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CONFLICT AND LANGUAGE VARIATION IN WWI AND II DARK SITES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY.

1. Introduction

Advertising tourist sites that are connected with historical events related to war, suffering or atrocity is a challenge for the tourism industry, which has to reconcile the intrinsic consumerist purpose of the tourist activity with the necessity for memorial, for respect, and for a narrative that educates future generations not to commit the same errors of the past. Dark Tourism —understood as ‘the act of travel to sites of death, disaster or the seemingly macabre [...]’ (Stone 2011: 319)—, thus, contests the hedonist aspiration of traditional tourism practice that typically searches for enjoyment (Butler and Pearce 1995: 21; Urry 2002 [1990]: 91-92), as it focuses on events that are ‘unpleasant most obviously for the victims and those who could associate themselves or identify with them, but also for others, such as spectators, who may not feel themselves so directly involved’ (Ashworth and Hartmann 2005: 1). Potential tourists may feel repelled, rather than attracted to sites whose main draw is the recreation and memorialisation of macabre events that usually have left an indelible mark on society. This mark is more critical and creates more controversy when the atrocities and suffering, which are the aim of the *tourist gaze* (Urry 2002), are part of the recent historical past of the *gazer* (Lennon and Foley 2000: 11; Stone and Sharpley 2008: 578). In those cases, it is possible that the perpetrators and the victims are still alive, and sometimes even sharing the same space (Strange and Kempa 2003); thus, the action of transforming their suffering and actions into tourism products is a taboo and may not be considered appropriate.

1.1 The Language of Tourism

For language analysts, Dark Tourism opens an interesting field of research, as it may question traditional posits about the functions of language in tourism settings. Dann (1996: 249) in his seminal book, *The Language of Tourism*, defines the specific language of the industries of leisure and tourism in the following terms:

[...] the language of tourism is a structured, monological, multi-strategical and controlling way of communicating between often anonymous parental senders and readily identifiable childlike receivers. Through many registers, diverse media and at all stages of a trip, the language of tourism transmits timeless, magical, euphoric, and tautological messages which contain the circular expectations and experiences of tourists and tourism.

Relying on a sociological approach, on the one hand, he highlights the euphoric function of this language; on the other, he claims that tourism is essentially a linguistic activity. According to this conceptualization, language becomes capital, as Dann (1996: 249)

maintains: 'Indeed, so pervasive and essential is the language of tourism that, without it, tourism itself would surely cease to exist'. It is present in the pre-journey activities, when the tourist gaze is constructed; it entices and 'woos' the tourists towards a potential destination; it guides and informs them throughout the activities that they perform; and finally, it is through language and discourse that the experience is retold and evaluated in post-journey encounters (Dann 1996: 142-166). Essentially, from a sociologist perspective tourism does not exist if it is not verbalised.

Dann also attempts one of the pioneering characterizations of the language, and outlines seven essential features that define tourist activities (1996: 63-64, 123), namely (1) *lack of sender*, as most of the tourism promotional material does not record the name of a particular author; (2) *circular communication*, as there is always an implicit tautology in the tourist message, based on the knowledge that the sender of the promotional message is the host who receives the tourists; then, these tourists can also become senders of the same tourist message by retelling their experience to other potential tourists, who in turn will probably become actual tourists and will go through the same experience and process; (3) *monologic modality*, the author defends the fact that most of the promotion in tourism is one-sided, as the sender is anonymous and does not allow for interaction and the receivers are regarded as a part of a mass of 'asexual, ageless' receivers (1996:64)¹; (4) *tautology*, in the sense that tourists travel to 'assert' the message they received about a destination in the promotion previous to the journey. Then, the tourists acknowledge it and carry back the narrative to the point of depart, when it will be assessed and retold again. For Dann, the language is also marked by (5) *cripticism*, as it is highly specialised; in some specific contexts, it can also be defined as '*technospeak*' (Dann 1996: 216; cf. Febas Borra 1978: 93; cf. Calvi 2006: 88), for instance, when describing monuments, landscapes or procedures. Besides, it is a (6) *language of expectation*; the author considers that in certain registers the conversations and linguistic exchanges are over-stereotyped and the linguistic component is merely reduced to a foretold lingo made up of set sentences from a phrase-book. Finally, relevantly enough for the purpose of this study, he also claims that the language of tourism is essentially characterized by (7) *euphoria* (except for the inclusion of pieces of criticism in travelogues) and also tends to be overly positive. This feature may not be taken for granted in Dark Tourism advertising, where euphoric language may be considered irreverent or inappropriate and, as the findings will show, is practically not present in certain Dark Tourism sites.

Although previous studies in the field of tourism language had already been published at the time (e.g. Cohen 1972; Hassan 1975; Cohen and Cooper 1986), Dann's study can be considered the inflexion point in the literature as the majority of linguistic approaches that were starting to be published around the beginning of the year 2000, influenced by the development of Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP), adopted his thesis as a starting point for research. Nowadays, it can be affirmed that the study of the language of tourism has reached adulthood, as it is demonstrated by the variety of publications and the multidisciplinary of approaches. Nevertheless, the definition of the language of tourism as an example of LSP has been controversial, as in general it is not characterized by a dense technical terminology and cryptic meaning for non-initiates; on the contrary it belongs to a context of use where everybody is susceptible to becoming a user, thus, a tourist. Therefore, most of the studies published in the late 90's and the 2000's started with an *apologia* of the

status of the language of tourism as LSP (e.g. Dann, 1996: 1; Calvi 2006: 7; Capelli, 2007 [2006]: 16; Francesconi 2007: 21-25; Manca 2007: 114-116; Nigro 2006: 43-44). At this moment, we can affirm that research in this field has already overcome the stage of disciplinary definition, as research projects such as *Linguatourism* (coordinated by Prof. Maria Vittoria Calvi), and the publication of dictionaries (Alcaraz et al. 2006; Collin 1997; Medlik 1994; Montaner Montejano et al. 1998; Termcat 2001) and collections (Baider et al. 2004; de Stasio and Palusci 2007; Calvi and Mapelli 2011) have assisted and given substance to the definition of the Language of Tourism as an LSP language. In short, the language of Tourism can be defined as a language with specific terminology, specific use of syntax, and specific discursive genres that is used in the context of the industries of Tourism and Leisure.

The majority of research on tourism language has been focused on the analysis of the promotional use of tourism language either in leaflets (Febas Borra 1978), brochures (Calvi 2006; Francesconi 2007; Nigro 2006), guide books (Margarito 2004), web-sites (Aleson-Carbonell 2004; Calvi 2004; Manca 2008) or in parallel studies of diverse promotional genres (Castello 2002). However, nowadays new directions after the work and definition of different genres of tourism (Calvi 2010; Malpelli and Piccioni 2011; Torresi 2010) have been opened to research. Works on translation (Pierini 2007; Suen 2009) and corpora (Lam 2007; Nigro 2006; Navarro and Miotti 2011) have also had an important impact on the description of the language. Some current approaches have already contested some of the premises of Dann's work and some of its basic features, and studies try now to re-assess pre-conceived features and structures of the language of tourism². This is the objective of the present study which tries to evaluate previous findings in the language of tourism in the context of WW1 and WW2 Dark sites, as they offer an atypical tourism experience.

In the context of the analysis of Dark-Tourism sites, there have not been many approaches to the study of the language, mainly due to the fact that the interest in Dark Tourism as a field of research is quite recent. Even so, some research on the use of language in the interpretation of dark museums from a critical discourse analysis perspective has been completed (Wight 2007; Wodak and Richardson 2009) with the main focus on political perspectives and the political use of language in the interpretation of the sites. Another type of studies comes from the field of sociology in which there is an approximation to the study of language through a content-based methodology (Stone 2012a), although this type of studies merely provides a superficial insight into the linguistic phenomenon.

The language of promotion of Dark Tourism sites needs more careful attention as it is representing a kind of tourism that may put into question some of the previous assumptions made on the language of tourism. In a way it can be considered a type of 'anti-tourism' that challenges the relation of tourism and commerce, and thus, disputes the very basic foundation of promotion, which is to attract a possible customer/ tourist. Following Francesconi (2007: 98) 'Anti-tourist' feelings and attitudes articulate the denigration of tourist superficiality and passivity'.

Under this premise, the hypothesis is that the language of Dark Tourism challenges the pervading *euphoria* as a basic characteristic of tourism texts (Alcaraz et al. 2006: xv; Castello 2002: 2; Febas Borra 1978: 119, 197; Francesconi 2007: 90-93; Lam 2007: 87; Manca 2007: 120-7; Nigro 2006: 54-55; Calvi 2006:85), and questions the importance of the use of qualitative adverbs and adjectives. Moreover, the discursive function of the texts is likely to

favour informative, rather than persuasive modalities. In addition, discursive topics may be centred on the historical/educative and memorial/land-based function of the sites (Pierkarz 2007:30-31), rather than on the recreational and commercial side because the object of tourism consumption is too sensitive to be overly commercialized.

1.2 Dark Tourism Studies

The controversy between commercialization and memorabilization in Dark Tourism sites is understood from a theoretical point of view as a product of the postmodern culture in its process of commodification of human nature (Lennon and Foley 2000: 4-5). Typically in a postmodern context all facets of human ontology are susceptible of being sold: death and suffering are no exceptions. In this line of argument, Urry (2005: 26) points out that in most cases, once the interest is raised upon a particular event or landscape, tourism and its economic consequences are inevitable: 'The consuming of a place as landscape is thus our destiny and our dilemma. It cannot be avoided.' In fact, most of the so-called dark sites are 'constructed, maintained, restored, adapted or promoted' especially for 'touristic consumption' (Sharpley 2009b: 147). Nevertheless, this consumption is not realised without reluctance as this postmodern move attempts to sell the most sacred, the most untouchable part of human existence: *terrorism, atrocity, suffering, crime*, or even *death*. Unarguably, both for the host community and the visitor, the touristic use of the site raises questions about the 'morality' of the presentation/interpretation of the sites, as they become 'musemized', 'staged', and, thus, become 'unauthentic' (Dann 1991: 17-18). Tourism is sometimes regarded as an 'immoral vehicle' for the mediation of atrocity and suffering events, as the consumerist approach to the event may cause alienation from the tragedy and the minimization of its tragic consequences (Strange and Kempa 2003: 387; Pierkarz 2007: 30).

Scholarly interest in Dark Tourism is relatively recent and its definition as an academic field can be traced to the publication of John Lennon and Malcolm Foley's seminal book *Dark Tourism* (2000)³. Although there is an implicit agreement in the literature in adopting Lennon and Foley's work as a seminal work in the current approach to Dark Tourism, the topic had already raised previous and contemporary interest in other scholars who, albeit their different use of terminology and points of view, started to create a strong theoretical support for the topic. For instance, in the 90's Seaton coined the term 'thanatourism' to refer to the visit to places related to death and disaster (1996; 2000: 655-56; 2002); Gregory Ashworth defined 'atrocity tourism' as a term that focuses on the darker aspects of this type of tourism (Ashworth and Hartmann 2005: 6-7); and Dann (1998) discussed 'the dark side of tourism' and attempted a first taxonomy on what he calls 'divisions of the dark', namely *perilous places, houses of horror, fields of fatality, tours of torment*, and themed *thanatos*.

Notwithstanding their differences, all these approaches to the study of Dark Tourism share certain common elements that configure the theoretical scope of dark sites. One of the most recurrent topics in the literature is the question of 'memorability'. This is a key concept as the darkness or lightness of a site does not really depend on the seriousness of the atrocity that is being the focus of the dark site; conversely it bears more on the memorabilization of the event that leaves an indelible mark on the consciousness of the postmodern society⁴. Hence, places in connection with atrocious events become Dark Tourism destinations when there is a social conscience that has defined them as relevant or 'extraordinary' (Ashworth and Hartmann

2005: 4). In that way, certain sites have become paradigmatic dark destinations, for instance concentration camps or genocide sites (Beech 2009; Miles 2002; Sharpley 2012), battlefields (Balwin and Sharpley 2009; Ryan 2007), prisons such as Robben Island (Strange and Kempa 2003), sites of the Spanish Civil War (Smith 2007), Waterloo (Seaton 1999), slavery memorials and museums (Rice 2009), ground zero and other terrorism attack sites (Stone 2012a; Deegan and Dineen 1997), nuclear tourism (Stone 2013), shrines for the famous (i.e. Princess Diana⁵, Elvis Presley, James Dean, or Valentino⁶) or for infamous criminals (i.e. Jack the Ripper, or Charles Manson); nevertheless, other sites which could claim for a similar or even darker status have remained forgotten, off the beaten track, as they maybe have not left a mark in society consciousness, or their memorabilization is too controversial⁷.

Sharpley (2005: 225-226; 2009a: 20) distinguishes four types or *shades* of Dark Tourism, namely (1) *Pale tourism*, when there is not intentional Dark Tourism objective and sites are not interpreted or do not have a purposeful dark-tourism draw; (2) *Grey Tourism Demand*, sites without a dark purpose that are visited by tourists seeking Dark Tourism; (3) *Grey Tourism Supply*, sites with a declared focus on Dark Tourism that attract visitors not always interested in these aspects, who just come across the sites out of serendipity; and finally, (4) *Black tourism*, which is the most pure form of Dark Tourism. In these black sites ends meet and both supply and demand pursue dark-tourism experiences.

This is an operational framework that connects demand and supply aspects, therefore, assisting scholars in the purpose of providing a taxonomic description of the Dark Tourism phenomenon. In the same line Miles (2002) describes different degrees of darkness in the interpretation of genocide sites and Phillip Stone (2006) working on Sharpley’s taxonomy provides a more detailed description of the possibilities (see Figure 1).

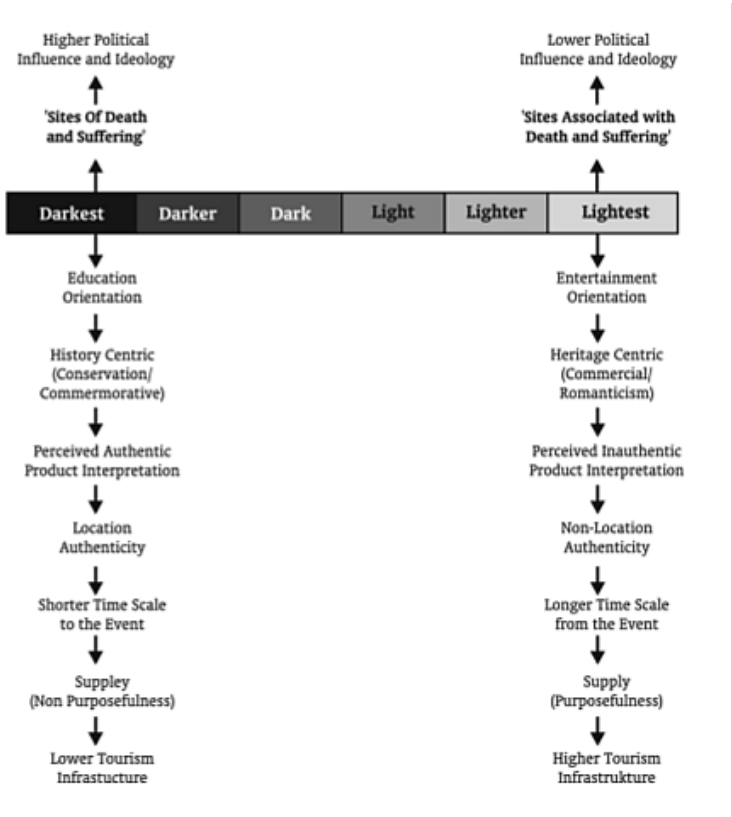


Figure 1: A Dark Tourism spectrum. Stone (2006: 151).

In his model he presents a cline of six types of supply that depend on key variables such as the ideology, the interpretation of the site, the purpose, both the authenticity and the 'perceived' authenticity of the site, the time-scale, the intentionality as a Dark Tourism product, and, finally, the type of infrastructure provided. This framework is actually formulated upon the tension of parallel contradictory forces proposing a dialectic play of opposites which constitutes the characteristics of supply. Under this perspective, an array of different possibilities is presented, and some Dark Tourism sites and activities that did not conform to all the requirements of 'pure' Dark Tourism (Ashworth and Hartmann 2005: 6) can find a place where their specific characteristics are defined.

The study of Dark Tourism has been the object of great interest during the last decade. Frameworks, typologies and studies of special cases have drawn the most relevant results of these first approaches. Following Stone (2011), now research on the field must turn from the disciplinary discussion and definitions, towards research approaches that concentrate in understanding the Dark Tourism phenomenon. From the point of view of linguistic analysis, the most interesting direction is the study of promotion and advertising, especially getting an insight into the relations between the site and the media and how language mediates the interpretation of a site as a Dark Tourism attraction.

WW1 and WW2 sites, which are the object of the present study, are a paramount example of what can be considered cases of Dark Tourism products with a long and productive life. Nevertheless, some scholars would not consider them good examples of 'pure' Dark Tourism (Ashworth and Hartmann 2005: 6), as the time span has been long enough to lessen the dark connotations of those sites and they have suffered a process of what scholars call *sanitation or loss of dark features*⁸. However, this study argues that WW1 and WW2 sites maybe represent nowadays the pure essence of the Dark Tourism industry supply, as the existence of a multiple variety of sites (and interpretation functions) may be representative of the different *shades* of Dark Tourism. Inasmuch as most dark sites are not purposeful-built attractions and are just transformed into such by the marketing and promotional activity of the stakeholders involved, the language of promotion may be held responsible in most cases for the creation and definition of Dark Tourism sites as such. Language, thus, becomes not only the instrument of mediation and interpretation of the site, but also the architect of its meaning. Language may give relevance to certain Dark Tourism features of the sites and may determine, for instance, their role in provoking fear or 'anxiety and doubt about the project of modernity' (Foley and Lennon, 2000: 11) or refresh the deep scar that some events have left in the consciousness of society⁹.

1.3 Hypothesis and research objectives

The hypothesis of the present paper is that language, as an instrument of interpretation and commodification of Dark Tourism sites, reflects the conflicting dialectic forces that configure the framework of the Dark Tourism spectrum. Thus, the overly euphemistic nature of the language of tourism promotion is expected to be constrained by the sobriety and reverence that pervade some of the darkest sites. The language of Dark Tourism is the mediator of the dissonance created, on the one hand, by the commercial purpose inherent to all tourist sites,

and, on the other, by the ethical interpretations of the site (commemorative, historical or educative).

The main objective, then, is to explore how language variation accommodates to the different degrees of darkness; darkness that is going to be dependent on the dialectic opposites that concur on a specific tourist site. Taking into account the different shades of the Dark Tourism spectrum (Stone 2006), darker sites are likely to definitely challenge the preconceived euphoric features of the language of tourism; whereas lighter sites may be opened to a wider variation.

With that particular aim, an exploratory study of one hundred web-sites of WW1 and WW2 and tourism sites has been realized. The reason of that choice, as it has been previously mentioned, bears on the fact that WW1 and WW2 sites are a perfect laboratory to study the dialectic tension of Dark Tourism sites, as on the one hand the span-time from the war events to our time may have sanitised the atrocity and the horror of the war, but on the other the relevance of those war feats to the current socio-political post-modern society has maintained a sense of reverence and respect that contest the commercial approach of tourism to those sites. Indeed, as Stone (2012b) states, war and battlefields sites raise dilemmas over the consumption of death and the ethical and morality issues involved. This assumption is corroborated by Leopold (2007: 52-57) and Pierkarz (2007:30) who defend the implementation of ethical standards in these sites, lest the atrocity and dark past of the sites should be forgotten. In addition, W1 and W2 sites offer a wide range of tourist resources that range from the most atrocious to the most sanitized versions of war, covering specific-designed museums, trails, cemeteries, airfields, battlefields, or even re-created theme sites.

It is expected that the dissonance created by the presence, on the one hand, of the historical, commemorative and educative function, and on the other by the pull of the recreational and commercial function, will have a reflection in the use of promotional language. Hence, variation on the interpretative functions of the site will presumably cause variation on the language of WW1 and WW2 tourism promotion, by reducing or enhancing the use and abuse of the typical tourist 'extreme language' of excessive euphoria (Febas Borra 1978: 70).

2. Corpus and methodology

For the aims of the study, it was important to know which sites were the object of tourism interest. With that particular aim a massive mailing was sent in October 2009 to all the available emails of tourist offices in the United Kingdom. In total 527 requests for information about WW1 and WW2 tourist sites were sent, 32 addresses were erroneous and 460 messages with information were received. Some of the information was redundant as some tourist offices just sent information about the main sites in the UK, namely the Imperial War Museum (IWM) sites, Duxford Airfield Camp and Churchill Cabinet Rooms.

From all the information gathered a random selection of one hundred web-pages were singled out for a preliminary exploratory study. The web-sites were distributed into diverse categories, namely (1) 38% were web-pages with general information about WW1 and WW2 sites; (2) 29 % were articles in general tourism web-pages; (3) 20% were museums; (4) 4%

memorials; (5) 3% real-site battlefields; (6) 2% were heritage centres; (7) another 2% were associations of veterans or heritage friends; and finally, (8) 1% were related to other type of tourist services and products such as itineraries and special events.

Table 1: Characteristics of the Sample

| | WW1 and WW2 Sample |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Text Files | 100 |
| Tokens | 52544 |
| Types | 7163 |
| Sentences | 1811 |
| Sentence length | 27,41 |

The analysis of the sample was carried out with Mike Scott's *WordSmith Tools 5.0*© and with the tool *vocabulary_analysis (WSDL)* © from the IULA 04 SoapLab Web Services. This latter analytical software 'calculates different lexicometric measures and displays them graphically (tokens, types, hapaxes & type/token ratio)' (WSDL 2013). The statistical description of the sample from WordSmith© can be seen in Table 1. Although we can admit that the size of the sample is not sufficiently large to draw definite conclusions upon the characterization of the language of WW1 and WW2, the results of this exploratory study are intended to guide future research on the field by giving a preliminary description of the linguistic features that may characterize this type of language.

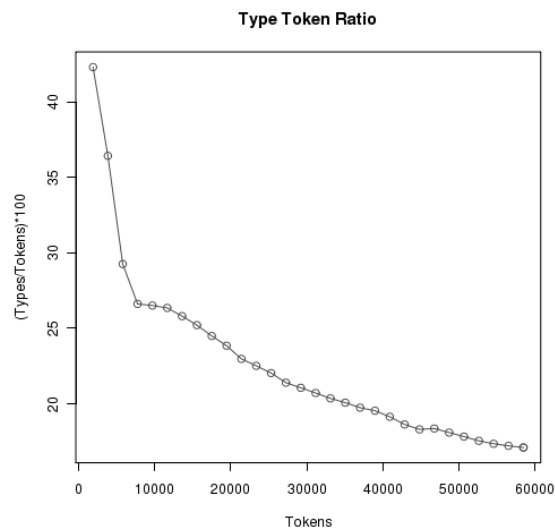


Figure 2: Type-token ratio of the Sample.

The vocabulary analysis (see Figures 2 and 3) shows the distribution of tokens and types, on the one hand, and the distribution of tokens and *hapax legomena* or hapaxes (words that only appear once) on the other. The type-token ratio (TTR) generally measures lexical variety (see Figure 2), by establishing a relation between the types and the tokens. In the particular case of this sample we can see how lexical variety decreases steadily as a wider number of tokens is accumulated. Thus, around the range of 50,000 tokens the TTR is nearly 14%, so the sample shows a relative level of saturation. Figure 3 shows how hapaxes have a moderate curve in comparison with tokens, a typical distribution of hapaxes in an English collection of texts, which usually scores around 50% of the vocabulary (Fengxiang, 2010: 631).

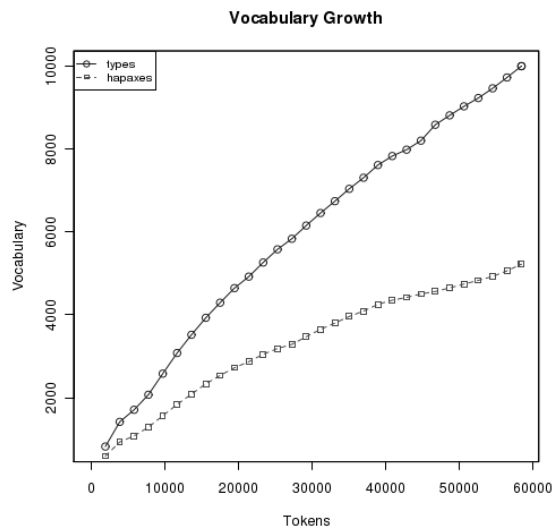


Figure 3: Relation between Tokens and Hapaxes.

3. Results and discussion

At first, in order to identify the terms and words that characterise this type of language, an analysis of keywords has been realized using WordSmith© (Scott 2008). This analytical process points out those words whose frequency is unusually high, always in comparison with a corpus of reference (Scott 2013). In this particular case the British National Corpus (BNC) has been selected in order to determine which semantic fields present a higher frequency in comparison with the common usage of language represented by the reference corpus. Thus, the results could help us to draw conclusions about the terminological and syntactic characterization of the language object of study.

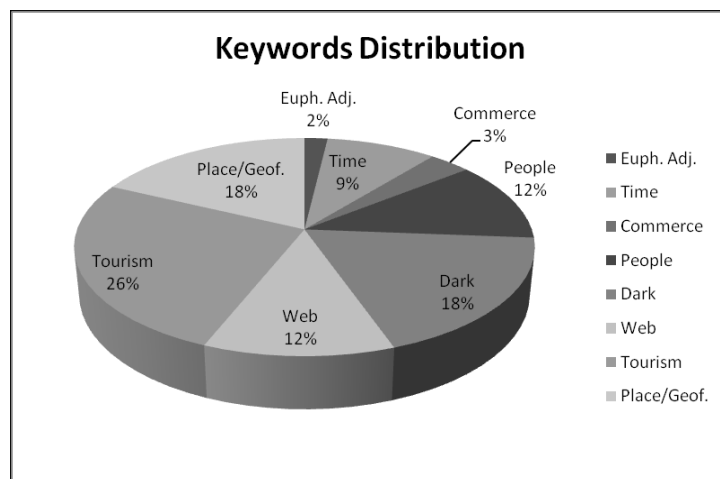


Figure 4: Scope of Keywords distribution in the sample

The analysis has yielded 488 keywords; none of the instances has produced negative keyness, so all examples correspond to usage with an unusual higher percentage in comparison to the BNC¹⁰. Following Nigro (2006:79), who used a similar methodology in the

study of keywords in guide books, words with a limited number of instances (less than 40 in this case) have been eliminated from the results as their low frequency minimizes their relevance in the corpus. Afterwards, the keywords have been reorganized in wider semantic fields which can help us to understand the specific semantic characterization of this sub-language of tourism (see Figure 4 for general results and distribution and Table 2 for some examples in each category).

Table 2: Semantic grouping of keywords.

| Place/Geography | Rate in Keywords Distribution | | Rate per 100 words | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| | 19% | | 0.28 | | |
| WORLD | SITE | DOVER | NORFOLK | NORTH | DUXFORD |
| LONDON | UK | HERE | COUNCIL | WEST | BRITAIN |
| Tourism/Services | 28% | | 0.4 | | |
| MUSEUM/S | EVENT/S | HERITAGE | ADMISSION | HISTORY/ HISTORIC | TOUR/S |
| INFORMATION | WELCOME | COLLECTION/S | EXHIBITION/S | VISIT/S/ VISITING | HALL |
| Web | 12% | | 0.18 | | |
| WEBSITE | EMAIL | CLICK | CONTACT | LINKS | ONLINE |
| SEARCH | HOME | COPYRIGHT | NEWS | PAGE | FIND |
| Dark sites/ attractions | 14% | | 0.28 | | |
| AIRFIELD | WAR/S | SECOND WORLD WAR/ WWII | MEMORIAL/S | RAF (Royal Air Force) | IWM (Imperial War Museum) |
| AVIATION | AIRCRAFT | BATTLE | MILITARY | AIR | HMS (Her Majesty Ship) |
| People | 12% | | 0.18 | | |
| CHURCHILL | US | VISITOR/S | OUR | GROUP | FAMILY |
| YOUR | BRITISH | | | | |
| Commerce | 4% | | 0.05 | | |
| SHOP | HIRE | FREE | TICKET/S | | |
| Time/ Schedule | 9% | | 0.13 | | |
| OPEN/OPENING | CLOSED | DURING | CHRISTMAS | DAILY | NOVEMBER/NOV |
| DAY | OCTOBER | DECEMBER/DEC | | | |

Apart from the classification of lemmas into the semantic fields, for the purpose of the study it is significant to yield results about the use of verbs of action and adjectives. Firstly, the choice of verbs of action in a specific tourist genre can share light on the purpose of visit and the expected conduct of both tourists and hosts. Thus, language constructs the tourist experience by listing the expected actions performed by the stakeholders in the sites.

Table 1: Results on verbs of action

| Verbal Action | Rate in Keywords Distribution | | Rate per 100 words | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|------------|--------------------|---------|---------|
| | N/a | | 0.17 | | |
| VISITING | INCLUDING | EXPERIENCE | FLYING | OPENING | CLOSE |
| TRAVEL | BUY | HIRE | FIND | CLICK | WELCOME |

Secondly, table 4 offers an insight on the use of quality euphoric adjectives because, as it has been stated in the introduction, these euphemistic and positive words characterize the language of tourism (see Dann 1996; Alcaraz et al. 2006: xv; Castello 2002: 2; Febas Borra 1978: 119, 197; Francesconi 2007: 90-93; Lam 2007: 87; Manca 2007: 120-7; Nigro 2006: 54-55; Calvi 2006:85). These words are defined by Nigro (2006: 80) as adjectives that

promote and present in a positive way a site or location. Nevertheless, she does not include them in her keyword semantic classification of the vocabulary of guide books, as they do not carry a strong semantic charge. Conversely, this study claims that the analysis of euphoric language is central; firstly, as it is defined by the literature as one of the fundamental characteristics; and, secondly, because in the case of Dark Tourism the use of quality adjectives can challenge this very premise.

Table 2: Results on Euphoric Adjectives

| Adjectives | Rate in Keywords Distribution | | Rate per 100 words |
|------------|-------------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| | 2% | | 0.03 |
| SPECIAL | MAIN | KEY | |

At first sight, the results obtained corroborate the hypothesis outlined in the introduction; as the distribution in the corpus of semantic units related to *commerce* and to *euphoric adjectives* is dramatically lower than those related to other fields in the sample, such as *dark tourism*, or *tourist services*. Nevertheless, it is still interesting to see that basic commercial words such as *shop*, *hire*, *buy* or *ticket* have a high frequency in comparison to the reference corpus (BNC); therefore, it is undeniable that commerce has an important impact on the language of Dark Tourism and it is characteristic of its specificity if we compare it to common language use.

As regards the semantic field of *geography*, the findings corroborate other studies (cf. Febas-Borra 1978: 42-44; Nigro 2006: 80-81) that have signalled the importance of the construction and description of the geography of tourist sites in promotion. It is interesting to highlight the presence of the deictic *here*, which represents the closeness of the tourist attraction to the potential tourist/reader. This is a treatment of the tourist sites that challenges the typical description of touristic attractions as places of the ‘extraordinary’ or the ‘exotic’ (Febas Borra 1978: 69-70), because the promoted event or site is indelibly close to our life experience. Keywords such as *UK*, *Britain*, just reinforce this stance, as the majority of the texts are directed to a British audience.

In the semantic field of *tourism services*, we can mainly see that the semantic units highlighted refer to activities related to museums, exhibitions and events whose main purpose is to display collections and instruct visitors about heritage. The main functions are informative and historic; learning is also included in the keywords, albeit its frequency is not relevant (less than 40 instances) due possibly to the small size of our current sample. These findings endorse Pierkarz’s theory of the function of battlefield sites (2007: 30-31), as it shows how WW1 and WW2 tourist sites in general also show preference for historical and educative interpretations. This representation of the site as a place for learning and information contrasts drastically with the commercialization purposes also present in the texts.

The semantic field of the *web* and its high frequency in relation to the reference corpus raises the question of the influence of the media of transmission in the language of tourist promotion. This is out of the scope of the present paper, but it might be an interesting issue of research for future approaches. The majority of examples from the corpus are taken from the paratext on the webpage. This paratext is usually set on the top or on the side menus of the page and gives support to the tourist message without interfering with its communicative

function. Further work on the relations between paratext and text in web-sites, together with an analysis of moves in promotional web-pages will shed some light on this question.

Dark-tourism references in the corpus are mainly related to the type of tourist attractions and artefacts that can be visited in WW1 and WW2 sites. It is interesting to see how memorials appear as tourist attractions, and how the function of remembrance is activated together with the historical and educative approach in complete agreement with Pierkarz's functions (2007). The language is used with an educative and informative function in order to *sanitize* or to lessen the negative impact of the sites, offering a positive reading to past atrocities. As the examples show (see Table 2), most of the words are not necessarily loaded semantically with a negative charge.

Further to the references to *people*, it is interesting to see the appearance of proper names to attract interest (i.e. Churchill, or with a lower frequency Wilfred Owen, or Glenn Miller); but most interesting is the high-frequency use of pronouns to refer to potential readers, that is 'you, and its forceful integration in a gregarious *us* or *our*. This use of pronouns is defined as *ego-targeting*, an advertising technique that presents the message as if it were directed deliberately only to the reader (Calvi 2006: 72-73; Nigro 2006: 61; Pierini 2007:89). In addition, it is also worth of notice how the language of Dark Tourism avoids the use of the word *tourist* in preference for the word *visitor*, a vocabulary shift that characterises what Francesconi calls *anti-tourism* (2007:103). As she points out the word *visitor* connotes elitism, which avoids the negativity of hedonism, and maybe the commercialization and exploitation that typical mass tourism conveys. However, the actors of the Dark Tourism experience are not only *visitors*, but also *families*, or even *groups* (see Table 2) that are attracted by the educative, historical and the remembrance/memorial pull of these tourism sites. Therefore, language plays a double role. On the one hand it promotes elitism; on the other, it presents sites as accessible to normal people. These results show that there is a dialectic force of opposition between different interpretations of the sites, and the variation in the use of language can help us to propose a framework with a language spectrum of different possibilities similar to the one proposed by Stone (2006).

Another important issue is the absence of reference to the military forces of the axis alliance. This absence is notorious, as it is the fact that the only related keyword that appears in the list is POW (Prisoners of War). This word has a low frequency (0,001 *per* 100 words) and it only appears in five texts. The forced silence of the enemy is also a feature of the process of sanitation of dark sites. Conversely, in the majority of tourist attractions the interpretation of the courage and heroic feats of the *us*, the British and the victors, is salient. *Us* is also employed in the discourse of victimization, where the word includes modern spectators who become also the recipients of the suffering of the war. This use also encompasses sometimes the allied forces or even other suffering countries, but it is never extended to the enemies.

In relation to *commerce*, the results of the study yield few examples, although those few words have a strong keyness factor. Consequently, their importance in the language of Dark sites is undeniably. Their existence, then, activates the dissonance between the memorialized and the commercialized. This conflict is clearly traced in the vocabulary shift employed in lighter, or medium –cline dark sites. An interesting example is the word *memorabilia* which is preferred to the most commercial word *souvenir*. This variation in the choice of words

portrays one of the opposite dialectic forces underneath the interpretation of WW1 and WW2, which seeks to reduce overly commercial references where sensitive aspects of human experience, such as death or war, are present. Other concepts that do not have a strong frequency in the sample, but that also carry dissonant interpretations, are the references to *weddings* and *corporate business*, which should be object of further study in a larger sample.

Time and *schedules* are also an important issue in the tourism industry, although in some studies this concept has not been included as being considered too utilitarian and void of semantic force (Nigro 2006: 79). Nevertheless, time organizes the tourist experience and in doing so it establishes the moments of tourism activity. Indeed this is one of the factors that characterize the language of tourism as a '[...] structured, monological, multistrategical and controlling way of communicating between often anonymous parental senders and readily identifiable childlike receivers' (Dann 1996: 249). All tourist activities are determined by time, for tourists need to follow the schedules imposed by the somehow strict time-tables of activities, itineraries or museums. For Dann (1996) the tourism industry acts like a mother who imposes schedules and activities over her cared children/tourists.

As regards *adjectives*, the keywords obtained are not the hackneyed euphoric qualifiers typical of the 'timeless, magical, euphoric, and tautological messages' of the language of tourism promotion (Dann, 1996: 249). Conversely, qualification is scarce and only three modifiers get to the list of the most frequent. This finding establishes one of the main differences of this sublanguage in comparison to the general language of tourism, where adjectives are 'ubiquitous' (Lam 2007: 87), and are considered one of the main features of communication in the world of tourism (Calvi 2006: 84; Febas Borra 1978: 80; Manca 2007: 115, 120; Nigro 2006: 60).

Finally, regarding *verbs of action*, most of them refer to actions performed by the potential tourists on the site; and the others are actions carried out by the host communities (i. e. to *open* and to *close*). The host community role is basically perceived as utilitarian and devoted to commercial purpose; however, visitors are expected to be more dynamic and combine the tourist experience, being that *visiting* or *flying*, with commercial activities (i.e. to *buy*, to *hire*). Other verbs, present in the keyword list and worth of noticing despite their lower frequency, are *donate* and *enjoy*. *Donate*, as it was the case with memorabilia, is a paradigmatic example of how commercialization is transformed in these Dark Sites into an action that sanitizes the experience; that is the transaction of money is sanctioned by a process of voluntary giving. Thus, the experience becomes lighter and the debasing connotation of consumerism seems to disappear, albeit the evident economic exchange which is still present. *Enjoy* is also an interesting case as it activates one of the dialectic forces that pull the darkest interpretation of the sites as places of entertainment, instead of 'hallowed memorial grounds' (Pierkarz 2007:30).

A close study of the context and concordances discloses an uneven distribution of the topics and modes of interpretation that rest upon the line of opposite dialectic forces. Hence, the interpretation of the sites based on language yields a similar cline to Stone's spectrum of Dark Tourism supply (2006). Stone's cline is an all-embracing system that covers all possibilities of tourism supply: it offers six different shades of dark that are multiplied by eight conditioning dichotomies (see Figure 1). This complex array of possibilities is not reproduced with enough salience in language, as not all factors are represented by keywords

with relevant frequency over the reference corpus of general language. Taking into account our linguistic findings, we can propose a parallel three-fold taxonomy, based on Stone (2006), which adapts better to the description of the language of promotion for dark sites. Thus, discourses could be classified into, namely *100% Dark sites*, *Sites of Contrast*, and *Entertainment and Commercial Sites*.

Therefore, *100% Dark Sites* are characterized by the language of the dark. In these cases, discourse draws on the historic, educational function of the cline and on a sense of reverence and commemoration that pervades the texts. People are represented as heroes, endurers or commemorators, whereas the enemy is just named by their atrocious actions (bombing, destruction). Some of these sites are not part of the usual tourism infrastructure; in some a tourism categorization is even explicitly rejected. Even so, the events and sites are presented to the visitor (not the tourist) through typical tourism commercialization channels (tourist information centres, institutional web-pages, etc.). Therefore, these sites are sold as tourism products, but language sanitizes the business of tourism through a vocabulary shift which either talks about donations, or blurs, even silences, the economic transactions. The language is deprived of typical tourist euphoria; in contrast with the emphasis on loaded-vocabulary focusing on suffering, atrocity and war. The following are some representative examples:

- (1) Photographic Collection/albums-some photographs available of the damage sustained after the bombing of Middlesbrough Railway Station during WW2 & photographs available of remembrance occasions at the Albert Park memorial. (Military Heritage Trail of Middlesbrough)
- (2) The Annual Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial on Rose Hill (opposite Chesterfield Town Hall) will take place at 11.00 a.m. The Royal British Legion would welcome all to attend this Act of Remembrance, by forming up in front of the Town Hall at 10.50 a.m. The two minutes silence will be started by North East Derbyshire District Council sounding the Maroon. (Chesterfield Tourist Information Centre: Armistice Day Act of Remembrance at Chesterfield)
- (3) The War Widows Rose Garden was planted as a tribute to the nation's war widows who often endure great hardship, as well as the emotional stress through the loss of their husbands. [...] Prices Free entry. Donations appreciated. Open all the time. Open every day with the exception of Christmas Day. (Visit Staffordshire: Remembrance Garden at National Memorial Arboretum)
- (4) There are various memorials and rolls of honour dedicated to those men and women who fell in various wars. These memorials and rolls cover many centuries in some cases, most World War One and Two. During any conflict there are certain acts of bravery or defiance that are noticeable above others. (Roll of Honour)

Contrasting Sites are in the middle cline of the language of Dark Tourism spectrum. Most of these sites offer educational and historical functions, but at the same time foster entertainment and commercial exchanges as these sites are typical of the tourism infrastructure. For instance, national museums based on narratives of courage and victory, where the focus is on the education of families and children, such as the IWM (Imperial War Museum), are examples of this interpretation. The language employed is more vivid, some overt euphoria can be traced, which is contested in the same discourse by the seriousness of the references to war, suffering, or death. In these cases opposition in language is ubiquitous.

- (5) Inside, we continue to explore the impact of war by bringing the stories of real people to life through powerful and thought-provoking exhibitions and displays. You can also experience the Big Picture Show, take a tour or join in with family activities during your visit as well as enjoy the spectacular views over The Quays and Manchester from the viewing platform in the 29-metre-high Air Shard. (IWM_North)
- (6) Sit in our recreated Blitz street shelter simulation and experience how it would have felt being caught in a real air-raid (although the comforting narration reminds everyone that fortunately, on this occasion, it's completely safe!). (Newhaven Fort)

(7) The Museum displays the remarkable story of the Soldiers of Gloucestershire who have served their regiments since 1694. It depicts their courage, humour, their traditions and their sacrifices in exciting and colourful exhibitions for all ages to enjoy. (Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum)

(8) Things are still progressing; we're not a Duxford or Hendon but we are determined that all visitors should enjoy their time with us, learn about the aviation heritage which is part of our locality and above all remember those who lost their lives in the conflicts of the 20th Century. (Sywell Airfield)

Finally, concerning *Commercial Sites*, the use of language is 'extreme' (Febas-Borra 1978). The language is euphoric, full of positive and evaluative references. Adjectivization and qualification is present through the text and the function of language follows exactly the literature description of the language of tourism (Alcaraz 2006; Castelo 2002; Calvi 2006; Nigro 2006; Francesconi 2007; Manca 2007). These examples are good representative samples of the language of tourism described, for instance, by Graham Dann, a language that 'attempts to persuade, lure, woo and seduce millions of human beings' (1996: 2).

(1) There are some great other prizes too - a chance to enjoy an unforgettable flight with a Spitfire, thanks to a generous donation of a gold experience by Action Stations!, a signed Battle of Britain fine art print donated by Colin Smith, a Dictionary of the Battle of Britain signed by ten of the Few and a signed copy of William Walker's new book of poetry. (Battle of Britain)

(2) Browse through the listings here for a guide to what's on over the weekend, we're sure you'll find something to enjoy! A complete wartime experience with music and dancing from the eras in the beautiful district of Saddleworth. (SADDLEWORTH WARTIME WEEKEND)

(3) Explore the spectacular surrounds of Dartmouth Castle and have fun with your camera. The U-Boat Story has been named winner of Merseyside's Small Visitor Attraction 2011, and has been highly commended as a tourism and leisure attraction in the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors North West Awards 2010. You will see into the cross-sectioned submarine and discover its amazing story through a highly interactive and exciting exhibition. (U-boat)

The results of this qualitative analysis of texts show that our proposed language spectrum is determined by confronting forces that underpin and configure the interpretation of Dark Sites texts. Thus, the texts can be classified in a cline depending on the degree of closeness to one side or the other of the opposing dialectic narratives activated by the presence or absence of certain vocabulary choices. These can be articulated in the following dichotomies that mimic but reduce Stone's complex system of key variables to only five (see Figure 1): (1) *History vs. Activity Consumption*; (2) *Education vs. Commerce*; (3) *Reverence vs. Entertainment*; (4) *Unplanned vs. Planned Tourism Infrastructure*; (5) *Us vs. The Enemy*. Therefore, following this proposed framework, narratives based on *History, Education, Reverence* and *Unplanned Tourism* references define the darker side of the cline, whereas a focus on *Consumption, Commerce, Entertainment* and *Well-defined Tourism Infrastructure* describes the lighter side of the Dark Tourism industry.

4. Conclusions

The findings of this exploratory study cannot be regarded as fully conclusive as further investigation and an enlargement of the corpus is needed in order to reach a definite insight into the characterization of the language of Dark Tourism sites. Nevertheless, the results have yielded interesting results that have challenged the established understanding of the language of tourism in the literature. On the one hand, the hypothesis of the study has been fulfilled as

the language of the darkest types of tourism contests the pervading euphoria of canonical tourism texts (Dann 1996: 63); in doing so it mediates the tourism experience by sanitizing the context of use. This is achieved by a careful selection of vocabulary, the reduction of euphoric and qualifying adjectives and the preference for an interpretative function based on educative, commemorative and historic motivations in which commercial and business references are forced out of the narrative.

On the other, the results also show that texts that belong to the lighter side of the cline are closer to the description of canonical tourism texts. These texts are full of euphoric language and their function is focused on entertainment and the search of hedonism. Thus, we can conclude that in general, the language of Dark Tourism challenges the assumed features of the language of tourism, but a that careful insight on specific contexts provides evidence that there is richer variation and that language use adapts to the multiple shades of a cline from darker to lighter sites, where *light* represents the sites with a more commercial and touristic interpretation, and *dark* the anti-tourism narration.

Even though the linguistic features gathered are not enough to describe the whole spectrum of the Dark Tourism supply as described by Stone (2006:151), at least it is enough to establish three well-defined typologies of language use in these sites, namely, the language of *100% Dark Tourism Sites*, the language of *Contrasting sites*, and the language of *Commercial Sites*. These typologies are defined by the choice of words and by the opposing dialectic forces that are used to construct their narratives and that pull the pre-existent and pervading narratives of tourism to a darker, or a lighter side of the cline. These results corroborate similar findings in previous research, for example Wight argues that the sites in the middle of the cline ‘are sanitised and shaped by inoffensive, *authentic* interpretation’, whereas, darker sites ‘[...] showcase trendy-tragedy to an increasingly attentive audience’ (2007: 117).

Language becomes the instrument for the interpretation of the site and, in a way, constructs the Dark Tourism experience, contributing to the process of memorabilization of the sites. As Pritchard and Jaworski highlight (2005: 2): ‘Discourse, including language, defines experience and performance, and by empowering action or inaction, naturalises social relations’. This is the case in the study of Dark Tourism language, where potential dark tourists/ visitors discover and anticipate the experience by the descriptions of dark tourism advertising. In this particular case, this process is capital as Dark Tourism sites, especially *100% Dark Sites*, offer an experience that is radically different from typical tourism supply. Thus, the linguistic analysis is not only important as regards the advancements in the description of this language for special purposes, but also in reference to the understanding of the tourism exploitation of Dark sites.

Further to language studies, although it is unquestionable that the study of the language of tourism has reached maturity, the results yielded highlight the necessity of pursuing new research objectives that aim to question established assumptions in the field. In fact, the language of WW1 and WW2 Tourism sites presents an inestimable context for the study of variation, as the register in some contexts differs dramatically from the typical colourful language of the industry of tourism that represents an embellished, sublime, and transformed reality (Febas-Borra 1978: 119) and, therefore, can be a good laboratory of research in order to fully understand the characteristics and usage of this language. The multidisciplinary and variety in the representation and interpretation of the sites allow for a thorough analysis of the

spectrum of Dark Tourism in particular, and for a complementary understanding of the language of tourism. More research should be done in this area in order to assert all the possible shades of language use.

Future research should also focus on yielding comparable statistical results that previous studies do not always provide in order to be able to assess the relevance of the different findings. Besides, it should also highlight the importance of certain word classes such as euphoric adjectives or verbs of action, as they are capital in the characterization of the language of tourism. Another line of research should focus on the media employed for the communication of the message because it seems to have an impact in language; therefore, a deeper study on the discursive characteristics of its use would assist in the evaluation of its actual impact in the tourist message.

Finally, although the results have determined a new proposal for the classification of language use in the Dark Tourism cline, a more detailed characterization of the language in each of the categories is needed to fully estimate its validity. An extended corpus in each typology, together with a detailed analysis of their lexical, morphosyntactic, genre, discursive and sociocontextual features will ensure a full understanding of the use of Dark Tourism language.

5. Notes

¹ This concept is also studied by Cohen and Cooper (1986: 538), who were the first scholars to be interested in linguistic research in the field of Tourism. Their studies also pinpoint the scarcity of communication exchanges between the host society and the visitors.

² For instance, as regards the *anonymous authorship*, other studies have claimed the significant presence of senders in some examples of tourism promotional discourse (Febas Borra 1978: 77; Torresi, 2010: 63-93), in sharp contrast with Dann's approach.

³ This is not strange because in fact the scholar interest for Tourism as an academic field of study is also quite recent, since it started to be developed as a subject of scientific interest from the second part of the 20th century onwards (Cooper et al. 1998 [1993]:3; Burns and Holden, 1995).

⁴ The case of Costa Concordia shipwreck in 2012 is a good example of this phenomenon. At the time it attracted wide interest worldwide and, indeed, tourists continued to visit the site six months afterwards. Nowadays, the interest has decreased but the site is still being signalled as a main tourist attraction in Giglio Island Tourist web-site (see Isola del Giglio Tourist Information). The future of the site as a tourism destination is yet uncertain.

⁵ See Thomas Blom (2000).

⁶ See Joanne Mackellar (2006) on fanaticism and Dark Tourism.

⁷ See, for example, the forgotten status of sites of the German Occupation on the Channel Islands (Carr 2010). In this case atrocity *per se* does not attract tourist interest, and there are other factors that determine this status (Ashworth and Hartmann, 2005:3).

⁸ The process of sanitation, as used by Pierkarz (2007) involves the process of diminishing the negative effects and connotations inspired by the atrocity and evil facts that dark sites commemorate by applying and giving a new and reformed function to the sites, mostly based on education and learning. This process is difficult as there are also recreational, marketing and commercial purposes involved. As the author posits sometimes is difficult to establish a line in-between and in some cases the dark features of a site are magnified (2007: 43): 'The issue here is the tightrope that must be walked between sanitizing war and battle, with sensationalism and gore.' In fact, some scholars claim that the process of sanitation gives meaning to the Dark Tourism experience as it emphasizes the positive side of the phenomenon. As Stone states (2012a: 94) '[...] Dark Tourism, which makes absent death present, is not so much presenting narratives of death, but about representing narratives of life and living in the face of inevitable mortality.'

⁹ 'In fact the commemoration of the anniversary of the beginning of the 1st War World in 2014 will probably increase the interest of the public on these sites and language and promotion will play a key role in the process'

¹⁰ The maximum *p value* was set at 0.01 and results were highly significant as the highest value obtained for *p* in the whole sample was equal to 6.839 E-11.

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