



**Title: Speaking to the World: An Audit of Multilingual Visitor
Communication across the Andalusian ‘Route of the White Villages**

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Submission Date: 11-July-2025

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Abstract

The subject of this audit is multilingual communication strategies engaged in by 14 municipalities in the provinces of Cdiz and Mlaga that form the marketing destination "Route of the White Villages", as a cultural landscape attraction. The strategically oriented analysis of digital channels, on-site signage, and materials used in tours by tour-guides reveal a set of significant gaps in intercultural business communication which may hurt the competitive positioning of the destination on international tourism markets. The main insights show that there is inconsistent brand messaging, poor quality of translation, uneven cultural sensitivity in content delivery and poorly supported accessibility offers to the various demographics of visitors. The audit uses known concepts such as Hofstede cultural dimension theory, Destination Image Theory and Plain-Language regarding the effectiveness of communication. Suggestions are centralized style guide, introduction of intercultural copy-review workflows, and development of CRM-based content personalization systems. These strategic interventions would also seek to enrich visitor experience, build brand coherence and market penetration in the main source markets as well as express cultural competency and inclusivity.

Keywords: cross cultural communication, inbound tourism marketing, multilanguage tourism, cultural environment, consistency of brand.

1. Introduction

This is because the global tourism sector exists in multicultural contexts that are becoming ever intricate and communication forms a major component in the determination of destination competitiveness and customer satisfaction. The "Route of the White Villages" (Ruta de los Pueblos Blancos) in Spain is an example of cooperative marketing efforts that bring together 14 municipalities in the area of Cadiz and Mlaga provinces that present their unique cultural heritage to produce a single destination experience. This business communication audit survey looks into the multilingual communication plans used within this network particularly in its digital medium, physical signage system, and interpretive information that inscribes international visitor perceptions and experiences.

This audit has an operationally short-term application with strategic longer-term applications to destination management in a multicultural setting. With international tourism becoming more diverse than ever before, where vacationers and others travel in record numbers but bring with them more diverse cultural backgrounds as well as variations in the way they communicate, destinations must exhibit a high order of intercultural competence as a way of sustaining their competitive edge. Although the networking of the White Villages provides an unique local experience, the fragmentation of the network poses specific opportunities regarding the uniformity of brand messaging and in communication standards across different administrative borders and cultural settings.

The given analysis fills an important research gap in the study of intercultural business communication as it discusses collaboration in destination marketing campaigns and the challenges that the latter face in dealing with the multilingual nature of information delivery, cultural sensitivity, and accessibility concerns. The results of the audit become relevant by giving theoretical knowledge of the dynamics of intercultural communication in tourism and practical knowledge of how to manage destination management organizations with the aim of maximizing their international market marketings.

The study questions aim at measuring consistency of the messages throughout the network, determining quality of the translation and cultural relevance, studying the coverage of different visitor populations and their inclusivity, and finding areas of strategy-based communication strengthening. Based on the systematic implementation of proven intercultural communication strategies, this audit will give evidence-based suggestions on how to enhance the effectiveness of interaction with visitors as well as enhance the competitive position of the destination in international markets.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Intercultural Communication in Tourism Contexts

When it comes to intercultural business communications in the tourism setting, the advanced knowledge of the impact of cultural differences on message reception, creation of expectations,

and satisfaction levels is vital. Cultural dimensions theory offered by Hofstede reveals principles behind development of specific pattern of preferences in communication and rather pattern of interpreting cultures and styles based on power distance, individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity-femininity (Hofstede, 2001). These dimensions are vital in that they determine the nature of response of visitors with various cultural background in the context of tourism, and how such individuals perceive destination marketing promotions, interpretive messages, and service delivery strategies.

These dynamics can be illustrated by power distance differences between the Spanish and the Nordic cultures. The communication styles are usually higher power distances in Spanish language whereby there are hierarchical language styles that are mostly direct and indirect. Northern visitors, having encountered smaller power distances, can understand such a communication to be more traditionally formal or a barrier to a natural cultural exchange. This cultural misfit can be a source of invalidation of destination positioning undertakings and cause poor memories to the visitor regardless of good intentions.

Findings of a study by Dann (1996) on the language of tourism determine that the language of tourism creates the expectations of the visitors by employing linguistic features, cultural resonance and narrative structures in destination communications. The tourism discourse is quite unique and like any other discourse, it has to be effective on the one hand and on the other hand, this discourse also has to be authentic and culturally appropriate. This dual demand poses certain problems especially to multilingual destinations that desire to maintain local culture identity and at the same time maintain the highest level of the international market acceptance.

2.2 Destination Image Theory and Communication Effectiveness

Echtner and Ritchie (1991) Destination Image Theory offers invaluable ideas on the ways textual and visual messages influence or determine the visitation scenarios and change behavioral intentions towards visiting. The theory makes the differentiation between cognitive and affective image components, whereby the cognitive components comprise the factual information about the destination attributes, whereas the affective elements concern the emotional judgment and the cultural identifications. An effective intercultural communication has to deal with both of these

dimensions taking into consideration cultural differences in the processing and the patterns of information as well as emotional reactions.

Theoretical framework focuses on the creation of the mental pictures formed of destination communications by the visitors and how it shapes decision-making influences, expectation development, and satisfaction deliveries. In the case of collaborative destination networks such as the route on the White Villages, it becomes very difficult to present a continuous image in various communication process as well as amid the situation of diverse culture. Cognitive dissonance has the potential of destroying the ability of destination to compete effectively and to achieve visitor satisfaction as a result of inconsistent messaging.

A study conducted by Pike and Ryan (2004) on destination positioning illustrates the value and relevance of cultural congruence of message contents and cultural constructs of message recipients to determine the effectiveness of the message sent. Destinations have to struggle between being the real thing and be easy to approach, that cultural heritage portrayals are still relevant, internationally to a diverse audience and yet they retain their local cultural integrity. Intercultural communication competence is demanding and cutting-edge, and faculty members should be systematically orientated towards cultural adaptation strategies in order to strike this balance.

2.3 Plain-Language Principles and Business English Standards

The concepts of plain-language offer critical parameters to design simple, efficient communications that cut across cultures and languages. The standards developed by the Plain Writing Act of 2010, balanced on clarity, concreteness, and reader-oriented design have been prevalent in the international business environments. The principles are of extreme importance when applied to tourism communications given the effects of time pressures upon the visitors working in ambiguous cultural settings.

The standards of Business English applied to the international settings refer to the quality of construction of the active voice, creating coherent paragraphs, and using culturally neutral words. A study completed by Williams (2007) illustrates the importance of following these standards to increase the understanding rate of a non-native English speaker as well as minimizing cases of cultural misunderstanding. Multilingual tourist spots should adopt a highly standardized system of

business English in all means of communication to smoothen out the experience of visitors and to communicate professional aptitude.

The combination of plain-language principles and the theory of intercultural communication brings about frameworks in the development of culturally informative and accessible material that would cater to the different demographics of visitors. The method needs to deal with a vocabulary choice, sentence-building pattern, cultural allusion as well as graphic design features that can endorse cross-cultural understanding in a distinctive order.

2.4 Accessibility and Inclusive Communication Design

The modern approach to intercultural communication highlights accessibility and inclusive design as the aspects that embrace the wide range of visitor profiles and abilities. Technical standards of digital accessibility, such as Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1, can cover all the aspects of digital accessibility, but cultural accessibility needs consideration of cultural competence, linguistic diversity, and socioeconomic inclusion.

A study by Darcy and Dickson (2009) on accessible tourism states the way the communication becomes accessible in terms of communication accommodation beyond disability is to include cultural accessibility, linguistic accessibility and socioeconomic accessibility. Cultural competence can be achieved through destinations with fully deployed accessibility strategies that increase the attainable scope of the market and positively influence the results of visitor satisfaction.

Created by Inclusion Europe, the theory of Easy-to-Read as a method of communication includes the steps toward creating content that meets the needs of visitors with cognitive disabilities, learning differences, and limited language skills. Such strategies follow greatly the principles of intercultural communication along with practical accessibility standards in the interest of all visitor population groups.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Design Method

Mixed-methods approach represents the adoption of the combination of post-designed qualitative intercultural communication assessment with quantitative content analysis used in this audit. The research design is focused on the systematic review of the communication materials in various channels and cultural settings, but at the same time, attempting it to be focused on practical strategic implications with respect to destination management.

This framework of audit combines the existing intercultural communication theories and modern business forms of communications to come up with a detailed set of evaluation criteria. Such manner allows a systematic evaluation of communication performance alongside evidence-based recommendations on how improvement may be realized in this area strategically.

3.2 methods of data collection

The main communication media consist of 3 separate streams of communication, viz: digital (websites, social media, mobile apps), physical (QR- activated signage, interpretive panels, directional signs), and human (tour-guide scripts, visitor centers interactions, hospitality service protocols).

Digital platform analysis should involve the incorporation of systematic evaluation of formal municipal websites, shared marketing platforms, and third-party booking systems. In terms of the content, the analysis revolved around the consistency in messages, quality of translation, cultural sensitivity, and the provision of the accessibility. Technical assessment analysed mobile responsiveness, load times, and interface usability aspects.

Physical signage evaluation entailed documentary assessment of the multilingual signage structures, QR-code implementation and the quality of interpretive products directly on-site. The parameters of the evaluation were visibility, readability, cultural appropriateness and Accessibility compliance. With the use of GPS mapping, the distribution of signage patterns was recorded as well as coverage gaps.

Communication analysis by humans involved consideration of standard visiting tour-guide scripts, visitor center pattern and hospitality service instructions. Such points of focus were cultural competence, language proficiency, and adherence to larger destination messaging strategies.

3.3 Framework of Analyses

The analytical model draws on the theory of cultural dimensions due to Hofstede that identifies the compatibility of communication practices in relation to cultural expectations of the visitors. Power distance analysis focuses on corporateness level, hierarchical allusions and barriers of access. Individualism-collectivism assessment checks how commendable the content is in focusing more on the individual experiences or opportunities that arise in community interaction.

3.4 Limitations and Ethical Considerations

There are various methodological limitations that this audit appreciates have effects on findings interpretation. Limited on-site observation and consultations among stakeholders was hampered by time restriction. Language barrier could have interfered with the understanding of some Spanish language records and references to culture.

The ethical matters involve respect of local cultural issues, preventive inviolability of business information and recognition of resource limitations to smaller municipalities. The recommendations make sure to give emphasis on the sustainable implementation methods that do not ignore the local capabilities and cultural values.

4. Findings

4.1 Message Consistency Analysis

The audit shows great discrepancy in the deployment of brand messages in the 14 municipalities that make up Route of the White Villages network. Unlike the case with major companies like Nike, where individual product lines still use theme and visual identity elements as well as taglines that are still under the control and influence of Nike, the various municipalities have their own, unique and different taglines, visual identity elements, and narrative frameworks, which in turn

undermines the overall market recognition of the umbrella brand and positioning. Seven municipalities would position themselves along the line of a different version of the authentic Andalusian experience, four of them focus on historical heritage preservation, and three are occupied by the slogan about the natural landscape beauty.

This message fragmentation makes the brain struggle to know the single value offering as a visitor. The lack of standardized brand policies allows the municipalities to develop their marketing strategy which can be inconsistent with the goals of the network. In the German-language, there are specific and notable inconsistencies: four versions of the translation of the white villages have been found on individual municipal websites and in promotional materials.

Conducting a digital platform analysis has shown that there is discrepancy in the usage of the important concepts, and in one way or another, the concepts cultural landscape, historical route, and tourism circuit are used interchangeably. Such terminological differences compromise the search engine optimization and leaves international visitors in a stage of confusion on where to obtain full route details.

The same could be said about the content perceived by social media as its fragmentation is shown by different municipalities being separate and using various kinds of hashtags, visual design schemes, and engagement tactics. This will curtail the cross-promotional and minimize the overall marketing influence in the international markets.

4.2 Translation Quality and Cultural Appropriateness

Quality analysis of translation shows that there are systematic misconducts in literal methods of translation that do not recognize cultural communication preferences and language conventions. The English language texts often use word-to-word Spanish to English translations which invite clumsy use of words, poor communication, and cultural mishaps.

The most common translation mistakes are: direct translation of the Spanish idiom that do not exist in English language, incorrect use of the formal register when the informal tone is more feasible, and direct translation of the cultural terms that need explanatory background to be understood by international audiences. The same issues with the German-language materials are observed, where the use of terms that describe the region and historical allusions is especially problematic.

The issue of cultural sensitivity as applied to the regional minorities heritage, specifically the Roma cultural heritage and the Islamic historic influence, is inconsistent in the presentations of history. Some cities offer full cultural background and some limit or avoid these aspects all together. Such inconsistency poses a risk to the reputation and does not use cultural diversity of the destination as an advantage competitively.

Technical issues of translation involve conversions of measurement units, unsaid directions, opening hours, contact details, and translation into visitor needs of other states. These realistic translation failures have a direct effect in the quality and satisfaction results of visitor experiences.

4.3 Accessibility and Inclusive Design Scorecard

Accessibility review shows the existence of substantial coverage lapses concerning different visitor groups and abilities. Online platforms lack adherence to WCAG 2.1 web accessibility requirements, and especially the alternative text of images, compatibility with keyboard navigation, and screen reader optimization.

The possibility of making provision of easy-to-read content in all municipalities does not exist, which interposes the accessibility of visitors with cognitive limits, learning differences, and low levels of language proficiency. This gap is a large potential in the market, as well as a poor performance in terms of cultural competence with regard to visitor diversity.

The physical signage systems have irregular access provisions where certain cities have Braille alternatives whereas others have no form of tactile accessibility provisions.

4.4 Cultural Competence and Sensitivity Analysis

The Cultural competence evaluation shows that the principles of intercultural communication are not paid an equal amount of attention throughout the network. While others exercise little cultural sensitivity practices, some of these municipalities display high levels of astuteness concerning their cultural adaptation needs.

The issue of power distance is mixed as some sources use formal Spanish norms of communication that would be off-putting to Nordic guests who value a more equalized form of communicating. On the other hand, there are towns that are so casual in their communication which might not appear right to a tourist of high-contextual culture.

Different levels of cultural referencing explanations exist, some municipalities shall supply vast levels of cultural background, others shall rely on the visitor knowledge level about the background and history of local habits. Such lack of consistency creates unequal quality of the visitor experience and can lead to cultural misconceptions.

Sensitivity on religious and cultural presentation of historical presentations is also found to vary with certain municipalities offering balanced historical presentation whilst in others some elements of culture are given emphasis over the other. This discrepancy causes a possible risk of disappointing the visitors and reputational risks in different cultural markets.

5. Discussion

5.1 Strategic Implications of Communication Fragmentation

The chain of communication fragmentation formalised in the Route of the White Villages network is a strategic threat that compromises collaboration-related higher marketing performance, and the quality of the visitor experience. In an intercultural business communication approach, there exist several issues of this fragmentation that work at varying levels to diminish the level of competitive positioning of the destination in the global markets.

There is no coherent brand message and as such, the network cannot enjoy economies of scale in its international marketing endeavours. Small municipalities do not have funds to perform such large scale international marketing, and their segregated strategies fail to enable them to combine their resources and perform joint marketing programs. This turns out to be a classic coordination game in which self-interested rational choices lead to poor collectively rational consequences.

The culture dimensions theory by Hofstede gives information about the nature of the impact of this fragmentation on various groups of visitors. Nordic customers expect a certain systematization in the organization of information and information flow and in case of chaos in messages and the structure of routes, they may be irritated. Visitors from the Mediterranean region might be more tolerant to communication differences yet would benefit more disciplined organizational structure and uniform quality.

Communication channel and approach proliferation impose cognitive load to visitors who want to plan end-to-end routes experiences. Fragmentation of information adds complexity in decision-making whereas lowering the confidence in planning travel. This has a special effect to the independent travelers that are an important and expanding cultural tourism destination market segment.

5.2 Translation Quality and Cultural Adaptation Challenges

The identified systematic quality issues to translations on the network point to general intercultural communication frontier issues affecting tourism destinations. Literal way of translation fails to capture the cultural ease of communication, language norms and contextual expectations, which influence how messages are received and used.

The translation issues that have been identified have numerous adverse effects which are outside immediate understanding. Poorly written phrases with ambiguous meanings create unprofessional impressions of images that undermines confidence of visitors in quality of destination and the standards of the services offered. These perception effects not only have a short-term impact on visitor satisfaction, but also have a longer term impact on word-of-mouth promotion and social media reviewing that have an impact on destination reputation.

The issue of cultural adaptation goes beyond linguistic translation to deal with explanations of cultural reference (not to be translated), presentational of historical narratives, and management of expectations in the provision of services. International visitors have variously varying needs of cultural context and explanation information related to various cultural background, the levels of education and prior travel experience. The present-day one-size-fits-all solution cannot maximize the effectiveness of communication to various visitor types.

The biased approach to the regional minority heritage, especially the influence of the Roma culture and Islamic history, is yet an untapped resource as well as a possible PR hazard. Historical complexity and cultural diversity can only be an effective competitive advantage in the global cultural tourism markets when performed with proper cultural sensitivity and substantial context.

5.3 Implications of Accessibility and Market Penetration

The reported inaccessibility disparities translate to serious lost chances to reach out to more clients and boost patron experience. There are no Easy-to-Read measures and digital accessibility levels are insufficiently met, which leaves behind a large percentage of the visitors and cultural competence is not high where diversity is concerned.

Modern tourism markets focus more on the principles of inclusive design that supports luxury features of tourism facilities, different abilities of visitors, and their technological access levels. The destinations that are actively taking care of the access needs enjoy the competitive advantages and increase their market reach. The existing gap in accessibility reduces the applicability of the network to emerging market segments such as ageing travelers, and those with different needs towards a family, as well as visitors with differences in their level of technology.

The uneven step-up to multilanguage adds a hindrance to major source markets, besides curbing international expansion potential of the network. Andalusian cultural tourism has large potential in French, Italian, and Portuguese markets, which, however, are currently not adequately addressed, and this decreases marketing efficiency and product quality of the visitor experience.

The presence of digital accessibility gaps is particularly threatening taking into consideration the fact that not only it is tourism that is gradually moving towards mobile technology as the key to information searching, booking sources, and way-finding. In case visitors are not able to properly use digital resources, they may face serious challenges in route navigation and getting the help of the necessary services.

5.4 Applications of the Theory and Insights

The cultural dimensions theory developed by Hofstede can be applied in finding out how communication strategies tailored to meet the needs of tourists using the Spanish cultures can pose a challenge to other tourists with diverse cultures. Power distance discrepancies that have been noted between Spanish communication norms and Nordic visitor expectations can represent greater issues of intercultural tourism communication.

The applications of Destination Image Theory reveal the presence of a type of inconsistency in the messages that cause the occurrence of cognitive dissonance, thus rendering the effectiveness of

destination positioning ineffective. The discrete strategy will not help the network in developing coherent projections of destination images regulated to accommodate strategic marketing goals and visitor satisfaction outcomes.

Applicability of plain-language principles shows a direct association between the effectiveness of visitor experience and quality of technical communication. The recognized issues in sentence structure, choice of words and culture

6. Conclusion

As a set of findings of an intercultural business communication audit conducted within the Route of the White Villages network, the potential of strategic enhancement is very high in terms of improving the quality of visitor experience, anchoring the brand, and increasing international market penetration. The outlined issues of message consistency, quality aspects of translation, cultural suitability, and accessibility provisions, overall, diminish the competitive potential of the destination whilst building obstacles to different visitor audiences.

The findings of the audit show that the problems of intercultural communication in collaboration in tourism networks make it necessary to implement systematic, coherent solutions that ensure not only the independence of local actors but also the common strategic goals. Its sprawling nature currently in place does not enable the network to reach its potential in an optimal way as it produces suboptimal results both regarding the visitors and municipalities involved in the network.

The use of the identified intercultural communication theories offers evidence-based modeling of the difficulties in adopting strategic interventions that do not interfere with local cultural values but are adequate in maximizing the effectiveness of international markets. Appropriate solutions identified are in favor of a sustainable implementation process that ensures the local capacity is kept intact as they meet group strategic goals.

The sequential effects are not limited to the immediate operational gains, but they also address wider issues concerning the collaborative destination management in the international tourism markets that are ever becoming more diverse. The recommendations that come as a result of the

audit offer concrete frameworks that could be used to combat them as they continue to shed theoretical insights on the dynamics of intercultural communication in the context of tourism.

The potential areas of the further research are the longitudinal evaluations of the implementation performance, the comparisons of other similar tourism-based collaboration networks, and the designing of the uniform assessment criteria concerning the efficiency of intercultural communication in the context of tourism relationships. Such research directions might help not only advancing the theory but also the development of the practice in destination management.

As the audit shows, adequate intercultural communication in the business related to the tourism sphere depends on highly-developed cultural differences knowledge, systematic accessibility consideration, and the synchronized management of times when the local authenticity and the international accessibility have to be reconciled. The Route of the White Villages network has huge potential of international success in the market but to achieve that potential, there needs to be some improvement in the way they communication.

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