



## Marketing Language in Tourism Discourse: Corpus Based Study on Personal Pronoun “You”

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### ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the use of the personal pronoun "you" in tourism discourse through a corpus-based study of the Lonely Planet website. As a central element in engaging readers, the pronoun "you" serves to directly address and involve the audience, making the discourse more interactive and persuasive. By analyzing a comprehensive corpus of travel-related texts, this study examines how "you" is strategically utilized to create a personalized experience, guide the reader's journey, and establish a conversational tone in tourism content. The research uncovers patterns in the usage of "you" across various contexts and topics within the website, providing insights into its role in shaping audience perception and enhancing the effectiveness of tourism marketing. This study contributes to a better understanding of linguistic strategies in digital tourism discourse, offering valuable implications for both researchers and professionals in the tourism industry.

**Keyword:** Tourism Discourse, Corpus-Based Study, Lonely Planet

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### ABSTRAK

Tulisan ini menyelidiki penggunaan kata pronomina “you” dalam wacana pariwisata melalui kajian berbasis korpus pada website Lonely Planet. Sebagai elemen sentral dalam menarik pembaca, pronomina “you” berfungsi untuk menyapa dan melibatkan audiens secara langsung, menjadikan wacana pariwisata lebih interaktif dan persuasif. Dengan menganalisis kumpulan teks terkait perjalanan yang komprehensif, penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana pronomina "you" digunakan secara strategis untuk menciptakan pengalaman individual, memandu perjalanan pembaca, dan membangun nada percakapan dalam teks pariwisata. Penelitian ini mengungkap pola penggunaan kata “you” di berbagai konteks dan topik dalam situs web, memberikan wawasan tentang perannya dalam membentuk persepsi audiens dan meningkatkan efektivitas pemasaran pariwisata. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang strategi linguistik dalam wacana pariwisata digital, memberikan masukan bagi para peneliti dan praktisi di industri pariwisata.

**Keyword:** Tourism Discourse, Corpus-Based Study, Lonely Planet



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## 1. Introduction

One effective way to manage tourism, one of the industries that boosts the country's economy, is to combine all of its components into one cohesive whole. This includes utilizing language to draw in potential travellers (Suhami & Afdal, 2023). According to Topler, (2018), language plays a significant role in the tourist business as a medium of cognition, communication, and connotation. Language is also crucial to the branding of specific tourism locations. Furthermore, he contends that language choices are thought to have a key role in the discourse around tourism, important. Appealing language and technology choices made in tourism promotion both contribute to travellers' desire to travel and explore new places and their search for the perfect tourist location (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2008). This indicates that not only technology such as the use of website but also the language plays pivotal role in marketing a tourism destination.

Tourism discourse is a unique form of communication that seeks to attract and engage potential travellers by evoking emotions, fostering curiosity, and creating vivid imagery of destinations. In this context, language plays a crucial role in shaping the perceptions and experiences of readers. According to Dann (1996:35), the language used in tourism also possesses the following traits: tautology, exhilaration, monologue, and lack of sender identity. People are encouraged to make decisions about their vacation destinations by participating in tourism marketing (Salim, M.A.B., Ibrahim, N.A., Hassa, H., 2012). Additionally, promotion enables a location to stand out from the crowd and develop a unique character.

In the tourism industry, verbal techniques for websites are crucial (Zakharova, 2021). They assist in describing a reality that gives visitors the impression that they are actually having a "off-the-beaten-track" vacation (Maci, 2013:21). Among other linguistic elements, personal pronouns are particularly important in tourism discourse as they directly address the audience and establish a relationship between the writer and the reader. This connection is vital in creating a sense of involvement and personalization, which are key to successful tourism marketing. Due to its unique lexical, syntactic, pragmatic, and semantic traits, tourism holds a unique place in specialized discourse (Gotti 2006, 19).

Websites can assist travelers with visualizing their trip and with the planning and anticipation phase (Jack and Phipps 2005). Specifically, the images and material on websites have the power to mold travelers' expectations and establish a destination's brand that appeals to potential visitors and is representative of the place itself (Hallet and Kaplan-Weinger 2010). According to Hallet and Kaplan-Weinger (2010), the text promoting the destination is actually created by the interaction between the web user, the web text, and the website creator. In order to draw people in and guide their "gaze" (Urry and Larsen 2011), tourism discourse employs a combination of textual and visual features to entice people to act and purchase tourism-related goods (Suau-Jiménez, 2016). Persuasion at its best is embodied in the business goal of reaching as many potential tourists as possible and converting them into actual consumers (Sulaiman and Wilson 2019; Calvi 2016; Manca 2016).

Therefore, the main purpose of tourism discourse is persuasion, which is demonstrated by the way it employs a variety of language techniques, including the usage of personal pronoun (you). Direct marketers are encouraged to use the word "you" when communicating with customers to generate a sense of engagement (Hanc 2016). In tourist texts, personal pronouns take on a unique role since they are employed in ego-targeting—also referred to as interpellation or hailing—which aims to appeal to the customer's ego. In fact, a potential tourist feels singled out and is more likely to become one if they acknowledge that they are being addressed directly. One of the most efficient methods used to generate a successfully persuasive text is the creation of a personal relationship between the actors in the communicative event (Cogno and Dall'Ara 1994: 228). In this way, agreement is more easily obtained: the recipient is drawn into the text and empathy is established, generating identification and loyalty.

The element of "you" in tourism texts is a powerful tool for personalization, engagement, and persuasion, helping to create a compelling narrative that encourages potential tourists to envision themselves in the destination and take action. The personal pronoun "you" is especially prominent in tourism discourse. Its usage goes beyond simple grammatical function and serves as a powerful rhetorical tool that can influence the reader's engagement with the text. By addressing the reader directly, "you" can create a conversational tone, making the content feel more intimate and relatable. In tourism content, this approach can be effective in guiding readers through imagined experiences, encouraging them to envision themselves in the described destinations and activities. The pronoun "you" personalizes the reader's journey, transforming them from passive observers into active participants in the narrative.

Despite its widespread use in tourism texts, the strategic deployment of the personal pronoun "you" has received limited scholarly attention. Existing research on tourism discourse has often focused on broader

linguistic features, such as descriptive language and metaphors, adjectives (Edo-Marzá 2012), verbs, nouns (Manca 2016), and modality markers (Suau-Jiménez 2012) while overlooking the specific role of personal pronouns. This study aims to fill this gap by conducting a corpus-based analysis of the Lonely Planet website, a leading travel guide and content platform. By analyzing the use of "you" in this digital tourism discourse, the study seeks to uncover the ways in which the pronoun is employed to engage readers and enhance the effectiveness of tourism marketing.

The Lonely Planet website provides an ideal corpus for this analysis due to its extensive and diverse collection of travel-related texts. As a widely trusted source of travel advice and inspiration, Lonely Planet appeals to a broad audience of travelers, making it a rich site for examining how "you" is used to address and engage a global readership. This paper analyzes the frequency, distribution, and contextual use of "you" in across different types of content, such as destination guides, travel tips, and feature articles, to reveal patterns and strategies in its application. This study contributes to the understanding of linguistic strategies in tourism discourse, particularly in the digital realm. The findings have implications for both academic research and practical applications in tourism marketing, offering insights into how language can be used to create more effective and engaging communication with prospective travelers.

## 2. Method

The present study employed descriptive qualitative design with corpus method. Corpus linguistics is a rapidly growing methodology that uses the statistical analysis of large collections of written or spoken data (corpora) to investigate linguistic phenomena. It can be regarded as primarily a methodological approach; it is empirical, analyzing the actual patterns of use in natural texts. It utilizes a large and principled collection of natural texts, known as a corpus, as the basis for analysis. (Biber et al., 2012). The data of this study were the personal nouns "you". The source of the data was the website lonelyplanet.com, specifically on the menu of "Asia", "Countries", "Best Places to Visit". There are eleven countries listed on that particular menu. The reason for choosing the eleven countries on that website as we purposely aimed to limit the data based on destinations per country category and thus excluded regions and cities categories. Each website of those countries has different number of words and personal pronouns "you" as illustrated on table 1 below. The data were collected through the shortcut of Ctrl+F on each website in order to gather the personal pronoun "you" and limit to you as either subject pronoun or object pronouns. Data were analysed using Content Analysis (CA). CA is a research tool used to find specific words, themes, or concepts in a given set of qualitative data, or text. Researchers can measure and examine the occurrence, significance, and connections of particular words, topics, or concepts by using content analysis. (*Content Analysis*, n.d.).

## 3. Findings

The following table compiles all personal pronouns "you" on lonelyplanet website, under the feature of "Destinations", "Asia", "Countries", and "Best Places to Visit". We purposely selected the feature "Best Places to Visit" because it contains suggestions to prospective tourists of which places to visit and see.

Table 1. Data of Personal Pronouns "You"

Countries	Website Link	Words Volume	Frequency of "You" personal pronoun
Cambodia	<a href="https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-cambodia">https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-cambodia</a>	1483	7
India	<a href="https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-india">https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-india</a>	2845	19
Japan	<a href="https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-japan">https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-japan</a>	1259	10
Nepal	<a href="https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-nepal">https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-nepal</a>	1415	14
Philippines	<i>No article on best places to visit</i>	-	-
Singapore	<a href="https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-singapore">https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-singapore</a>	2400	21

South Korea	<a href="https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-south-korea">https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-south-korea</a>	1155	8
Sri Lanka	<a href="https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-sri-lanka">https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-sri-lanka</a>	2371	25
Taiwan	<a href="https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-taiwan">https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-taiwan</a>	1259	9
Thailand	<a href="https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-thailand">https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-thailand</a>	1877	14
Vietnam	<a href="https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-vietnam">https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/best-places-to-visit-in-vietnam</a>	1659	20

Based on the above table, website with higher frequencies of "you" (such as the ones for Sri Lanka, Singapore and Vietnam) tend to adopt a more direct and engaging tone, addressing the reader personally. This can make the content more compelling and persuasive by creating a sense of personal connection, encouraging readers to imagine themselves in the described scenarios. These articles may aim to create a more immersive experience, using "you" to speak directly to the reader and foster a sense of involvement. The use of "you" might also be influenced by the cultural and tourism context of each destination. For instance, articles about countries that are positioned as adventure or experience-based destinations (like Nepal **and** Sri Lanka) use "you" more frequently to engage readers actively and encourage them to visualize themselves participating in activities. In contrast, articles about countries where the appeal might be more about cultural heritage or relaxation (like Cambodia **or** Japan) may use "you" less frequently, relying more on descriptive language that sets the scene rather than directly involving the reader.

Below is a sentence example from Cambodia website.

*“Charming Kampot town offers a wide range of backpacker hostels, riverside resorts and boutique hotels where **you can base** yourself while **you take in** the French architectural legacy, explore the pretty river by paddleboard or kayak, or venture into the bucolic countryside on two wheels.”.*

The phrase "where you can base yourself" positions the reader as an active participant, suggesting that Kampot is a place where they can comfortably settle in and explore at their own pace. This personalization makes the travel experience feel more tailored and inviting. By including "you" in these activities, it makes these experiences more tangible and appealing, encouraging the reader to envision themselves enjoying these specific aspects of Kampot. Using "you" in the context of exploring different activities reinforces the idea that the reader is in control of their travel experience, making the destination feel more accessible and customizable. It suggests that Kampot offers diverse experiences suited to various interests, encouraging the reader to consider it as a potential travel destination. Another example from Cambodia website can be seen below:

*“Add thunderous waterfalls and a jungle zipline to the mix, and **you have the perfect** ingredients for an ecotourism adventure.”*

The phrase "you have the perfect ingredients" helps the reader visualize a complete and appealing adventure. It turns abstract concepts like "thunderous waterfalls" and a "jungle zipline" into concrete, exciting experiences that the reader can picture themselves enjoying. Using "you" makes the reader feel as though they are being personally invited to experience the adventure. It shifts the focus from a general description to a more personalized suggestion, making the travel experience seem tailored and accessible to the reader.

Below is a sentence example from India website:

*“Wherever you go, **you’re guaranteed** a mind-expanding and exhilarating blast of color, soul-soaring splendor, earth-shaking history and moments of pure serenity.”*

By using "you're guaranteed," the sentence assures the reader that these experiences are not just possibilities but certainties. This guarantees that wherever they travel, they will encounter a vibrant mix of sensory and emotional experiences, which helps them visualize the destination more vividly. By using "you,"

it suggests that the reader will personally experience this comprehensive adventure, making the destination seem like a well-rounded and fulfilling choice. Another sentence example from India website is given below:

*“Spend a few days exploring the energetic bazaars, cultured museums and British-era landmarks, and **you’ll soon fall in love** with Kolkata’s irrepressible energy.”*

By using "you," the sentence directly involves the reader, making them feel personally connected to the exploration of Kolkata. This direct address helps the reader imagine themselves experiencing the city, making the destination feel more accessible and relevant. The invitation to "spend a few days exploring" suggests that immersing oneself in the city’s vibrant bazaars, museums, and historic landmarks will lead to a deeper appreciation of its character. The promise that "you’ll soon fall in love with Kolkata’s irrepressible energy" personalizes the outcome, making it seem like a natural result of their visit. This personalized promise of an emotional connection to the city adds an enticing element, encouraging the reader to see the city as a place where they can form a strong, positive attachment.

Whereas below is a sentence example from Sri Lanka website:

*“If **you struggle with** the heat, it’s worth knowing that first-class cabins are air-conditioned and second-class cabins usually have fans.”*

The pronoun "you" personalizes the information, making it clear that the statement is tailored to the reader’s specific needs or preferences. By acknowledging "you struggle with the heat," the sentence empathizes with the reader’s potential discomfort, which helps build trust and shows that their comfort is a priority. This personalized approach makes the information more relevant and reassuring. Additionally, by providing details about the air-conditioned first-class cabins and the fans in second-class cabins, the sentence offers practical solutions to a common travel concern. This direct address ensures that the reader feels considered and informed, which can enhance their confidence in making travel decisions.

Below is a sentence example from Taiwan website:

*“Just a 30-minute train ride away from the center of the capital, **you can luxuriate** in geothermal heat-fueled hot springs. Veiled in the sulfur mist, you’ll find hotels outfitted with bathtubs gushing hot water, public baths and a springs-obsessed culture.”*

The phrase "you can luxuriate" suggests that this opportunity for relaxation and indulgence is tailored specifically for the reader, making the experience feel more accessible and desirable. Additionally, using "you’ll find" helps the reader visualize the amenities and atmosphere of the destination, such as the hotels with bathtubs gushing hot water and the springs-obsessed culture. This personal address makes the description more vivid and relatable, allowing the reader to more easily picture themselves in this setting. Another sentence example from Taiwan website is given below:

*“**You can also pop** 10 minutes south to Dulan to visit the Amis tribal village and Xindong Sugar Factory.”*

The phrase "you can also pop" functions as a gentle suggestion or invitation, encouraging the reader to take action. It frames the activity as an additional, easy option rather than a major endeavor, making it more likely that the reader will think, "Why not?" and decide to explore the area. This phrasing uses "you" to directly involve the reader in the narrative, subtly encouraging them to take part in the experience.

Below is a sentence example from Thailand website:

*“If a drink is what **you’re after**, you will not go thirsty – spring for Q&A Bar’s Pinkish, a twist on the Negroni with rhubarb and grapefruit gin.....”.*

Using "you" encourages the reader to imagine themselves in the scenario. It helps them visualize being at the Q&A Bar and enjoying the drink described, making the experience more vivid and memorable. Moreover, "you" creates a sense of exclusivity, implying that the reader’s preferences are understood and

catered to. It suggests that the experience will be just right for them, making the offer feel more appealing and customized. By using "you," the text builds anticipation and curiosity. The reader becomes more interested in the drink because it feels like a recommendation made just for them, increasing the likelihood that they will seek more information or visit the bar. Another sentence example from Thailand website is given below:

*"Here is where you will find Thailand's most famous floating markets, including Damnoen Saduak (at its busiest in the early morning)...."*

By saying "you will find," the text encourages the reader to visualize themselves exploring Thailand's floating markets. This usage helps the reader imagine the experience more vividly, seeing themselves navigating the bustling markets early in the morning. This technique enhances the reader's ability to picture the scene, which can be more persuasive in enticing them to visit. The phrase "you will find" acts as an invitation, subtly encouraging the reader to participate in the experience by visiting the floating markets. It suggests that this is something they can and should do, promoting a sense of adventure and exploration. The use of "you" here is less about commanding action and more about creating an inclusive, welcoming tone that draws the reader in.

Below is a sentence example from Vietnam website:

*"About as far south as **you can get** from Hanoi without splashing into the Gulf of Thailand, the island of Phu Quoc is where beach worshippers come to pray"*

By addressing the reader directly with "you," the sentence invites them to imagine themselves on an adventure to Phu Quoc, positioning them at the edge of Vietnam's southernmost tip. The use of "you" makes the experience feel more immediate and tangible, encouraging the reader to visualize the journey from Hanoi to Phu Quoc, almost as if they're on the verge of stepping into the Gulf of Thailand. Another sentence example from Vietnam website is given below:

*"**You'll want** to take plenty of photos on the winding mountain road".*

The sentence speaks directly to the reader, encouraging them to imagine themselves on the winding mountain road, surrounded by picturesque scenery. This creates an emotional connection, making the reader feel that the experience is relevant and tailored specifically for them. The phrase "you'll want to" subtly suggests that taking photos isn't just an option but a natural response to the beauty of the landscape, implying that the scenery is so breathtaking that it will inspire anyone to capture the moment. This personalized approach makes the reader feel like the experience is already theirs, heightening their anticipation and excitement. By placing "you" in the middle of the action, the sentence effectively motivates the reader to see the journey as a must-do, making the winding mountain road feel like an essential part of their travel itinerary, and the act of taking photos a memorable part of that experience.

In the meantime, below is a sentence example from Philippines website:

*"so **you'll get fabulous** discounts on accommodation".*

The phrase "you'll get" adds a sense of certainty and assurance, making the reader feel confident that these discounts are within their reach. This personalized approach motivates the reader to feel more excited and optimistic about their travel plans, as it presents an opportunity to save money while still enjoying a high-quality experience. By making the reader the focus of the statement, "you" turns the sentence into an invitation to take advantage of this unique benefit, making it feel like a reward they deserve. This direct engagement helps to create a stronger connection between the reader and the travel opportunity, encouraging them to act on it. Another sentence example from Philippines website is given below:

*"If **you time it right** and tourist crowds are thinner".*

The phrase "if you time it right" gives the reader a sense of control and empowerment, suggesting that they have the ability to create a better travel experience through careful planning. It subtly hints at insider knowledge, making the reader feel like they are receiving valuable advice that can enhance their trip. y

personalizing the message with "you," the sentence encourages the reader to imagine themselves in a more serene and exclusive setting, making the experience feel more desirable and special. This approach turns general travel advice into a targeted suggestion, increasing the reader's connection to the idea and motivating them to plan their trip accordingly for a more rewarding experience.

Meanwhile, below is sentence example from South Korea website:

*"It is the country's Confucian culture capital, where **you'll find** traditional wooden masks and soju, the Korean national drink".*

The sentence draws the reader into the experience, making them feel like the destination is directly accessible to them. The phrase "you'll find" invites the reader to imagine themselves actively discovering the cultural treasures of the Confucian capital. This makes the experience feel more immediate and personal, as though they are about to embark on a journey filled with authentic cultural experiences. By involving "you" in the sentence, the reader is made to feel like a traveler who will soon immerse themselves in the richness of Korea's Confucian heritage, making the destination more appealing and desirable. Another sentence example from South Korea website is given below:

*"Every fall at the Andong Maskdance Festival, **you can see** them in action in play performances".*

The sentence creates a sense of direct involvement, inviting them to imagine themselves attending the Andong Maskdance Festival. The phrase "you can see them in action" personalizes the experience, making it feel as if the reader is being given a unique opportunity to witness the cultural performances firsthand.

#### 4. Conclusions

The present research conforms with the findings of Nerea et al. (2013) in which the pronoun 'you' is one the most frequent words appeared on tourism website and has the goal to make the tourist who is reading the text feel as if he or she is the only person to which the message is addressed. From a marketing perspective, using "you" frequently can be a deliberate strategy to make the reader feel more involved and personally addressed. This strategy can be particularly effective in encouraging potential tourists to consider a destination by making them feel like the content is speaking directly to them. Articles that use "you" more often may aim to create a more conversational and approachable tone, which can help build a stronger connection with the reader and potentially increase their interest in visiting the destination.

Since the present research was limited to certain features of the website, future research is recommended to delve into the frequency, distribution, and contextual use of "you" in across different types of content, such as destination guides, travel tips, and feature articles, to reveal patterns and strategies in its application.

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