Abstract: Communication practices which are a part of the contemporary media-culture are intrinsically tied to the processes of (re)creating collective identities. One of the possible strategies in the frame of the mediated communication practice is to connect traditional elements of cultural memory with new ones, which are declared as preferable and acceptable. In that way the collective identity remains, on the one hand, “homogeneous”, offering stability to the members of communication community, on the other hand, it is subject to change and dynamics, always “ready” to be reshaped in order to achieve wider acceptance. The tourism media products, especially tourism promotion videos, are the best examples for this mediated communication practice. The visual images, combined with text messages, i.e. slogans, are not only some of the most important narrative mechanisms in the presentation of certain tourist destination, they are also the key elements of the mediated collective cultural memory and identity of the respective country presented in the tourism promotion videos.

The main goal of this article is to examine the representation and composition forms of some of the tourism promotion videos both from the Balkan countries as well as from other regions worldwide related especially to the elements of the cultural memory in order to define culture-specific and cross-cultural strategies relevant to the creation of the collective identity. The analysis is based on the Critical Discourse Analysis, respectively the analytical framework of the “Grammar of Visual Design” by Kress/van Leeuwen.

Keywords: communication, cultural memory in past, present and future, narrative and conceptual structures of representation, national identity, tourism promotional videos

I. COMMUNICATION AND CULTURAL MEMORY

The most prominent scholar on the theoretical framework of cultural memory, Jan Assmann, defined cultural memory as a “body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose ‘cultivation’ serves to stabilize and convey that society’s self-image. Upon such collective knowledge,
for the most part (but not exclusively) of the past, each group bases its awareness of unity and particularity. (Assmann, Czaplicka 1995: 132) Cultural memory is generated from what Assmann calls *objectivized culture* (Ebd. : 128), which can ensure group identity exclusively through the communication. (Ebd. : 131; Anderson, 2003) As many scholars in the field of communication studies have pointed out, the processes of (re)creating collective identities, especially in the postmodern era, are based primarily on mediated communication, that is, within institutionalized sign transfer between the producers and the recipients. (Tomić, 2008) The axiom of the increased power of representation posed by the scholars within the critical discourse studies underlines this view, both in theoretical observations as in empirical analysis. This especially applies on tourism media products, i.e. tourism promotion videos which gradually replace the traditional genre of tourism marketing, namely the advertisement in a newspaper. (Thurlow, Aiello, 2007 : 308) Although the most prominent approaches dealing with the connection between media and tourism focus primarily on tourism media products from the point of view of their economic benefits and impacts, (Kavaratzis 2005; Papadopoulos 2004) it has to be taken into account, as some authors noticed, that “consuming tourism media products is a part of our overall mediated cultural experience; the images, sounds, and spectacles in tourism media help produce the fabric of everyday life, shaping political views and social behaviours, and providing the materials out of which people forge their identities.” (Yan, 2010 : 3) In this way communication forms and contents of tourism media products become reusable texts which carry elements of cultural memory carefully chosen and disseminated by institutionalized sign producers in order to stress highly symbolic value of the particular culture. Furthermore the nexus between tourism and culture employed in the tourism media products is the semiotics of tourism as cultural practice. This is the very theoretical frame within which tourism media products are to be discussed in this article.

In the very early stage of the studies of tourism a semiotic character of tourism has been pointed out. (MacCannel 1999; Thurlow, Aiello, 2007 : 309) The empirical studies of the historical development of tourism in respective country such as, for example, the history of tourism in the socialist Yugoslavia (Granditz, Taylor, 2010) or the analysis of particular tourism genres such as postcards or inflight magazines (Thurlow, Aiello, 2007) endorse semiotic and representational functions of tourism. Tourism as ”semiotic industry” is according to Thurlow and Jaworski “committed to production, commodification and representation of culture and cultural difference”. (Thurlow, Jaworski, 2010 : 227) Even when it is used to generate revenues, tourism is never exclusively and primarily an economic activity, as a study of the politics of tourism in the Arab world from 2008 by Hazbun shows. (Hazbun, 2008 : XXXII) Hazbun analysed tourism strategies in Tunisia, Jordan and Dubai and showed conclusively that tourism development in these countries followed the political view that beaches, deserts, biblical locales and architectural ruins can be used as an instrument to produce new sources of wealth. By ”wealth” he doesn’t mean direct economic benefits but more importantly symbolic capital: tourism in the Arab world has been increasingly seen as a national development strategy because it allows them to promote economic reterritorialization, that is to straighten national economy, politics and finally identity with-
in global market despite globally more negative image of the Arab, i.e. Muslim world. (Ebd.) High symbolic value of tourism treasures great political and cultural possibilities, in one word, great ideological potentials, which are mostly being deployed by the bearers of state and tourism policy. Tourism visual practices are suited for achieving particular ideological goals because they can build up emotional connection between residents and visitors, on the one, and express a specific national identity, different from that of the visitors, on the other hand. (Yan, Santos, 2009 : 299)

Indeed, as many studies of tourism products have showed, nation is a very stable discursive “product” in the tourism industry and a cultural specific one. (Thurlow, Aiello, 2007 : 331) In tourism promotional videos nation is being discursively created and mediated through an interplay of national and international elements within the visual text, in order to both strengthen national identity and promote “global”; i.e. intercultural values. (Ebd. : 305) Especially those “national elements” in the visual text consist from the figures of memory, as Assmann defines them (Assmann, Zaplicka 1995: 129) and they are the main subject of our analysis. We will argue furthermore that the “international elements” in the promotional videos are also an important part of self-presentation and a part of a future-oriented cultural memory which becomes seemingly homogenous due to the strong connection between tourism promotional videos as genre and globalization.

II. Methodological Framework

The examination of the representation and composition forms of some of the tourism promotion videos both from the South East European countries as well as from other regions worldwide is based on the Critical Discourse Analysis, respectively the analytical framework of the “Grammar of Visual Design” by Kress/van Leeuwen. (Kress, van Leeuwen, 2006) According to Kress and van Leeuwen we live in an era of multimodality which means that there are other semiotic codes equivalent to the language used in representation and communication of collective and cultural subjects. (Ebd. : 2f) More important for the concept of multimodality is the simultaneous deployment of several semiotic codes which especially applies to the promotional videos. The grammar of Kress and van Leeuwen is an analytical framework of contemporary visual design in Western cultures based on the social semiotic theory of representation, that is, on the relation between signer and signified within specific social and cultural environment. The environment they refer to is restricted to the Western cultures, which itself doesn’t exclude regional and cultural variation as Kress and van Leeuwen repeatedly stress. (Ebd. : 4) This is important for our analysis because all promotional videos covered are produced FOR the West, that is, they are produced in order to be accepted within the Western tourism discourse with its specific cultural and social rules and constraints in sign production. The particular perspective of these authors regarding the relation between the signer and signified is that this relation is always motivated and conventional in order to articulate some ideological positions. (Ebd. : 14) The semiotic character of tourism I referred previously to reveals the interdependence between tourism and particular ideological positions, be it more national or global-oriented. That is why tourism promotional videos are good empirical mate-
rial to apply this method to. This analytical framework has been influenced by the systemic functional grammar of Michael Halliday and, in a broader sense, by Critical Discourse Analysis. As Halliday suggests every semiotic mode has to fulfil three metafunctions:

- **Ideational** – it refers to how objects of the outside world are represented within the (visual) text
- **Interpersonal** – it refers to the relations between sender and receiver of the sign
- **Textual** – it refers to the composition of the elements/ signs in the (visual) text.

Our analysis is related to the first and third metafunction, that is, to the structures of the representation and composition of the promotional videos. The analysis of interpersonal metafunction would require a more extensive empirical investigation of audience’s interpretations which is beyond the scope of this paper.

Within the ideational metafunction the authors distinguish between narrative and conceptual structures of representation. (Ebd. : 59) “When participants are connected by a vector [pictorial equivalent of the action verb, mostly a line directing from A to B], they are represented as doing something to or for each other. ... we will call such vectorial patterns narrative - ...” If we cannot draw a direct line from one object (“participant” in terms of Kress/ van Leeuwen) to another one, we speak about conceptual structures. Both narrative and conceptual structures are furthermore elaborated in detail, which we cannot dwell on here. For our analysis the most important is the function of diverse deployment of representational structures: “where conceptual patterns represent participants in terms of their class, structures or meaning, in other words, in terms of their generalized and more or less stable and timeless essence, narrative patterns serve to present unfolding actions and events, processes of change, transitory spatial arrangements.” (Ebd. : 59)

Within the textual metafunction Kress and van Leeuwen stress following three interrelated aspects (Ebd. : 177):

- **Information value**, which is to be determined by the placement of the elements within the various “zones” of the image: left (the region of the “given”) vs. right (the region of the “new”); top (the region of the “ideal”) vs. bottom (the region of the “real”), centre vs. margin.
- **Salience**, which is being realized by placement of the participants in the foreground or background, furthermore size, contrast in colours or sharpness are also relevant.
- **Framing**, realized by elements which create dividing line or by actual frame lines signalizing that depicted participants are connected or disconnected in some way.

As mentioned above, Assmann sets cultural memory into the area of objectified culture which is defined as process of abstraction of actions and objects from the sphere of their everyday purposes. This is how their semantization takes place so that actions become rituals, objects artefacts and history becomes myth. (Sondergeld, 2010 : 41) In order to fulfil the goals of tourism promotional videos as media products: to create recognizable national brand (from the point of view of marketing) and to promote specific cultural features and a unique national identity of particular country (from the
ideological point of view) elements of cultural memory have to be first “semantized” and then to be transformed into visual images and text messages within the promotional video. Using this definition of cultural memory, and after sampling a few videos, we determined following particular elements of analysis:

- time: depicted in symbolic representation of history
- space: depicted in representation of landscape, mostly river, lake, see side, mountains
- artefacts: depicted in representation of monuments, food, achievements, text messages, and people. People are decoded as artefacts because they usually represent either tradition, ethnicity, and customs (in the case of „national elements”) or guest society, i.e. receiver of the message (in the case of „international elements” of cultural memory).

Although we try to abstract singular elements in order to have more conclusive results it is essential to the promotional videos as genre that all mentioned elements are strongly intertwined. Especially the element of time is very often realized through other elements of space and artefacts.

In order to define culture-specific and cross-cultural strategies relevant to the creation of the collective identity within tourism promotional videos we have examined some of the tourism promotion videos from following countries: Albania, Australia, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Croatia, Chile, China, Dubai, Ecuador, Egypt, Greece, Holland, Hungary, India, Mexico, Montenegro, Oman, Peru, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain and Turkey. All chosen videos are official, that is, released by national tourism or state authority, made for promotional purposes (tourism fairs, other fairs or general marketing activities such as promotion on international broadcasting organization).

III. BETWEEN NATIONAL CONCEPTS AND GLOBAL NARRATION

On the ideational level the conceptual structure of representation is being the most frequently used, as probably expected. The most prominent example of this representation form in our corpus is the video of Egypt from 2009 with the slogan "Egypt. Where it all begins". In this video both visual as well as textual elements, i.e. words used to describe the country during the first minute of the video are focused on the past, on the essence of Egypt as origin of the whole world which is intrinsic feature of the country. On the one hand, the video highlights mostly artefacts whose symbolic character can be instantly recognized: the Pyramids, Sphinx, temples, souks, and other national monuments that are considered as uniquely Egyptian. All visual images of these artefacts are mostly centred, and, what is unusual, depicted on the top area which increases their informational, i.e. symbolic value as ideal and timeless. People in the video are depicted in the bottom and compared to the monuments, less salient, that is, only as collateral objects. On the other hand, the text showed in the first minute of the video amplifies this effect not only by word combination but much more by graphical highlighting of those words which semantically refer to the essential elements of creation both literally: the Sun, land, the Nile and mythical: beginning, empire, civilization, mother, legend, story. This video is a good example how multimodality is being used to communicate a past-oriented objecti-
vized culture in order to represent specific national identity in the present and also how space and artefacts are used to produce the element of the time which is in fact the main focus of this video. Similar representation forms one can also find in the promotional video of China: “China, forever” from 2003, which reveals a linear composition of time and history by lining up the depicted artefacts and elements of space: Forbidden City, Great Wall, Buddha sculpture, Potala Palace, the Yellow River, Chinese woman on the bridge with the red umbrella, etc. However, in this video elements of space, that is, landscapes are imbedded into the images of artefacts, even in the second part of the video which is clearly framed by the image of Western tourists (from 4:45 minute) and represents contemporary China. Elements of space are mostly depicted in the background and centred juxtaposing the artefacts, mostly people, which are depicted in the foreground and equally often on the left and right. This is, on the ideational level, the most frequently used pattern of representation because it allows a mitigation of sense of real time: the elements of cultural memory can be transferred from the past into the present and the future. This can be defined as a trans-cultural communication strategy within tourism promotional videos.

The same patterns we find in the promotional videos of some South-East European countries such as Bulgaria (“Open doors to open hearts” from 2007) and Romania (“Land of Choice” from 2009). In their analysis of the use of images and symbols in the narratives of nation branding in the videos of these two countries Nadia Kaneva and Delia Popescu stated that “the overall symbolism is rather generic, offering a simple listing of [...] tourism assets: monasteries, wine, beaches, mountains, skiing and golf, hotels and beautiful young people”. (Kaneva, Popescu, 2011 : 200) They conclude that “both Romania and Bulgaria appear to be lost in time – vacillating between an idyllic, folkloric, pre-modern past and a glitzy, luxurious, modern future.” (Ebd. : 201) This results in what these scholars call a “national identity lite”. Furthermore this vague, blurred national identity is, according to Kaneva/Popescu a consequence of the practice of self-Orientalism, that is, of choosing and presenting those elements the (Western) tourist expect to be specific to particular nation. In many particular analysis of the nation branding in the tourism promotional videos including here mentioned Chinese, Bulgarian and Romanian videos self-Orientalism has been critically pointed out. (Yan, Santos, 2009; Kaneva, Popescu, 2011; Feighery, 2012) Although this is not an exclusive result of a specific representation form chosen to depict figures of cultural memory (re)creating national identity for the global market, it can be argued that conceptual structures of representation facilitate this effect and are not specific only for post-communist countries. (Kaneva, Popescu, 2011 : 202)

The narrative structures are not so common in the tourism promotional video when it comes to the past-oriented elements of cultural memory. If present, then in the images of artefacts, mostly people from the host society performing some traditional actions: painting, playing some instruments or dancing as for example in the videos of China, Mexico (from 2008), Costa Rica (from 2010), Oman (“Beauty has an address” from 2012). The narrative structures are mostly used to show representatives of the guest society, that is, tourists doing something in the host country. So in the video of Chile “Chile is good for you” from 2010, a tourist is kissing a Moai statue. The narrative structures
refer to action, change, openness, to temporary moments. In that way these representational structures are seen as Western-oriented opposite to duration, security and constancy the conceptual structures communicate. Furthermore, there are also hybrid forms wherein the focus on narrational structures in the representation of culture of host society underlines the ideological shift aimed by institutionalized sign producers toward stronger global, i.e. Western affiliation. The two most prominent examples we can find in the videos of Peru and India. In the Indian video, released in 2012 (“Incredible India”), a female Western tourist is performing all traditional and modern rituals (artefacts) that are part of objectivized Indian culture: she shakes her head, wears traditional clothes and spends time with other Indian women in the temple, cheers with Indian people, meditates, takes part in a traditional medicine, travels on elephants etc. Yet at the end of the video she is asked by one domestic man in English if this is her first time in India whereon she answers in Hindi. As Thurlow and Jaworski showed, language is the most important resource in production of cultural differences deployed often in tourism promotion videos showing the host-guest-interaction. This code-crossing at the end of the video stresses once more simultaneously exotic difference and familiarity within the two cultures, Western and Indian. (Thurlow, Jaworski, 2010 : 187) The plot of Peruvian video, also from 2012 (“Whatever you need is now in Peru”), consists of the story of one and the same Western male tourist who is depicted in a time frame as being very engaged businessman in in the year 2032 and adventurous traveller in Peru in the year 2012. This video accentuates the path of the inner development of one individual so that the most prominent narrative structure is the communication between one and the same person captured in the cold, amorphous office in the future who watches a video made by young spirited version of himself in the past behind whom space and artefacts of vivid Peru can be seen, partly through narrative structures (dancing with the Peruvian people, eating, drinking) but mostly depicted in a conceptual pattern. The Peruvian Tourism Board explained this new country brand campaign by stating that Peru is not just a tourist destination but also a destination for self-discovery. Putting the narrative structures in the foreground an impression of the precedence of the individual identity of (Western) human has been produced. At the same time, the presentation of the elements of textual metafunction, especially specific temporal framing, size, and contrast in colours of depicted objects stresses the cultural differences between modern and authentic in favour of Peru.

Similar representation form one can find in a Greek promotional video from 2007, “Explore your senses” in which tourist touch, smell, eat, and drink “figures of cultural memory” such as monuments, see, food, other people. However, the textual metafunction, i.e. representation patterns can strongly influence the overall representation by referring to the opposite meanings from those narrative structures normally do. In the same Greek video the most artefacts (except people) and elements of space are depicted centred, that is, as the most prominent and on the right, that is, as something new. In the Turkish video, “I dream of Turkey” from 2006, history is being communicated by lining up the artefacts (churches and mosques, caves in Ephesus, Bosphorus bridge, Sufi dancing) and elements of space (Capadocia, mount Nemrut, seaside) on the top: the area of ideal and very often on the right side: already known is being represented now as something new.
This is how the figures of cultural memory can be reshaped in order to be accepted both in the national and in the international communication community, that is, this representational pattern is being used to reconstruct the cultural memory. (Assmann, 1995: 130) A depicted woman – mermaid should point out not only to something exotic, irrational, mythical, that is, to the typical Western Orientalist perspective, but putting it mostly on the top and at the end of the video on the right, this artefact should stress the positive self-evaluation within the Orientalist representational discourse. In this way, the thesis about ideological self-Orientalism inherent to the tourism discourse and strategy of the Eastern world, as several scholars on postcolonial studies showed, has been proved once again to be true. The Montenegrin video, “Montenegro Wild beauty”, is similar to the Turkish one not only by the exotic, flying feminine figure, but also by the textual composition of the depicted elements of space and other artefacts.

In their studies of semiotic landscapes, Jaworski and Thurlow pointed out that landscape features (mountains, rivers, coastal areas), but also architectural sites (churches, bridges, monuments) are used as “articulation of territory”. They become a part of semiotic process in which national identity is being built. (Jaworski, Thurlow, 2010: 7) Some of the landscape features within tourism discourse and especially in the promotional videos serve just the opposite strategy: cultural deterritorialization, as Hazbun defines it. (Hazbun, 2008: XXXV) The representation of beaches, golf courses, ski centres, modern hotels and clothes, sometimes even food, implies transnationality and global affiliation. Interestingly, they are also very often represented through the conceptual structures stressing their intrinsic, authentic, and timeless value, seemingly opposing the globalization strategy of developing homogeneous, unrecognizable space. That is why we define those elements as present and future-oriented figures of cultural memory. Their interplay with past-oriented, “national” figures of cultural memory has the goal to transform and redefine the meaning of cultural space, as Thurlow and Aiello showed. (Thurlow, Aiello, 2007: 307) This is proved to be also a cross-cultural strategy of representation practice in tourism discourse aiming to “empty” localities and persons of their specific political and cultural dimensions. “Only in such a way can the world appear to us as a beautiful sight, devoid of all disturbing post-colonial tensions of politics, injustice, poverty, dependency and subalternity that characterize it.” (Thurlow, Jaworski, 2010: 235) On the level of textual structures, those elements are variously depicted, dependant on the ideological orientation of the particular country toward stronger entitlement to (national) uniqueness or to (transnational) affiliation.

IV. Conclusion

Heterogeneity across cultures is one of the main characteristics of the culture as a general human phenomenon. (MacCannel, 1999: 180) Accordingly, it can be assumed that because cultures are different, representations of the culture, that is, of the cultural memory should also be different, as a strong differentiation marker. This is furthermore in accordance with presented scholar views on tourism as the semiotic industry and cultural practice which produce, customizes and communicates cultural differences. However, the conducted analysis showed many similarities and cross-
cultural communication and representation strategies across different countries and cultures. Although this analysis cannot be seen as exhaustive due to the number of countries and videos respectively, it can be concluded that if the unique national identity is to be emphasized, conceptual structures and more salient textual patterns will be used. On the contrary, narrative structures will be deployed if the orientation toward global, i.e. Western prevail. The modes of their combination within tourism promotional video can be seen as culture-specific communication strategy. Finally, it has to be taken into account that semiotic and ideological goals in the particular sign production change continuously, so that different videos of one and the same country can distinguish strongly even within a short period of time.

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