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REVIEW ARTICLE

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Building information trust and shaping intention to visit Saudi Arabia: A pragmatic discourse analysis of stance, evidentiality, and persuasion in firm- and consumer-generated digital tourism content

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ABSTRACT

Prospective tourists encounter destinations through language before they experience them through travel. Company websites, visitor reviews, and social media exchanges offer competing accounts of what a journey might involve, yet their influence cannot be explained adequately by identifying who posted them. The wording of a claim also matters: writers express certainty, supply evidence, acknowledge restrictions, and position readers as particular kinds of visitors. This conceptual article connects research on electronic word of mouth and information adoption with linguistic accounts of stance, evaluation, and pragmatic inference. It develops a framework for examining how firm- and consumer-generated English-language content about Saudi Arabia may support information trust and visit intention. The central argument is that readers assess both a message's evidential basis and its relevance to their own circumstances, within expectations shaped by authorship and commercial purpose. Linguistic credibility remains distinguishable from factual accuracy, while trusting information remains distinguishable from deciding to travel. Constructed examples demonstrate the proposed analytical categories without being presented as collected tourism data. A prospective research design combines corpus comparison, contextual reading, and reader experiments to investigate the framework. The article contributes an explicit account of language between content production and tourist decision-making, while identifying the conditions under which persuasive discourse can inform, disappoint, or mislead.

KEYWORDS: digital tourism discourse, information trust, stance, evidentiality, pragmatics, visit intention, Saudi Arabia

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1 Introduction

A traveller considering Saudi Arabia may read a hotel description promising personal attention, a visitor's account of a difficult arrival, and a company response explaining what happened. Each text offers information, but each also proposes a relationship between writer and reader. The hotel speaks with institutional authority. The visitor claims the authority of experience. The response attempts to establish whether the institution can listen and act. Assessing these texts involves more than comparing positive and negative words. Readers must decide who can reasonably know what, which details deserve confidence, and whether the account applies to the journey they envisage.

Research on electronic word of mouth has established the importance of interpersonal information in hospitality and tourism communication (Litvin et al., 2008). Xiang and Gretzel (2010) examine the place of social media in online travel information search, while Ayeh et al. (2013) investigate credibility perceptions and attitudes towards using user-generated travel content. Such work provides a substantial foundation for studying information trust. A linguistic perspective contributes a more specific question: through which observable features of discourse does a message become credible, useful, or questionable to a particular reader?

The distinction matters because labels such as information quality can conceal several different processes. A detailed review may be informative because it specifies the circumstances of a visit. A concise institutional notice may be useful because it states exactly which service is available. A highly readable promotional passage may remain difficult to verify. Length, grammatical fluency, positivity, and source category cannot therefore serve as interchangeable indicators of credibility. Their meanings depend on communicative purpose and on the reader's task.

Saudi Arabia provides the application context for the present argument. The focus is English-language digital discourse encountered by prospective visitors, including translated English content. English offers a common medium across audiences whose linguistic backgrounds and familiarity with Saudi places may differ considerably. It should not be treated as evidence of a single international audience. A repeat business traveller, a heritage visitor, and someone combining family visits with leisure may seek different information even when they read the same page. Their expectations require investigation rather than inference from nationality alone. Descriptions of heritage also raise questions about who receives a voice. English copy can present a place chiefly as an object for visitor discovery, or identify people who interpret and maintain it. Neither pattern should be assigned to Saudi communication without examination. The distinction nevertheless supplies a useful analytical question about agency: are residents represented as speakers and decision-makers, or mainly as scenery within the tourist's anticipated experience? Examining subject choices, attributed speech, and the ownership implied by possessive expressions can show how a destination is made intelligible to outsiders. Such analysis connects persuasion with representation while avoiding an assumption that commercial effectiveness exhausts the social meaning of tourism language.

The original title proposes that digital content builds trust and drives visit intention. These verbs identify the relationship to be explained; they do not establish that every message has a positive effect or that an effect has been demonstrated in Saudi Arabia. A persuasive account might increase interest, reduce it, or help a reader decide that a particular journey is unsuitable. Trustworthy communication can consequently produce lower intention without failing communicatively. Treating increased intention as the only successful outcome would obscure this possibility.

The article develops a conceptual synthesis and an accompanying research framework. It asks how source expectations interact with linguistic evidence, how readers distinguish a writer's knowledge from promotional commitment, and how those interpretations might enter travel decisions. Its contribution lies in specifying the intervening linguistic processes. No original corpus, survey, or experiment is reported. The proposed relationships remain open to testing and substantive revision, and examples introduced below are analytical constructions rather than quotations from Saudi organisations or visitors.

2 Conceptual foundations and scope

Information trust refers here to a reader's willingness to rely on a particular account when making a travel-related judgement. Source credibility concerns perceived qualities of its producer, including expertise and trustworthiness. These concepts overlap but should not be collapsed. A reader can consider a company competent while doubting one expansive promise, or accept a visitor's description of a room while questioning that visitor's generalisation about an entire destination. Hovland and Weiss (1951) provide an early foundation for distinguishing source credibility as a condition of communication effectiveness.

Information adoption introduces another distinction. Sussman and Siegal (2003) connect informational influence with the adoption of knowledge in organisational settings. Tourism applications require their own validation, but the conceptual separation is useful: encountering or believing information does not necessarily mean incorporating it into a decision. Filieri and McLeay (2014) investigate travellers' adoption of accommodation reviews, and Filieri (2015) develops a diagnosticity-adoption account of review helpfulness. Diagnosticity concerns whether information helps someone evaluate an option. A credible description can have little diagnostic value if it does not address the reader's needs.

Visit intention is a stated orientation towards future travel. It is neither a booking nor an observed visit. Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour places intention within a broader account involving attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Accordingly, confidence in destination information need not overcome cost, scheduling, or practical constraints. The present framework treats trust as a possible contribution to intention, alongside these other considerations, rather than a sufficient cause of travel.

Linguistically, stance concerns how speakers or writers evaluate objects, position themselves, and relate to other positions. Du Bois (2007) supplies a relational account of this process. Hyland (2005) distinguishes resources through which writers express stance and engage readers in academic discourse. Applying those resources to tourism requires attention to genre differences. A holiday review and a research article do not make the same claims to authority, even when both use expressions such as *perhaps*, *clearly*, or *in my experience*.

Martin and White's (2005) appraisal framework supports analysis of evaluation, including attitudes, the strength of evaluations, and the treatment of alternative voices. Evidentiality is used in this article in a broad discourse sense: linguistic indications of where knowledge comes from and how a claim is supported. It does not imply that English possesses a compulsory grammatical evidential system. Expressions such as *I visited*, *according to the timetable*, and *the organiser confirmed* offer different grounds for knowing. Their interpretation depends on the surrounding account.

The synthesis follows the logic of theory integration described by Jaakkola (2020). Sources are selected for their direct relevance to linguistic interpretation, online credibility, tourism information, or research design. The selection is purposive and does not constitute a systematic review with an exhaustive search and screening process. Its value rests on conceptual coherence and explicit evidential boundaries. Established theories inform the argument, but the specific relationships proposed for English-language Saudi tourism discourse are the article's analytical extensions.

3 Authorship and the organisation of digital voices

Firm-generated content comprises material produced or editorially controlled by commercial tourism organisations. Consumer-generated content comprises accounts presented as contributions by service users or prospective users. Destination authorities and public tourism bodies require separate identification because institutional promotion does not automatically equal commercial firm authorship. Lumping all official material together may be convenient, but it loses differences in responsibility, expertise, and communicative remit that readers may consider relevant.

Even these distinctions need qualification. A company can repost a visitor's words, select a testimonial, or commission a creator to describe an experience. A visitor can write independently after receiving a complimentary service. The original speaker, editor, sponsor, and distributor may therefore be different actors. A useful analysis records those roles separately whenever evidence permits. An undisclosed relationship cannot be established from enthusiastic language alone; uncertainty about provenance should remain visible in the dataset.

Commercial purpose also changes how language is interpreted. Friestad and Wright's (1994) persuasion knowledge model explains how people recognise and respond to attempts to influence them. Applied here, a superlative in an advertisement may be treated as an expected sales convention, whereas the same superlative in an apparently independent review may invite a different inference. Disclosure can alter that inference without making the account either wholly credible or wholly unreliable. The question becomes what the reader believes the writer is trying to do.

Consumer accounts have purposes beyond supplying objective information. Munar and Jacobsen (2014) examine motivations for sharing tourism experiences through social media. A review may also sustain a social relationship, record a memorable event, or present the writer as knowledgeable. These purposes do not invalidate testimony. They explain why experiential authority and selective self-presentation can coexist. Treating consumer content as naturally disinterested would be as reductive as treating company content as necessarily deceptive.

Platform presentation adds further voices. Ratings, verified-status labels, sorting rules, and surrounding comments can frame a text before its first sentence is read. Metzger and Flanagin (2013) examine cognitive heuristics in online credibility assessment, providing grounds for considering these shortcuts alongside detailed reading. Linguistic analysis should therefore record the interface conditions under which a message appears. A screenshot of a review preserves a different interpretive context from an isolated sentence copied into a spreadsheet.

Authorship is consequently a starting condition for interpretation, not a fixed credibility score. A company's detailed admission may be persuasive because readers expected promotion; an independent review's universal claim may be doubtful because one visit cannot establish it. The framework predicts that source expectations interact with the scope and support of the claim. The same wording need not produce the same judgement when its attributed author changes.

4 Linguistic resources for credibility and persuasion

4.1 Stance and the scope of certainty

Certainty tells readers how strongly a writer commits to a proposition. Tourism promotion often requires confident recommendations, but the relevant question is whether commitment exceeds the evidence available. Compare two constructed statements: *Every visitor will enjoy this itinerary*, and *Visitors interested in architectural history may enjoy this itinerary*. The first projects a universal future experience. The second identifies an audience and limits its prediction. Neither sentence supplies evidence by itself, yet their different scopes create different expectations about what the writer can responsibly claim.

Hedges can mark appropriate caution, although they can also conceal responsibility. A company stating that a service *may be unavailable* supplies less usable information than a statement identifying the dates or conditions of possible unavailability. Conversely, excessive qualification can make a straightforward fact unnecessarily difficult to understand. Hyland's (2005) account encourages attention to interactional function rather than counting hedges as inherently virtuous. The interpretive issue is whether a qualification helps readers calibrate confidence.

Temporal and conditional expressions are particularly consequential in travel discourse. *During our visit* limits a claim to an observed period; *if you book this option* restricts an entitlement; *usually* signals a pattern with possible exceptions. Removing such expressions during editing or translation can enlarge the promise. A corpus analysis should therefore examine certainty together with temporal scope and conditions. A raw count of confident adjectives cannot capture the practical difference between a standing guarantee and a report of one experience.

4.2 Evidentiality and accountable descriptions

Evidence marking connects a claim to an identifiable basis. First-person experience, named documentation, and attributed testimony support different kinds of knowledge. A visitor can report what happened during a stay without knowing why management made a decision. A company may know its published procedures without knowing how every guest experienced them. Du Bois's (2007) relational perspective helps locate these positions: the object being evaluated and the writer's relation to it both matter.

Consider two constructed reviews. The first says, *The staff were wonderful*. The second says, *When our arrival time changed, reception confirmed the revised arrangement by email*. The second identifies an action, a circumstance, and a channel through which it could potentially be checked. That detail gives the evaluation a basis, although it does not independently authenticate the story. Fabricated testimony can contain precise details. The proposed linguistic category is therefore evidential specificity, not verified truthfulness.

Attribution also distributes responsibility. *According to the operator* distinguishes a reported claim from the writer's own observation. Quotation marks may preserve another voice while implying approval, distance, or doubt. Analysts must read the framing clause and surrounding passage to identify that relationship. A promotional page that quotes a visitor may borrow experiential authority while retaining control over selection. The quotation's apparent intimacy does not remove the publisher's editorial role.

4.3 Evaluation and the usefulness of mixed accounts

Evaluative language directs attention towards what deserves approval or concern. Appraisal theory distinguishes resources for expressing attitude and adjusting its intensity, while also considering whether alternative positions are admitted (Martin & White, 2005). This matters because a review's usefulness may lie in the distribution of evaluations across features. A visitor can praise an encounter with a guide while finding the pace unsuitable. Compressing that account into a single positive sentiment score loses information needed by readers with different priorities.

Sparks and Browning (2011) investigate how online reviews affect hotel booking intentions and perceptions of trust. Their work supports treating review framing as consequential; it does not establish that any particular mixture of praise and criticism will work identically across destinations. The present argument is more conditional. A concession may improve diagnostic value when it identifies a relevant trade-off. A token criticism added to an overwhelmingly promotional passage may instead appear staged.

The relationship between evaluation and agency deserves equal attention. The statement *We found the walk demanding* attributes a judgement to particular visitors. *The walk is unsuitable for everyone* projects a much broader conclusion. Evaluating the object, identifying the evaluator, and specifying the comparison standard are distinct linguistic tasks. Trust may depend partly on whether readers can reconstruct those tasks and judge the relevance of the experience to themselves.

4.4 Addressing readers and making implied promises

Second-person address can create involvement by inviting readers to imagine themselves within an experience. An imperative such as *Discover the old quarter* invites action without supplying a factual guarantee. A formulation such as *You will receive individual assistance* makes a stronger commitment about provision. Linguistic analysis must distinguish invitations, recommendations, and promises rather than grouping them as calls to action. Their consequences differ when expectations are later disappointed.

Presuppositions also influence interpretation. A constructed phrase such as *return to your favourite destination* presupposes prior attachment, positioning the reader as already familiar and favourable. For an unfamiliar audience, that positioning may feel irrelevant. Descriptions that assume a single preferred style of travel can exclude readers without stating an exclusion explicitly. Engagement therefore involves the identity offered to the reader as well as direct address or friendliness.

English-language communication introduces an additional issue. Fluency can make a message easier to process, but linguistic polish is not evidence of honest authorship. Less idiomatic reviews may contain accurate, relevant testimony. An assessment that rewards native-like English without checking informational content risks confusing language proficiency with credibility. Reader studies should examine whether judgments of writing quality are distinct from assessments of evidence, especially where prospective visitors use English as an additional language.

4.5 Replies and the negotiation of responsibility

Trust can develop across an exchange rather than within a single message. Zhang and Vásquez (2014) examine hotels' responses to online reviews as discourse through which consumer dissatisfaction is managed. Sparks et al. (2016) investigate how responses to negative reviews affect inferences of trust and concern. Together, these studies make company replies an especially productive meeting point between linguistic analysis and tourism research. Replies address the complainant while remaining visible to prospective customers who never participated in the original encounter.

A constructed response stating *We regret your disappointment* recognises an emotion but leaves responsibility for the event unspecified. *We gave you incorrect arrival information* attributes an action to the institution. Neither formulation alone establishes that a problem has been remedied. A further statement identifying a correction and its scope supplies different information. Analysis should distinguish acknowledgement, explanation, responsibility, and proposed action, while examining how these moves relate to the complaint that prompted them.

Disagreement is not necessarily a failure of politeness or credibility. An institution may need to correct an inaccurate account, and a visitor may reasonably reject an inadequate explanation. The relevant linguistic questions concern whether the reply addresses the substance of the claim, supports its account, and leaves room for clarification. Counting apologies would miss these differences. A formulaic apology can accompany evasion, while a carefully explained disagreement can provide useful evidence for other readers.

5 A framework connecting language with travel decisions

The proposed framework begins with a message encountered under particular source and platform conditions. Readers interpret its linguistic resources in relation to their existing expectations, then assess whether the account deserves reliance and helps with their decision. Those assessments may influence destination image and intention, although practical constraints and prior preferences also contribute. Baloglu and McCleary's (1999) model of destination image formation provides a basis for locating communication within a wider process of destination evaluation.

The central mechanism is a reader's judgement that a claim is supported and appropriately bounded. The term appropriately matters. A short operational notice may require a clear source and date; a personal account may require circumstances that explain its relevance. Adding detail indiscriminately could make a text harder to use. The framework therefore concerns the fit between evidence, claim, and decision rather than an assumption that more linguistic features always produce more trust.

Proposition one is that evidential specificity will support information trust when readers perceive the stated basis as relevant and proportionate to the claim. The relationship should weaken when details appear unverifiable, decorative, or inconsistent. This proposition extends work on diagnosticity and information adoption by identifying linguistic features that could account for some evaluations of information quality. It remains possible for convincing specificity to increase misplaced trust, so perceived support and actual accuracy require separate measurement.

Proposition two is that source expectations will moderate the interpretation of stance and evaluation. A bounded concession may have different effects in a company description and a consumer review. Flanagin et al. (2020) examine credibility in relation to message sidedness, source, and thinking styles, supporting attention to their interaction rather than a universal advantage for balanced messages. The proposed Saudi tourism application should investigate those conditions directly instead of importing an effect from another communication setting.

Proposition three is that information trust will contribute more strongly to visit intention when the information is diagnostic for the reader's journey and travel is perceived as feasible. Someone may trust a review completely yet conclude that the experience does not suit their interests or resources. Conversely, a reader already committed to travelling may use trusted content only to choose activities. These possibilities mean that a single positive path from trust to intention cannot describe every stage of travel planning.

Proposition four is that responsive institutional discourse can alter how readers interpret earlier criticism when it supplies a relevant explanation or credible corrective commitment. A public reply may improve confidence in the institution while leaving the original negative evaluation intact. The outcome should therefore include trust in the particular information and trust in the organisation as distinct judgements. Measuring only general positivity could conceal a useful increase in confidence about complaint handling.

Recent Saudi research offers a contextual point of comparison. Alkhofaily and Noureldin (2026) report survey associations linking sustainability storytelling and smart tourism interactivity with destination trust and responsible visit intention. Their study concerns broader perceptions and a responsibility-oriented intention construct. It does not directly test the linguistic categories developed here. Its relevance is that destination trust already provides a plausible Saudi research context; the present contribution specifies wording and interpretation as objects of investigation within that context.

The framework also recognises feedback. Prior destination attitudes may shape which accounts people seek, believe, and remember. Content is not encountered randomly in ordinary travel planning. A sceptical reader may search for complaints, while an enthusiastic reader may interpret restrictions as manageable details. Without observing prior attitudes and exposure, associations between favourable discourse and intention may reflect selection as well as persuasion. This is a substantive theoretical issue, not merely a statistical inconvenience. The level of inference needs attention too. A reliable description of one excursion cannot establish that every tourism service in Saudi Arabia is dependable. Readers may nevertheless generalise from an encounter, particularly when they have little other knowledge. Research should measure trust in the specific claim before asking about the service provider or destination, and examine whether these judgements remain distinguishable. Agreement between sources also requires interpretation. Two apparently independent accounts may repeat the same publicity material, whereas disagreement may reflect different seasons or service options. Corroboration becomes informative only when the sources offer sufficiently independent evidence about comparable circumstances. These distinctions prevent destination trust from becoming a catch-all label for favourable reactions.

6 A prospective corpus and reader research design

6.1 Corpus boundaries and provenance

A future study should specify its collection period, destination coverage, platforms, and inclusion rules before testing the propositions. The initial corpus could focus on English descriptions and reviews of comparable Saudi tourism services, such as accommodation and guided heritage experiences. Commercial websites, institutional destination pages, independent reviews, and company replies should form identifiable strata. Sponsored creator content requires its own category when the relationship is disclosed. Ambiguous material should remain marked as ambiguous.

Each record should preserve publication and collection dates, source location, genre, attributed authorship, and the service or place discussed. A review and the company's reply should be linked without merging their voices. Reposts and syndicated descriptions need duplicate identifiers because repeated wording may represent distribution rather than independent agreement. Collection should retain enough surrounding text to interpret pronouns, quotation, negation, and conditional claims. Search rankings and interface presentation should be documented where they affect what material becomes visible.

The sampling frame must also account for absences. People who post publicly are not interchangeable with all visitors, and visible English-language accounts do not represent every linguistic community. boyd and Crawford (2012) question assumptions that large digital datasets are automatically comprehensive or objective. Here, those concerns imply explicit limits on inference: corpus patterns describe the collected discourse, while claims about visitors generally require additional evidence and an appropriate sampling design.

Translated texts merit particular care. Where an Arabic original is accessible, the analysis should preserve its relationship to the English version and examine changes in certainty, agency, and implied commitment. Where translation status is unknown, it should not be guessed from awkward wording. English texts can still be analysed as messages available to readers, but claims about translation choices require a source text. Bilingual reviewers should examine consequential differences without treating the Arabic text as culturally uniform or the English text as socially neutral.

6.2 Annotation and contextual analysis

The annotation scheme should identify the proposition being expressed, its scope, the attributed knower, and any stated evidential basis. Further categories should cover evaluation, reader address, commercial disclosure, and response moves. These are related dimensions, not ingredients of a predetermined credibility score. A sentence can contain a strong evaluation with limited scope and explicit evidence. Coding each dimension independently makes that combination available for analysis rather than forcing it into a positive or negative category.

A constructed example makes the procedure concrete: *During our visit, the organiser said that transport would be available, but we arranged our own journey*. The opening restricts the temporal frame; the reporting clause assigns the availability claim to the organiser; the final clause reports a different action by the visitors. The sentence does not establish that transport was unavailable. Annotating it as a service failure would add an unsupported inference. Readers might still regard the account as incomplete and request clarification. Coding should preserve that distinction between what the text states, what it leaves unresolved, and what an interpreter concludes. Disagreements between annotators can reveal precisely where a category encourages excessive inference during coding.

Baker et al. (2008) demonstrate how corpus techniques and contextual discourse analysis can inform each other. Their research concerns a different domain, but its methodological logic is transferable. Frequency comparisons can locate recurring formulations; concordance reading can establish their functions within passages. Counts should be normalised for unequal corpus sizes and interpreted alongside the proportion of documents containing a feature. One repeatedly copied slogan should not be mistaken for a widespread independent practice.

Automated methods require validation against the intended linguistic task. Grimmer and Stewart (2013) emphasise problem-specific validation and the continuing need for careful interpretation in text analysis. A classifier identifying evidential language should be checked on examples involving quoted claims, denied experiences, and conditional promises. Performance should be reported by relevant category, since a satisfactory overall score can conceal poor recognition of rare but consequential features. Human annotators should review material held apart from codebook development.

Nelson's (2020) computational grounded theory offers a complementary logic of pattern detection, interpretive refinement, and confirmation. Unexpected combinations, such as institutional texts with extensive concessions or consumer texts with highly promotional address, could guide close reading. They should not automatically be treated as suspicious. Negative cases may reveal genre variation, reposting, humour, or an inadequately specified category. An audit trail should explain how such cases change the analysis.

6.3 Testing interpretation and influence

Corpus comparison can establish how language is distributed, but it cannot establish what prospective visitors believe after reading it. Reader interviews or think-aloud tasks should first investigate which cues participants notice and how they explain their judgments. Participants should include different levels of English proficiency and prior Saudi travel experience. Questions should distinguish understanding the message, trusting its factual content, evaluating its producer, and finding it useful for a particular decision.

A subsequent experiment could vary attributed source and evidential specificity while holding the underlying service description constant. A separate experiment could test whether a relevant limitation changes the interpretation of promotional certainty. Combining every possible feature in one small study would make interpretation difficult. Stimuli should be pretested for comprehensibility, plausibility, length, and unintended differences in attractiveness. Any fictional company identity or manipulated attribution should be disclosed during debriefing under the approved research procedure.

Measurement should use separate indicators for information trust, perceived usefulness, destination attitude, and visit intention. Existing scales require assessment in the selected population rather than automatic reuse. English proficiency, prior familiarity, perceived feasibility, and baseline intention deserve attention as potential alternative explanations or moderators. Statistical modelling should respect repeated ratings by participants and shared stimulus texts. Sample size should follow a justified power or precision analysis for the planned comparisons, with exclusions and primary outcomes specified in advance.

Random assignment can support claims about manipulated message features within the experiment. It does not by itself establish that trust causally mediates their effect on intention, because mediator and outcome may share unmeasured influences. Temporal separation, alternative models, and sensitivity analyses can clarify that limitation. Behavioural outcomes such as requesting further information may strengthen interpretation, but a click remains different from purchasing or visiting. Follow-up evidence should preserve those distinctions.

Public availability also does not eliminate ethical responsibilities. A searchable review can expose its author when reproduced in a research report. Researchers should consider consent, platform conditions, quotation searchability, and the consequences of combining personal accounts across sites. Paraphrase or restricted access may be appropriate for sensitive material. Reproducibility can be supported through codebooks, analytic decisions, and permitted metadata without assuming that every collected text can be redistributed.

7 Implications for Saudi tourism communication and language education

Tourism organisations can use the framework to review whether their English content makes commitments that staff and services can support. Editors should identify universal claims, unspecified comparisons, and vague assurances, then ask what evidence or qualification a reader needs. A claim about a particular service should identify its applicable conditions. A testimonial should retain enough context to avoid turning one person's experience into a general guarantee. The objective is an account that remains dependable when the visitor encounters the service.

Review replies deserve a similar editorial discipline. Staff should address the actual issue, explain what the organisation can establish, and distinguish a completed correction from a future commitment. Removing a generic apology is not necessarily an improvement; neither is adding one automatically sufficient. The quality of the exchange depends on its relationship to the complaint. Where public discussion would expose personal information, a private continuation can be proposed while the public response still explains the relevant process. Translation practice should preserve the strength and limits of the original commitment. Replacing an expression of possibility with a categorical assurance may produce smoother English while changing what is promised. Translators and service managers should therefore review consequential modality together. Terminology consistency matters, but pragmatic consistency matters as well. Readers need to know whether a sentence describes a normal arrangement, confirms an entitlement, or simply suggests an attractive option.

The framework also gives English for tourism courses a clear linguistic purpose. Students can compare constructed versions of a review, identify the basis of each claim, and explain which visitor could use the information. They can practise replying to complaints without erasing disagreement or inventing remedies. Assessment can reward appropriate attribution, clear scope, and an accurate representation of available evidence. Native-like idiom should not substitute for the ability to communicate responsibly and intelligibly.

Sustainability claims illustrate the practical stakes. A general description of an experience as responsible supplies little information about the practice being praised. Writers should specify the relevant activity and identify the basis of the description where evidence exists. Alkhofaily and Noureldin (2026) make responsible visit intention relevant to Saudi destination research, but persuasive sustainability storytelling cannot itself establish environmental performance. Linguistic scrutiny can reveal the scope of a claim; independent evidence must establish whether the claimed practice occurs.

Consumer-facing guidance can encourage readers to distinguish observed events from general recommendations and to compare accounts discussing similar circumstances. Platforms could make commercial relationships and publication dates easier to interpret, while organisations could preserve corrections when information changes. These recommendations require evaluation in practice. The framework does not imply that adding a checklist will make every reader careful or every message reliable. Its practical value is to identify specific points at which misunderstanding can be reduced.

8 Limitations and further research

The article offers a conceptual explanation and a prospective design. Its propositions have not been tested on an original Saudi corpus or reader sample. Findings from hotel reviews, organisational information adoption, and academic discourse inform different parts of the argument, but their transfer requires validation. A future study may find that particular linguistic cues matter less than price, imagery, personal recommendations, or established source preferences.

The emphasis on English wording also leaves part of digital communication outside the initial framework. Photographs, video editing, voice quality, and interface design can alter how identical words are understood. Multimodal extensions should investigate those relationships without attributing every effect to language. Translation comparisons would add further depth, provided their analysis is based on identifiable source and target texts rather than assumptions about cultural difference.

Credibility research must also confront deliberate imitation. A writer who knows that bounded claims and experiential detail appear trustworthy can reproduce those features strategically. The proposed categories identify resources used in the presentation and assessment of knowledge; they cannot function as a linguistic lie detector. Future research should therefore investigate calibrated reliance, including appropriate doubt, alongside positive trust and intention. A reader who recognises insufficient evidence may be responding well even when persuasion fails.

9 Conclusion

Firm- and consumer-generated content enters tourism decisions through interpretable language. Writers present themselves as knowledgeable, assign value to experiences, delimit certainty, and invite readers to imagine a visit. These choices shape the grounds on which information may be trusted, but their significance depends on the source, communicative setting, and reader's purposes. A linguistic approach makes those relationships available for explicit analysis.

For English-language discourse about Saudi Arabia, the proposed framework connects stance, evidentiality, evaluation, and responsiveness with information trust and visit intention. It preserves distinctions between persuasive credibility and accuracy, between institutional and informational trust, and between intention and travel. Its empirical promise lies in linking contextual corpus analysis with evidence of reader interpretation rather than inferring psychological outcomes directly from textual features.

The practical implication is precise. Organisations and consumers communicate more usefully when readers can identify what is being claimed, whose knowledge supports it, and where its limits lie. Such communication may encourage a suitable journey or help someone reconsider an unsuitable one. Both outcomes can reflect informed decision-making. Understanding that process gives linguistics a substantive role in tourism research and gives destination communication a stronger basis for earning justified trust.

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