

The study is an investigation of communication events and discourse strategies in an intercultural context. The participants studied comprised English-speaking tourists of different nationalities visiting Mombasa, interacting with local tour guides also from diverse cultures in Kenya. During their day-to-day interaction, a lot of conversation takes place and it through a study of these conversations that features of intercultural communication were identified and discussed. The study specifically explored the nature of tourists/tour guides conversations to establish how these speakers from diverse cultures interpret each other's utterances to achieve effective communication. The main aim of this study was to identify, investigate and describe the communication problems encountered by the participants, their causes and possible remedies during the discourse.

Various studies on intercultural discourse have been carried out by scholars such as Scollon and Scollon (1980) and Neil (1996) among others. However, an intercultural study of tourist/tour guide discourse in Mombasa has not been carried out and this study aims to fill this gap in knowledge. To obtain the conversational data, the researcher accompanied tourists groups on city tours organized by the United Touring Company (U.T.C.) for a period of 10 weeks. The methods used in data collection were audio recording, participant - observation and note - taking.

The data was first transcribed then analyzed using the tenets of following theories: Speech Act as postulated by Searle (1969), Speech Accommodation advocated by Giles (1979) and the Politeness Theory propounded by Levinson and Brown (1978).

The findings showed that although communication among people from diverse cultures is usually hampered by various socio-cultural differences, the tourists and tour guides were able to communicate effectively. This was achieved by employing various communication strategies to repair conversation problems.

In conclusion, the use of English as a common language for international communication in tourism implies that proficiency in the language is important for the tour guide and the industry at large. A good command of the language and communication skills will enable the guide to serve the travelers better by giving them the standard of service they expect. The industry should therefore put more emphasis on functional language, which focus on language use in situations and day-to-day interaction.