

## Grammar Analysis in Tourism Text: A Linguistic Study of “What’s the Problem with Overtourism?”

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### ABSTRACT (10 pt, Times New Roman)

This study aims to analyze grammatical structures used in the tourism article “What’s the Problem with Overtourism?” written by Leahy (2023) and published in National Geographic Traveler. The research focuses on identifying and describing various grammatical features, including tenses, passive voice, gerund and infinitive constructions, and relative clauses, to reveal how grammatical choices shape meaning and readability in tourism discourse. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this study finds that the author employs a range of grammatical patterns to convey factual information, emphasize ongoing global concerns, and maintain a balance between persuasive and informative tones. The use of present simple and perfect tenses dominates the text, reflecting both timeless truths and current relevance of overtourism issues. Passive constructions are strategically used to emphasize processes over agents, while gerund and infinitive forms add fluidity and continuity to the narrative. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of grammar use in professional tourism writing and provide pedagogical insights for English learners, especially those in tourism and communication studies.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Grammar plays a crucial role in shaping meaning, coherence, and persuasion in written texts, particularly in the field of tourism communication, where descriptive, informative, and persuasive functions intersect. Tourism writing has a dual purpose: it informs readers about destinations and travel-related issues, while also subtly influencing perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. In the context of sustainable tourism, the use of grammatical structures becomes even more significant, as writers must balance factual reporting with persuasive strategies aimed at raising awareness or encouraging responsible travel. Therefore, examining grammar in authentic tourism texts is essential for understanding how language choices support communicative purposes and contribute to the construction of particular narratives within tourism discourse.

In recent years, the issue of overtourism has gained substantial global attention and has become a central topic in tourism scholarship and media. It defines overtourism as a condition in which the number of tourists exceeds the capacity of local environments, leading to negative impacts on natural resources, cultural heritage, and residents’ quality of life (Peeters et al., 2021). As explained, overtourism challenges the long-term sustainability of destinations and demands new ways of communicating sustainability-related issues. (Hall, 2019). From a linguistic perspective, s about overtourism often require writers to adopt grammatical and discursive strategies that emphasize urgency, seriousness, and global relevance. Thus, analyzing grammar in texts addressing overtourism offers valuable insights into the rhetorical techniques that writers use to highlight the severity of the problem and engage readers critically.

Previous studies on grammar within tourism discourse have explored various linguistic features, including modality, tense usage, voice, and syntactic structures. According to Dann (Dann, 2023), tourism language typically favors the present tense and active voice to evoke immediacy, dynamism, and engagement, particularly when describing destinations or promoting travel experiences. This tendency reflects the promotional nature of much tourism communication. However, more recent studies indicate a shift toward more varied and sophisticated grammatical patterns in tourism writing, especially in texts discussing

sustainability, environmental challenges, or global trends. (Sujatna, 2016) noted that present, perfect, and passive constructions increasingly work together to create a more objective and analytical tone. Similarly, Kamel (2024) highlights that this grammatical diversification enhances the credibility of tourism texts, particularly when writers aim to construct arguments rather than provide simple descriptions.

This study aligns with these evolving perspectives by exploring specific grammatical features in (Leahy, 2023) article “What’s the Problem with Overtourism?”. The analysis focuses on dominant tense forms, passive voice constructions, gerund and infinitive patterns, and relative clauses. These elements were selected because they frequently appear in academic and journalistic texts of tourism issues and often reflect the writer’s stance, emphasis, and communicative intention. By examining these grammatical features, the study seeks to reveal how language choices in the article contribute to the broader discourse on overtourism and sustainable tourism.

The relevance of grammar in tourism communication is also supported by recent linguistic studies, particularly those examining the interplay between language and environmental narratives. It argues that tourism texts employ grammar not only to convey information but also to shape readers’ interpretations and emotional responses (Jaworski & Pritchard, 2005). Biber et al. (2002) adds that tourism writing often relies on the present simple tense to create a sense of timelessness and universality, portraying destinations as consistently appealing and stable. However, such strategies are increasingly challenged by the realities of overtourism, which require more nuanced and cautionary linguistic approaches (Maci, 2010).

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, several studies have examined how tourism communication has adapted linguistically. It found that writers now more frequently use perfect tenses and passive voice constructions to discuss recovery trends, environmental changes, and sustainability efforts (Jurakovic & Legovic, 2023). These grammatical choices allow writers to highlight cumulative developments, express ongoing concerns, and frame actions in an impersonal or neutral tone (Ghosh et al., 2024). It argues that grammatical variation plays a significant role in shaping the emotional framing of tourism narratives, particularly when addressing sensitive issues such as overtourism, climate change, or community resistance. (Isti’annah & Winarti, 2025). Thus, grammar becomes a tool for balancing factuality with affective engagement.

In the Indonesian context, research on tourism discourse has similarly emphasized the functional role of grammar. For instance, it found that infinitives and gerunds in tourism brochures serve as cohesive devices that help writers transition smoothly from factual explanations to recommendations or promotional messages (Wardhana & Dewi, 2025). It also emphasizes that grammatical cohesion, including the use of relative clauses, enhances clarity and strengthens the persuasive appeal of tourism texts (I Gusti Ngurah Adi et al., 2019). These findings suggest that grammar in tourism communication is not merely structural but deeply functional reflecting ideological stances, cultural values, and communicative goals embedded in the text (Pratiwi et al., 2019).

Building on these theoretical and empirical insights, the present study situates its analysis within both global and local perspectives on tourism discourse. While previous studies have examined grammar in promotional materials, brochures, and destination descriptions, relatively fewer have focused on grammar in journalistic or analytical texts that address sustainability-related issues such as overtourism. The article provides an ideal case study, as it combines descriptive information with evaluative and cautionary commentary, requiring the strategic use of diverse grammatical structures. By investigating tense usage, passive constructions, gerund–infinitive patterns, and relative clauses, this study aims to bridge linguistic theory and applied grammar analysis in a real-world tourism context. (Leahy, 2023)

Furthermore, the study contributes to ongoing discussions about sustainable tourism communication by highlighting how grammatical choices influence tone, credibility, and reader engagement. For example, the predominance of the present simple tense may underscore the ongoing nature of overtourism, while present perfect constructions can emphasize cumulative impacts. Passive voice may be used to foreground events rather than agents, thereby aligning with a neutral and analytical tone. Meanwhile, gerunds, infinitives, and relative clauses contribute to syntactic complexity and coherence, enabling the writer to connect ideas logically and persuasively.

In sum, this study builds upon previous research by examining grammar in a contemporary global tourism text focused on overtourism. It aims to demonstrate that grammatical features serve not only as linguistic structures but as rhetorical tools that shape the way tourism issues are framed and communicated. By analyzing the grammatical patterns in Leahy (2023), the study offers insights into the linguistic strategies employed to address one of the most pressing challenges in the tourism industry today.

## 2. METHODS

This study used a qualitative descriptive method to examine the grammatical structures used in (Leahy, 2023) article “What’s the Problem with Overtourism?”. The qualitative descriptive approach is chosen because the objective of the research is not to quantify linguistic features but to describe, interpret, and contextualize the grammatical forms found within an authentic written discourse. As stated by Sandelowski (2010), qualitative description is particularly suitable for studies aiming to provide a comprehensive summary of events or phenomena in everyday terms. In this study, the “phenomenon” of interest is the set of grammatical choices the author employs to construct meaning within the tourism discourse.

By the research design, the qualitative descriptive design focused on identifying patterns of grammatical forms and explaining their communicative functions. This design allows the researcher to work directly with naturally occurring data. In this case, written text and to gain insight into how grammatical structures contribute to clarity, persuasion, coherence, and stance in the of overtourism. The analysis is guided by the descriptive linguistic framework proposed by (Celce-Murcia et al., 1983), which emphasizes the interrelationship between grammatical form, meaning, and use. Through this lens, grammar is not viewed merely as a set of rules but as a resource for meaning-making shaped by the discourse context. Thus, the method focuses on: accurately describing the grammatical forms; identifying the meanings and functions associated with those forms; and interpreting how these grammatical choices support the rhetorical purpose and stance of the article.

By the data source, the primary data for this study were sentences and clauses taken from (Leahy, 2023) article. This text was chosen because it discussed a contemporary global issue from overtourism was through a blend of explanation, critique, and argumentation, making it rich with varied grammatical constructions. The article contains multiple sentence types and diverse grammatical structures that offer examples of tenses, voices, and clause combinations relevant to English discourse analysis. The grammatical structures examined include: Verb tense usage: simple present, present continuous, present perfect, simple past, and future forms; Passive voice constructions; Non-finite verb forms: gerunds and infinitives; Complex structures: relative clauses (defining and non-defining)

### Procedures of Data Collection and Analysis

#### Data Identification

In this first stage, it conducted a close reading of the article to identify sentences and clauses that contain the grammatical structures of interest. This process involves systematically scanning the text and highlighting occurrences of the target grammar features. The identification stage is exploratory, allowing the researcher to capture all relevant instances without yet engaging in deeper interpretation. Selection criteria include: Sentences in which tense plays a key role (e.g., describing current conditions with simple present, or showing ongoing developments through present continuous). Sentences used the passive voice to emphasize processes or outcomes rather than agents. Clauses contained gerunds or infinitives functioning as subjects, complements, or adjuncts. Sentences utilized relative clauses to add detail, define concepts, or provide supporting information.

#### Data Classification

After relevant sentences are identified, they are classified according to grammatical categories. This step involves grouping the data based on the specific structure they exemplify. The classification follows the categories derived from Celce-Murcia et al. (1983) grammar framework and general descriptive linguistics. The categories typically include: Tense and Aspect Forms; Simple present, Simple past, Present continuous, Present perfect, Future expressions (e.g., will, going to, predictive verbs), Voice, Passive constructions, Active constructions (for comparison), Non-Finite Verb Forms, Gerunds, Infinitives, Complex Sentence Structures, defining and non-defining relative clauses, Embedded clauses

#### Data Interpretation

The interpretation stage is the core of the qualitative analysis. In this stage, each grammatical structure is explained in terms of form, meaning, and discourse function, following the grammar-as-meaning framework. This involves not only describing the structure but also explaining why the author uses a particular grammatical form in a particular context. The simple present may signal general truths about tourism, whereas the present continuous may highlight emerging trends. Passive voice may be used to depersonalize responsibility for overtourism, shifting focus to systemic causes. Relative clauses often provide definitions or additional explanatory information that help the reader follow the argument. Certain tense choices or infinitive

constructions may indicate the author's opinion or advice regarding tourism management. The interpretation stage is thus integrative, connecting the grammatical analysis to broader issues of meaning and communication within the text. The focus is not solely on the structural properties of grammar but on how these structures contribute to the construction of knowledge and argumentation within tourism discourse.

### 3. RESULTS AND

#### Tense Usage

The result indicated that the present simple tense is the most frequently occurring tense in the article, including:

"The term 'overtourism' **is** relatively new."

"Overcrowding **is** an issue for both locals and tourists."

These used to show that relies heavily on the present simple to present information as factual, general, and universally valid. The second most prominent tense is the present perfect, found in sentences such as:

"Hallstatt **has opened** its doors to around 10,000 visitors a day."

"City taxes **have become** increasingly popular."

The simple past tense is used to present specific historical events, as illustrated by "In 2021, large cruise ships were banned from using the Giudecca Canal." Meanwhile, the future tense appears in predictions and projections such as "The number of worldwide tourists will reach 1.8 billion."

The dominance of the present simple tense aligns with the article's aim to describe ongoing conditions and general truths about overtourism. The present simple commonly appears in expository and journalistic texts because it conveys stability and objectivity. In the context of tourism studies, this tense helps present overtourism not as a temporary trend but as a systemic and persistent issue. It reinforces the sense that the problems described apply broadly across time and space.

The use of the present perfect tense serves a different rhetorical purpose: it emphasizes continuity, linking past developments to present-day implications. (Carter & McCarthy, 2006) noted that the present perfect is often used to highlight ongoing global phenomena, which fits the article's framing of overtourism as a long-term and evolving challenge. When Leahy states that taxes "have become popular," the emphasis is not merely on what happened but on how such policies continue to shape tourist-resident dynamics today. Thus, the present perfect strengthens the thematic focus on sustained impact rather than isolated events.

The simple past tense provides historically anchored facts that help the reader contextualize current issues. Statements like the 2021 ban on cruise ships provide chronological grounding, signaling that tourism management strategies have evolved in response to public pressure, environmental concerns, and political decisions. This chronological framing allows readers to interpret overtourism as part of a larger narrative of policy change and societal reaction.

Finally, the future tense is strategically employed to create a sense of urgency. Predictions such as the projection of 1.8 billion tourists reinforce the narrative that overtourism will worsen without significant changes. It argues that future-oriented language is frequently used in sustainability discourse to encourage proactive planning. Leahy's use of the future tense positions overtourism as an impending challenge requiring immediate attention, thus enhancing the persuasive intent of the article (Hall, 2019). Together, these tense choices indicate a careful balance between describing present realities, referencing past developments, and projecting future risks. This temporal layering allows the article to present overtourism as both a current crisis and a continuing global concern that demands sustained intervention.

#### Passive Voice

Passive voice constructions appear frequently throughout the text, including:

"Large cruise ships **were banned**."

The passive voice is often used when describing policies, processes, and consequences without specifying the agent responsible.

The passive voice plays a central rhetorical role in shaping the tone of the article. As (Biber et al., 2002) emphasize, passive constructions are characteristic of informational and academic writing because they foreground processes and outcomes rather than individuals or institutions. In the context of overtourism, this grammatical choice helps portray the issue as systemic rather than attributable to a single actor.

For instance, the statement “Large cruise ships were banned” focuses on the action itself and its effect, not on the authority that enacted the ban. This choice enhances neutrality and objectivity, which are important for journalistic credibility. The article avoids assigning explicit blame, thereby maintaining an impartial stance while still informing readers of significant policy changes.

At the same time, the passive voice subtly underscores the complexity of overtourism by highlighting that its causes and consequences involve many stakeholders: governments, tourists, residents, businesses, and environmental groups. Avoiding explicit agents prevents oversimplification and keeps the reader focused on the phenomena, not on individual entities. This is particularly important in tourism discourse, where attributing responsibility can be politically sensitive.

The passive structures thus support the article’s communicative aim: to describe overtourism as a multifaceted issue shaped by interconnected factors. Through this grammatical choice, the text promotes a perception of overtourism as requiring shared responsibility and collective effort rather than isolated action.

#### Gerund and Infinitive Usage

Gerunds and infinitives appear frequently, as shown:

“**Encouraging** more sustainable travel”

“**Finding** solutions to reduce friction”

“**To manage** crowds, it’s first necessary to analyze the causes”

Gerunds are used to describe ongoing processes, while infinitives express purpose or intention. The use of gerunds and infinitives enhances the cohesion and fluidity of the article. Gerunds, functioning as nouns, provide a sense of continuity and ongoing action. (Wardhana & Dewi, 2025) notes that gerunds are often used to express general activities that are habitual, extended, or process-oriented—precisely the type of actions relevant in sustainability and tourism contexts. When the text refers to “encouraging sustainable travel,” the gerund encapsulates the broad, continuous effort required to change tourist behavior.

Infinitives, on the other hand, convey goals, objectives, or recommended actions. Their frequent occurrence helps structure the article’s problem-solution dynamic. For example, “To manage crowds...” signals a shift toward proposing strategies, which guides the reader through the logical progression of cause, effect, and recommended response. The infinitive thus contributes to the article’s clarity and persuasiveness by highlighting necessary actions in response to overtourism.

Both forms contribute to the article’s argumentative rhythm: gerunds emphasize ongoing issues, infinitives highlight future directions. Together, they strengthen the text’s coherence and clarify the complex ideas being communicated.

#### Relative Clauses

Relative clauses are used to add further information without disrupting sentence flow. Examples include:

“Murmuration, **which monitors the environmental impact of tourism**, ...”

“Places **where residents are up in arms** at the influx of travellers”

These clauses provide elaboration while maintaining smooth transitions. Relative clauses contribute significantly to the informational density of the article. According to (Huddleston & Pullum, 2005), they allow writers to integrate additional descriptive or explanatory content without creating fragmented sentences. In the article, relative clauses help the author incorporate detailed information about organizations, locations, and phenomena relevant to overtourism (Leech & Svartvik, 2013).

By embedding facts within larger sentences, the writer maintains narrative fluency while still offering specific, contextual details. For instance, the clause “which monitors the environmental impact of tourism” not only identifies Murmuration but also immediately emphasizes its relevance to the topic. This structural efficiency is especially valuable in journalism, where space is limited and clarity is essential. Furthermore,

relative clauses help connect descriptive and analytical components, blending factual information with interpretive commentary. This enhances comprehension and reinforces the article's educational purpose.

#### Discourse Function of Grammar

Across the text, grammatical choices serve several identifiable functions:

- Tenses establish temporality and highlight the relationship between past developments, present conditions, and future implications.
- Passive voice reinforces neutrality and signals systemic issues.
- Gerunds and infinitives clarify ongoing processes and goals.
- Relative clauses condense information and maintain cohesion.

Taken together, these grammatical features reveal the rhetorical sophistication of Leahy's writing. Grammar is not used merely for structural correctness; it becomes a tool for shaping meaning, guiding interpretation, and persuading readers. The article's grammar supports its larger communicative goals:

1. To inform: Present simple and relative clauses present factual information clearly and efficiently.
2. To contextualize: Present perfect and past tense create a coherent historical narrative.
3. To caution: Future tense emphasizes impending consequences.
4. To maintain neutrality: Passive constructions allow for objective reporting.
5. To guide readers: Gerunds and infinitives organize ideas into logical sequences.

These grammatical elements work together to structure a narrative that is factual yet compelling, objective yet persuasive. In tourism journalism, where societal, environmental, and economic issues intersect such rhetorical precision is essential. The article's grammar strengthens its argument that overtourism is a multifaceted and urgent global challenge requiring thoughtful analysis and collaborative solutions.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study was concluded by affirming that the article "What's the Problem with Overtourism?" was constructed through the effective use of diverse grammatical structures that were intended to build a clear, credible, and engaging narrative about contemporary tourism issues. Various tense forms, voice choices, and complex grammatical devices such as gerunds, infinitives, and relative clauses were employed to shape the rhetorical impact of the text. These grammatical forms were not used merely as stylistic decoration; instead, they were positioned as essential resources that influenced how information was presented, interpreted, and understood by readers.

One of the most significant findings was identified in the predominant use of the present simple tense throughout the article. This tense was utilized to express general truths, established definitions, and ongoing conditions connected to overtourism. Sentences such as "The term 'overtourism' is relatively new" and "Overcrowding is an issue for both locals and tourists" were noted as examples of how the present simple was applied to strengthen the article's informative function. Through this tense, overtourism was framed as a current and observable phenomenon, ensuring that the issue was perceived as relevant and urgent. The steady use of this tense was also aligned with journalistic writing conventions, which typically were shaped around clarity and factual accuracy.

Additionally, the present perfect tense was identified as another key grammatical feature. It was used to illustrate cumulative developments, long-term impacts, and shifts in global tourism patterns. Through this tense, relationships between past events and their present consequences were highlighted, reinforcing the idea that overtourism had emerged over time. The rhetorical effect produced by this tense was recognized as especially important, as the present perfect was employed to connect historical background with contemporary concerns. By doing so, readers were encouraged to understand overtourism as a sustained issue rather than a crisis.

The passive voice itself was also found to play a major role in shaping the tone of the article. Many events, policies, and consequences were described without explicitly naming agents, which was consistent with the objective style of environmental journalism. Constructions such as "restrictions have been introduced" or "locations are being overwhelmed" were observed as strategies that shifted attention toward actions and outcomes rather than individuals or institutions. This focus on processes rather than agents was interpreted as a way to maintain neutrality, balance, and analytical distance when discussing complex tourism challenges involving multiple stakeholders.

Beyond tense and voice, the article's syntactic complexity was enhanced through the use of gerunds, infinitives, and relative clauses. Gerunds were employed to represent actions or practices—such as “managing visitor numbers” or “promoting sustainable alternatives”—as conceptual units that could be analyzed collectively. Infinitives often were used to communicate purpose or intention, helping readers understand motivations behind tourism strategies or policy decisions. Relative clauses were inserted to provide additional detail and clarification, ensuring that descriptions were expanded without interrupting the overall flow of the text. Through these forms, syntactic variety was achieved, and the readability and rhetorical strength of the article were improved. From a pedagogical perspective, the findings of this study were interpreted as useful insights for English learners, especially those engaged in tourism, hospitality, or environmental studies. Authentic texts such as this article were considered valuable models for understanding that grammar operates not only at the sentence level but also across the entire discourse. Rather than viewing grammar strictly as a matter of correctness, learners were shown how grammatical structures were used to create emphasis, coherence, tone, and persuasion. For future tourism professionals—who will be expected to communicate clearly, advocate for sustainability, and interpret complex information—these insights were regarded as especially relevant. Finally, several suggestions for future research were proposed. Comparative studies across different cultures or languages could be conducted to explore how writers from diverse backgrounds construct narratives about overtourism, sustainability, and ethics. Additional research could also be carried out to examine how grammatical variation influences readers' perceptions of responsibility, urgency, or credibility. By expanding the scope of analysis, a deeper understanding of the relationship between linguistic structure and public interpretation could be developed.

In conclusion, the article analyzed in this study was shown to demonstrate deliberate and effective use of grammatical structures that strengthened clarity, credibility, and persuasion. Grammar was portrayed as a communicative tool that shaped meaning, guided interpretation, and supported the article's overall purpose. It is hoped that this study will be used as a reference for future pedagogical development and further linguistic study in tourism communication.

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