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*The Use of English in Tourism Promotion:
A Comparative Analysis of Italian and
Uzbek official campaigns*

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the vital function of the English language through an analysis and discussion of official tourism web pages from Uzbekistan and Italy. Using a corpus-based methodology, the study explores the language strategies and marketing techniques used on the institutional websites of both nations. As a part of the project, a database from institutional tourism web pages has been created and analyzed in-depth using the *AntConc* software. The findings showed disparities and similarities in the persuasive use of English to engage tourists' attention. Therefore, this study provides valuable insights into a better understanding of multilingual communication techniques and gives information about the importance of linguistic choices in tourism promotional discourse.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation aims to investigate the crucial role of the English language in promotional discourse, particularly focusing on its persuasive use in official tourism campaigns. During a personal travel experience in Uzbekistan in September 2023, I noticed a lack of tourism brochures in English at some archaeological sites, even if this material was meant for an international audience. Therefore, to investigate this topic more, the present study compares tourism promotion in Uzbekistan, an emerging tourist destination, with Italy, a country with a long-standing tourism tradition. Thus, the purpose is to comprehend the differences between the two countries in promoting tourism abroad, considering how they use English on their institutional web pages to enhance their offer.

Chapter 1 will provide a general overview of English as a lingua franca, which will be useful to comprehend the further analysis of the study. Studies on the relationship between language and persuasion reveal that language can be used strategically to persuade readers, particularly in tourism discourse (English for Specific Purposes or ESP). By exploring the roots of this industry, we can better understand its bond with English and the importance of effective promotion accomplished through the language.

Chapter 2 will outline the sources and methods chosen for this research. It begins by first defining what a corpus is and corpus linguistics, followed by detailed descriptions of the data collection procedure and the *AntConc* software. The investigated data were extracted from Italy and Uzbekistan's official tourism web pages. For the sake of clarity, visual representations, such as tables and figures, are included in the chapter. Furthermore, the final section highlights the specific persuasive linguistic elements analyzed in detail in the following part.

Finally, Chapter 3 will report and discuss the results obtained from the corpus-based analysis and compare the Italy Corpus with the Uzbekistan Corpus. Through the identification of discrepancies and similarities, this section gives useful insights into how these two nations choose to promote their cultural heritage abroad.

The concluding section will summarize the key findings and provide some recommendations to institutional tourism offices on how to improve their persuasive communication, along with some suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 1

Understanding the Role of English in the Tourism Industry

The present chapter delves into the meaningful interrelationship between the English language and the tourism industry. To ensure a comprehensive understanding, this part of the dissertation begins with specific and technical information about English use as a lingua franca (ELF), contextualizing the historical background of this status. Subsequently, Tourism will be mentioned as one of the fields where the specialization of this language has been successful in helping the industry to expand and improve. In the further sections, I will focus on the crucial role played by the AIDA model in enhancing the efficacy of tourism communication, particularly in its persuasive capacity. Therefore, the final section introduces a practical tool that will be explained and integrated into forthcoming chapters.

1.1. English as a lingua franca

The use of English as a lingua franca (ELF) is defined as “the common language of choice, among speakers who come from different linguacultural backgrounds” (Jenkins, 2007), emphasizing its role in both linguistic and cultural domains. Its application in different disciplines, such as business, technology, science, and diplomacy, emphasizes its crucial role in international communication. The main focus of ELF is to facilitate clear and understandable communication among individuals from various countries, rather than adhering strictly to traditional grammar rules. By prioritizing effective communication, a lingua franca enables people who speak different idioms to comprehend and interact with each other. This linguistic approach within the global population impacts intercultural communication and can contribute to developing greater collaboration. According to the survey published by Statista, findings reveal that in 2023, English ranked as the most widely spoken language globally, with Chinese, Hindi, and Spanish following closely behind. This research considers both native and non-native speakers, reported in millions. To provide precise statistics, the total number of

English speakers has reached 1.5 billion. On the other hand, the profusion of linguistic variations and adaptations in ELF has inevitably attracted some criticism from linguists. They have argued that ‘standard’ language selection (British and American English) contributed to the marginalization of other dialects, rendering it an inherently ‘monocentric’ idiom (Ruby and Saraceni, 2006: 11). Nevertheless, the results from research conducted among participants in the European Union’s Erasmus Programme by Jennifer Jenkins, suggest that bilingualism is a valuable communication tool. The author further states that “world Englishes and English as a lingua franca have a lot more that draws them together than sets them apart” (Jenkins, 2007).

1.2. Historical background

The status of English as a global ‘lingua franca’ can be traced back to the deep historical agency of the British Empire. To understand the origins of this language, it is first necessary to set a linguistic framework, followed by the fundamental stage of its evolution. English belongs to the Indo-European language family, an ensemble comprehending multiple languages spoken across Europe, South Asia, and Southwest Asia. This is the world’s largest linguistic group characterized by shared features and similarities.

The version of the English used today is called modern. It descends from the Germanic branch, which includes Swedish, Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Dutch, and German. The English language evolved throughout thousands of years into three main phases: Anglo-Frisian, Old English, and Middle English. This process can be explained as the transition from a complex morphological structure, composed of numerous prefixes and suffixes, to simpler forms. From a geographical perspective this language, once confined to a small European region, has emerged as the most dominant language worldwide. According to Strevens’ analysis (1982), English historical development has undergone five phases. Among these, the fourth one, known as “the colonial subjects (1900-1950)” was arguably the most significant for the language’s global spread. Indeed, Strevens notes that

during this period it was intentionally taught to colonial populations through English-medium educational systems in Africa, South Asia, the Pacific, and other regions. This contributed to the adoption of English as a second language, for various social purposes, by millions of people (Strevens, 1982). A crucial factor for its spread was the distribution of texts through the printing press, a device producing multiple copies of a text. It made easier and faster the book's publication and contributed to creating a standard language version.

1.2.1. The use of the English language in Europe and Asia

English can be adapted to specific contexts and situations, creating a variety known as English for Specific Purposes (ESP), defined as its teaching modality for academic or professional functions (Laurence, 1997). The expansion of this linguistic approach began in the second half of the XX century, and since then, its spread has been slow but constant over the decades.

Given the prominence of the tourism industry, a comparative examination of the global distribution of English is warranted. Hence, this dissertation will focus on continents that have recently witnessed substantial growth in their roles in international tourism due to the adoption of English as a second language. Undoubtedly, this relevance has emphasized the importance of language proficiency in facilitating travel and hospitality services. This claim is supported by the World Population Review, a platform providing global demographic data. It emerged that European nations have a deep cultural heritage which inevitably attracts millions of tourists per year. As a result, it is notable that five European countries are among the top 10 most popular destinations. France, followed by Italy, Spain, the Czech Republic, and Hungary, hosted over 117 million tourists in 2019. According to the European Commission's report on tourism, effective English language skills among services provided in these countries, contribute to visitor satisfaction and positive experiences, attracting more people to these cities (European Commission, 2020).

The situation changed after the COVID-19 pandemic when people desired to visit distant and uncrowded destinations. Therefore, Africa and Asia emerged as the preeminent continents to satisfy such preferences, particularly “new” countries like Uzbekistan. The abundance of well-preserved historical monuments alongside a modest tourist inbound, was facilitated by the visa-free reforms, the exemption from entry permits extended to citizens of 77 countries. Referring to the measures implemented regarding the English language within the tourism sector, this nation promulgated a resolution in 2021 “for increasing the numbers of youngsters who mastered foreign languages” (Sultanov, Gulomkhasanov, Dilnoza, 2022). As asserted by the Uzbek Government, this initiative elevates the country to a new level by amplifying its standings in the tourism industry world rankings (Sultanov, Gulomkhasanov, Dilnoza, 2022: 52). This decision led to an influx of 7 million tourists to Uzbekistan in 2023, as disclosed by the Chairman of Tourism Committee, Umid Shadiyev, at the beginning of the current year (Gazeta.uz, 2024).

1.3. The Tourism Industry

“We encounter tourism and travel texts in our everyday life” (Francesconi, y: 4) through various means of communication, like adverts, social media, emails from travel companies, travel anecdotes shared in conversations, etcetera. Consequently, with its expanding global reach, tourism has become interdisciplinary and covers domains including the humanities, economics, law, gastronomy, sports, and entertainment (Maci, 2021: 4). On the other hand, due to its dynamicity, giving definitions is challenging. The United Nations World Tourism Organization defines it as “a social, cultural and economic phenomenon related to the movement of people of their usual place of residence, pleasure being the usual motivation, for a limited time” (UN Tourism, 2008). This United Nations Agency represents the leading international authority in the tourism sector, even in sustainability with the Statistical Framework for Measuring Sustainability of Tourism (MST).

Back to the origin of this industry, mass tourism was born in England in the eighteenth century, due to the ability of Thomas Cook to organize the technologies invented during the Industrial Revolution. He pioneered the concept of “pre-scheduled tours for groups of people who traveled together with similar purposes usually under the organization of tourism professionals” (Sezgin, Yolal, 2012). By using railways and ships for transportation, Cook was able to successfully reach the amount of 20,000 tourists annually. Going back to the present day, technology has completely transformed the tourism industry, making air travel more accessible than in the previous century. In addition, this sector now offers niche experiences, including culinary and wellness tourism, alongside eco-tourism for those visitors aware of the environmental issues.

1.3.1. Tourism 2.0

Technology and the World Wide Web have deeply changed the world and, since then, everyone started interacting simultaneously from different countries. This has expanded even to the tourism industry, allowing people to look for information on destinations and flights by themselves, confronting prices, and documenting online. Indeed, knowledge can be easily acquired due to an open-access research environment full of source materials (Berlin Declaration, 2003). Online platforms, including TripAdvisor, Booking, Expedia, Skyscanner, etc., have proven to be people's favourite tools for planning their vacations and require them to collaborate to gain transparency in information. Moreover, despite many other scientific domains, “tourism research is already informed by multiple disciplines” (Liburd J., 2011) including geography, sociology, economics, law, and political science. Therefore, the ongoing evolution of technology continues to shape the tourism sector, developing new useful tools to optimize the travel experience.

1.3.2. “New” tourism destinations

As anticipated in the paragraph about the present situation in Europe and Asia, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly reshaped the preferences in travel destinations. People are now seeking new experiences in countries that are not invaded by the traditional masses of tourists. The trend is evident among experienced travelers, who prefer more adventurous and unique landscapes. This claim is supported by MacCannell (1976), as cited by Sulaiman and Wilson (2019), who asserted that tourists want to discover authenticity through “the backstage regions of times from the past, pre-modern places in pristine, natural landscapes, and the real lives and local cultures of others”. The best destinations for fulfilling this need are mostly in Asia and Africa, while there are also notable tourists inbound in South America. Buenos Aires, Costa Rica, Chile, South Africa, Kenya, and Senegal are notable references. About Asia, Uzbekistan is particularly attractive to tourists due to its rich cultural legacy and uncrowded UNESCO sites. Furthermore, The Economist (2019) named it the most improved country and Lonely Planet (2019) recognized Uzbekistan as the best 2020 travel destination.

1.4. English for Tourism

Aforesaid, tourism contributes to the growth and development of countries. As a result, the quality of tourism services largely relies on the skills and abilities of the workforce; thus, it is crucial to provide adequate training and education to tourism employees, including English teaching. They can achieve the necessary skills to communicate effectively with tourists from many cultural backgrounds. Specifically, English has been linguistically adjusted to appeal to the largest possible customer base through brochures, ads, and announcements. This concept known as “persuasiveness”, as underscored by Maci (2023: 21), represents the ability to “sell a product by describing a reality which has to be perceived by potential tourists as authentic”. Conventionally, when tourism aims to gain goods and services exchange, it uses two strategies: offer and command. The former (see, for example, Fig. 1) manifests through modal verbs, such as ‘will’ and ‘should’, followed by a lexical verb of liking or desire; the latter (see, for example, Fig. 2) is conveyed through imperatives (Manca, 2016: 38).

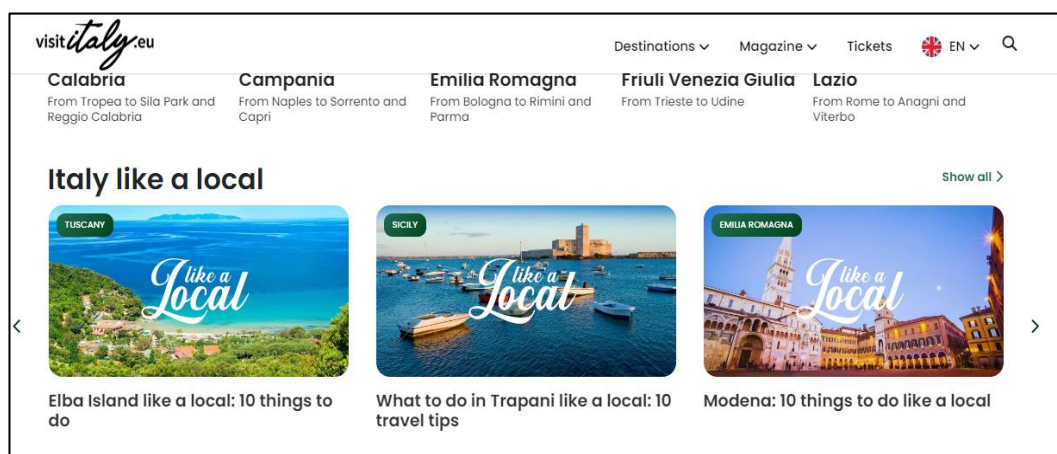


Figure 1 – “Offer” from the website www.visitItaly.eu



Figure 2 – “Command” from the website www.uzbekistan.travel/en

As can be observed in Figure 1 above, the direct question is not visible. However, as specified by Manca in her analysis, it may be interpreted as if it were written as “Would you like to visit Italy like a local?”. This brief example aims to enhance how the English language influences tourism communication. Since this is a broad and complex topic, further insights will be provided in the following paragraphs.

1.5. Persuasion in Tourism Discourse: the AIDA model

According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2014), persuasion is defined as the act of convincing someone to do something. Concerning the tourism industry, this strategy is applied to convert potential tourists with “the aim

of creating perceptions, beliefs, ideas, and expectations” (Sulaiman and Wilson, 2016: 11) as part of a mental representation. Therefore, it is crucial to identify the specific features of travel promotion that best attract consumers. In tourism communication, persuasion usually manifests through a network of interrelations of verbal and visual elements combined to satisfy tourists’ expectations (Manca, 2016: 2).

Among the various existing methods, the most effective one in inducing the potential tourist to take action and purchase a product is the AIDA model. Initially developed to understand personal selling, the model was later applied to marketing and advertising (Manca, 2016). The purchase of a product or a service happens through a sequence of actions the consumers accomplish. As explained by Manca, this communication strategy is articulated in four steps representing a linear sequence of effects: Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action. When potential tourists encounter an advertisement that captures their attention, they begin to show interest and look forward to finding new information. At this stage, if the communication effectively uses names and adjectives enhancing the beauty and uniqueness of the destinations, the consumers start to feel the desire to own the product. In the final step of the entire process, if the communication is well-structured and persuasive, the consumers take action. For clarification, an overview map has been drawn up giving examples concerning the AIDA model in the tourism sector (Fig. 3). Alongside this method, the role of images is fundamental as the visual elements are what potential tourists search for to confirm or refute their expectations (Sulaiman and Wilson, 2016: 12).

THE AIDA MODEL IN TOURISM DISCOURSE

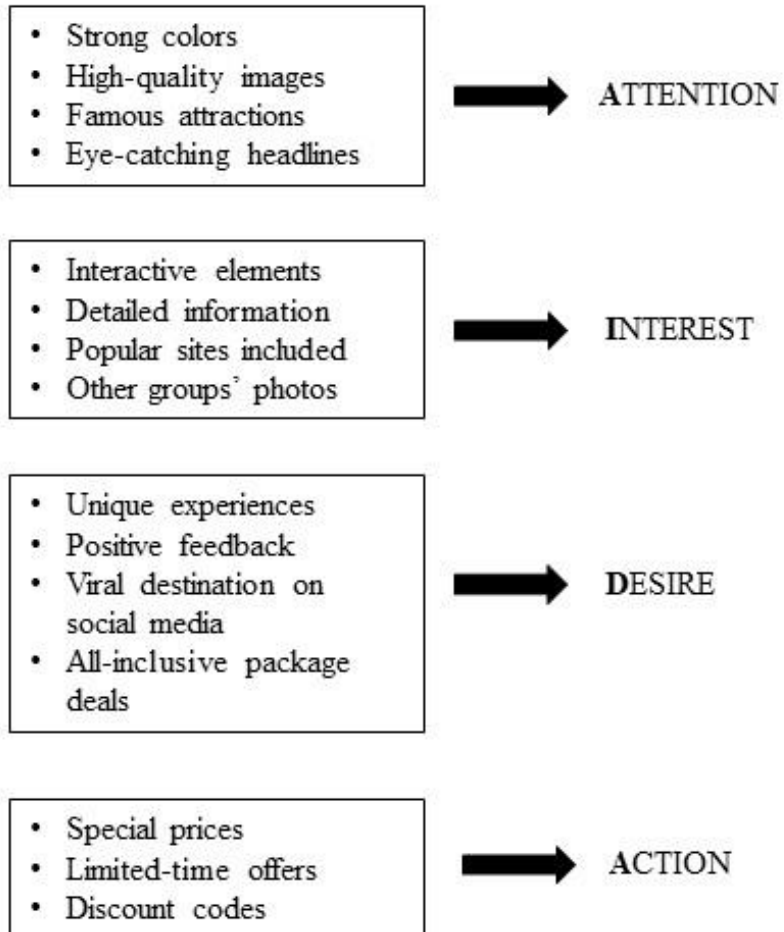


Figure 3 – Example of AIDA model in tourism discourse

1.5.1. The importance of tourist reviews

Online recommendations are one of the most important aspects for travelers during the decision-making process, as they trust other peers more than the official tourism web pages (Filieri, Algezau, & McLeay, 2015). Thus, potential tourists evaluate their travel options considering both positive and negative feedback on accommodations, attractions, and restaurants. Undoubtedly, TripAdvisor stands out as the primary reference platform in this scenario. “With more than 75 million travel reviews and opinions, the popular TripAdvisor site is consulted at the pre-trip stage by 60 million individual monthly visitors” (Francesconi, 2014: 33). In 2021 the leading reviews website published a highly informative report highlighting the significant impact of user reviews. Indeed, it is important to mention the importance of this tool in shaping travelers' choices and provides a valuable resource. As a result, 3 out of 4 respondents rated online reviews as “extremely important” when making travel decisions (TripAdvisor, 2021). Feedback contains useful insights to improve service and understand consumer preferences and, given this importance, tourism institutional web pages often rely on them to improve their services.

CHAPTER 2

A corpus-based analysis

This chapter begins with the notion of corpus and its main characteristics. Among the wide range of analysis software options available, *AntConc* has been selected as a crucial tool for investigating the tourism language's primary lexical and syntactic features. This section outlines the procedure of corpus creation, following the methodology proposed by Manca (2016), which was modified to suit the purposes of this study. The texts included in the database were downloaded from the official websites of Uzbekistan and Italy's tourism boards. The final part of the chapter elucidates lexical and syntactic features of travel discourse and explains how to recognize its persuasive elements. The resources and definitions discussed in this section will be fundamental for the analysis presented in the final part of the research.

2.1. Definition of corpus and corpus linguistics

According to the Longman Dictionary, a corpus (pl. corpora) is a “large collection of written or spoken language, that is used for studying the language” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, s.v. “corpus”). In other words, it consists of a set of texts, typically stored in electronic format, applied to linguistic analysis. These contents provide authentic evidence of linguistic varieties, considered ‘natural’ because they represent real-life communicative contexts. The first computerized corpus was assembled in 1971 by the Montreal French Project, containing one million words (Sankoff, Lessard & Turong, 1977). Due to digital evolution, most corpora are now electronically stored. They can be examined using specialized software, with *AntConc* and Sketch Engine being the most popular and reliable tools in this field. These programs allow the linguist to investigate the language and give useful insights to the research (Manca, 2016: 69).

Once collected, the texts composing corpora can be investigated by applying a methodology known as corpus linguistics. This approach is based on the

assumption that the purpose of analysis should not be the study of what is theoretically possible, but rather the actual features that naturally occur in a language (Manca, 2016: 66). For this reason, a corpus is considered empirical, as it always refers to real-life language. As Manca (2016: 67) suggests, on these linguistic features some hypotheses can be formulated and then analyzed, employing specialized computer software, a powerful tool that will be explained in Section 2.3. of the present chapter.

The results achieved through the corpus analysis can either confirm existing expectations or reveal new insights. In the first case, the approach is defined as ‘corpus-based’, while the latter is known as ‘corpus-driven’. This second option claims that the corpus itself should be the sole source of hypotheses about language, in contrast to the first one, which exploits the tool to explore a pre-existing linguistic theory (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001). As the present dissertation aims to analyze persuasion and tourism promotion, a corpus extracted from the institutional websites of Italy and Uzbekistan has been created. Therefore, linguistic features will be examined through an ad-hoc corpus to investigate the complexity of tourism language promotion.

2.2. Data collection method

As anticipated in the previous paragraph, nowadays corpus data are predominantly stored in electronic format, with careful consideration given to the representativeness of language varieties. In the context of this dissertation, Official Tourism Websites represent the optimal source of data, as they effectively employ persuasive language to describe travel services.

In the assembling process of the official tourism website corpus, only certified web pages were used. They are managed by authorized Tourism Boards of the respective countries, ensuring reliable information about destinations, accommodations, culture, and local tips. Indeed, texts in the corpus were gathered from certified web pages for both countries to observe and describe real examples of the use of language in promotional materials, with persuasive intentions.

Specifically, for Italy, the institutional web pages are www.visititaly.eu and www.italia.it, whereas for Uzbekistan the official website is only www.uzbekistan.travel/en. The content was first translated into English using the translation option available on the upper section of the screen and then converted into a text file (.txt). Alternatively, the same result can be achieved by adding the extension “/en” to the string in the search bar. The *AntConc* software enables the file conversion into database format only if this procedure is applied. To ensure a comprehensive linguistic representation of each country, three different cities were selected. This selection relies on the rankings provided by TripAdvisor’s recommendations. Thus, according to the leading reviews website, the unmissable towns in Italy are Rome, Florence, and Venice, while for Uzbekistan are Khiva, Samarkand, and Tashkent. The details about the structure are further explained in the following section of this chapter. As for the size, the corpus has to be large enough to be representative of the language under analysis. However, there is no fixed size to be considered appropriate and in tourism discourse texts tend to be shorter and direct. With these considerations, the corpus I created comprises 45.223 linguistic units (tokens) to ensure an adequate and representative sample size for analysis. As a result, Table 1 below provides a more concise overview.

OFFICIAL TOURISM WEBSITES CORPUS	
Sources	Tokens
Italy	29.428
Uzbekistan	15.795
Total number of tokens	45.223

Table 1 – Sources and size of the OTW Corpus

In corpus analysis, tokens represent the individual elements that constitute texts. In other words, they are linguistic units defined by spaces or punctuation. For instance, in the sentence “Landscapes that will take your breath away” (extracted from the homepage of www.italia.it/en) the tokens are “Landscapes”, “that”, “will”, “take”, “your”, “breath”, and “away”. This token count range helps build a rich dataset for linguistic analysis and ensures genuine findings. Corpora usually contain

more than millions of tokens; however, this dissertation focuses on a specific kind of language and countries, which inevitably reduces the total token amount. Ultimately, it is important to note that, from the point of view of the sender and the receiver, promotional material of official webpages symbolizes the “Business to consumer” model (B2C). Thus, the selected texts are written by governments or local authorities and are addressed to non-expert users.

2.2.1. A corpus of official tourism websites

As already mentioned in Section 2.2. of this chapter, the corpus was initially divided by country, specifically focusing on Italy and Uzbekistan. Three cities from each country were selected to ensure a valid linguistic representation, creating distinct text files. Then, only information about historical and cultural heritage was considered. This decision was driven by the fact that official tourism web pages often mention various services, including hotels and restaurants. In contrast, this research enhances the cultural promotion of the examined countries. Below, are Tables 2 and 3 showing the specific structures and the corresponding tokens, similar to the methodology by which the general corpus was previously illustrated.

ITALY CORPUS	
City	Tokens
Rome	10.624
Florence	9.105
Venice	9.699
Total number of tokens	29.428

Table 2 – Structure and Size of the Itay Corpus

UZBEKISTAN CORPUS	
City	Tokens
Samarkand	5.416
Khiva	2.392
Tashkent	7.987
Total number of tokens	15.795

Table 3 – Structure and Size of the Uzbekistan Corpus

Aiming to obtain more accurate results in the following phase of the analysis, efforts were made to achieve a comparable number of tokens across the corpora. Nonetheless, variations in the token counts are still present due to differences in the length and content of the text associated with each landmark. Additionally, there is only one Uzbek institutional webpage, whereas Italy owns two.

2.3. Corpus analysis tools

A corpus by itself does not provide useful data for the research. Therefore, it is crucial to plan a well-targeted analysis process to identify the important language features. As already discussed in the preceding chapter, one of the most efficient and widely used pieces of software in this field is *AntConc*, developed by Laurence Anthony. From the main user interface (Fig. 5), various tools can be utilized depending on the purpose of the analysis.

Anthony (2004), in his publications and forum, illustrates the tools available in the program that enable language analysis. The main ones are:

- Concordancer (KWIC)
- File View
- Word List/ Keyword List
- Word Clusters

Among them, the most suitable applications for this dissertation are Word List and Concordancer (KWIC). The former creates a list of words sorted by the number of occurrences in a text file, known as frequency. The latter, labeled as Key Word In Context (KWIC), presents concordance lines in which words are given between linguistic features typically co-occurring around them. The researched terms may not have a relevant meaning, but their collocation illustrates persuasive functions based on the linguistic context. The Word List function is useful for getting information about the rank and frequency of a term, divided into columns.

These statistical data discern what the institutional web pages decide to enhance and prioritize in their promotional strategy. Usually, the first ten most frequent words in a corpus are function words, such as determiners, prepositions, auxiliaries, conjunctions, pronouns, and prepositions (Manca, 2016). However, the comparison between corpora provides more valuable insights if the researcher only focuses on nouns, verbs, and adjectives, otherwise called content words. The tables below (Tables 4 and 5) illustrate the most frequent terms of the Italy and Uzbekistan corpora, highlighting the emphasis on the culture and historical heritage. Additionally, Figure 1 shows the interface of the KWIC function and word collocations.

ITALY WORD LIST		
Rank	Word	Frequency
1	Rome	181
2	Venice	151
3	City	145
4	Visit	145
5	Most	139
6	Florence	128
7	Colosseum	126
8	Gallery	120
9	Uffizi	115
10	Museums	111

Table 4 – Most frequent content words in the Italy Corpus

UZBEKISTAN WORD LIST		
Rank	Word	Frequency
1	Uzbekistan	94
2	Tashkent	80
3	Samarkand	75
4	Museum	68
5	Ancient	62
6	City	60
7	All	54
8	Madrasah	52
9	Most	52
10	History	50

Table 5 – Most frequent content words in the Uzbekistan Corpus

The screenshot displays the AntConc KWIC concordance interface. At the top, there are menu options: KWIC, Plot, File View, Cluster, N-Gram, Collocate, Word, Keyword, and Wordcloud. Below the menu, it shows 'Total Hits: 145 Page Size: 100 hits' and a search bar containing 'city'. The main area is a table with columns: File, Left Context, Hit, and Right Context. The table lists 17 concordance lines, each with a file name (e.g., Florence.txt, Rome.txt, Venice.txt), a left context snippet, the word 'city' as the hit, and a right context snippet. Below the table, there are search options: 'Search Query' with checkboxes for Words, Case, and Regex; 'Results Set' set to 'All hits'; 'Context Size' set to '10 token(s)'; and 'Sort Options' with dropdowns for 'Sort to right', 'Sort 1', 'Sort 2', 'Sort 3', and 'Order by freq'.

	File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
1	Florence.txt	for the offices of the municipal administration, magistrates of the	city	of Florence, and the State Archives. Traces of the
2	Florence.txt	prevent its deterioration. In addition to the symbol of the	city	of Florence, four other impressive unfinished sculptures by Mich
3	Florence.txt	Maria Luisa de' Medici bequeathed the artistic collections to the	city	of Florence, provided that they never left the Grand
4	Florence.txt	Novella station After considering the various ways to reach the	city	of Florence, the conclusion is that the closest stop
5	Florence.txt	visit the Uffizi, the prerequisite is to get to the	city	of Florence, where the museum is located right in
6	Rome.txt	monuments, is of great economic importance to Lazio, with the	city	of Rome always on the list of the most
7	Florence.txt	was one of the first sites recognised after the historic	city	of Rome and Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper
8	Rome.txt	of the Roman Empire and its greatness everywhere: just the	city	of Rome is rich in heritage, monuments and archaeological
9	Venice.txt	this region is famous for the charm of Verona, the	city	of Romeo and Juliet, Padua, a treasure trove of
10	Venice.txt	where the world's first woman graduated. Verona is the	city	of Romeo and Juliet. The entire historic centre is
11	Florence.txt	city that symbolises the Renaissance The Tuscan capital, a Renaissance	city	of art and Italian culture, Florence has spanned the
12	Rome.txt	named lake and the wonderful Orsini-Odescalchi castle; Tuscany, a	city	of great importance in ancient times still preserving intact
13	Venice.txt	the Scrovegni Chapel that Giotto frescoed. Padua is also the	city	of Italy's second oldest university, the Bo, where
14	Venice.txt	masterpieces including those of the great Giotto, and Vicenza, the	city	of Palladio. Also noteworthy are the walled cities, including
15	Rome.txt	of Castel Sant'Angelo offers a breathtaking spectacle over the	city	of Rome, giving an unforgettable experience to anyone who
16	Rome.txt	an out-of-the-box cultural experience in the vibrant	city	of Rome. Between history and beauty: The museums of
17	Rome.txt	origin is the largest one in Europe; Anagni, another famous "	city	of the Popes"; and Sperlonga, a seaside town with

Figure 7 – The KWIC concordance from the AntConc Interface

In conclusion, the software *AntConc* provides fundamental tools, crucial for language analysis. This process of linguistic analysis is essential to understand the different ways Italy and Uzbekistan use the English language to promote their countries through official tourism web pages.

2.4. Corpus analysis: Lexical and syntactic features of tourism discourse

This paragraph elucidates the linguistic features by which the corpus analysis works. Technically speaking, the language of tourism can be investigated through lexical and syntactic features. From a lexical perspective, the main characteristics are monoreferentiality and conciseness, while syntactic features are expressive conciseness and ego-targeting (Macy, 2013: 10-23). Monoreferentiality pertains to Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) terminology and refers to its ability to convey only one connotation. For example, the noun “gallery” has multiple meanings, but in tourism terminology, this term refers to a place where art pieces

are exhibited. Indeed, with this linguistic quality, the problem of ambiguous or imprecise vocabulary is absent. Secondly, the language of the travel industry aims to inform the reader with specific yet concise information. As a result, acronyms ('B&B' for Bed and Breakfast or 'FAQ' for Frequently Asked Questions), compounds (Eco-tourism), blending (Agritourism), and zero derivation (Maci, 2013) are frequently in tourism discourse.

From the syntactic point of view, tourism language often omits unnecessary phrasal elements, such as articles, subjects, prepositions, and verbs. For instance, a demonstration can be found on the www.visititaly.eu homepage. The phrase heading the section "Italy like a local" implicitly contains a verb, with "Explore Italy like a local" or "Travel through Italy" being the possible alternatives. Ego-targeting is another technique concerning the syntactic structure, aimed at engaging the reader by making them feel different from the mass of customers (Francesconi, 2014: 62). This expedient directly involves the potential tourist and creates a sense of exclusivity. To conclude, the lexical and syntactic features offer information about how tourism discourse attracts and informs travelers by utilizing monoreferentiality, conciseness, expressive conciseness, and ego-targeting.

2.4.1. Persuasive linguistic elements

Content words can be interpreted by following the four steps of the AIDA model, as explained in Chapter 1 (cf. paragraph 1.4.). This model is crucial and very relevant for our study because it enables linguists to understand how persuasion is achieved in the tourism language and identify the elements that are more relevant than others in the country's heritage promotion. Indeed Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action should enhance similarities across cultures (Manca, 2016: 66). The first step is often achieved through adjectives and nouns underlining the uniqueness and historical worthiness of the landmarks. The engaging phase is often conveyed through informative nouns and adjectives that provide some details about cultural attractions. Still, with these linguistic elements, the writers aim to induce the reader to create a stronger emotional connection and to desire to live the experience in the

first person. Desire and Action are often achieved through imperative and interrogative forms, such as ‘What are you waiting for?’ or ‘Choose the best option’. The specific functions covered by imperatives, positive adjectives, superlatives, and interrogative forms will be illustrated with concrete examples for each corpus in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

Data analysis

The comparative investigation presented in this final chapter of the corpora of promotional writing about Italy and Uzbekistan delves into the effective use of important content terms. The present analysis uses *AntConc* software to examine the persuasive properties of imperative verbs, adjectives, superlatives, and interrogative structures, under the theoretical framework proposed by Manca (2016). Corpus linguistics serves as a descriptive tool to analyze specific linguistic features (see Chapter 2, Section 2.1), and this approach is also applied to the present study. Hence, the purpose is to check whether non-native English-speaking countries, such as Italy and Uzbekistan, employ persuasive strategies on their institutional tourism websites to enhance their appeal to an international audience. The findings will provide valuable insights into how these countries use the English language to promote their destinations. Further interpretations of these results will be given in the conclusion.

3.1. Italy Corpus

The Italy Corpus is a collection of texts downloaded from Italy's official tourism websites, www.visititaly.eu and www.italia.it/en. They encompass a wide range of attractions, focusing on persuasive language strategies to promote Italy's cultural heritage. The subsequent analysis concentrates on some key linguistic elements that are essential to comprehend the tourism promotion system. Specifically, it explores imperative verb forms, adjectives, superlatives, and interrogative structures. The forthcoming paragraphs provide a more detailed examination of those aspects. The corpus will be analyzed with the help of the software *AntConc*, with particular attention given to the KWIC function (Key Word in Context) and Word List function (see Chapter 2, Section 2.3).

3.1.1. Structure

The structure of this corpus was conceived to represent how writers about Italy use the English language to promote the country on the international tourism market. The corpus contains 29.428 tokens sourced from institutional web pages. The texts, gathered from www.visititaly.eu and www.italia.it/en, include descriptions of cultural attractions, practical tips, and general information for tourists. The corpus concentrates on three specific cities: Florence (9.105 tokens), Rome (10.624 tokens), and Venice (9.699 tokens). This selection aims to offer a wide range of Italian travel experiences and a variety of cultural heritage. For this study, content words - nouns, verbs, and adjectives - and their appropriate forms concerning their persuasive use to promote tourism are the main focus of the analysis.

3.1.2. Imperative verbs

Verbs are strategically used in tourism language to invite the reader toward action, following the fourth step of the AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action). This is accomplished by using the imperative verb form, which plays a crucial role in persuading potential tourists. This conjugation works well since it directly asks the reader to select between two possible alternatives, pointing them to the better option. As the table below shows, Italy's official tourism websites use this strategy to catch the attention of potential tourists.

IMPERATIVE	EXAMPLES	FREQUENCY
Visit	<i>Visit the Uffizi to treat yourself to a few hours</i> <i>Visit the Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere</i> <i>The Trevi Fountain: Visit this jewel of water and stone</i> <i>Visit Italy like a local</i>	9
Enjoy	<i>Enjoy delightful occasions while touring ancient villages ...</i> <i>Climb up and enjoy the breathtaking view over Rome!</i> <i>Enjoy the picture postcard views of Ponte Vecchio!</i>	3

See	<i>See it from a different viewpoint</i> <i>See together which method is right for you</i>	2
Have	<i>Have a look at the best things to see in Venice</i> <i>Have fun! Visit the Colosseum by night</i>	2
Explore	<i>Explore one of the wonders of the modern world: the Colosseum</i> <i>Explore Italy like a local (Fig. 1)</i>	2

Table 1 - 5 most frequent imperative verbs in the Italy Corpus

The top 5 verbs in the Italy Corpus, i.e. ‘visit’, ‘enjoy’, ‘see’, ‘have’, and ‘explore’, establish direct communication with potential tourists. Additionally, to emphasize their persuasiveness, these verbs often appear in expressions such as ‘it is a must-see attraction’ or ‘(top) 10 things you should visit in’. Considering only the frequency of imperatives, the data is not as high as expected, but it still displays Italy’s intention to persuade and motivate the readers to discover its attractions. Interestingly, many of the imperative verbs occur on the main pages of the websites, particularly on the homepage. Thus, as the first point of contact with the reader, it is designed to make a stronger impact. The perfect instance of this approach is found on the *Visititaly* homepage, where the most visible element is the sentence “Explore Italy like a local” (Figure 1).

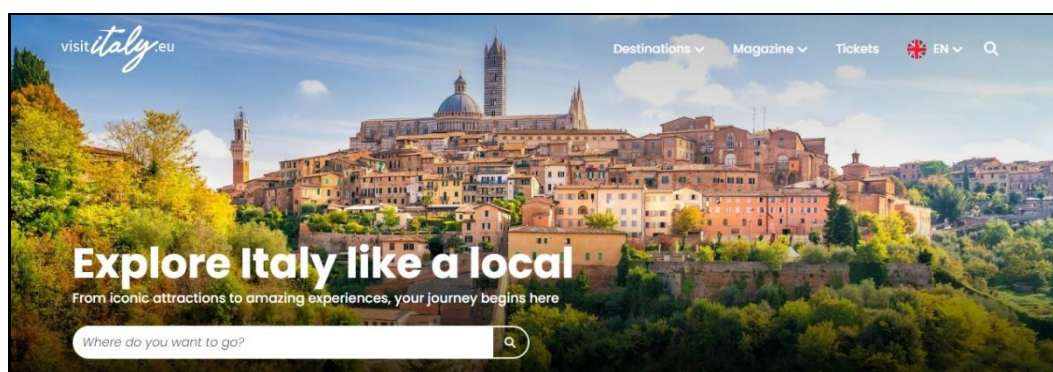


Figure 1 - Example of imperative verb in the Italy Corpus in www.visititaly.eu

3.1.3. Positive adjectives

With regard to the AIDA model, adjectives represent a key element in tourism language, particularly in enhancing the interest and desirability of a destination (Manca, 2016: p.). Within the Italy Corpus, positive adjectives are strategically employed to highlight the unique qualities of Italian heritage, thereby persuading potential tourists of its value.

Some authors (e.g. Manca, 2016 and Maci, 2020) have classified adjectives based on different criteria, including semantic or syntactic aspects. However, the purpose of this present study is not to provide a classification but rather to examine the presence and use of adjectives as key components of persuasion strategy in tourism promotion. The adjective ‘famous’ stands out as the most frequently occurring, appearing 75 times throughout the database. With this linguistic strategy, the texts do not only suggest to the reader that these destinations are worth visiting but also refer to them as essential experiences. Indeed, it contributes to building up an imagined scenario that increases the prestige and global significance of Italy’s cultural heritage. Table 2 below lists the ten most frequent positive adjectives found on Italy’s official tourism websites, ordered in terms of frequency in the corpus.

ADJECTIVE	EXAMPLES	FREQUENCY
Famous	<i>The 10 most beautiful and famous churches in Venice</i> <i>The most famous and appreciated in the world</i> <i>Valdobbiadene is famous for being the home of Prosecco</i> <i>This region is famous for the charm of Verona</i>	75
Ancient	<i>This fusion of ancient and modern architecture offers visitors a unique experience</i> <i>A collection of ancient sculptures and paintings ...</i> <i>Treasures of ancient art by Bronzino, ...</i> <i>Visit them to catapult you straight into ancient Rome!</i>	49
Beautiful	<i>The most beautiful and famous churches in Venice</i> <i>The most romantic and beautiful city in the world</i>	49

	<p>Among the beautiful paintings and magnificent sculptural works</p> <p>Spend your vacation in the beautiful Italian capital, Rome</p> <p>One of the most beautiful squares in Florence</p>	
Historical	<p>The historical center of Rome ...</p> <p>... historical artifacts and masterpieces of sacred art</p> <p>... great artistic and historical heritage, beautiful cities and villages ...</p> <p>... incredible historical testimony</p>	48
Venetian	<p>... the Venetian Aperitif now widespread throughout the world</p> <p>... unconveying piece of Venetian history</p> <p>A typical Venetian Bacaro</p> <p>Architecture typical of the Venetian style ...</p>	45
Roman	<p>... the most impressive Roman architecture that has come down to the present day</p> <p>... the heart of the Roman heritage</p> <p>... offering visitors a fascinating immersion in Roman history</p> <p>There are traditional Roman trattorias</p>	44
Great	<p>This region has a great artistic and historical heritage</p> <p>It represents a great example of the Venetian Renaissance</p> <p>This great artistic importance was attached to entertainment, sport, and games</p> <p>Look at the great attractions with which the city abounds</p>	42
Unique	<p>... such a unique and all-to-be-discovered region</p> <p>Venice owns a unique building style</p> <p>Rome is a unique city, rich in history and beauty</p> <p>Each museum is a unique journey through time</p> <p>An infinite beauty enclosed in a unique place</p>	42
Important	<p>This is one of the most important and fascinating archaeological areas in the world</p> <p>The most important museum in the world</p>	41

	<i>Incredible architectures and important stories and legends</i>	
Italian	<i>The region of Tuscany was the heart of Italian literature and art</i> <i>The beautiful Italian capital</i> <i>One of the world's best examples of Italian gardens and Florence's true green lung</i> <i>Unique and precious Italian jewel</i> <i>Uffizi Gallery: the masterpieces of Italian Renaissance</i>	41

Table 2 - The 10 most frequent positive adjectives in the Italy Corpus

Notably, the adjectives listed in the table above, highlight the beauty and uniqueness of Italy's artistic and cultural heritage. Local authorities emphasize the distinctive features of the promoted destinations but also reference the peculiarities of Venice, Florence, and Rome. The adjectives 'Venetian', 'Roman', and 'Italian' usually refer to architectural features, but they can also concern gastronomy discourse (e.g. "*There are traditional Roman trattorias, where you can enjoy a truly unforgettable evening*" and "... the Venetian Aperitif now widespread throughout the world"). Indeed, www.visititaly.com and www.italia.it/en achieve this by using an adjectival system based on the beauty and uniqueness of the tourism product. Moreover, in this way, web pages can influence readers' behavior and their perception of destinations.

3.1.4. Superlatives

Similar to the category analyzed before, the institutions of the official web pages investigated the use of superlatives to increase the positive connotation of attractions and experiences exposed to tourists. The use of superlative adjectives aims at intensifying the sense of distinctiveness and authenticity of the service promoted (Maci, 2020: 23). To simplify the procedure for the analysis, 'most' and 'best' are the two most frequent superlative adjectives attested in the corpus. Examples and frequencies of this lexical feature are included in Table 3 down below.

SUPERLATIVE	EXAMPLES	FREQUENCY
Most	<i>Saint Mark Cathedral is one of the most important and stunning churches in Venice</i> <i>The most important works of art</i> <i>The most beautiful city in the world</i> <i>The most iconic and distinctive landscapes</i>	139
Best	<i>The best museums in Rome you should visit in 2024</i> <i>The best things to see in Venice in two days</i> <i>The best side of Italy</i> <i>Best tours and experiences in...</i> <i>Florence is one of the best cities for a weekend away</i>	50

Table 3 - Most frequent superlative adjectives in the Italy Corpus

Yet, the combination of superlatives with positive adjectives contributes to increasing the attractiveness of a place and, for this reason, they tend to collocate with adjectives with a particular semantic effect. The following is an example of their use:

*The most **popular** time of the year is summer*

Furthermore, superlatives are also expressed through the form *the* + adjective + *-est*, such as *the greatest*, *the largest*. In Italy Corpus, this can be observed in www.italia.it/en when referring to the Colosseum.

*One of the capital's symbols is the Colosseum. As **the largest** and most famous Roman amphitheatre in the world, it was built between 70 and 80 AD and was home to gladiator fights, but also circus shows and games.*

3.1.5. Interrogative Forms

As mentioned in Chapter 2 (Section 2.4.1.), persuasion in tourism discourse is achieved by establishing a direct bond with the reader. Usually, the institutional webpages of Italy use the interrogative form to encourage the reader to take action and plan their visit. A corpus-based approach was employed to analyze this technique. Question marks within the texts were replaced with the term ‘questmark’ to facilitate the identification of the interrogative structures. Using the KWIC (Key Word In Context) function of the *AntConc* software, it emerged that question clauses occur 36 times in the Italy Corpus. Among these, 27 are WH-direct questions. Examples include:

Why is Rome called the Eternal City?

What to eat in Florence?

What are you waiting for?

This structure serves multiple purposes in the tourism discourse, mainly regarding persuasion by prompting the reader to envision themselves participating in the activity. Thus, the analysis centered on the frequency and type of interrogatives employed, particularly WH- interrogatives (what, where, why, which, who, how). These kinds of interrogative forms are known as direct questions and usually ask for an immediate response by the reader. The upper menu of www.italia.it/en homepage exemplifies this strategy, including instances such as ‘Where to go’ and ‘What to do’ that directly engage the readers and guide them towards trip planning activities (see Figure 2).

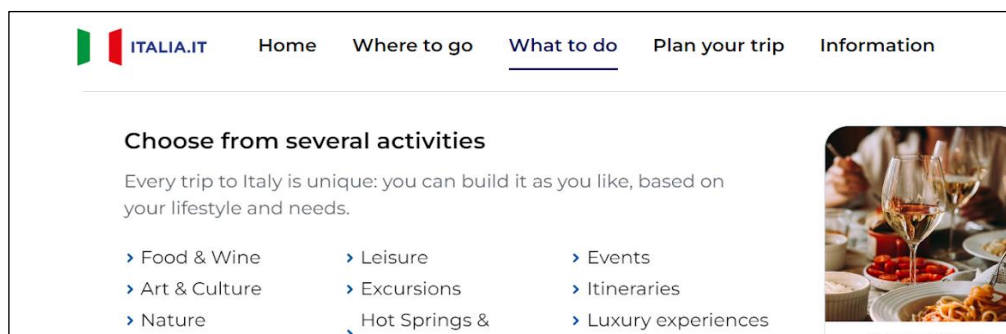


Figure 2 – Interrogative forms in www.italia.it/en

3.2. Uzbekistan Corpus

Unlike Italy, Uzbekistan currently has only one official web page. The Corpus created from Uzbekistan.travel/en comprises a selection of texts collected with the same procedure adopted to create the Italian Corpus. Thus, the subsequent analysis explores the use of imperative verb forms, adjectives, and their superlative variations, as well as interrogative structures. The investigation will be conducted with the help of the software *AntConc*, particularly focusing on the KWIC function (Key Word in Context) and Word List function.

3.2.1. Structure

This corpus was designed to represent how Uzbekistan tourism promoters use the English language to promote the country on the international tourism market. This corpus contains 15.955 tokens sourced from the above-mentioned Uzbekistan's tourism institutional website. The texts include descriptions of cultural attractions, practical tips, and general information for tourists. The corpus focuses on three main cities: Khiva (2.392 tokens), Samarkand (5.416 tokens), and Tashkent (7.987 tokens) to ensure a comprehensive representation of the country. To guarantee a coherent analysis, the same parameters selected for Italy will be employed.

3.2.2. Imperative verbs

Investigating Uzbekistan Corpus with the KWIC function, it has emerged that there is a near-total absence of imperative verbs. The only imperative form identified was the verb 'see', with a single frequency (see Table 4). This finding suggests that Uzbek tourism promotion may have limited or different use of imperatives compared to Italy.

IMPERATIVE	EXAMPLES	FREQUENCY
Visit	<i>No imperative forms</i>	-
Enjoy	<i>No imperative forms</i>	-
See	<i>See and taste the most delicious food in the world!</i>	1

Have	<i>No imperative forms</i>	-
Explore	<i>No imperative forms</i>	-

Table 4 - 5 most frequent imperative verbs in the Uzbekistan Corpus

On the other hand, analyzing the corpus it can be easily noticed that there is a higher frequency of polite forms with modal verbs, such as 'can' or 'would you like to'.

*There you **can** find absolutely everything*

***Would you like to** visit the real past?*

Concerning the imperative form of verbs in the Uzbekistan Corpus, we can conclude this part of the analysis by saying that the official web page prefers other persuasion strategies to attract potential tourists.

3.2.3. Positive adjectives

In the Uzbekistan Corpus, positive adjectives are strategically employed to underline the unique qualities of the country's heritage. Among these adjectives, 'ancient' is the most frequent, appearing 62 times throughout the database. It suggests that these destinations are testimonies of a deep historical tradition. Similarly, the others enhance the prestige and global significance of the attractions. Table 5 below lists the ten most frequent positive adjectives used on Uzbekistan's official tourism websites. They are ordered in terms of frequency in the corpus as previously done with the Italy Corpus.

ADJECTIVE	EXAMPLES	FREQUENCY
Ancient	<p><i>... the Great Silk Road and the ancient cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva and Termez</i></p> <p><i>... one of the most ancient cities not only in Central Asia, but in the world as well</i></p>	62

	<p>... magnificent architecture and ancient traditions preserved a unique heritage</p> <p>These cities have an ancient and rich history ...</p> <p>The ancient Khiva is included in the UNESCO World Heritage List</p>	
Unique	<p>... unique architecture and art</p> <p>Travelers can see unique landscapes in the Sarmyshsay Gorge</p> <p>Khiva is a unique open-air museum city</p> <p>At the Art Gallery you can buy unique products of Uzbek national masters</p>	31
Uzbek	<p>Several exhibitions of Uzbek art in Paris</p> <p>Uzbek dishes are a song of the East</p> <p>Real flavour of Uzbek gastronomy</p> <p>Way of life of the Uzbek people</p>	28
Large	<p>The book was in a large number of countries</p> <p>... a large selection of trails for skiing</p> <p>Darvaza-Khana is built with an arched large terrace in the national style</p> <p>... 'TashkentAle', which is attended by a large number of photographers from all over the world</p>	23
Modern	<p>The modern metropolis Samarkand ...</p> <p>One of the first and modern amusement Park in Tashkent</p> <p>Tashkent is a modern metropolis ...</p>	22
Famous	<p>The historical center of Khiva is decorated with the famous Ichan-Kala fortress</p> <p>Sherdor was the most famous educational institution among Muslims</p> <p>... gastronomic delights and famous craft workshops</p>	18
Beautiful	<p>We introduce you to the most beautiful places in this city</p> <p>You can take a walk in the most beautiful metro in the world</p> <p>Khiva is a beautiful oasis city with ancient walls</p> <p>The beauty and richness of this beautiful city ...</p>	18

Huge	<i>The city of Samarkand, which has a huge number of priceless monuments</i> <i>Ranging from small trinkets to huge memorable souvenirs</i> <i>Evidence of the huge potential of Uzbekistan</i>	11
Special	<i>The seventh room deserves special attention</i> <i>Among the special places, ...</i> <i>... inside which there were special rooms for guards and offices</i> <i>... there are certain places where you can get special shots</i>	8
Amazing	<i>The amazing story of Tashkent</i> <i>... but also for the amazing flora and fauna, picturesque mountains, ...</i> <i>Walking through these amazing places, you can feel the immersion in the ancient world</i>	5

Table 5 - 10 most frequent positive adjectives in the Uzbekistan Corpus

As previously seen for the Italy corpus, the positive adjectives employed by the official tourism web page of Uzbekistan emphasize the beauty and uniqueness of the country and its landscapes. The following are some examples of this strategy:

*We introduce you to the most **beautiful** places in this city*

*Khiva is a **unique** open-air museum city*

Moreover, the adjective ‘Uzbek’ remarks the nationality related to places and cuisine.

*Real flavour of **Uzbek** gastronomy*

***Uzbek** mountains are very attractive*

3.2.4. Superlatives

As anticipated in the analysis of the Italy corpus, ‘most’ and ‘best’ are the two most frequent superlative adjectives selected to represent superlative adjectives in the corpus. Examples and frequencies of this linguistic feature are included in Table 6 below.

SUPERLATIVE	EXAMPLES	FREQUENCY
Most	<p><i>The most famous large and significant museums of the country are ...</i></p> <p><i>... the most important archaeological sites in the Central Asia</i></p> <p><i>The most popular time of the year is summer</i></p> <p><i>One of the most popular routes for experienced riders is the route along the Northern slopes of the Ugam ridge</i></p> <p><i>Do you want to see the most spectacular sports competitions among young athletes?</i></p>	52
Best	<p><i>... where you can make the best shots</i></p> <p><i>The Art Gallery presents the best works of contemporary Uzbek artists</i></p> <p><i>One of the best ways to get in touch with the centuries-old history of Uzbekistan and discover a new culture is to visit various museums...</i></p> <p><i>The building of the Art Gallery presents the best works of contemporary Uzbek artists</i></p>	11

Table 6 - Most frequent superlative adjectives in the Uzbekistan Corpus

In a similar way to what was demonstrated by the analysis of Italy Corpus, the use of superlatives is revealed to be more frequent than positive adjectives. This method is crucial because it means that the official tourism web pages aim to enhance the uniqueness of cultural heritage as much as possible.

3.2.5. Interrogative forms

With the official tourism promotion in Uzbekistan, the same methodology previously used for the Italy Corpus was applied. Thus, the question marks in the

text files were replaced with the term ‘questmark’. From the corpus investigation, it emerged that interrogative clauses are used 13 times, with a significant majority of yes/no questions (9 out of 13). This interrogative structure can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no” and is useful to get a fast response while maintaining a courteous tone. For instance, instead of saying “Join us”, institutional web pages can write “Do you want to join us?”. Specifically, Uzbekistan’s tourism website demonstrates a preference for polite and inviting forms over Wh- questions (what, where, why, which, who, how), as illustrated in the following examples:

***Do you know that** Samarkand is the same age as such ancient capitals of the world as Rome and Nanjing?*

***Do you know that** in December 2016 pilaf was included in the UNESCO Intangible Heritage List?*

***Do you want to** see the most spectacular sports competitions among young athletes?*

***Do you want to** plunge into the past?*

Yes/no questions, characterized by phrases such as ‘Do you know...’ or ‘Would you like to...’, encouraging readers to give a quick answer without being imperative. Thus, the examples above highlight how Uzbekistan’s tourism websites effectively engage potential tourists through interrogative clauses while maintaining a polite tone.

3.3. Some considerations

The findings discussed in this chapter shed light on the persuasive techniques used by Italy and Uzbekistan’s institutional tourism web pages. A comparison of the data reveals some notable discrepancies in the use of the English language between the two countries. Italy appears to use more linguistic strategies for international promotion than Uzbekistan. However, from the investigation of the corpora, it turned out that both countries employ techniques to effectively lead readers through the AIDA model’s stages of attention, interest, desire, and action. For instance, the

two corpora show comparable patterns using positive adjectives and superlatives. Concerning favourable attributes, both corpora use ‘famous’, ‘ancient’, ‘beautiful’, and ‘unique’ to enhance the attractiveness of their cultural heritage. Additionally, similarities are in the use of adjectives emphasizing countries’ identity, i.e. ‘Uzbek’ for Uzbekistan and ‘Venetian’, ‘Roman’, and ‘Italian’ for Italy.

Furthermore, in both corpora ‘most’ and ‘best’ are the prevalent superlative adjectives. Although usage is more frequent in the Italy Corpus, the texts collected from the official Uzbek website also present a higher rate of superlatives than expected (63 frequencies) compared to the total of Italian ones (189 frequencies). The following pie chart (Figure 4) visually represents this situation:

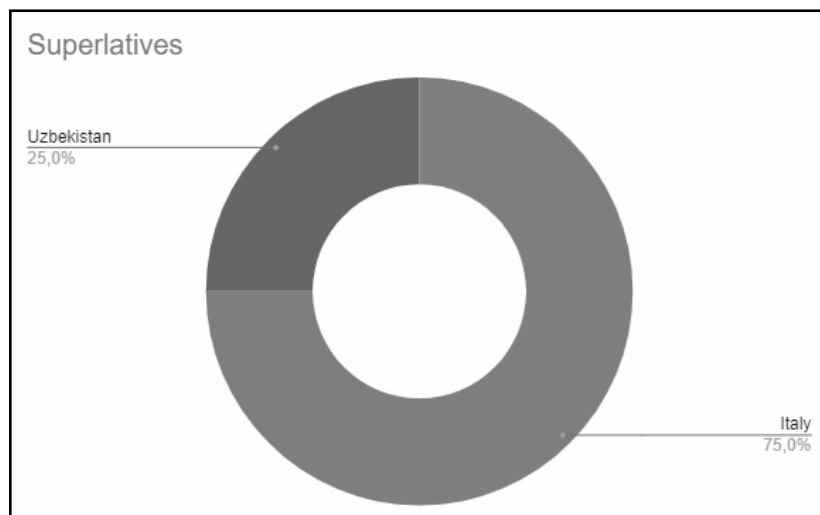


Figure 4 - Comparative pie chart of superlative frequencies in the Italian and Uzbek Corpora

Despite the general trends, there are striking discrepancies in the use of imperatives as shown in Table 7. These variations enhance how this conjugation of verbs is strategically employed to engage the reader in tourism discourse. Therefore, in the Italy Corpus imperative structures are frequently employed to invite the reader to book their trip or activity, particularly focused on the cultural heritage (see Table 1, Section 3.1.2.). On the other hand, the Uzbekistan Corpus contains only one imperative form, concerning the gastronomy discourse rather than national landmarks (see Table 4, Section 3.2.2.).

ITALY		UZBEKISTAN	
Imperative	Frequency	Imperative	Frequency
Visit	9	Visit	0
Enjoy	3	Enjoy	0
See	2	See	1
Have	2	Have	0
Explore	2	Explore	0

Table 7 - Frequency of imperative forms used on official tourism websites in Italy and Uzbekistan

Furthermore, there was a noticeable difference in the use of interrogative structures. It is noteworthy that Italy uses stronger rhetoric when it comes to tourism promotion than Uzbekistan. This was especially visible in the greater number of queries (27 times) that were introduced using Wh- interrogatives. On the other hand, preferences for yes/no questions are evident in nine of the thirteen frequencies present in the Uzbek Corpus. In the conclusive part of this dissertation, these findings will be examined in detail, giving some suggestions for further research.

Conclusion

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate the strategic use of the English language in tourism discourse, to achieve a deeper understanding of the persuasive techniques employed by the official websites of Italy and Uzbekistan. My findings show that both countries use persuasive linguistic elements to promote their destinations, despite the difference in the number of institutional tourism web pages (Italy having two and Uzbekistan having one).

The results offer valuable insights into tourism marketing, highlighting the use of imperative verbs, positive and superlative adjectives, and interrogative structures as powerful techniques for engaging potential tourists' attention. These methods can help destinations in improving the appeal and effectiveness of their website. Furthermore, my comparison between Italy and Uzbekistan indicates that both countries care about the promotion of their cultural and historical heritage. Through analysis with the *AntConc* software, I obtained an accurate representation of each country's use of language. Notably, the Italy Corpus presented a greater frequency of persuasive linguistic techniques, perhaps because this country has a longer experience as a popular tourist destination, giving it more time to improve its promotional strategies. In contrast, although Uzbekistan is relatively new to the global tourism industry, it still adopts all of the persuasive methods, indicating awareness of an effective campaign. A notable difference was found in the upper section of the respective home pages (www.visititaly.eu and www.italia.it/en) with interrogative structures that immediately reveal the intention to create a direct bond with users.

A similarity was noticed in the use of positive and superlative adjectives. Both countries employ these linguistic devices to enhance the beauty and cultural significance of their cultural heritage, often concerning their ancient origins. These qualities are often enhanced by superlatives, making a particular destination appear even more desirable to potential visitors.

In other words, this research has successfully addressed all the core questions of the study:

- RQ1: Are Italy and Uzbekistan promoted in similar ways in the English language?
- RQ2: How is English used to highlight local culture and traditions?
- RQ3: What differences exist in the use of persuasive language strategies between the two countries?

The first research question was answered negatively, due to the disparities aforementioned. However, it is important to underline that Uzbekistan, despite still being an emerging country in the tourism sector, effectively uses many of the same promotional linguistic strategies as Italy. Another purpose of this dissertation was to understand how English is used to promote cultural heritage. The corpus analysis revealed that Italy prefers to focus on its culture and famous cities, such as Venice and Rome, while Uzbekistan often emphasizes the antiquity of its attractions, particularly its role as one of the most important stops along the Silk Road. Finally, one of the main goals of my research was to find out whether, and how, the English language may be strategically used to promote destinations internationally and persuasively. In this domain, the AIDA model emerged as a key reference in this field, proving to be a useful tool for understanding how tourists are convinced to book experiences or travel. In Chapter 3 the different promotion techniques of Italian and Uzbek cities were extensively discussed and reported with specific examples. Overall, it can be stated, based on the data obtained, that Italy employs all linguistic strategies, but prefers to use adjectives and WH- interrogatives to be more appealing to potential visitors. On the other hand, Uzbekistan adopts few interrogative structures and almost no imperative verbs, relying on yes/no questions and positive adjectives to promote the uniqueness of its attractions.

To conclude, this dissertation has contributed to a deeper understanding of tourism promotion in two non-native English-speaking countries. Evidence of a high degree of promotional strategies was presented, refuting the initial assumption about Uzbekistan's limited use of the English language. As expected, Italy demonstrated a high level of tourism advertising, supported by a good number of

frequencies of effective language techniques. Future research could further investigate these findings, for instance, by examining the cultural factors influencing language use in tourism promotion or by proposing a similar study tracking improvements in Uzbekistan's institutional web page and official tourism campaigns.

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Summary in Italian

La presente tesi di laurea propone di condurre un'approfondita analisi sull'uso della lingua inglese nei siti ufficiali del turismo di Italia e Uzbekistan. La scelta di tale argomento non è casuale, ma nasce da un'esperienza personale vissuta durante un viaggio in Uzbekistan nel settembre del 2023. In occasione di una visita a Khiva, una delle città storiche più importanti del paese, notai come le brochure dei principali siti archeologici fossero redatte esclusivamente in lingua locale o russa, nonostante si trattasse di materiale rivolto a un pubblico internazionale. Questo episodio ha stimolato in me l'interesse alla base di questo studio, il cui obiettivo principale è quello di indagare le ragioni dell'utilizzo, o della mancanza, della lingua inglese nella promozione del patrimonio artistico e culturale di un paese, considerandone il suo valore persuasivo.

Il primo capitolo esplora in generale il ruolo della lingua inglese nel contesto storico e contemporaneo, risalendo nel dettaglio alle sue origini linguistiche sino ad arrivare al suo status di lingua franca globale. Successivamente, si introduce l'industria del turismo come tassello fondamentale nell'economia mondiale, ponendo particolare enfasi sul cambiamento delle preferenze dei viaggiatori dopo la pandemia COVID-19. Infatti, il virus ha modificato le classifiche delle destinazioni internazionali, posizionando ai vertici i paesi in cui vi sono prevalentemente paesaggi naturali e pochi turisti. Nella parte conclusiva del capitolo, i due concetti precedentemente esposti si fondono, spiegando l'importanza dell'uso persuasivo della lingua inglese nei siti ufficiali del turismo.

Il capitolo 2 fornisce tutte le nozioni di natura tecnica e metodologica necessarie per comprendere l'analisi dei dati presentati nel terzo. In questa sezione viene presentato il procedimento creazione dei due corpus, analizzati tramite il software *AntConc*. Questo strumento rende possibile la ricerca attraverso database originati a partire da file di testo (.txt), che nel caso di questa tesi sono stati ottenuti dai siti ufficiali del turismo di Italia e Uzbekistan. Una prima differenza è emersa proprio in questa fase di compilazione dei corpus, poiché il paese dell'est-asiatico presenta un'unica pagina ufficiale, a differenza delle due italiane. A tale proposito, per ottenere informazioni in merito alla frequenza e contesto d'uso degli elementi

linguistici in oggetto all'indagine, sono state utilizzate le due funzioni principali di *AntConc*: Word List e Key Word In Context (KWIC). La prima genera una lista ordinata delle parole presenti nel corpus, dalla più frequente alla meno ricorrente. La seconda funzione, invece, permette di visualizzare il contesto grammaticale in cui appaiono i termini ricercati, offrendo una panoramica sulle strutture linguistiche più comuni. Di particolare ispirazione per le tecniche di investigazione sono state le metodologie di analisi presentate in *Persuasion in Tourism Discourse* (Manca, 2016) ed *English tourism discourse* (Maci, 2020).

Tra i modelli di riferimento in questo campo, quello che sicuramente spicca di più è l'approccio AIDA, acronimo di Attention (Attenzione), Interest (Interesse), Desire (Desiderio) e Action (Azione), che descrive le quattro fasi cognitive attraversate dal potenziale turista durante la pianificazione di un viaggio. In modo particolare, viene posto l'accento su come l'utilizzo di alcuni espedienti linguistici possa influenzare ciascuna di queste fasi, portando l'utente al compimento dell'azione decisiva, ovvero l'effettiva prenotazione. Dal punto di vista linguistico, l'uso di imperativi, aggettivi positivi, superlativi e forme interrogative risulta determinante per stabilire un contatto diretto con il potenziale visitatore, rendendo una determinata attrazione o destinazione altamente desiderabile.

Da queste basi ha poi sviluppo concreto l'analisi nel terzo capitolo, il cui obiettivo è quello di verificare la frequenza d'uso degli espedienti linguistici persuasivi per un'efficace comunicazione. L'indagine si concentra su un confronto dettagliato tra i corpus di Italia e Uzbekistan, allo scopo di rilevare le differenze o somiglianze nell'uso di strategie persuasive tra i due paesi. Dai dati è emerso che entrambi i paesi ricorrono spesso all'uso di aggettivi positivi e superlativi per enfatizzare la bellezza e unicità del patrimonio culturale offerto, mentre si nota un maggiore divario in relazione alla frequenza di strutture interrogative. Particolarmente degna di nota è la quasi totale inesistenza di verbi imperativi nel corpus dedicato all'Uzbekistan, che dimostra la preferenza di forme di cortesia e indirette piuttosto del modello imperativo, spesso presente nel corpus italiano.

Le conclusioni mettono in luce ciò che è emerso dalla comparazione dei dati ottenuti dai corpus dei due paesi in analisi. Pur riscontrando variazioni marcate, è

stata rilevata la presenza di elementi comuni che suggeriscono una volontà di miglioramento nelle strategie comunicative, soprattutto per l'Uzbekistan, che potrebbe trarre beneficio dall'incremento dell'uso dell'inglese per aumentare la propria visibilità turistica su scala internazionale.

In sintesi, questa dissertazione sottolinea l'importanza della scelta della lingua nella promozione turistica, con particolare riferimento all'inglese, potendo dunque costituire una base per ulteriori ricerche nel campo della comunicazione turistica e fornire spunti concreti per i paesi coinvolti al fine di migliorare le proprie strategie di promozione all'estero.