

On empathy in online tourism experience. High-frequency adjective patterns in English and Spanish promotional language

La empatía en la experiencia turística online. Adjetivos y patrones de uso más frecuentes del lenguaje promocional en inglés y en español

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the identification and analysis of recurring adjective patterns in Spanish and English tourism promotional content available online. The study discusses how prototypical utterances may trigger empathy in each language, with high-frequency adjectives and emotional relevance being key in the addressees' expectations as predictors of genuineness. This research offers a corpus-based approach to linguistic tendencies and presents empathy as a step beyond persuasion in translated or copywritten materials. To that end, a bilingual, *ad hoc* corpus recently compiled from institutional websites was examined in order to collect significant samples of persuasive elements in online tourism discourse. The results obtained show both common and contrastive aspects in the two languages, with empathy being preferably boosted under the assumption that positiveness and a specific proportion of frequent adjectives

Resumen

El presente trabajo tiene por objeto la identificación y el análisis de patrones con adjetivos recurrentes en contenidos online sobre promoción turística en inglés y en español. En particular, el estudio plantea el potencial que presentan los segmentos prototípicos de cada lengua como disparadores de la empatía, a la vez que se centra en la frecuencia y la relevancia emocional de los adjetivos más habituales por su capacidad predictiva respecto a las expectativas de los destinatarios y el carácter genuino del lenguaje. Así mismo, esta investigación ofrece un enfoque basado en el análisis de corpus sobre tendencias lingüísticas en las que la empatía se concibe como un estadio adicional a la persuasión susceptible de debate en materiales traducidos o géneros publicitarios. A este respecto, se ha partido de un corpus bilingüe *ad hoc* elaborado a partir de páginas web institucionales con idea de reunir muestras significativas sobre

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yield desirable effects among speakers of Spanish and English.

KEYWORDS: tourism promotional language, linguistic empathy triggers, adjective positiveness, specialised translation, translation in tourism.

tales elementos persuasivos en el discurso turístico online. Como resultado, se ha concluido que existen puntos en común y aspectos contrastivos entre ambas lenguas que ocupan una posición preferente como desencadenantes de la empatía al asumir que la carga positiva en determinadas proporciones de adjetivos frecuentes produce efectos deseables entre los hablantes de cada idioma.

PALABRAS CLAVE: lenguaje turístico promocional, disparadores lingüísticos de la empatía, adjetivos con carga positiva, traducción especializada, traducción en turismo.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, most companies seem to have confined their promotional efforts to publishing content with the simple aim of having an online presence or instantly offering a corporate image with a massive impact. The priority for many publications seemed to be SEO (Search Engine Optimization) or the automatic repetition of keywords to achieve top positions on Google Search and other web engines rather than achieving a notable quality or persuasive effect through their commercial messages. This entailed a sort of overgeneralisation (Coupland 2003) and a sometimes vague benefit for companies. On this respect, tourism promotion was no exception given the production of online texts and publications clearly diverging from natural language.

However, in our current and globally developed era of mass communication (Crystal 1997; Mateo Martínez 2007) a new conception appears to be increasingly accepted in terms of optimising website content and achieving real results with the said content, which includes the need for attention to language as a tailor-made tool for real efficiency and strategic communication.

While concepts such as empathy and prototypicality might seem to be easily understood at first sight, they are not always so easily achieved, since the extent to which they are visible, evident, or effective in a language is still little understood. That said, their potential is a key for translators and copywriters.

Research in Applied Linguistics and Corpora Analysis could be considered an ideal starting point to assess language in use and quantify to at least some extent the impact of such cognitive and pragmatic effects (Fogg 2003; Lakoff 1987; Langacker 2008; Wilson & Sperber 2002; Yus Ramos 2006). In this sense, a specific corpus of tourism-based persuasive messages in English and Spanish provides the basis for this study and offers an opportunity to show how the language of tourism is preferentially used.

This research seeks, therefore, to evaluate adjective recurrence in frequent utterances of the corpus to provide some preliminary insight into empathy triggers in English and Spanish. By exploring our specialised corpus on the language of tourism, we try to determine how empathy activation can be achieved with the high-frequency adjectives in these two languages, assuming that empathy triggering is a step beyond persuasion and efficiency.

Moreover, this article is intended to raise awareness of the importance of using prototypical language to meet customers' expectations. In this regard, predictability is linked to implied user knowledge and the probable emotions aroused in readers' minds when exposed to regular discourse. Specifically, our initial hypothesis is that prototypical items in tourism promotional language are better candidates to trigger empathy than random structures or personally biased terms. Furthermore, reproducing the common tendencies and proportions of a specific language is considered to boost empathy as well.

On the contrary, it is assumed that shocking or unnatural expressions are likely to produce distrust and distance, so identifying high-frequency items also helps us recognize less-recurring elements and decide how convenient they are in a specific context. In fact, distinguishing something as infrequent, uncommon, or atypical may lead writers and translators to avoid mistakes or eventually create more natural and effective content by choosing more frequent patterns instead. This may help them to become familiar with the most significant tendencies found in corpora as far as the adjective function is concerned.

This article starts with a short introduction about the cognitive effects related to regular discourse and expectations in tourism promotional language. The following section, Empathy and prototypical patterns in language for specific purposes, includes simple and representative clarifications about some key concepts: empathy, recurring patterns, and language for specific purposes (LSP). In these preliminary sections, tautology and positive connotations are also explored, with references to them as possible boosters of or candidates for empathy. The third section, Methodology, provides details on the selection of corpus analysis as the specific method with which recurrent adjectives are identified, listed, and analysed in both languages, focusing particularly on the contrastive points and high-frequency items. The corpus characteristics are visually presented and its features are described to make clear the extent to which the corpus-based study is appropriate for achieving the research goals of this study. In the fourth section, Results and discussion, the findings obtained after examining the corpus are graphically exhibited along with their interpretation. A general discussion is also provided about which items or segments may prompt a positive response in terms of empathy and, indirectly, which ones may disable its effects. Ultimately, in the final section, Conclusions, some general reflections on the presumed empathy-moving patterns found are presented, and ideas for future research projects are suggested.

2. EMPATHY AND PROTOTYPICAL PATTERNS IN LANGUAGE FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

Tourism discourse has been traditionally associated with professional and academic languages considering its condition as jargon for a wide group of specialists (Alcaraz 2000-2004; Alcaraz *et al.* 2007). It is also considered that tourism language has a specific organizational structure and covers specific communicative intentions expressed in a formal register for a common goal. This combination of elements is assumed to be different from those normally linked to general language, which is an additional reason to consider tourism language, and particularly promotional materials in this genre, as an LSP (Cabré 1999; Calvi 2016; Mapelli 2008; Pickett 1989).

Considering promotional discourse in tourism as an LSP is particularly important to validate the representativeness of the prototypical patterns and repetitive aspects found in

the corpora (Leech 2007), since frequency in use expressly reflects their significance and genuine character. Frequent terms may indeed be considered as a sort of visible trace that reveals how the specific purpose of language in this area is often preferentially materialised.

On the other hand, empathy activation is regarded as a desirable effect, given the impact it may have on readers in terms of customer loyalty. In this sense, it is conceived as the product of a cognitive process that is assumed to be intentionally fostered by copywriters and translators. This means, therefore, that empathy can be what establishes the distinction between conscious, repetitive consumption of a service and the occasional choice of customers who were not moved by the promotional message from the very beginning. The promotional message may result in no loyalty if the service quality is not above average, but a positive inclination linguistically associated with the persuasive content may be the initial guarantee for the positive features to be remembered and internalized towards further consumption (Cialdini 2001 & 2005). With similar levels of quality, attention, and satisfaction, it is presumed that an effective and empathy-moving message is of key importance to gaining customers' devotion and fidelity. But what exactly is empathy and how is it achieved in tourism language?

2.1. The concept of empathy

Empathy is perceived as a sort of positive and desirable effect aroused in readers' minds after they process reasoning or emotions related to the message. Most experts consider empathy to be the result of several cognitive processes including logical reasoning, motivation and feelings of affinity, affective experiences, and emotional responses among others. But not all scholars agree on the degree to which each of these aspects is important, moving, or inspiring to customers or addressees whose desirable reaction is their selection of a specific destination.

For instance, Eisenberg identifies empathy as a predictable reaction that may influence people's behaviours or emotions depending on their mood (Eisenberg 2000). For some experts, empathy is a cognitive skill to be used for the evaluation of and proper response to thoughts and viewpoints that take into consideration the recipient's motivations (Deutsch & Madle 1975; Regan & Totten 1975). Similarly, Hoffman bases his definition of empathy on affective moves produced after assessing the potential emotions the others may have (1982), whereas Gallo (1989) finds in empathy a cognitive effect arising from the appreciation of and capacity to understand someone else's feelings.

Consequently, we may think that the extent to which empathy is achieved or activated may also depend on the speakers' level of motivation, reasoning, or emotional movements. It is, however, certainly true that the measurement of such complex processes does not depend exclusively on linguistic items. What can be assumed and linguistically studied here is, in any case, the set of possible combinations where language items and functions can contribute positively to empathy activation and, therefore, constitute a powerful but not exclusive strategy in tourism promotion.

Copywriters or translators can use empathy triggers to guess recipients' needs or preferences and develop the capacity to predict their reactions even without having any real awareness of the reasons behind them. Indeed, predictability in each language is conceived as a strategic tool with a very significant application in tourism campaigns, but the intentional use of language may also contribute to expected reactions and, therefore, predictable responses.

2.2. Cognitive effects: recurrence and positiveness

Cognitive effects are especially relevant in persuasive discourse bearing in mind readers' involvement. In this sense, as far as persuasion is concerned, it is not surprising to find explicit appeals to recipients or clarifying comments about ideal reactions to promotional messages. If we particularly focus on language for tourism promotion, this reader-oriented dimension or interpersonal function (Halliday 1978) is even reinforced by products being marketed as worthwhile experiences or life-long memories among real or potential addressees whose expected reactions are assumed to be preferentially positive (Cialdini 2005; Dann 1996).

As human beings, a positive response to a specific proposal is always more than welcome, so we may consider our cognitive systems also accept this premise logically and automatically. The pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain is nothing new, from Epicurus' hedonism to the most cosmopolitan theories in neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) or self-help books. Consequently, positive connotations are integrated into our minds and language as desirable features and, therefore, as preferential aspects with a sort of emotional sense to be exploited for persuasion. In Dann's words (1996: 65), 'positive connotations or euphoria constitute one of the distinctive aspects of tourism discourse' to support the conative or appellative function.

Given all the previous considerations, positive adjectives are assumed to be of key importance in tourism language. But, obviously, it does not mean the indiscriminate use of these items absolutely and unconditionally guarantees a persuasive effect or, even, the next step, empathy activation. One of the hypotheses tacitly contained in this article points to the fact that the community of speakers and experts of each language strategically and implicitly decides or influences how frequently some adjectives or adjective patterns are used in the area of tourism. What is more, we contend that a detailed analysis is needed to determine the lexical variety of adjective patterns involved and the extent to which lexical repetition can be used for prototypical effects in English and Spanish.

However, the way readers are persuaded through cognitive processes needs to be discussed from a multifaceted viewpoint, since hundreds of simultaneous actions are likely to be activated at the same time. As an example, 'motivation, attention, memory, and audio-visual perception' (Fajardo 2007: 68), among other aspects, are conceived as cognitive precursors for empathy triggers with a special impact on language.

On the other hand, the frequency in key terms is an indicator of speakers' and professionals' preferences as well. Nevertheless, recurrence, or tautology according to Dann (1996), and its acceptance as a strategy, if so, can be regarded as a linguistic, cultural, or stylistic convention. Repetitions may be associated with poor style or, on the contrary, with clarity, precision and, smartness. This study is, therefore, also designed to determine frequency tendencies and conventions for each language (Spanish and English) in tourism as well as the variety or proportion of items that are repeated in the two languages for this genre, since the combination of these two factors in adjective patterns may offer guidance about linguistic conventions and uses.

2.3. Adjective functions and effects

On the whole, adjectives are commonly identified with their capacity to combine with nouns and provide extra details or limitations which are not intrinsically implied by the nouns on

their own. Moreover, a starting consideration for this study is that descriptive adjectives (Halliday 1994; Payne *et al.* 2010; Pustet 2006; Quirk *et al.* 1985) are especially relevant for tourism discourse given their connotative sense.

Proper adjectives, —demonyms or place adjectives (e.g. Spanish, English...) (Demonte 1999; Quirk *et al.* 1985) — also constitute an important class for tourism persuasive messages. They are considered to be regular and easily identifiable, but what is evident from a desirable position is their presence will be expected in a destination promotion with empathy triggers to be activated whenever the place under the campaign is somewhat referred to.

Indeed, a basic conception is that adjectives are essentially modifiers (normally in noun phrases), while nouns and verbs are, respectively, the heads of noun phrases and predicates (Bhat 1994). However, the case is that adjectives and adjective patterns are also very often used on their own (unaccompanied and not directly accompanying a noun but referring to it as a subject) as predicates. Adjectives modifying a noun are attributive, whereas those used as predicates are predicative (Quirk *et al.* 1985), making them interesting items to analyse in corpora of tourism language. In this article, adjectives in general have been analysed, no matter whether they are attributive or predicative in our corpus.

Some scholars, such as Englebretson (1997), have used corpora studies to quantify the proportion of attributive or predicative adjectives used in interactions, concluding that what defines adjective choice is not the grammar and norms of the language itself or the medium through which messages are transmitted (communicative channel), but rather the speech act (Gordon & Lakoff 1971; Searle 1985), the amount of shared knowledge among the participants in communication and the level of formality ascribed to the discourse. Considering the thousands of possible contexts that exist for tourism commercial language, we might understand that tourism persuasive content, identified as one-way communication, requires extra efforts to be put in place to establish what knowledge is shared between the recipients in a particular campaign and those who published or ordered the promotional messages (Hyland 2010).

Furthermore, the speech act implications are quite clear in tourism promotion, but the level of formality can be another source of discussion after studying the register and the level of colloquiality established as ideal in English and Spanish. Thus, locating and quantifying the specific high-frequency adjectives with a positive sense, along with the patterns they are integrated into, is a significant strategy for finding language-based tendencies and to thus conduct a qualitative analysis of pragmatical and contextual issues.

2.4. Candidates for empathy: prototypical patterns in tourism discourse

Some considerations may be needed to resolve in what ways frequency levels and positive charge in adjectives are materialised and interpreted in terms of predictability and preferences for speakers as far as tourism promotional discourse is concerned. Indeed, it may be of great help to find proper candidates for empathy triggering to be used as more appropriate, genuine, and prototypical items by translators, copywriters, and experts in communication.

Under the theoretical framework, it is generally presumed that some segments, combinations, or patterns including adjectives are better candidates to activate empathy in English or Spanish in proportion to how frequently they are used and how visibly the positive connotations are evidenced in each language corpus.

Thus, considering empathy a significant mechanism, sometimes automatised, for tourism promotional purposes, some specific assumptions can be made as a starting point to identify what is supposed to prompt it for confirmation purposes on the corpus. Firstly, we may consider that adjective prototypes positively contribute to empathy, with speakers expecting to find them in tourism discourse as representative elements of this LSP which enable users to identify it as a genre (Llorens Simón 2021; Rosch 1975-1983; Suau Jiménez 2006; Swales 1990).

Additionally, positiveness in recurring adjectives is also assumed to be characteristic and frequent in the language of tourism (Dann 1996: 65; Durán Muñoz 2012: 108-109; Kelly Holmes 2005: 8), and that it makes a special contribution to activating empathy, thus moving a step beyond persuasion. Tourism language being an LSP, as many scholars state, we may also consider that recurrently using positive adjectives yields a natural sense while identifying frequent positive qualities lets us find naturalness. Hence the interest in studying a corpus to identify patterns and understand their underlying cognitive reasoning. In this regard, recurrence shows relevance and users' expectations, which means empathy is probably activated with predictably typical and expected adjectives. For this reason, an English speaker may be shocked or puzzled by an unexpected formula that is probably a direct reproduction of Spanish style (e.g. *a proposal of very wide plans of guides**) in the same way that a Spanish user may find some expressions quite unexpected and questionable, probably because they were derived from an English collocate (e.g. *esta representación es justo tan vibrante como la anterior**).

Indeed, if customers have expectations towards the promotional message they read, using common adjectives will probably have a positive impact and a desirable empathy move. On the contrary, a translator or copywriter selecting uncommon elements to use in their text will probably result in mistrust, scepticism, or even disloyalty in terms of its consumption among recipients. Corpus analysis is thus the key to evaluating genuineness, prototypicality, and, therefore, appropriateness.

3. METHODOLOGY

Discourse addressees play a very relevant role in the tourism experience, not just because they are supposed to identify the reaction they are expected to show after interpreting a promotional message, but also because their expectations are also essential to designing the persuasive content necessary for marketing campaigns and quality promotional content (Agarwal 2004; García & Saad 2008; Scarpa 2020). This means specialised translation and copywriting should be based on common messages the speakers, whether predisposed or not, identifies with. Furthermore, empathy as a desirable effect adds extra value to the message, which makes the identification of empathy triggers more than welcome.

Indeed, first-sight impressions on how prototypical and empathy-moving some patterns may be cannot get accepted as evidence unless a significant amount of materials has been completely examined for confirmation purposes (Kenning 2010; Laviosa 1997; McEnery 2019; McEnery & Xiao 2007). As a consequence, corpus analysis is considered to be a suitable methodology to go beyond speculations and suppositions and overcome the limitations of manually processed samples. For this research, a comparable, bilingual, *ad hoc* corpus has been compiled online in order to carry out both a quantitative and qualitative analysis

of the tourism promotional language used on institutional websites. The technological tool *Sketch Engine* was chosen for corpus creation and treatment, which comprises the compilation of two subcorpora, the identification of frequently used adjectives, the listing of common expressions with positive, recurring adjectives; and the context displays. The most prominent advantage of using a corpus-based methodology and a computer-aided procedure includes the option of conducting a rigorous study based on empirical data and a significant sample of real language in use.

In summary, we have confirmed that corpus analysis is an appropriate method for recurrent adjectives to be identified, quantified, and examined in context. Specifically, a specialised corpus has been expressly compiled to find frequency levels, conventional expressions in context, and common word combinations as support to evaluate representative sense, or persuasive effect predictably and additionally resulting in empathy activation. After determining these significant and empathy-oriented elements, specialised translation or copywriting decisions can be better explained, while the introduction of the corpus approach is presented as a core strategy to do so (Leech 1991-2007; McEney 2019; Olohan 2004; Parodi 2004).

3.1. Corpus dimension

The corpus size is defined by the number of words it is composed of, this aspect being relevant in terms of representativeness. The general data for the corpus and the specific details on each subcorpus are shown in the table below.

	Global corpus	English subcorpus	Spanish subcorpus
Number of words	657,618	328,377	329,241

Table 1. Corpus size data.

This corpus is representative, being medium-sized according to the generally accepted classification (Berber Sardinha 2002; Leech *et al.* 1994; Vargas-Sierra 2012). Specialised corpora are assumed to be relevant enough even when their size is below 1 million words, since their use is limited to the specific LSP they were designed for (Baker 2010; Fuster Márquez & Pennock-Speck 2015; Leech, 2007; Ornia 2015, Parodi 2004; Vargas-Sierra 2006). Additionally, its representativeness is reinforced by the content institutional sense and the significant value of currently online available texts.

3.2. Corpus design

Our *ad hoc* corpus integrates both real materials as a reference and recurrence indicators as factual data in order for a contrastive study to be conducted, with technical support provided by the *Sketch Engine* platform. The online software has been used for corpus creation, and content analysis including frequency and context assessment functions. The corpus creation is, therefore, the basis for the research under the criteria below, whose application responds to general considerations for corpus arrangement (Bowker & Pearson, 2002; Vargas Sierra, 2006):

Criteria	Type	Corpus description/component
Language production channel & origin	Written, materials available online	Online content posted on the websites of the 10 most visited cities in the UK and Spain. The content authors are not identified, but what is significant is the institutional sense of the aforesaid websites, which eventually implies a normative function
Corpus size – number of words	Medium-sized (250.000-1m)	657,618 words
Text distribution	Balanced	Web content is divided into a similar number of sections, most of them with similar names/references (Home/About us, Things to do, Attractions, etc.), and normally linked to each other. The number of texts is, therefore, not clearly defined; although the content included in both subcorpora has this original characteristic.
Content	Specialised	Specialised content in the tourism domain.
Size in samples	Complete samples	All the materials available on the above websites are included in the corpus.
Coding/tags	Tagged	The corpus is tagged and the analysis of the basic research aspects is partially centred on the tags (especially those related to adjectives). It includes part-of-speech tagging and lemmatization.
Documented/non-documented	Non-documented	No specific elements, relations, links, or files can be identified with texts; considering web content is offered as a unit rather than as a collection of well-delimited texts.
Period	Recent	All the materials used for the corpus compilation currently appear on their original websites and have recently been used for promotional purposes.
Updating options	Monitor	The content integrated into the corpus can be both increased and updated.
Purpose	Specialised, <i>ad hoc</i>	Promotional purposes in a specialised area. Tourism promotion is the key purpose, assuming the promotional initiative was officially and institutionally started. The expository-argumentative genre is predominant, but not exclusive in this domain.
Selection of the samples	Proportional sampling	All the materials available on the aforesaid websites are mass compiled and can be proportionally analysed.
Languages	Bilingual, comparable	Spanish & English. The corpus comparable sense is especially important for a contrastive study to be applied in specialised translation, copywriting, or communicative tasks.

Table 2. Corpus design criteria.

Given that tourism discourse is conceived as an LSP, a comparable, bilingual corpus was created with a subcorpus in English and a subcorpus in Spanish designed in order to analyse language in tourism contrastively. In this regard, the comparable trait involves both subcorpora having similar traits as regards size, genre, source, period, and domain (Kenning 2010; Laviosa 1997; McEnery & Xiao 2007), which empirically validates their comparison for a contrastive study.

On the other hand, the features attributed to the corpus, to the extent they are described before, are also relevant to conceive it as a representative source for the specialised language and purpose indicated above. Thus, studying how the promotional language of tourism behaves online is assumed to be particularly accurate with the arrangement of the corpus under such criteria.

3.3. Corpus analysis

Different functions and features are offered by *Sketch Engine* to base a corpus analysis on, namely Word Sketch, Word Sketch Difference, Thesaurus, Concordance, Collocation, Word lists, N-grams, Keywords/Terminology, Trends, and Parallel corpus. However, not all of them are activated for a particular type of corpus. For example, the Parallel analysis tab is hidden in a comparable corpus display. In this particular case, examining the corpus has been possible by using three main functions available on the software: Word List, Concordance, and Word Sketch. As a result, data processing has been arranged in three steps. With the Word List tab, adjectives as a category can be found, so a list of high-frequency adjectives has been obtained along with recurrence indicators in each subcorpus. This is of great help to assess both the frequency levels and the number or variety of common adjectives as a contrastive feature to be compared between English and Spanish. While the Sketch Engine interface also includes Keywords as a function, it is designed for terminology extraction. The results obtained from a search initiated with this option would contain several grammar categories, so the frequency list and order resulting from the process would not be exclusive to adjectives.

Secondly, the Concordance function lets us find all the corpus applied uses of a high-frequency adjective, providing a significant collection of actual samples in context. This is valuable to prove how appropriate a specific adjective may be when comparing corpus contexts with our target or communicative background in specialised translation or copywriting. Finally, the Word Sketch section directly leads to possible collocates or word combinations that include each frequently used adjective identified with Word List. This helps us in evaluating how prototypical segments are or can be, with special attention to common patterns that integrate nouns and adjectives, prepositional groups, and conventional objects for specific verbs.

Both quantitative and qualitative details have, therefore, been explored. This means that first, recurrence indicators could be established, then positiveness could be identified and finally, typical patterns could be confirmed. On this point and because of its prototypicality, we can consider a recurring adjective with a positive charge as a probable empathy trigger, especially when included in a corpus-based collocate which displays the propensity proven by the corpus review. As a result, the findings obtained with our corpus analysis have representatively revealed how often certain adjectives are used in each language's tourism discourse, how varied they are in terms of their global recurrence, and how context-based their positive sense is; which is relevant to theorizing on degrees in empathy triggers as a first insight.

On the basis that any recurring adjective may boost empathy as a sample of prototypical persuasive language, a gradation can be theoretically established to show empathy activation and its possible levels under frequency ranges. The table below presents some preliminary formulae to provisionally categorize empathy moves, although an adjustment will be added to these initial patterns on the basis of the global results obtained from the corpus analysis.

Positions in order of frequency	Approximate frequency range	Empathy triggering expectation	Provisional formula/expression
1-75	850 to 100	High-empathy expectation	FE1
76-200	99 to 30	Medium-empathy expectation	FE2
201-300	29 to 15	Pro-empathy attitude	FE3

Table 3. Preliminary formulae on empathy triggering expectations.
FE: Frequency as empathy trigger.

The aforementioned parameters consider frequency as one of the precursors for empathy triggering, but the findings from the analysis also demonstrate why recurrence values cannot be regarded as absolute or exclusive figures. As anticipated in a previous section, the research is not only dedicated to finding frequency levels but also to determining proportions and tendencies along with positiveness, so results have been specifically evaluated in each subcorpus for empathy prediction purposes. The specialised character of some high-frequency adjectives has also been examined taking into account frequency ranges and common contexts, which is especially important to determine the extent to which certain recurrence patterns or tendencies respond to a professional strategy or a dominium-based convention with empathy impact. Conversely, a medium-low frequency in relatively common adjectives can also be a source of debate, since frequency results may entail a preference for lexical variety to be discussed as well in terms of empathy. As a consequence, the data in the next section are displayed in such a way as to find the logical interpretation for the above-indicated aspects which extends the preliminary formulae.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Under the previous reflections, the interpretation of the results is centred on the recurrence and positiveness related to adjectives, with the data below showing proportions, tendencies, and speakers' expectations in each language. Thus, analysing the information in the tables lets us understand what speakers are used to finding in English and Spanish tourism promotion messages and, therefore, what may trigger empathy in their minds when feeling identified with the language they are familiar with.

Firstly, the most frequent adjectives are presented in order of frequency along with their recurrence indicators.

English subcorpus Wordlist (2,418 items/31,921 total frequency)		Spanish subcorpus Wordlist (2,554 items/28,959 total frequency)	
Item	Frequency	Item	Frequency
good	731	grande	841
new	487	santo	606
great	445	turístico	572
itinerary	419	nuevo	472
beautiful	365	mejor	397
unique	347	cultural	362
large	333	antiguo	342
perfect	326	histórico	304
exciting	312	natural	302
local	293	mayor	299
free	288	principal	274
welcome	284	único	272
famous	257	español	228
old	231	internacional	208
modern	229	real	208
available	228	importante	206
historic	226	bueno	204
independent	219	nacional	203
top	201	pequeño	195

Table 4. List of frequent adjectives in English and Spanish subcorpora – positions 1-20.

If the data in table 3 are considered, all the previous adjectives can be associated with a high-empathy expectation and can be categorized as FE1. But, although these adjectives are in the top positions in the corpus, their specificity level is not very high, because they are sometimes systematically repeated due to their obvious positive sense. However, the subsequent positions (21-40) give more specific samples.

English subcorpus Wordlist (2,418 items/31,921 total frequency)		Spanish subcorpus Wordlist (2,554 items/28,959 total frequency)	
Item	Frequency	Item	Frequency
contemporary	198	especial	166
open	196	alto	161
stunning	189	gastronómico	161
iconic	177	romano	160
high	175	municipal	158
full	173	amplio	155
special	156	largo	154
fantastic	155	viejo	151
British	152	tradicional	140
easy	150	mundial	139
fine	149	público	136
small	148	posible	135
short	144	urbano	131
stylish	141	máximo	121
friendly	138	comercial	120
award-winning	136	moderno	117
international	135	diferente	113
big	134	necesario	113
private	133	emblemático	110
vibrant	133	mediterráneo	110

Table 5. List of frequent adjectives in English and Spanish subcorpora – positions 21-40.

Combining more specificity with empathy, we can assume that the positions after the first 20-25 high-frequency adjectives are more and more specialised or specific, with lower figures in terms of frequency but a still significant recurrence. This condition can be especially empathy-moving for experienced users (those who are more familiar with this LSP, whether as experts or travellers) as more conscious speakers, for which empathy may be labelled as EE (empathy related to experience in this domain). The following table provides a logical grading:

Positions in order of frequency	Approximate frequency range vs. specialisation	Empathy triggering expectation	Logical formula/expression
20-75	200 to 100 Specialisation/Specificity C	Pro-empathy attitude for experienced speakers	EE3
76-150	99 to 30 Specialisation/Specificity B	Medium-empathy expectation for experienced speakers	EE2
151-250	29 to 15 Specialisation/Specificity A	High-empathy expectation for experienced speakers	EE1

Table 6. Logical formulae on empathy triggering with experienced speakers.
EE: Extra empathy arising from experience in promotional tourism discourse.

These categories can be illustrated with some examples along with their frequency indicators, which entail relevant implications in any context related to tourism.

EE3 → In English: *contemporary* (198), *stunning*, (189), *iconic* (177), *special* (156), *stylish* (141), *award-winning* (136), *vibrant* (133) / In Spanish: *medio* (175), *especial* (166), *gastronómico* (161), *amplio* (155), *tradicional* (140), *urbano* (131), *comercial* (120), *moderno* (117), *emblemático* (119).

EE2 → In English: *magnificent* (84), *impressive* (78), *picturesque* (63), *exotic* (52), *colourful* (46), *authentic* (36), *legendary* (36) / In Spanish: *espectacular* (99), *contemporáneo* (84), *auténtico* (77), *clásico* (65), *interesante* (60), *profesional* (55), *sostenible* (50), *prestigioso* (35).

EE1→In English: *prestigious* (27), *immersive* (26), *renowned* (25), *peaceful* (23), *inspiring* (23), *trendy* (22), *cosmopolitan* (22), *organic* (16) / In Spanish: *inmaterial* (28), *creativo* (25), *permanente* (25), *autéctono* (25), *innovador* (24), *reciente* (22), *imponente* (18), *señorial* (15).

In lower frequency positions, many adjectives share the same recurrence level, since their use is more precise and the number of repetitions is both similar and limited to a specific context (e.g. *self-guided*, *brilliant*, and *eclectic* (33) in English and *artesanal*, *visual*, and *alternative* (23) in Spanish.

For contexts and positiveness to be exemplified, two adjectives from the EE3 category have been chosen, *vibrant* & *modern*, for several reasons. Firstly, they are representative of a pro-empathy attitude and very close to a medium-empathy expectation, which means their specificity level is representative of the genre (tourism promotional websites), as well as reasonable and understandable at first sight. Furthermore, their meaning and relevance in the tourism experience are quite evident for any speaker of the language they are expressed

in, not to forget the positive charge they involve on their own from a pragmatic and cultural viewpoint. These conditions are common in good candidates for empathy triggering and proper indicators of this language behaviour considering both frequency levels and positive connotations.

The signs of the specialised sense in terms of empathy are shown to a certain extent below, displaying some examples of the above-mentioned pro-empathy adjectives.

CQL [lempos_lc=="vibrant-j"] · 133			
Details	Left context	KWIC	Right context
1	visitmanchester.com	running street food event GRUB is located in the vibrant Green Quarter just	
2	visitliverpool.com	national bank, it's now restored back to life as a vibrant drinking establishme	
3	visitbrighton.com	Hove's iconic beach huts with their colourful & vibrant facades & enjoy the	
4	visitbristol.com	this incredible city. </s><s> Bristol is diverse and vibrant and there is always	
5	visitoxford.org	a common phenomenon in Oxfordshire, lies a vibrant restaurant scene. </s><	
6	visitcambridge.org	the region, you can choose to dine at some of the vibrant and bustling inner c	

Table 7. Examples of use in context for *vibrant*.
KWIC: Key word in context

Ex. 1 – Extended context: Manchester's longest-running street food event GRUB is located in the **vibrant** Green Quarter just 5 minutes' walk from Manchester Victoria rail station </s><s> From fine dining and afternoon tea to pop-up markets and humble street food, Greater Manchester is packed with options to suit any mood offering any and every cuisine you can think of </s><s> Revolution: Food and cocktails - See 670 traveller reviews, 155 candid photos, and great deals for Manchester, UK, at Tripadvisor </s><s> Cocktails are shaken up late into the night here so you'll be sure to get your fix of liquid lusting </s><s> From the delicious food to the thirst-quenching cocktails and classy ... </s><s>: stop & space.

CQL [lempos=="moderno-j"] · 117			
Details	Left context	KWIC	Right context
1	es madrid.com	zona sur de la ciudad </s><> Se trata de un moderno espacio en el que la	
2	visitvalencia.com	y XIX, sin olvidar propuestas más actuales y modernas </s><> Platos decora	
3	malagaturismo.com	amplias, confortables, luminosas y muy modernas equipadas con todo luj	
4	zaragoza.es	vintage se unen en un lugar en el que lo moderno y lo tradicional se mezclan	
5	turismodecordoba.com	edificio ofrece unos espacios museísticos modernos atractivos y funcio	
6	bilbaoturismo.net	nuevas funciones combinando lo histórico y moderno sin olvidar la funciona	

Table 8. Examples of use in context for *moderno*.
KWIC: Key word in context

Ex. 2 – Extended context: Desde el siglo XIX, establecimientos como Colla Monleó, Chez Ramón y la Casa de los Botijos **llevan hasta Valencia las creaciones de**

maestros ceramistas de toda el área metropolitana </s><s> Arturo Mora, Vicent Monlló y Rafael Mora son algunos de los nombres propios que firman sus colecciones, que recrean estilos tradicionales diversos: de los motivos religiosos medievales, al azul del gótico (siglo XVI), a los reflejos metálicos (siglo XV) y la cerámica colorida y ornamental de los siglos XVII y XIX, sin olvidar propuestas actuales más **modernas** </s><s> Platos decorativos, vajillas, vasos y recipientes pueden hallarse en sus estanterías, al igual que piezas icónicas y singulares de la historia valenciana </s><s>

The contexts of the 1-50 high-frequency adjectives have been examined, all of them being found to have positive connotations and an evident positive approach. From these positions onwards, some contexts have also been randomly reviewed, with positive charges found in all of them. No negative sense has been identified at all, which leads to the assumption that on tourism promotional websites positiveness is exclusive, typical, and expected. This circumstance can be evidenced with the symbol P+. Additionally, and surprisingly, in the process of context evaluation, opposite adjectives have been found very close to each other in the same line or paragraph, both with a positive sense or connotation. This involves the addressees' expectations are presented as positive and desirable concerning similar referents, as exemplified below:

E.g. There are lots of **new** attractions and events planned for families around Birmingham in the **ancient** woodland walk...

A walk is here an ancient and desirable attraction, while new attractions are also conceived positively.

E.g. Situada en pleno centro comercial de Córdoba, su **novedoso** diseño camina de la mano con el respeto por lo **tradicional**...

The design is presented here as innovative and respectful of traditions at the same time, and both qualities are shown as positive.

On the other hand, some of the above-listed adjectives are to be shown in combination with other segments to confirm what typical collocates and expressions are like. For this purpose, two pro-empathy adjectives, *contemporary* and *emblemático*, have been selected to show their Word Sketch layout, above all after considering their reasonably specialised sense, their evocative charge as high-frequency adjectives, and their collection of positive connotations which contribute to making them good candidates for empathy activation.

Along with their recurrence in tourism discourse, what can be observed in these adjectives and their use in real samples is not only their context-based positive sense but also their natural character when contained in common segments speakers are assumed to expect. After analysing the items surrounding the adjectives in question and the ideas they may evoke, we find both a persuasive sense and a pro-empathy move which seems to be identifiable with feelings, history, tradition, society, and culture-based experiences particularly offered as desirable for addressees. Thus, logically speaking, these adjectives are closer to empathy activation than any qualification item that is randomly chosen or simply based on someone's intuition.

contemporary as an adjective · 198x	emblemático as an adjective · 110x
Nouns modified by ‘contemporary’	Nouns modified by ‘emblemático’
art modern and contemporary art	lugar los lugares más emblemáticos
design of traditional and contemporary design set in	rincón algunos de los rincones más emblemáticos de la ciudad
apartment of 67 stylish contemporary apartments consisting of	edificio los edificios más emblemáticos
culture of traditional & contemporary Scottish culture with Burns	establecimiento algunos de los establecimientos chocolateros más emblemáticos y degustando sus
twist takes on a contemporary twist and offers	monumento de los monumentos más emblemático
comfort town house – contemporary comfort with gorgeous rooms	casa-patio una casa-patio emblemática de la tradición
guesthouse a stylish, contemporary family-run guesthouse, nestled in	espacio espacios verdes emblemáticos
work broad range of contemporary work from both emerging	torre la emblemática Torre del Oro.
gallery is Birmingham’s leading contemporary art gallery located in	tienda tiendas más emblemáticas
bedroom contemporary bedrooms	comercio comercios emblemáticos
hotel contemporary hotel	calle las calles más emblemáticas de

Table 9. Examples of ‘Word Sketch’ results with *contemporary* and *emblemático*.

On the basis of the results listed above, some word combinations are shown to be very prototypical if we pay attention to how frequently they are used as collocates. If so, the categorisation of empathy can be marked as NE+ (standing for naturalness empathy in formulae). Specifically, *contemporary* seems to be closely related to ideas such as style, art, culture, and top facilities, whereas *emblemático* is very commonly associated with superlative expressions containing place nouns. As an example, this information is of great help in making decisions in specialised translation, copywriting or communication tasks, to the extent that we can understand appropriateness, quality and persuasion may depend on a corpus-based search rather than just on a dictionary entry or a personal inclination. Likewise, empathy moves are likely to be better followed or tracked with corpus monitoring rather than with individual preferences, since the selection of items and terms by tossing a coin is probably not an ideal strategy for specific purposes to be achieved.

So far, in this article, empathy triggering modalities have been defined through various

options to achieve prototypicality; such as via top-frequency positions (FE), secondly with specificity to be identified by experienced language users or speakers (EE), and thirdly with natural collocates (NE+). An additional modality can also be arranged by rooting genuineness in the degree of recurrence which is preferential for each language and its reproduction as a tendency. This property can be explored by comparing the number of adjectives and frequency levels in English and Spanish to find out the specific conventions in each language as regards tourism promotional content.

	English subcorpus	Spanish subcorpus
Nr items/adjectives	2,418	2,554
Total frequency	31,921	28,959

Table 10. Comparative figures for recurring adjectives and frequency indicators.

Observing the figures above, some evidence is available and observable. Firstly, we can see that there is a more reduced collection of adjectives, which are more frequently used in English; whereas we find a higher number of adjectives, which are less frequently used in Spanish. Additionally, after examining each list of words (Table 4), we can confirm that the order of recurrence does not coincide in both languages, to the extent that *good* is the most frequently used adjective in English and *grande* is the most recurrently used in Spanish.

The same propensity can be detected with other adjectives and their list positions, with some examples of surprising and relevant recurrence indicators for such adjectives as *modern* and *independent* in English or *santo* and *real* in Spanish. Undoubtedly, extra attention is needed in the future for research dedicated to the pragmatic and cognitive reasons for clarifying why these adjectives are preferential in each language and culture.

As an extension of the aforementioned tendencies, interestingly, the most recurring adjectives in English are condensed into the first 50 results, whereas in Spanish the most repetitive adjectives are more expansively distributed all throughout the first 75 positions, which reinforces the conclusion about a higher propensity to recurrence in English.

In terms of empathy triggering, the tendency of each language, either recurrence or more lexical variety and less recurrence, can be accordingly reproduced to achieve it. Therefore, if the aforesaid tendencies are properly followed, for example with express repetitions in English and with more synonyms in Spanish, the tendency variable will also be considered empathy moving (TE+ or empathy activated by following the suitable tendency). Nevertheless, this being a first approach to empathy, the specific proportions for each convention to be reproduced still need to be thoroughly studied and debated. Nevertheless, if we divide the total frequency by the number of adjectives used in each language, the result can act as a guide to the point at which we can consider that each tendency is being followed, although the achievement limits are still to be defined. The result of the division is 13.20 in English and 11.34 in Spanish. Therefore, we can interpret that the prototypical recurrence in English is followed with a result of 13.20 or a superior figure, whereas in Spanish variety (which is the opposite strategy to recurrence) is followed with a result of 11.34 or an inferior figure, establishing the reasonable variation in a $\pm 10-15\%$.

In sum, the combination of all the empathy triggering parameters can be evaluated in order to determine what empathy-moving language is like (EM), to identify it, reproduce it, and correct it, if so in translated or copywritten content.

$$EM = P+ \pm FE \pm EE \text{ s/A/B/C+} \pm NE+ \pm TE+$$

This means empathy moves or triggering are based on the use of high-frequency adjectives (FE) with positive connotations (P+) whose specific character (A, B, or C) is to be assessed along with their naturalness and their attention to the linguistic tendency related to each language.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS

Posting promotional content on the Internet is an unavoidable and more than relevant strategy for companies offering tourism-related products or services. Therefore, efforts to optimise the effects of their message are both worthwhile in terms of profit-increase policies and advantageous in terms of brand equity or customer loyalty. This consideration is directly opposed to the massive sense consumers feel with millions of texts available on thousands of websites, which were specially designed to promote services and destinations as desirable experiences.

So where is the key to making tourism language particularly effective, distinctive, and empathy-moving in each language? Indeed, corpus analysis is a very powerful tool, not only to answer this question, but also to measure the extent to which each term is appropriate in a specific context and combination of words. Additionally, a specific collection of adjectives, among other categories, may be conceived as a fusion of proper candidates for empathy triggering, given their frequency of use and their positive charge in a language tourism background after their proven value as a part of speakers' expectations to recognize the genre in question. Consequently, corpus-based research is a convenient instrument to delve into specialised languages and, more particularly, into tourism language traits.

On the other hand, our corpus study has revealed some findings as regards frequency, naturalness, and propensities in the language of tourism. Specifically, frequency indicators can offer some guidance on empathy predictions, with high-frequency adjectives being good candidates as empathy triggers on the basis of their recurrence in each corpus (under a preliminary ranking FE1, FE2, or FE3). Considering the specificity of the adjectives, some extra aspects related to empathy activation can be seen; especially those identified as proper strategies to catch the attention of experienced speakers who may be captivated by more colourful and specific language (with the ranking EE1, EE2, or EE3). Additionally, adapting segments to typical collocates is also a source of interest in terms of empathy triggering and prototypicality, with naturalness being attributed to common expressions and collocations located in each corpus (ranking NE+ if all the collocates have been found in the corpus). Finally, recurrence tendencies have also been covered by the study as an indicator of empathy move (ranking TE+ if the natural tendency is followed). Recurrence as a strategy for prototypicality was more specifically found in English, with a smaller number of adjectives being more frequently used than in Spanish. In contrast, a larger collection of adjectives that are less frequently used was identified in the Spanish subcorpus, which probably entails a higher variety of adjectives. As a consequence, we may conclude that the recurrence of

some adjectives is more likely to trigger empathy in English than in Spanish, this strategy being more familiar to and predictable for English speakers.

However, not only contrasts but also common points, can be found after corpus analysis. In both languages, positive charge is of key importance after checking the context for the adjectives. No matter the collocate they are integrated into, adjectives are all positively used, even when two opposite qualities are mentioned in the same section or line, both considered as positive and desirable for similar referents. This makes adjectives in tourism promotional language completely context-dependent in such a way that whenever an adjective is used in tourism promotional messages, either in English or Spanish, it is to be interpreted positively.

Thus, in tourism promotional content as a multifaceted LSP, speakers' expectations and social conventions may entail, for instance, that spaces can be similarly ideal whether they are either small or large under the preferences or inclinations of consumers, tourists, or users may have towards size in each context. Small areas can be positively evaluated to the same extent that large spaces can also be idealised depending on how highly appreciated traits under promotion are exhibited for each place or destination.

In terms of empathy, positiveness – or Dann's euphoria (1996)- is a key point to be considered and reproduced so that tourism discourse can be recognised as genuine. This means positive adjectives are good candidates or prototypes to trigger empathy or, at least, they contribute to not restraining it.

Furthermore, it is clearly worth mentioning the cultural impact of history, society, and even traditional religions on linguistic tendencies. For example, the most frequent adjectives in Spanish are *grande* and *santo*, whilst the top positions in English are filled by *good* and *new*. On this basis, it also comes as no surprise that we found *soleado* around 150 times in Spanish compared to *sunny* on just 36 occasions in English, which is obviously related to the typical weather in each country. Indeed, thousands of cognitive and pragmatical reflections can be referred to explain recurrence levels for each particular adjective, so future research on this topic includes a vast area.

There is absolutely no doubt that much more still needs to be studied, thoroughly analysed, and discussed in relation to adjectives in order to evaluate the degree of empathy a text or collection of contents may trigger. In future research projects, adjectives and other categories should also be examined to find out if their influence prompts or improves empathy activation.

Boosting empathy is a complex phenomenon with language playing a key —although not exclusive— role and offering an essential contribution. The next steps in this research will, hopefully, shed light on the significance of cognitive processes for empathy triggering.

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