English for Specific Purposes 58 (2020) 43–57

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

English for Specific Purposes

journal homepage: http://ees.elsevier.com/esp/default.asp

# A multi-level contrastive analysis of promotional strategies in specialised discourse

Marlén Izquierdo [a,*], María Pérez Blanco [b]

[a] Universidad del País Vasco (UPV/EHU), Spain
[b] Universidad de León (ULE), Spain

ARTICLE INFO

*Article history:*
Available online 27 December 2019

*Keywords:*
Contrastive rhetoric
Persuasive register
Promotional strategy
Specialised discourse
English-Spanish

© 2019 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

Promotion is bound up with a broad concept of advertising, whereby "mere information about a product is not sufficient to trigger a consumer reaction" (Janoschka, 2004: 88). In other words, promotional genres are associated with descriptive text types whose goal is to persuade. As such, promotional genres might be classified as representative of the informational-persuasive register (Biber & Zhang, 2018). Within the promotional realm we find core genres, like advertisements or book/DVD blurbs, which have received considerable scholarly attention (Bednarek, 2014; Cook, 2001; Gea Valor, 2005), but also more recent ones, such as web-based genres, which have seen far less linguistic exploration, promoting a specific call (Anthony, 2016) for academia to meet the industry's needs for specialised communication in English. The present study sets out to meet these needs, and the text type under study, the Herbal Tea Promotional Text (HTPT), can be understood as an instance of "descriptions with an intent to sell" (Biber & Zhang, 2018, p. 102). In that their ultimate purpose is selling, such

* Corresponding author.
*E-mail addresses:* marlen.izquierdo@ehu.eus (M. Izquierdo), mperb@unileon.es (M. Pérez Blanco).

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2019.12.002
0889-4906/© 2019 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

promotional genres resort mainly to a positive evaluation of a given product, which would thus be described with an intended perlocutionary effect of persuading the customer to purchase such a product.

The role of English for promotional purposes in a globalised world can hardly be overstated (Nickerson, 2005). In fact, the present study is framed within a larger project that aims to meet the communication needs of Spanish professionals who are seeking to promote their products through the English language. As identified by the ACTRES research team,[1] more and more local manufacturers in the food and drink industry in the region of Castile and León (Spain) are trying to enter the global market (Labrador & Ramón, 2015; Rabadán, Colwell, & Sanjurjo-González, 2016). Consequently, there is "a growing need for linguistic services, not only direct translation and/or interpreting services, but also services involving assistance in professional writing for various purposes" (Labrador & Ramón, 2015, p. 226). Echoing Anthony's call for academia to meet the needs of industry (Anthony, 2016), ACTRES researchers have embarked on various analyses of specialised sub-genres to develop corpus-based tools that assist Spanish professionals in the writing of food promotional texts, including HTPTs.

Drawing on Bhatia's Multiperspective Model (Bhatia, 2004), discourse can be approached as 'text', 'genre', 'professional discourse' and 'social practice'. Far from being mutually exclusive, these four dimensions are complementary and even overlap to a certain extent (Bhatia, 2008).

Accordingly, the text type under scrutiny in the current study, HTPT as 'text' represents a promotional register, which is here understood as containing those pervasive linguistic features (Biber & Conrad, 2009) that are frequently used to describe a product in such a way that the customer is persuaded to buy it. Here, this informational-persuasive register will be analysed as it appears in online food descriptions.

As 'genre', HTPT displays a (multimodal) macrostructure divided into moves and steps, where persuasive and descriptive functions are served through a variety of resources (cf. 3.1). HTPT would fit within a colony (Bhatia, 2008) of promotional genres where persuasion, together with description, informs the customer about a given product, in this case herbal teas. Within this colony, we find traditional promotional genres such as advertisements, but also modern-day, online, multimodal genres that have arisen in the technological era to satisfy new and emerging professional needs (Bhatia, 2005). In this regard, attempts by small and medium-sized Spanish companies to promote their products internationally, as mentioned above, have stimulated interest in online product descriptions. Thus, if we had to visualize a taxonomy within such a colony of promotional genres, we would find a primary branch of 'sister' genres that range from traditional ones, like 'ads', to modern-day ones, like 'online product description'. This latter genre, in turn, may serve as a parent genre, classifiable into different sub-genres that promote various types of products, such as 'food'. At a lower level of text specificity, the HTPT would be a promotional subgenre where a specific food is promoted through the description of different attributes, such as origin, taste, appearance, and ingredients, amongst others. In sum, as regards its communicative purpose, the HTPT is a modern-day promotional subgenre which is itself a member of the online food description subgenre.

To the best of our knowledge, no study has thus far accounted for the 'online product description' as a parent genre, although previous research has examined related sub-genres, such as wine tasting notes (López-Arroyo & Roberts, 2014), online cheese descriptions (Labrador & Ramón, 2015), and biscuit descriptions (Pizarro, 2018). These studies attest to the fact that linguistic commonalities found across all these different text types reflect a food promotional register. In this sense, descriptive and persuasive resources merge to describe the food-product as well as to motivate the consumer to sample it. Notwithstanding similarities in communicative purposes, topic-specific register features may emerge. As acknowledged by Biber and Conrad (2009, p. 46): "topic is the most important situational factor influencing vocabulary choice; the words used in a text are to a large extent determined by the topic of the text […] both at the level of general topic domains […] and very specific topical domains", just as 'food' and 'herbal tea' can be seen to exemplify, respectively. On the other hand, differences seem to occur at the rhetorical level, in that the macrostructural realisation of the text types noted above is not exactly the same. Nevertheless, equivalent moves are observed (cf. 3.1), which would strengthen the notion that a parent genre exists, this on the assumption that flexibility in genre structure is itself a defining criterion of what a genre is (Bhatia, 2008).

'Professional discourse' and 'social practice' are closely intertwined; as an instance of the former, the promotional texts described here are produced by a specific 'professional community'. Moreover, discourse production takes place in accordance with a set of conventions that have previously been established in, and are thus expected within, the 'social context' where communication occurs. Exploring the professional community or addressors of the HTPT further, it is, theoretically, the members of the marketing department of a given brand that are expected to produce it, in that they are familiar with advertising strategies and marketing devices that accurately create the desires and satisfy the needs of their potential customers. In practice, however, the degree of expertise and knowledge of these marketers might not always be sufficient to deal with specific text types such as the HTPT, let alone with its purely linguistic aspects.[2] In such a situation, large companies can often afford to hire professional writers or freelance communication advisors. Whereas this may be a simple, albeit costly, solution, these addressors would nevertheless need to be aware of genre-specific structure and register-specific linguistic features to comply with the abovementioned conventions. The likelihood that these professionals would be fully familiar

[1] Project LE227U13. ACTRES: *Análisis Contrasivo y TRaducción English-Spanish/ESpecializada* (English-Spanish/Specialized Contrastive Analysis and Translation).

[2] Personal communication with L. Martínez, marketing department of Pharmadus Botanicals S.L., a herbal tea manufacturer, with whom the ACTRES Research Team signed a collaborative agreement for the research Project LE227U13.

with such specific information is low, given that the HTPT – just like descriptions of cheese, biscuits, or any other specific kind of product – can be seen as a narrow, under-researched domain.

The situation is even more challenging for those small and medium-sized companies that are looking to expand the promotion of their products internationally, in that this requires the use of English as a foreign language (EFL) in an acceptable and comprehensible way. In this regard, machine translation is not a feasible solution due to not only inaccuracy problems but also the cost of post-editing (Skadina, Vasiljevs, Skadins, Gaizauskas, Tufis & Gornostay, 2010). Furthermore, as personally reported by marketers at Pharmadus Botanicals S.L., local manufacturers may not be able to afford to outsource either the writing or the translation of their promotional and descriptive texts and must attempt to do it themselves.

The challenge that such professionals face is twofold: first, they need to be in control of rhetorical and lexico-grammatical conventions that are typical of the promotional genre; second, they need to have a mastery of the English language in general, particularly in terms of the topic-specific variety which they will be using. Yet as Cook (2001, p. 3) warns, "although advertising seems to be homogenous and increasingly international and cross-cultural, such generalizations immediately run into trouble". Such a situation demands a contrastive study such as the one reported on in the present article, where we aim to address a specific gap in the field, in that previous studies have focused on English only (Labrador & Ramón, 2015).

Complying with socially driven conventions is paramount for the success of communication, both within and across language boundaries. So, how can professionals meet the requirements noted above? In the present context, a genre analysis approach to raise awareness of text structure and linguistic features would hardly be efficient or effective. Likewise, an English for Specialised Purposes course would also be insufficient, as well as impractical in terms of time. Therefore, in an academia-industry alliance, the role of linguists from ACTRES has been first to examine a specific text type in order to shed light on prototypical features from both the genre and register perspectives. Then, in order to assist professionals in the writing of specific promotional texts, we have capitalised on this (linguistic) descriptive work to design tools that are both useful and usable at the workplace, such as text generators[3] (Pérez Blanco & Izquierdo, 2018). Describing the HTPT writing tool is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, we report on the descriptive stages that were necessary prior to transferring the knowledge yielded to the tool. We designed the abovementioned writing tool with the assumption in mind that professionals might be less interested in the text itself than in its perlocutionary effect. To guarantee the acceptability, comprehensibility and expertise of the tool's output, which is key for successful communication, the research was conducted using a corpus-based approach.

Specifically, we used a comparable corpus-based approach (cf. 2), identifying both a recurrent macrostructure of the HTPT and those pervasive linguistic features that effect the text type's main functions, namely, describing and persuading. In particular, we focus on its most persuasion-laden move as a way of identifying the functional forces that make pervasive linguistic features be associated with the text's overall description-to-sell nature. Our research questions, then, are: what strategies underlie the informational-persuasive type of language used as a means of motivating the end customer to try the herbal tea products described? Are the addressees of the HTPT prone to be convinced by the same values conferred on the products in the British and in the Spanish cultures? In an attempt to answer these questions we will take into account whether addressors appeal to reason and/or emotion to the same extent in the two languages. Likewise, we will consider whether they rely on any other sort of effect on the customer. We will focus on the formal realisation of the most persuasive chunk of the HTPT to establish our classification (cf. 3.2).

## 2. Material and methods

A contrastive analysis based on a comparable corpus was conducted at two levels: rhetoric and lexico-grammar. This multi-level analysis is necessary because "knowing how to perform a genre […] involves knowing both its schematic structure, or *staging*, on the one hand, and the specific form-function correlation of each stage, on the other"[4] (Flowerdew & Wang, 2010, p. 80). The contrastive approach is paramount as a means of assisting Spanish professionals regarding their writing needs in English. We will first describe the selection of the material to be examined.

### 2.1. Corpus and data

As noted above, this study is a response to a real, professional need in an area of activity that involves cross-linguistic communication. In order to provide a solution, linguists must understand the kind of language use expected in the marketplace, bearing in mind both the national and discipline-based cultures. Thus, the most reliable way of getting to grips with the communicative needs of those Spanish manufacturers seeking to enter the global market is through analysing authentic instances of specialised writing practices, in both English and Spanish. This has motivated our compilation of an *ad-hoc* specialised, comparable corpus of HTPTs. Only with such a tool can linguists appreciate the genre- and register-specific features that are conventional and typical of the text type. "[T]echnology-facilitated genre[s] [are] typically rich in multimodal

[3] In compliance with an agreement signed between the ACTRES Research Team and Pharmadus Botanicals S.L., the writing tool Promociona-Te has been developed, tested and registered as intellectual property under the code LE-236-16. For further information, see https://actres.unileon.es:8080/.

[4] The term 'genre' in this quotation is used in a broader sense than in Biber and Conrad (2009), where genre refers solely to the rhetorical structure of the text type. In the current article, we follow Biber & Conrad's genre/register distinction.

and multimedia resources, allowing genre analysis to be conducted not solely on the linguistic elements (…) but also on other semiotic devices, as well as the interactions between them" (Lam, 2013, p. 14). This is indeed the case with the HTPT, for "it is the complete web site that functions as an advertising instrument" (Janoschka, 2004, p. 44). Nevertheless, we will only deal here with the purely linguistic dimension, the study of which has been undertaken due to the development of a much-needed writing tool for the workplace.[5] The data analysed are, thus, only textual.

The corpus compiled for our research purposes, and which we will refer to as ACTEaS_Promo, contains 150 texts[6] per language, and totals 36,266 words, with an average word number per text of 121. Pictures of plants, seeds, tea cups and similar elements were removed, together with images encoding the brewing instructions to be followed. Tables featuring nutritional facts were converted into plain text. Table 1 shows the corpus size.

The representativeness of the corpus is assured, in that its margin of error is 0.74 % for the English data and 0.72 % for the Spanish data at a confidence level of 95 %. These figures were the result of determining the sample size with the formula $\varepsilon = \frac{z\frac{\alpha}{2}\cdot\sqrt{p\cdot q}}{\sqrt{n}}$, where $\varepsilon$ is the actual margin of error; $z\frac{\alpha}{2}$ is the value of the $z$ standard normal distribution, where $\alpha$ is the complementary value to the confidence level, i.e., 0.05. As such, $z_{\alpha/2}$ equals 1.96; $p$ is the estimated proportion of the population, and q equals 1-p. The value for both $p$ and $q$ is considered to be 0.5. Finally, $n$ stands for the actual sample (number of words) per language.

This formula has been used for compiling other ACTRES specialised corpora (Labrador & Ramón, 2015; Pizarro, 2018). Texts were downloaded from twenty-four different online sources: twelve websites of well-known brands in the tea industry (such as Lipton and Hornimans), together with specialised online shops (e.g. Cup of Tea and Solo Infusiones) per language. The language varieties of our texts are British English and European Spanish. Likewise, the corresponding cultures of the HTPT would be British and Spanish. Availability was a key compilation criterion, and thus some sources provided more texts than others, although distribution is even in both languages, as illustrated in Figure 1:

In the corpus, herbal teas, including fruit infusions and function-specific teas (such as relaxation or sleep-related products) outnumber regular teas (usually known as black tea). A more fine-grained, manual selection of the products advertised on the websites was also made, in order to avoid duplicates of a specific tea, for example 'chamomile tea'. This procedure matched our expectation that a greater variety of teas could provide a wider array of register-specific lexical units (Pérez Blanco & Izquierdo, 2017). Even though a corpus-based lexical analysis is beyond the scope of this article, such an approach has proved useful in developing the writing tool, which includes a built-in glossary composed of food-related words and multiword expressions (Pérez Blanco & Izquierdo, 2018).

The fact that the HTPT can be defined as a narrow domain justifies the size of ACTEaS_Promo. As Biber and Conrad state, "there will be more variation among texts within a general register than a specific subregister, and so the linguistic analysis of a general register will need to be based on a larger sample of texts" (2009, p. 33), which is not the case here. In addition, previous corpus-based genre analyses have demonstrated the validity of small, specialised corpora for research at the rhetorical level (Flowerdew, 2004; Koester, 2013; López-Arroyo & Roberts, 2014), which will be the first type of analysis carried out here (cf. 2.2).

### 2.2. Contrastive rhetoric analysis

Following Connor (2004), we understand that writing is socially situated and may convey "preferred expectations about how information is organized in different languages and cultures" (p. 294). In this sense, there are two major cultural frameworks that jointly shape discourse, namely so-called big or national culture, and small or disciplinary culture. With regard to the former, languages – viewed as a cultural means of communication – may differ in the way shared meanings are mapped onto form. Put simply, while the HTPT serves the same description-to-sell function in English and in Spanish, formal differences may arise according to its conventionally agreed textual forms. Regarding the latter type of culture, i.e. business, the HTPT has never been examined before; so, looking into its generic macrostructure will shed light on English-Spanish differences here, given that "crossing cultural boundaries requires re-learning at least part of the genre in light of its construction in the new culture" (Upton & Connor, 2001, p. 314).

**Table 1**
ACTEaS_Promo Corpus Size.

| | English | Spanish | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Texts | 150 | 150 | 300 |
| Words | 17,673 | 18,593 | 36,266 |
| Words/text | 117.8 | 123.9 | 121 $\bar{x}$ |
| Source | 12 websites | 12 websites | 24 |

[5] As already noted, the ACTRES research team signed a collaboration agreement with Pharmadus Botanicals S.L., a local manufacturer from León (Spain) who reported their real cross-linguistic communication deficits and needs.

[6] By 'text' we understand the whole linguistic description of the (herbal) tea on the site. As indicated, we have not considered multimodal features in the present analysis.

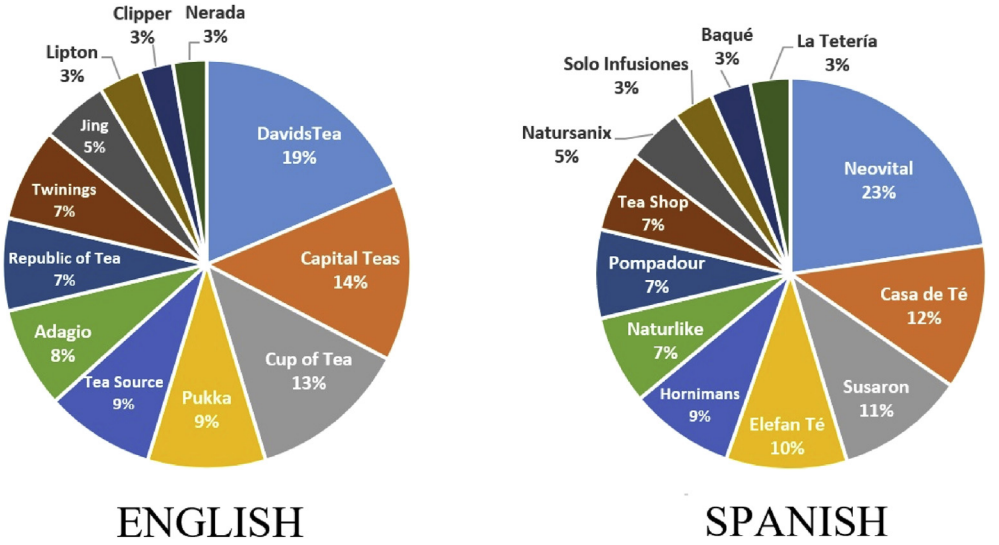



**Figure 1.** Brand/Shop websites used as the source of herbal tea promotional texts.

For over 30 years, the main unit of rhetorical analysis has been the 'move', a concept that refers to "semantic/functional units of texts which can be identified first because of their communicative purposes and second because of linguistic boundaries typical of the moves" (Upton & Connor, 2001, p. 317). The second part of this quotation should be taken with caution, though. Linguistic boundaries, either in the form of headers or keywords, as well as multimodal features that delimit the function of moves, do not necessarily confine certain information. In other promotional genres, like patents (Aragonés Lumeras, 2009), or informational texts such as audit reports (Izquierdo, 2015), moves may in fact span discursively beyond headers. As a consequence of this, communicative purpose is our main criterion, in that we will be interested mainly in identifying what move(s) bear a primarily persuasive function.

Moves, in turn, may be broken down into steps and substeps, thereby enabling a greater degree of refinement in structural analysis. Any rhetorical analysis should tag these aspects of texts, yet their semantic/functional nature makes tagging an extremely daunting task, one that requires manual checking and, inevitably, manual handling. Even though advances in automated tagging procedures have been made through the development of custom-made software that assists the researcher here and facilitates the annotation of larger corpora, fully automatic, accurate tagging has yet to be achieved (Ibrahim, 2013; Krestel, Bergler, & Witte, 2008).

ACTEaS_Promo has been fully tagged using the ACTRES Tagger, a semi-automatic tool[7] that is equipped with a tag set previously identified by hand on a smaller sample. Such tags can be used when and where necessary, according to the specific text, at two different levels: move and step. On closely observing a preliminary sample of the texts in both languages before tagging, substeps were not deemed necessary, nor were they found while the rhetorical annotation was being done manually. It is the user who judges the span of every functional chunk, this mainly on the basis of content. To guarantee interpersonal agreement on the boundaries of moves, we jointly established the prototypical structure of the HTPT and supervised the semi-automatic tagging. Our intuitive interpretation of the function of such content is reinforced by linguistic signals such as key adjectives, nouns, imperatives, even headers[8] that hint at a specific communicative purpose. For example, where content refers to a tasting note, we can select the relevant section, drawing from key words like 'aroma/smell', 'taste', and 'colour', among others, and click on the button 'TastingNote' in the tagger so that the selected chunk is annotated with the corresponding opening and closing tags, as shown in (1):

(1) <tasting> Appearance: tightly rolled large leaves on long stalks Infusion: vibrant and bright yellow. Aroma: creamy with beautiful hints of apricot and osmanthus flowers. Taste: fantastically fresh and light with spring flower, mango and apricot complexities.</tasting>

[7] At present, the ACTRES Tagger is unable to fully tag a text automatically. The Tagger is semi-automatic, in that the user chooses the tags required to code a text from a built-in tag set. Therefore, the actual annotation is manual, while the output tagging is ready for automatic retrieval, thanks to an *ad-hoc* mark-up language that enables a search engine to identify a given tag.

[8] We have not taken headers as move-step demarcations, though. They refer to move/step-specific content but do not necessarily delimit the chunk.

Having tagged a text, it is saved as an .xml file and stored in a repository, which can then be searched for specific tags using a purpose-built browser. ACTRES Tagger, which works with UTF-8 encoded .txt files, is user-friendly in that it lets the researcher undo flawed tagging in real time, provided that re-tagging is completed before the file is saved. In addition, the tool allows for nonlinear tagging. In other words, the user does not have to follow the sequential order of the move structure shown in Table 3; instead, a given section may be tagged even if the preceding information has not yet been annotated.

The software is equipped with a text integrity functionality, whereby the well-formedness and validity of every text is reported; the advantage of this lies in the possibility of re-tagging flawed files, thus refining the accuracy rate of the rhetorical analysis. Respecting the hierarchical structure is fundamental because, otherwise, the browser does not recognise the file if moves are not tagged. Likewise, marking a step within a non-corresponding parent move would make it impossible to retrieve such a step, since it would be mistagged. In short, the tagger eases the digitisation of files and their subsequent use by means of various corpus tools, but the tagging itself requires analysis by the research team.

### 2.3. Register analysis

The rhetorical analysis allowed us to identify the functional chunk in which promotional discourse appeared to be most predominant. This chunk was further analysed from a register perspective, focusing on pervasive language features with a persuasive function.[9] We benefited from previous research here as a means of classifying linguistic resources on the basis of which we intuitively perceived the suggested macro structure (see Table 3). The study by Labrador, Ramón, Aláiz-Moretón, and Sanjurjo-González (2014) provided a pool of lexico-grammatical English resources to consider, such as multiple modifications (e.g. 'Deeply comforting organic super fruity tea') and emphatic devices, as in 'It's no wonder Egyptian Pharaohs treasured the aromatic liquorice root'. In addition, resources operating at the level of the interpersonal function of language were very useful, these including uses of 'you', imperatives, and rhetorical questions, to name just a few. Cook (2001) and Janoschka (2004) have also noted the importance of lexis relating to reason and to emotion for stimulating interest in the customer. In this sense, Biber and Zhang's multidimensional analysis of description-to-sell web subregisters (2018) yields relevant findings. Subjective language, together with metadiscourse markers such as boosters, also build persuasion in Spanish (Suau Jiménez, 2011). At this stage we used ACTRES Browser, an *ad-hoc* tool with two main searching functionalities; as a MOVE-STEP concordancer, it allows us to search for all chunks tagged under a specific tag; as a KWIC concordancer, it lists all occurrences of a key input word, so that the user can check its surrounding co(n)text of use. We used mainly the former option to gather all instances of step '2.1. Marketing statement' as a means of identifying persuasive language. Since the register analysis was qualitative, it was carried out manually. Focusing on content, this was largely a matter of identifying lexical items, plus certain lexico-grammatical constructions and examples of figurative language that we intuitively felt were descriptive and persuasive. An advantage of the browser is the ability to juxtapose English and Spanish data, which serves our contrastive aims well here, as shown in Figure 2:

It is frequently claimed that advertising plays with customers' psychology in that it tries to convince them to purchase the product advertised (Fennis & Stroebe, 2010; Koszembar-Wiklik, 2016). For this reason, the interpretation of register features found in our corpus is based partly on Cialdini's Theory of Influence (2009). He establishes six principles as the basis of persuasion:

- 'reciprocity': customers may be moved to buy a product that they have tried previously thanks to free samples or discounts.
- 'commitment and consistency': a product would be perceived as appealing providing that it lets a customer be consistent and coherent with their beliefs and attitudes.
- 'social proof': the more popular a product is among a customer's peer group, the more likely it is to be purchased.
- 'authority': customers will follow the recommendations of people generally considered influential.
- 'liking': customers will follow the recommendations by people they like.
- 'scarcity': the fewer supplies of a product the more appealing it is for a customer.

This model has been applied to the analysis of other promotional genres; for example, Mustafa, Kahar, Bunari, Zakaria and Habil (2012) found that some principles seem to be preferred for some of the moves or steps of online direct response sales letters, so it remains to be observed whether such principles also operate in HTPTs (cf. 3.2).

In addition, we also interpreted our data with regard to their assumed overall effect on the HTPT addressees. One possible effect could be rational, if the customer buys the product believing that doing so is a logical and intelligent response, on the assumption that the product will do them good. Another possible effect would be that of pleasure, if the customer 'feels like' buying the product on the assumption that they will simply enjoy it. The former type of effect is achieved through reason,

[9] We are aware that the combination of rhetorical (top-down) and register (bottom-up) studies entails a circularity, one that seems to be typical of most move analyses (Pho, 2008). However, we do not consider this to be a weakness of the combined study, given that the linguistic signals that helped us determine move-specific content correspond to "implicit choices" (Östman, 2005 p. 190) of the meaning-form language interface. In other words, the register analysis is embedded within the rhetorical one. The reason for these being reported separately is methodological, in that they are used as tools to identify, first, the move structure, and then the language that carries out promotional strategies.

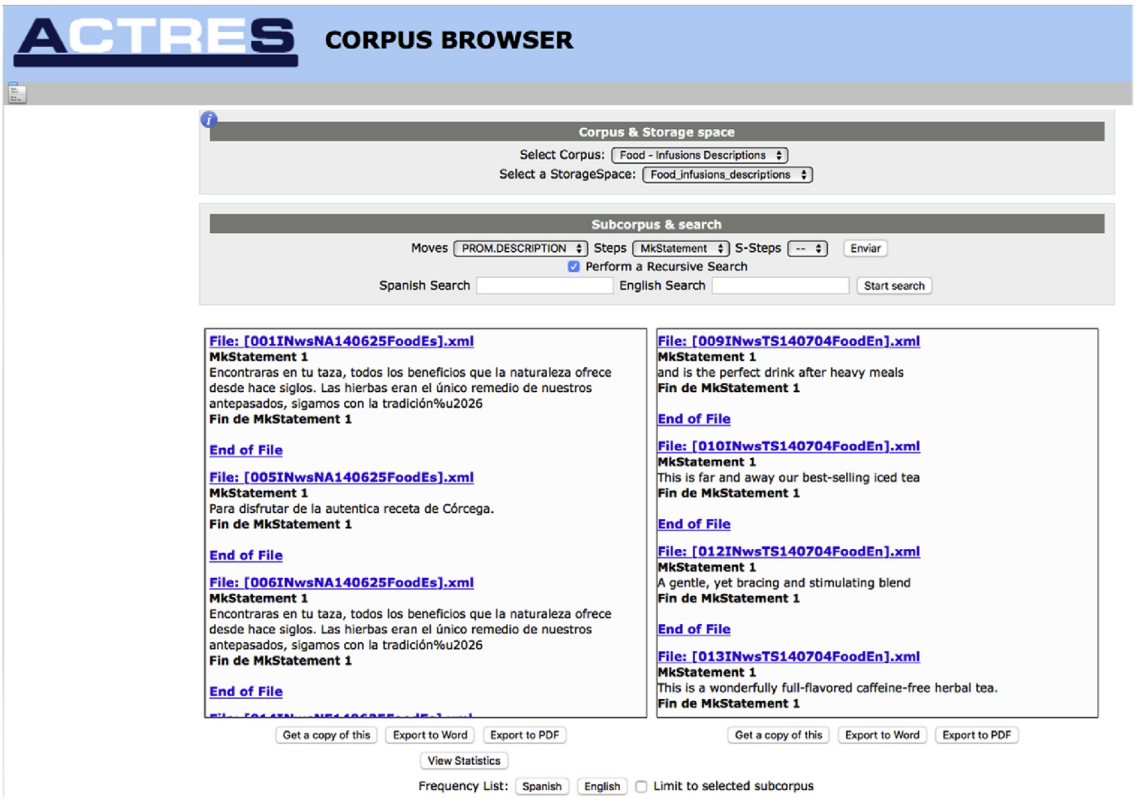



**Figure 2.** English-Spanish Juxtaposition of tagged Marketing Statement steps.

whereas the latter operates through a tickle mechanism, i.e. a cause of enjoyment and satisfaction (Cook, 2001). This is very much related to the target culture and their concept of (herbal) tea. Both in English and in Spanish, the addressees of the HTPT belong to an undefined mass audience; yet, the HTPT is not a pop-up ad, something that might draw a person's attention while they are browsing a site on fitness, for example. Most addressees, presumably interested in herbal tea, visit these sites deliberately. However, whereas some English-speaking countries have greater familiarity with tea, to the extent that there are more tea-related concepts in the language, this is not the case in Spain. Therefore, we will consider whether the promotional strategies used to persuade the customer reveal any difference that might be understood in cultural terms.

## 3. Results and discussion

### 3.1. Rhetorical macrostructure

The rhetorical analysis revealed the generic move structure shown in Table 2 and illustrated in Appendix 1.

As shown in the central column of the table, we identified six moves, five of which are further subdivided into steps. Table 2 also shows in how many texts we observed the realisation of each move and step. We also provide percentage occurrence rates as a means of illustrating similarities and differences more clearly. Bearing in mind the ultimate goal of the project, that is, the development of a writing tool that assists professionals in their real-life communication tasks, we argue that M1 and M2 can be considered obligatory chunks in the HTPT. Their overall function is primary in the genre and their frequencies of occurrence are high. Likewise, M3 and M4 would also be highly recommended, yet they do not seem to be always necessary. This is partly the case because some of the information conveyed here is also implicit in M2. Regarding M5, its relevance in the genre seems weak in quantitative and qualitative terms: it appears in few sources and its content is also hinted at in M2. Finally, even though M6 seems to be highly peripheral, given its low occurrence rate, it ought to be seen as compulsory, as we will argue below [10].

[10] As indicated above, this research responds to real needs in the area of professional communication. Thus we formulate the descriptive findings in prescriptive terms, so that the writing tool developed (cf. footnote 4) might be professionally and socially appropriate and accurate in the world of marketing.

**Table 2**
Rhetorical macrostructure of the HTPT.

| EN | | Move step | ES | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | % | | % | N |
| **150** | **100** | **M1 - identification** | **100** | **150** |
| 150 | 100 | Name | 100 | 150 |
| 37 | 24.7 | Origin | 16.7 | 25 |
| 150 | 100 | Image | 100 | 150 |
| 19 | 12.7 | Package & Price | 8 | 12 |
| **150** | **100** | **M2 - Promotional description** | **100** | **150** |
| 125 | 83.3 | Marketing Statement | 62.7 | 94 |
| 122 | 81.3 | Tasting Note | 55.3 | 83 |
| 33 | 22 | (Health) properties | 20.7 | 31 |
| **108** | **72** | **M3 - Ingredients** | **74.7** | **112** |
| 107 | 71.3 | Name | 73.3 | 110 |
| 21 | 14 | Characteristics | 32 | 48 |
| **85** | **56.7** | **M4 - Suggestions** | **77.3** | **116** |
| 80 | 53.3 | How to make | 66.7 | 100 |
| 18 | 12 | How to take | 34 | 51 |
| **48** | **32** | **M5 - Processing** | **18** | **27** |
| 19 | 12.7 | The process | 8 | 12 |
| 29 | 19.3 | The Brand | 10 | 15 |
| **60** | **40** | **M6 - Nutrition & allergies** | **6** | **9** |

So, the macrostructure is common to English (henceforward EN) and Spanish (from here on ES) HTPTs. In neither language, however, does it follow a uniform pattern, although the order presented in Table 2 reflects a regular distribution. Cross-linguistic differences at this level relate mainly to frequency of occurrence. We observed that while M1 and M2 are frequent and always appear at the very beginning of a text, the others are highly variable with regard to their occurrence and position on the website as a whole. M1 identifies a herbal tea through four steps: step 1 names the infusion, whose origin is on occasions provided (step 1.2.). There is always an image of the herbal tea (step 1.3.) and we could also get information about the type of package in which the infusion comes, as well as its price (step 1.4.). Steps 1.1. and 1.3. are always present in both languages. M2, which is tagged in all 150 texts per language, overtly promotes the herbal tea. Both their descriptive and evaluative functions are primarily served in step 2.1. 'marketing statement', which is highly recurrent. This step is of paramount importance for this study, in that it feels more persuasive than descriptive and will therefore be analysed further (cf. 3.2.). Furthermore, step '2.2. Tasting note' provides an account of a tea's taste, colour, aroma and texture, using a positive, praising tone through evaluative adjectives like '…*maravillosos sabores a*' [marvellous tastes] and adverbs as in '…yogurt taste and is pleasantly sweet'. As illustrated in (1) above, this step shows how closely information and persuasion are intertwined (Biber & Conrad, 2009). Finally, step 2.3. refers to 'health properties' of the infusion, mainly identifying specific ailments the herbal tea would be suitable to fight.

The information-persuasion interface is likewise observed in M3, which provides detailed information on ingredients, usually listed one after the other (step 3.1.). Most interestingly, ingredients' qualities are often emphasised by means of evaluative adjectives (step 3.2.). In both languages the occurrence of M3 is high (72 % in EN and 74.7 % in ES). M4 is a frequent means of addressing the customer, advising them on how to make the infusion (step 4.1.); specifying the amount of tea needed for a cup, the most suitable water temperature for the drink to infuse at, or how long this latter stage should take. Moreover, step '4.2. How to consume' gives advice on how and when to drink the herbal tea, including the best time of the day, whether to have it hot or cold, with or without sugar, milk, and so on. Only M4 is often marked by headings such as 'Suggestions', 'Brand name + recommends…' or a 'How to…' phrase. In addition, orality, which is characteristic of promotional discourse (Cook, 2001; Janoschka, 2004), is notable in M4, mainly encoded through imperatives. From a cross-linguistic point of view, this move is more frequent in ES than in EN (77.3 % and 56.7 % respectively), and might be explained in cultural terms: tea drinking is not as frequent a habit among Spaniards as it is for the English, so the addressors might feel it necessary to give clear instructions for a better tasting experience, thus ensuing the satisfaction of the consumer.

M5 'Processing' informs the customer about aspects of product production (step 5.1.). It also conveys information about the brand's quality standards and any corresponding certificates (step 5.2.). Data suggest that having this sort of information in the HTPT is brand-dependent, which might explain the move's overall low occurrence rate (32 % in EN and 18 % in ES). Finally, M6 'Nutrition & Allergy Information' is interesting from a contrastive perspective; although M6 seems to be peripheral in both EN and ES, the difference in the typical rate of occurrence is striking (6 % in ES, 40 % in EN). It should be noted that the inclusion of M6 is obligatory by law (EU, 2011)[11] as it provides consumers with food information, following general food labelling and nutrition labelling laws. It also warns consumers about any possible adverse effects of the herbal tea for certain physical and health-related conditions. However, even though this sort of information is legally required in the HTPT, the

[11] EU regulation 1169/2011, chapter I, article I (2a) p. 25.

regulations did not come into effect until 2016, which explains the rather unstable behaviour of the move in our data, given that corpus compilation took place in late 2014.

A comparison of the HTPT macrostructure to that of similar sub-genres, such as those for cheese online descriptions (COD) (Labrador & Ramón, 2015), reveals similarities that suggest the possibility of a parent genre for the promotion of foods. Despite a different distribution in moves and steps, online descriptions of cheese and HTPTs inform the customer about the same kind of food attributes, such as origin, ingredients and taste. Likewise, online cheese descriptions offer tasting suggestions (2) and refer to stages in production.

| | |
|---|---|
| (2) | HTPT M4 [Suggestions], Step 4.2. Always best enjoyed without milk<br>COD M6 [Offering serving suggestions], Step 6.1. Best enjoyed at room temperature |

Most differences appear to be food type-related. As such, in terms of ingredients CODs mention a variety of milk types, whereas in the HTPT a wide array of herbs and tea plants are referenced. Another example is found in the processing stages: aging applies to cheeses but not to teas. However, the structures of the two kinds of descriptions are similar, displaying some of the typical features of promotional registers.

In sum, the informational-persuasive sense of the HTPT is observed through the generic macrostructure identified. In general, persuasion is effected through the use of a few evaluative adjectives and adverbs, as well as lexical items conveying positive connotations of the herbal tea, in all six moves. M2 is key in this regard, especially through step '2.1 Marketing statement', which substantially reinforces the promotional effect, and for this reason we will analyse it further below from the perspective of register.

### 3.2. Register-bound promotional strategies

The register features found in our corpus match the type of promotional language observed in previous research (Cook, 2001; Janoschka, 2004; Labrador et al., 2014). Our study contributes to the existing literature by categorising a set of promotional strategies that characterise the persuasive force of the HTPT marketing statement (MS). Example 3 illustrates the kind of language in question here:

| | |
|---|---|
| (3) | EN: And it's so packed with good stuff, it's being hailed as the next big super fruit. Taste it for yourself in this super tangy tropical blend [109INwsDT140728FoodEn].<br>ES: El jazmín y la rosa se unieron en una cita. Activan todos nuestros sentidos, las flores se combinan suavemente y, por arte de magia, crean una taza de té sensual. Esto es lo que lo convierte en una deliciosa y extraordinaria experiencia. [026INwsNE140625FoodEs].<br>[Jasmine and rose gather to mingle. They activate our senses, the flowers combine gently and, as if by magic, they create a sensual cup of tea. This is what makes it a delicious and an extraordinary experience] |

Table 2 shows the number of HTPTs in which step '2.1. Marketing statement' is present (cf. 3.1.). Some texts were observed to contain more than one instance,[12] this being more frequent in EN than in ES. As shown in Table 3, one-to-one correspondences outnumber those that are many-to-one, especially in ES.

**Table 3**
Marketing statements (MSs) per text in EN and ES, and in each total sample.

| EN | | | ES | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MSs in a text | N texts | % | MSs in a text | N texts | % |
| 1 | 70 | 56 | 1 | 68 | 72.3 |
| 2 | 42 | 33.6 | 2 | 23 | 24.5 |
| 3 | 10 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 3.2 |
| 4 | 3 | 2.4 | 4 | – | – |
| Total | 125 | 100 | Total | 94 | 100 |
| **Total MS** | | **196** | **Total MS** | | **122** |
| Average MS/text | | 1.6 | Average MS/text | | 1.3 |

Hence, we analysed 196 text segments tagged as MS in EN and 122 in ES, which on average account for 1.6 and 1.3 MS per text, respectively. This difference had implications for the quantitative analysis of the promotional strategies. Just as there were not always one-to-one correspondences between text and MS, a given segment could display more than one promotional strategy. This is illustrated in example 4, where 'enjoying the experience' conflates with 'praising the benefits'.

| | |
|---|---|
| (4) | Stay healthy as your taste buds stay happy [016INwsCT140704FoodEn] |

[12] As we have noted, the macrostructure is not rigid, and it is often the case that the kind of information labelled as MS appears in several different parts of the text. The tagger does not allow us to merge step-bound contents.

As a result, there are 304 categorisations in EN and 177 in ES, as shown in Table 4.

On average, in the two languages the text type seems to behave rather similarly in terms of the number of strategies per MS (1.55 vs 1.45 in EN and ES, respectively). However, in terms of the number of strategies per text, EN MSs could be seen as more strategy-dense, with an average of 2.5 strategies per text segment, compared to 1.9 for ES. This divergence might be the result of the larger number of texts in EN containing several marketing statements, as indicated above, together with a greater overlap of strategies.

As illustrated in Table 5, MSs in the HTPT seem to rely on six different promotional strategies to convince the customer to try the herbal tea in question.

Such strategies, which are conveyed using descriptive and evaluative language, are identified through an interpretation of what the persuasive effect of the marketing statement on the consumer is intended to be. So, both denotations and connotations of lexical resources played a central role in our register analysis.

'Enjoying the experience', 'praising the benefits', 'aesthetic appeal' and 'uniqueness' are corpus-driven strategies in that they reflect the content of the MSs, as empirically observed in their formal realisation. We coined these labels to categorise the perceived value of the herbal tea; on the other hand, we borrowed 'social proof' and 'authority' from Cialdini's Theory of Influence (2009). With regard to the other principles in this model, only in English did we find two instances of 'reciprocity' and just one of 'scarcity', 'liking', and 'commitment'; their very low frequency of occurrence, together with the fact that none of these principles were found in ES marketing statements, led to us not including these labels or categories in our classification. Nevertheless, if we had extended our analysis to other moves of the HTPT, we might have found more such realisations. For example, step '5.2 The brand' within 'M5 Processing' informs the customer of the brand's quality standards and commitment to environmentally-friendly policies. This seems comparable to the social strategy of credibility enhancement, as observed in 'sales letters' by Cheung (2008). This text-type comparison seems to hold, in that both the sales letter and the HTPT display "the social functions of informing and persuading [that] are generic to the nature of any sales propositions" (Cheung, 2008, p. 176).

The categorisation of the functional segments was rather daunting, given that this was content-based, and the wording of examples was sometimes felt to be ambiguous. To begin with, two judges independently annotated the same sample of MSs in order to gauge the degree of inter-rating agreement. The result was unsatisfactory, at slightly less than 50 % disagreement, and thus a procedure of joint annotation was deemed necessary to guarantee that the same criteria were followed consistently. We will now explain what each strategy entails.

**Strategy 1**. Enjoying the experience: the focus of the marketing statement lies in the pleasurable effects of consuming the herbal tea. The act of drinking becomes a sensory experience that will leave no one indifferent, as shown in (5):

| | |
|---|---|
| (5) | EN: Wrap yourself up in the naturally sweet taste and aroma of juicy, ripe cherries [065INwsTW140723FoodEn]<br>ES: Disfrute de esta mezcla dulce y fragante para poner un punto final suave al día. [014INwsNE140625FoodEs]<br>[Enjoy this sweet and fragrant blend for a smooth end to the day] |

We observe two recurrent register features in the MSs where this strategy is identified. A number of examples contain evaluative adjectives that invoke something positive and pleasant, such as 'wonderful', 'fantastic', 'perfect', *favorita* [favourite], *genial* [great]', *exquisito* [exquisite]. Another recurrent pattern consists of an activity type of verb followed by a

**Table 4**
Number of Promotional Strategies per MS and in each total sample.

| EN | | | ES | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strategies in one MS | N MS | % | Strategies in one MS | N MS | % |
| 1 | 100 | 51 | 1 | 75 | 61.5 |
| 2 | 84 | 42.9 | 2 | 40 | 32.8 |
| 3 | 12 | 6.1 | 3 | 7 | 5.7 |
| Total | 196 | 100 | Total | 122 | 100 |
| **Total strategies** | | **304** | **Total strategies** | | **177** |
| Average St/MS | | 1.55 | Average St/MS | | 1.45 |

**Table 5**
Promotional strategies in marketing statements.

| Promotional strategies | EN | | ES | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 304 N | % | 177 N | % |
| Strategy 1 - Enjoying the experience | 94 | 30.9 | 44 | 24.9 |
| Strategy 2 - Praising the benefits | 59 | 19.4 | 60 | 33.9 |
| Strategy 3 - Aesthetic appeal | 47 | 15.5 | 25 | 14.1 |
| Strategy 4 - Social Proof | 41 | 13.5 | 18 | 10.2 |
| Strategy 5 - Uniqueness | 41 | 13.5 | 8 | 4.5 |
| Strategy 6 - Authority | 22 | 7.2 | 22 | 12.4 |

complement that evokes a positive state, as in 'swing into a relaxing getaway', 'get cozy', or 'revive your senses'. This latter device is used less often in ES. Finally, the imperative construction situates the customer in the present time and the overall experience is rendered more vivid. All in all, promotion relies on sensory stimuli that trigger an emotion in the customer.

**Strategy 2**. Praising the benefits: When the herbal tea is acclaimed for its beneficial properties, we interpreted the strategy of 'praising the benefits' in the MS, as (6) illustrates.

| | |
|---|---|
| (6) | EN: Deeply soothing organic herbal tea. [045INwsPU140716FoodEn]<br>ES: Un respiro para tu cuerpo. [063INwsSU140711FoodEs]<br>[A rest for you]. |

Lexis that denotes health benefits, mainly through adjectives like 'soothing, comforting, relaxing' in EN led us to such an interpretation. We would argue that these adjectives are descriptive, rather than evaluative, on the assumption that the informational purpose of the HTPT entails factuality (Biber & Conrad, 2009). Accordingly, the customer should feel certain that by taking the infusion they will indeed achieve the positive state invoked by such adjectives. In ES, by contrast, this strategy relies on nouns like *ayuda* [help], *descanso* [rest], *beneficio* [benefit], *propiedades* [properties]'. Even though 'praising the benefits' is less frequently expressed by means of a 'verb + complement' combination, we did find some examples. As a whole, the lexico-grammatical construction refers to healthy habits such as 'cleanse your body and mind' or '*mantén tu figura*' [keep your figure]. In short, whatever the linguistic cue, the customer would reason that drinking the tea brings with it some benefits.

**Strategy 3**. Aesthetic appeal: in this strategy the MS relies on aesthetic sensations, which may be literal or imagined. Various resources were found as triggers of a feeling of 'beauty': a catchy phrase including poetic resources such as visual images, alliteration or playful language; a story (see Spanish example 3 above); even an assertion of a positive aspect of the product, be it inherent or conferred, that makes it appealing for the customer.

| | |
|---|---|
| (7) | EN: It's no wonder Egyptian Pharaohs treasured the aromatic liquorice root. [074INwsTW140723FoodEn]<br>ES: Un pastel para tu paladar e ideal para regalar. Embalaje especial Navidad.<br>[It's a cake for your palate and perfect as a present. Special Christmas packaging] |

In the EN example above, the word choice 'treasure' triggers in the customer's mind the image of something precious and shiny. A similar effect is created by the phrase '*embalaje especial Navidad*' [special Christmas packaging] in the ES example, which reinforces the idea of the tea being '*ideal para regalar*' [perfect as a gift]. On the other hand, the alliteration in '*un pastel para tu paladar*' [a cake for your palate] may make the statement itself sound intriguing, in addition to the connotations of the word '*pastel*' [cake] referring not only to something appetising but also appealing and usually attractive and satisfying to the senses. Alliteration, together with personal pronouns, confer an informal style on the MS and contribute to the immediacy that is typical of advertising discourse (Janoschka, 2004; Labrador et *al*., 2014).

**Strategy 4**. Social Proof: this strategy was observed whenever the MS seemed to show that the herbal tea was presented as being approved of by the community. Therefore, drinking that particular tea is not only socially acceptable, but even to a certain extent expected (see example (8)). In other words, both emotional and rational values can be seen here as persuasive factors.

| | |
|---|---|
| (8) | EN: Due to its natural sweet character, Rooibos is fast becoming a globally popular beverage that can be enjoyed at any time of the day [095INwsNE140728FoodEn].<br>ES: Nadie te culparía por ello [075INwsHO140714FoodEs].<br>[Nobody would blame you] |

Words whose meanings relate to 'popularity' underlie our interpretation of this strategy. Thus, 'popular', 'most-requested', *venerado* [adored/venerated] or *todos queremos* [everybody wants] were found in the corresponding MSs. The notion of 'acceptance' encompasses tea qualities such as 'caffeine-free', 'organic' and *sin calorías* [calorie-free], which is essential for people interested in nature-related products, such as tea. A greater variety of items from the latter category were found in EN than in ES; arguably, this reflects a wider concept of 'tea' that goes beyond a 'drink'. The ES culture does not have such a

"mature tea tradition", and this may be reflected in fewer collocations, contexts of use, or metaphorical associations here (Khorechko, Sentsov, Ruchina, Bolsunovskaya, & Kazaryan, 2015, p. 217).

**Strategy 5**. Uniqueness: by means of this strategy, the MS emphasises the fact that the product is unique in terms of its quality, a good enough reason for the customer to try this one-of-a-kind blend.

| | |
|---|---|
| (9) | EN: We hope this is the best digestif you will ever taste. [041INwsPU140716FoodEn]<br>ES: La mezcla de cada día para tu taza de té favorita. El té más genuino. [077INwsHO140714FoodEs]<br>[Everyday blend for your favourite cup of tea. The most genuine tea] |

The interpretation derives from the typical use of key adjectives such as 'unique' and *único* [unique], as well as the superlative constructions shown in example (9) above. These two resources are evenly distributed in the two languages, but the latter is especially frequent in EN.

**Strategy 6**. Authority: with this strategy, the MS engages with the customer's interest in the product by referring to someone – or something – that is perceived as having some sort of relevant authority or expertise, so that they become a model to imitate (Cialdini, 2009). That is, if they recommend or have tried the herbal tea, the customer may consider it a good idea to try it themselves. Among the authoritative entities observed, we find gods or other characters of renown (mainly those influential in the media), ancient traditions (especially Asian and Classical ones), and medical figures. Even the brand itself may be presented as a source of authority and knowledge. An example for each language is offered in (10):

(10) EN: Cardamon Cinnamon Tea was featured in Dr. Oz: The Good Life Magazine as one of Dr. Oz's favorite items for travel [061INwsRT140720FoodEn]
ES: Antiguamente fue considerada como una planta sagrada a la que atribuían poderes sobrenaturales. Se utiliza la planta florida. [106INwsNS140805FoodEs]
[In the old days, it was considered a sacred plant associated with supernatural powers. Blossoms are used]

In general, this strategy appears to convey a rational argument which will prompt the customer to try the product.

With respect to formal realisation, evaluation in our strategies is observed to be "expressed lexically -rather than grammatically", which has been seen as characteristic of informational-persuasive web documents (Biber & Zhang, 2018, p. 97). From a contrastive perspective, EN seems to prefer adjectives, whereas ES favours nouns. Semantically, these lexical items overtly refer to the senses and experiences, to health and benefits, and to medicine. Likewise, they encode participants in the activity of drinking tea. They are often arranged in multiple modification patterns, i.e., in strings of words that premodify the nucleus of the phrase. This is a feature of persuasive language noted in previous research (Rush, 1998; Labrador et al., 2014; Pérez Blanco & Izquierdo, 2017). Our findings, on the other hand, contrast with the type of clauses found by Labrador et al. (2014) that indicated positive evaluation in online advertisements. While these would depict a more complex, elaborate discourse, the HTPT marketing statements are concise and direct, as expected in electronic sales messages, for two main reasons: to fit the size of the screen and to be efficient in terms of short decoding time (Cheung, 2008).

Resources at the lexico-grammatical level are rare. In fact, the one recurrent pattern identified, composed of an imperative 'verb + complement', does not occur in all the strategies described. Yet this resource is relevant in that it illustrates the characteristic orality of promotional registers (Cook, 2001; Janoschka, 2004).

Quantitatively, all six strategies overlapped to some extent; we observed that in EN, 51 % of the text segments featured only one strategy whereas the remaining 49 % belonged to segments with two or more strategies (cf. Table 4); the realisation of 'enjoying the experience', 'praising the benefits' and 'aesthetic appeal' mirrored this distribution in particular. 'Uniqueness', by contrast, functioned alone in nearly 70 % of its occurrences. On the other hand, principles drawn from Cialdini, i.e., 'authority' and 'social proof', always combined with one of the other four strategies, irrespective of the language. In ES, the segment-strategy realisation was 'one-to-one' in 61.5 % of cases. Nevertheless, we observed this behaviour to be dominant in 'enjoying the experience' (54.4 %) and especially in 'praising the benefits', where 78.3 % of its realisations were single. This figure differed considerably from the situation in EN. On the other hand, the overlap in ES was 38.5 %. In this regard, both 'aesthetic appeal' and 'uniqueness' occurred in multiple-strategy segments, accounting for 64 % and 75 % of cases, respectively. We found this phenomenon particularly striking in the case of 'uniqueness' in ES and in EN (75 % vs 30 %).

At first glance, the raw frequencies shown in Table 5 above hint at cross-linguistic differences. Whereas the two languages resort to all six strategies, they differ in their preferences. EN tends to first make the customer feel that tea drinking is an enjoyable experience. By contrast, ES praises the benefits of tea drinking as a compelling reason to try it. With regard to the

least frequent strategies (cf. Table 5), ES marketing statements prefer 'authority' over 'social proof' or 'uniqueness' for the purposes of convincing; however, the latter two are used more often than 'authority' in EN. As already indicated, tea drinking has long been part of the British culture, which may account for the importance of 'social proof'. On the other hand, ES seems to rely more on 'authority', in that tea drinking is still somewhat alien to the culture and thus the ES customer requires someone or something to imitate to be convinced they should drink tea.

In addressing certain apparent differences in the analysis, we used the chi-square test to establish whether these were statistically significant or not. Setting an alpha level of significance at 0.05, only the promotional strategies of 'praising the benefits' and 'uniqueness' differed significantly, with far lower p-values of 0.0004 and 0.0017, respectively. We might find an explanation for these divergences by looking at the cultural contexts in which the HTPT are received. With regard to 'praising the benefits', in Spain, tea in general, and herbal tea in particular, is most commonly associated with folk remedies (Sanfélix Genovés, Palop Larrea, Rubio Gomis & Martínez-Mir, 2001). By contrast, in the British context tea drinking is a very common, everyday practice. This can perhaps explain why this strategy is not only preferred in ES, but its occurrence rate deviates considerably from that seen in the EN sample. On the other hand, the difference related to 'uniqueness' might arguably be seen as register-bound, in that EN expresses the strategy by means of a greater use of superlatives than ES, as well as words whose meaning inherently singles out a product. This, in turn, may be due to a need in EN for boosting curiosity or novelty in a target culture that may be so greatly exposed to a given product that further motivations for consumption are necessary (Janoschka, 2004).

## 4. Conclusions

In this paper we adopted a contrastive approach to the analysis of herbal tea promotional texts, doing so from two perspectives, genre and register, this as a means of identifying strategies that persuade the customer to try a given product. Taking the 'move' as our functional unit, we identified a generic six-move macrostructure that works across languages, albeit with different realisation rates. Focusing on the chunk where persuasion is a primary function, i.e., the step 'marketing statement' (MS) within the M2-Promotional description, we examined this from a register perspective. Promotional features such as evaluative adjectives, emotion-related and reason-related lexis, playful language, imperatives, and orality-trigger pronouns, encapsulate six different promotional strategies. On average, EN resorts to at least 2.5 strategies per text to promote the product, as against only 1.9 per text in ES. According to our data, EN seems to prefer emotion-laden strategies. This is mainly observed when the product is presented as an enjoyable experience or its aesthetic appeal is foregrounded. ES, by contrast, favours reason-driven strategies such as 'praising the benefits' of the herbal tea or referring to an authority figure who drinks it regularly enough for the customer to be persuaded to follow suit. Statistically, though, it is the strategies of 'praising the benefits' and 'uniqueness' that reveal significant differences, which means that some of the preferences observed are not sample-bound but cross-linguistic. ES appeals mainly to ways of convincing consumers to try the product, emphasising the benefits and effectiveness of doing so. Finally, the relevance of 'uniqueness' as an 'appeal to reason' in our EN texts, which predominantly 'tickle the emotions', might be explained in terms of the need to arouse the interest of an audience which is tired of the same old motivators.

This study has identified and categorised what strategies underlie the MS, that is, what value the HTPT addressor wants the addressee to see in the product. Strategy and value may be considered as two sides of the same coin; the former is seen from the addressors' position, the latter from the addressees' standpoint. In this sense, one way in which the current study could be improved is by adding a final stage conducted from an ethnographic approach. Interviews with both addressors and addressees would be useful in ascertaining whether our interpretation of underlying strategies matches their way of thinking and/or any resulting behaviour.

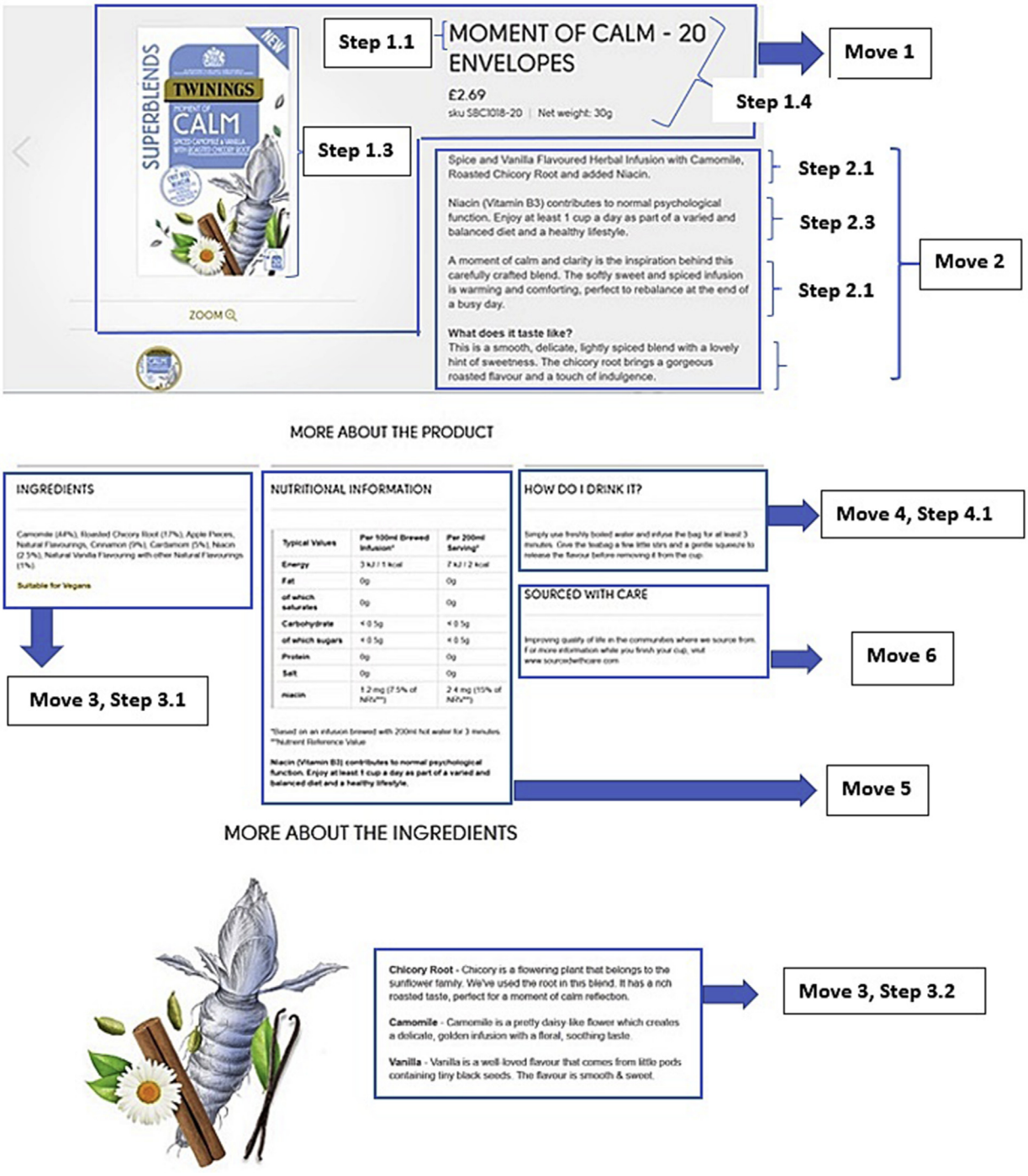
The research described here is descriptive yet application-oriented. All the contrastive, descriptive work was done prior to developing a text generator to assist small herbal tea manufacturers in promoting their products in English. The text generator *Promociona-Té*, currently being tested by Pharmadus Botanicals S.L., is a clear example of knowledge transfer and the result of conducting academic research to satisfy industry needs.

## Acknowledgements

Research for this paper has been partially funded by Project LE227U13 sponsored by the Regional Government of Castilla y León (Junta de Castilla y León, Spain) and through Project FFI2013-42994-R of the Spanish Ministry for Economy, Industry and Competitiveness.

We are greatly indebted to two anonymous reviewers for their thorough and thoughtful comments on a previous draft of this paper. Their generous advice and suggestions have helped us to improve it considerably. Any errors remain our own.

## Appendix 1


Step 1.1
MOMENT OF CALM - 20 ENVELOPES
£2.69
sku SBCI018-20 | Net weight: 30g
Move 1
Step 1.4
Step 1.3
Spice and Vanilla Flavoured Herbal Infusion with Camomile, Roasted Chicory Root and added Niacin.
Step 2.1
Niacin (Vitamin B3) contributes to normal psychological function. Enjoy at least 1 cup a day as part of a varied and balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle.
Step 2.3
A moment of calm and clarity is the inspiration behind this carefully crafted blend. The softly sweet and spiced infusion is warming and comforting, perfect to rebalance at the end of a busy day.
Step 2.1
What does it taste like?
This is a smooth, delicate, lightly spiced blend with a lovely hint of sweetness. The chicory root brings a gorgeous roasted flavour and a touch of indulgence.
Move 2
ZOOM
MORE ABOUT THE PRODUCT
INGREDIENTS
Suitable for Vegans
Move 3, Step 3.1
NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION
HOW DO I DRINK IT?
Move 4, Step 4.1
SOURCED WITH CARE
Move 6
Move 5
MORE ABOUT THE INGREDIENTS
Chicory Root - Chicory is a flowering plant that belongs to the sunflower family. We've used the root in this blend. It has a rich roasted taste, perfect for a moment of calm reflection.
Camomile - Camomile is a pretty daisy like flower which creates a delicate, golden infusion with a floral, soothing taste.
Vanilla - Vanilla is a well loved flavour that comes from little pods containing tiny black seeds. The flavour is smooth & sweet.
Move 3, Step 3.2

## References


Anthony, L. (2016). Tailoring corpus tools for academia and the language industry: A developer's perspective. In *Plenary conference given at VIII CILC, University of Málaga, Spain, 2-4 March 2016*.

Aragonés Lumeras, M. (2009). *Estudio descriptivo multilingüe del resumen de patente: Aspectos contextuales y retóricos*. Peter Lang: Bern.

Bednarek, M. (2014). 'An astonishing season of destiny!' Evaluation in blurbs used for advertising TV series. In G. Thompson, & A. Laura-Juez (Eds.), *Evaluation in context* (pp. 197-220). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Bhatia, V. K. (2004). *Worlds of written discourse*. London/NY: Continuum International Publishing.

Bhatia, V. K. (2005). Generic patterns in promotional discourse. In H. Halmarai, & T. Virtanen (Eds.), *Persuasion across genres* (pp. 213-228). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Bhatia, V. K. (2008). Genre analysis, ESP and professional practice. *English for Specific Purposes, 27*(2), 161-174.

Biber, D., & Conrad, S. (2009). *Register, genre, and style*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Biber, D., & Zhang, M. (2018). Expressing evaluation without grammatical stance: Informational persuasion on the web. *Corpora, 13*(1), 97-123.

Cheung, M. (2008). 'Click here': The impact of new media on the encoding of persuasive messages in the direct marketing. *Discourse Studies, 10*(2), 161-189.

Cialdini, R. (2009). *Influence: The psychology of persuasion*. New York: HarperCollins. E-book.

Connor, U. (2004). Intercultural rhetoric research: Beyond texts. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 3*, 291-304.

Cook, G. (2001). *The discourse of advertising*. London & New York: Routledge.

EU. (2011). Regulation 1169/2011 of the European parliament and of the council. *Official Journal of the European Union, 22.11.2011*, 18-63. Available online at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011R1169&from=EN. (Accessed 8 March 2019).

Fennis, B. M., & Stroebe, W. (2010). *The psychology of advertising*. London: Psychology Press.

Flowerdew, J. (2004). The argument for using English specialized corpora to understand academic and professional settings. In U. Connor, & T. A. Upton (Eds.), *Discourse in the professions: Perspectives from corpus linguistics* (pp. 11-33). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Flowerdew, J., & Wang, A. (2010). The linguistic and the contextual in applied genre analysis: The case of the company audit report. *English for Specific Purposes, 29*(2), 78-93.

Gea Valor, M. L. (2005). Advertising books: A linguistic analysis of blurbs. *Iberica, 10*, 41-62.

Ibrahim, A. (2013). Improve the automatic summarization of Arabic text depending on rhetorical structure theory. In *12th Mexican international conference on artificial intelligence (MICAI)* (pp. 223-227). Mexico: IEEE.

Izquierdo, M. (2015, March). Structured big data in business: The audit report from a cross-linguistic perspective. In *Paper presented at VII CILC, University of Valladolid, Spain*.

Janoschka, A. (2004). *Web advertising*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Khorechko, U. V., Sentsov, A. E., Ruchina, A. V., Bolsunovskaya, L. M., & Kazaryan, A. A. (2015). The concept of 'Tea' in the language picture of the world (Based on Chinese and Russian languages). *Procedia –Social and Behavioural Sciences, 200*, 215-223.

Koester, A. (2013). Corpora and workplace discourse. In K. Hyland, C. M. Huat, & M. Handford (Eds.), *Corpus applications in applied linguistics* (pp. 47-66). London/New York: Bloomsbury.

Koszembar-Wiklik, M. (2016). Controversial themes in advertisements: On manipulating the emotions of audiences and extending the boundaries of the social 'taboo'. *Communication Today, 7*(1), 13-31.

Krestel, R., Bergler, S., & Witte, R. (2008). Minding the source: Automatic tagging of reported speech in newspaper articles. In *Proceedings of the sixth international language resources and evaluation conference (LREC 2008), May 28-30, 2008, Marrakech, Morocco* (pp. 2823-2828). Available online at: http://hnk.ffzg.hr/bibl/lrec2008/pdf/718_paper.pdf. (Accessed 28 May 2016).

Labrador, B., & Ramón, N. (2015). 'Perfectly smooth, creamy and full flavoured': Online cheese descriptions. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences, 198*, 226-232.

Labrador, B., Ramón, N., Aláiz-Moretón, H., & Sanjurjo-González, H. (2014). Rhetorical structure and persuasive language in the subgenre of online advertisements. *English for Specific Purposes, 34*, 38-47.

Lam, P. (2013). Interdiscursivity, hypertextuality, multimodality: A corpus-based multimodal move analysis of internet group buying deals. *Journal of Pragmatics, 51*, 13-39.

López-Arroyo, B., & Roberts, R. (2014). English and Spanish descriptors in wine tasting terminology. *Terminology, 20*(1), 25-49.

Mustafa, F. Y., Kahar, R., Bunari, G., Hassan, M., & Habil, H. (2012). Persuasive elements in online direct response sales letters. *Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences, 66*, 391-401.

Nickerson, C. (2005). English as a lingua franca in international business contexts. *English for Specific Purposes, 24*(4), 367-380.

Östman, J.-O. (2005). Persuasion as implicit anchoring. The case of collocations. In H. Halmari, & T. Virtanen (Eds.), *Persuasion across genres: A linguistic approach* (pp. 183-212). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Pérez Blanco, M., & Izquierdo, M. (2017, December). Deliciously nutty, pleasantly sweet': A phraseological study of tea tasting notes. In *Paper presented at CLAVIER 17 - international conference representing and redefining specialised knowledge. University of Bari Aldo Moro, Italy*.

Pérez Blanco, M., & Izquierdo, M. (2018). November) in the absence of a translator, get a text generator: Developing a tool for Spanish professionals writing specialised texts in English. In *Paper presented at parallel corpora: Creation and applications. International symposium. PaCor 2018. University Complutense de Madrid, Spain*.

Pho, P. D. (2008). Research article abstracts in applied linguistics and educational technology: a study of linguistic realisations of rhetorical structure and authorial stance. *Discourse Studies, 10*(2), 231-250.

Pizarro, I. (2018, May). Online product descriptions: A corpus-based contrastive analysis of their visual elements. In *Paper presented at X CILC, University of Cáceres, Spain*.

Rabadán, R., Colwell, V., & Sanjurjo-González, H. (2016). BiTeXting your food: Helping the gastro industry reach the global market. In A. Moreno Ortiz, & C. Pérez-Hernández (Eds.), *Cilc 2016: EPiC series in language and linguistics* (vol. 1, pp. 361-371). Retrieved from https://easychair.org/publications/paper/Wv4r.

Rush, S. (1998). The noun phrase in advertising English. *Journal of Pragmatics, 29*, 155-171.

Sanfélix Genovéx, J., Palop Larrea, V., Rubio Gomis, E., & Martínez-Mir, I. (2001). Consumo de hierbas medicinales y medicamentos. *Atención Primaria, 28*(5), 311-314.

Skadina, I., Vasiljevs, A., Skadins, R., Gaizauskas, R., Tufis, D., & Gornostay, T. (2010). Analysis and evaluation of comparable corpora for under resourced areas of machine translation. In *Proceedings of 3rd workshop on building and using comparable corpora. BUCC 2010, Valletta, Malta*.

Suau Jiménez, F. (2011). La persuasión a través del metadiscurso interpersonal en el género Página Web Institucional de Promoción Turística en inglés y en español. In M. V. Calvi, & G. Mapelli (Eds.), *La Lengua del Turismo: Géneros discursivos y Terminología. Colección: Linguistic Insights 138* (pp. 177-200). Peter Lang: Bern.

Upton, T., & Connor, U. (2001). Using computerized corpus analysis to investigate the textlinguistic discourse moves of a genre. *English for Specific Purposes, 20*(4), 313-329.



**Marlén Izquierdo** is an associate professor at UPV/EHU. She received her PhD from University of León in 2008; she is a member of the ACTRES research team. Her research interests include corpus-based contrastive linguistics, ESP and EAP. She has disseminated research in various journals (*Languages in Contrast, Meta*), collective volumes (John Benjamins *Studies in Corpus Linguistics*), and at international conferences.

**María Pérez Blanco** is an assistant professor at University of León, from which she received her Ph.D. in 2013; she is a member of the ACTRES research team. Her research interests include contrastive analysis, corpus linguistics, translation, English-Spanish evaluation and modality. She has published articles in journals such as *Languages in Contrast* and *Revista Española de Lingüística Aplicada* and in edited volumes, such as Peter Lang *Lodz Studies in Language*.