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Multimodal Corpus Analysis of Digital Tourism Narratives: A Data-driven Approach Based on Systemic Functional Linguistics and Social Semiotics

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Multimodal Corpus Analysis of Digital Tourism Narratives:
A Data-driven Approach Based on Systemic Functional Linguistics and Social Semiotics – Elena Mattei
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation seeks to contribute to the field of tourism discourse and empirical research on multimodality by providing insights into the multisemiotic, promotional strategies of three popular English-speaking tourism boards on their Instagram accounts and company websites. It investigates specifically how discourse specialists systematically combine linguistic resources with photography to design particular representations of the travel experience and convey positive attitudes towards holiday destinations.

The study offers a multidisciplinary review that explores the connections between Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), semiotics and media studies, multimodality and sociology of tourism to gain an understanding of the current means of expression and legitimation of individuals' socio-economic needs and desires in contemporary, postmodern society (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014; Dann 1996; Berger 1972; Barthes 1977).

The core section of the dissertation consists in a multimodal investigation into three tourism boards' communication strategies through quantitative and qualitative methods. The objectives of this study were achieved by developing a SFL framework that analyzed and compared linguistic and visual choices in each digital channel under investigation. To this aim, multimodal data were collected from the Instagram accounts and websites of *Tourism Ireland*, *Destination Canada*, and *Tourism Western Australia*. The work includes the systematic, manual annotation of multimodal corpora through a data-driven, tagging system based on the Grammar of Visual Design and Transitivity and Appraisal systems (Pflaeging et al. 2021; Martin and White 2005; Thompson 2008). The quantification of multisemiotic strategies, furthermore, allowed for a statistical measurement of their frequency and significant variance across digital channels. The methodology included also inter-coder reliability measures in R.

The overall analysis has helped to define new discursive trends that assign particular roles to prospective tourists and praise specific aspects of the travel destination depending on audiences' social needs and the specific medium's communicative aim in the marketing funnel of persuasion (Manca 2016). In this sense, this study unveils the emergence of an Instagram, image-centric genre of tourism discourse (Bateman 2014a) that focuses on the stimulation of imagination and irrational response through less informative but highly evocative, evaluative orchestrations (Stöckl et al. 2020). The latter specifically play on postmodern individuals' inner desire for control and supposedly deliberate choice to engage *emotively* with the *extra-ordinary* (Urry and Larsen 2011).

The results of this study may also lead to an informed understanding as well as an awareness of how ideologies are perpetuated today and may be resisted. Consequently, this may support individuals in their attempts to challenge the 'legitimacy' of established views, opinions, and passive acceptance of them, and contribute to the construction of 'counternarratives' (Ahearn 2001; Plant 1992).

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INTRODUCTION

Due to the increasingly ubiquitous and pervasive nature of visual content on contemporary media, photographs have become essential means of affecting the perception of individuals for a variety of purposes (Shuqair and Cragg 2017). Indeed, according to the 2022 Global Statshot report[1] and Statista experts[2], Instagram – the visual medium par excellence – reported 1.4 billion daily users out of 4.74 billion social media users worldwide (Manovich 2016). Huang and Su (2018) found specifically that Instagram users access the social network primarily to escape from reality, find inspiration, entertainment, or new information about services through pictures or videos. As a matter of fact, this type of content has the highest engagement rate, especially if accompanied by long captions of written text[3].

The use of images, however, is not new. Even prior to the advent of the Internet, media and semiotics scholars had, in fact already demonstrated the potential of photography to shape views and evoke emotions, thanks to its perceptual resemblance to external experience and the unmediated nature of images (Mitchell 1994; Barthes 1972).

In the field of tourism marketing studies, in particular, images have been proved to be the primary means for the construction of the destination image and the visual consumption of an intangible service such as a holiday package (Garrod 2009). In this regard, scholars in the field of tourism studies clearly state that photographs shape the 'gaze' of the tourist at the travel experience and fulfill specific, postmodern tourist desires (Dann 1996). In a similar way, scholars in linguistics and discourse studies have investigated the role of tourism, promotional language, which consists of conveying positive attitudes towards the destination. This is done by highlighting the authentic and extra-ordinary nature of the leisure experience (Maci 2020; Manca 2016; Francesconi 2014).

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[1] https://datareportal.com/social-media-users#:~:text=Analysis%20from%20Kepios%20shows%20that,of%20the%20total%20global%20population. Last visit: 31/01/2022.

[2] https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/. Last visit: 31/01/2022.

[3] https://influencermarketinghub.com/ebooks/SMM_BENCHMARK_REPORT_2022.pdf. Last visit: 31/01/2023.

Corpus Linguistics and social semiotics are specifically converging nowadays to assist in the development of tools and methods for the investigation of large samples of language and human communication; these may allow researchers to investigate systematically the ways in which institutions, specialists and individuals combine linguistic resources with other means of communication to design a particular representation of facts and shape biased viewpoints in non-transparent ways.

Indeed, to corroborate the qualitative findings on the effective strategies of tourism promotional language and explore the visual promotion of the travel experience, many efforts have been made to study different kinds of tourism genres with the support of corpus studies and multimodality frameworks (Maci 2020; Manca 2017; Bianchi 2017). Nonetheless, corpus research on visual, tourism communication is still in its infancy, and the relationship between patterns of visual and linguistic strategies has not yet been explored at a systematic level, particularly with reference to social platforms such as Instagram.

In the burgeoning and multidisciplinary field of Digital Humanities, additionally, the adoption of quantitative and empirical measures through the development of theoretical, analytical, and technological tools as well as data-driven methods have become crucial to obtaining reproducible and replicable results and drawing reliable conclusions about social practices (Sayers 2018; Krippendorff 2004, 215).

The current dissertation is the result of a study which sought to fill this gap by shedding light on contemporary trends of effective tourism strategies for the promotion of holiday destinations by means of a multimodal investigation into tourism communication on Instagram and official websites.

This was achieved through the manual annotation and empirical as well as qualitative analysis of Instagram and website corpora of static images and written texts pertaining to three English-speaking, popular tourism boards, namely *Tourism Ireland, Destination Canada,* and *Tourism Western Australia*.

As shown in Figure 1, the analyses were carried out by means of a multidisciplinary framework that took the advancements made in the field of multimodality into consideration as both a socio-semiotic approach based on linguistics - Systemic Functional Linguistics and corpus studies - and an emerging empirical discipline which tests theory-

driven hypotheses and frameworks on data (Pflaeging et al. 2021). The combinations of multimodal approaches to discourse offered the opportunity to track and motivate patterns of linguistic and visual choices in the construction and legitimation of the postmodern *tourist gaze* (Urry and Larsen 2011). This term indicates specifically the set of expectations and desires of contemporary, digital users that are shaped by discourse specialists at the visual and linguistic level to stimulate daydreaming, escape from reality and anticipation of the sightseeing experience in the visual consumption of typical landscapes or traditions (Dann 1996; Urry and Larsen 2011; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014; Thompson et al. 2019; Martin and White 2005). In other words, the gaze may be considered to be a form of social control that is exerted by means of semiotic reproductions to manipulate the perception and pre-consumption of a destination, and which both reflects and legitimizes 'gazing' and commodifying practices at different aspects of travel destinations.

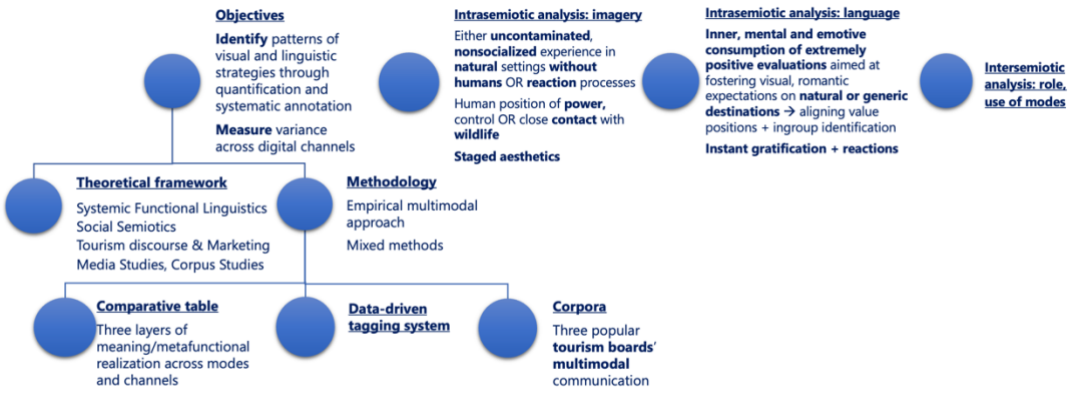


Figure 1: An overview of the dissertation's theoretical framework and research design

The aim of this dissertation, in particular, was to demonstrate that multimodal tourism strategies are used on both Instagram and other channels systematically to manipulate individuals' perception of and attitudes towards destinations. The study sought also to investigate how the multimodal design and narratives vary according to the channel of dissemination. Indeed, it is argued that discourse specialists, depending on the platform, 1) construct different views of the travel experience, also by assigning different roles and

degrees of agency to tourists; 2) convey different attitudes, emotions and evaluations towards the destination promoted.

In other words, the overall analysis helped define new discursive and multimodal generic trends that, through visual strategies and intentional word choice, underline specific aspects of the tourist destination in particular ways. This was possibly done depending on audiences' social needs and behaviour on different media, including their degree of intentionality in the purchasing process. In this sense, this study unveils the emergence of an Instagram, image-centric genre of tourism discourse (Bateman 2014a) that focuses on the stimulation of attention, imagination, and irrational response through less informative but highly evocative, evaluative, multisemiotic orchestrations (Stöckl et al. 2019; Manca 2016). The study was initially intended to measure also the impact of these patterns of strategies on the recipients of the multimodal, promotional messages; however, this procedure proved too ambitious for the scope of the study and certainly represents, therefore, a limitation as well as an area of interest for future research.

The objectives of the current dissertation were achieved by developing a Systemic Functional Linguistics framework that analyzed and compared linguistic and visual choices in each digital channel under investigation. The analytical tools include a tagging system that was designed for the annotation and statistical measurement of the occurrences of particular visual features in the image corpora, which builds on the Grammar of Visual Design (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006), but which was tested and, consequently, adapted to the discourse and genre of tourism communication (Manovich 2017; Dann 1996) on a newly developed software, which was designed and developed specifically for image tagging[4]. At the linguistic level, the annotation procedure was performed by interpreting and applying the Transitivity and Appraisal frameworks to categorize keywords and wordlists of the Instagram and website corpora (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014; Martin and White 2005; Thompson 2008).

The analytical framework mentioned above relies on the latest developments in multimodal research in terms of empirical analysis for the investigation of the layers of meaning realization in communicative events. The approach used to do this was to take

[4] http://xor.isti.cnr.it:8000/login.html Last visit: 31/01/2023.

into account the socio-economic and technological contexts and then to apply classification systems, with careful consideration of the data under investigation (Bateman et al. 2017). This procedure led specifically to the discovery of a new genre of tourism discourse on Instagram, which has specific rhetorical strategies (Bateman 2014a), or communicative purposes, and plays a specific role in customers' virtual journey to purchase compared to the website (Manca 2016). These particular strategies and conventions were reflected in different uses and semiotic labor of the semiotic resources.

In order to achieve this, the study was divided into nine chapters. The choice of an internal subdivision of the literature review into four distinct chapters, in particular, was made intentionally to allow for an understanding of how theories belonging to different scholarly traditions may intersect and transcend disciplinary boundaries for the generation of an original, multidisciplinary framework for Digital Humanities research. Additionally, the separation into different chapters proved useful to ensure clarity of each discipline's complex nature and contribution to the current study, and to progressively establish fruitful connections between different fields that were crucial to the development of the research questions and design of the current study.

More specifically, Chapter One reviews and highlights the importance of adopting a Functional approach to the understanding of meaning creation as the intentional combination of linguistic, paradigmatic choices that may be quantified and explored in their co-textual and contextual environment. Chapter Two, conversely, explores the emergence of photography as a medium and socio-semiotic practice for the construction and dissemination of socially constructed views of reality. Together, these chapters pave the way for the introduction of multimodality as a socio-semiotic approach to communication which, through the implementation of empirical approaches for the investigation of patterns of choices, unveils social uses and roles of modes in the digital, postmodern environment (Chapters Three and Four).

Chapter Five describes the research methodology which was used in the study, and is followed by the results of the multimodal analysis. The results of the visual annotation are reported through an empirical analysis (Chapter Six) and qualitative discussion (Chapter Seven), whereas the linguistic, corpus analysis is performed in Chapters Eight and Nine.

The latter report and discuss specifically the frequency and use of Transitivity and Appraisal resources across digital corpora of tourism discourse.

The study described and discussed in the current dissertation also has an important social implication. Indeed, the results of this research may lead to an informed understanding as well as an awareness of how ideologies are perpetuated today and may be resisted. Consequently, this may support individuals in their attempts to challenge the 'legitimacy' of established views, opinions, and passive acceptance of them, and contribute to the construction of 'counternarratives' (Ahearn 2001; Plant 1992).

Chapter One: Evolution of Systemic Functional Linguistics

The established need for a social semiotic, systemic functional theory of language and the increasing importance of a multisemiotic perspective

This chapter provides an overview of the development of linguistics as a discipline over the twentieth century, highlighting the increasing focus on a systemic view of language as a means to obtain a comprehensive and structured understanding of human exchanges and knowledge construction. It also wishes to underline the renewed importance of the role of language and other means of communication as meaning-making resources that are continuously shaped by the socio-economic and cultural context. In other words, it attempts to highlight the relevance of the extra-linguistic environment to the understanding of practices of linguistic use, which individuals often reproduce unconsciously. In the current digital era, language-based forms of meaning creation are being replaced by multisemiotic practices, which are becoming the main source of knowledge and contact with others in society; for this reason, the study of language alone in context is often reductive and inaccurate. Linguistic studies need, therefore, to take into account these changes and return to their roots in semiotics and in the study of the *sign* to attempt to investigate current social creation of meaning in a variety of contexts and discourses.

This chapter will emphasize the importance of a linguistic theory that views language as one of the means for the creation of meaning, and which considers other semiotic resources to be complementary in the construction of communicative events. The focus on the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics, in particular, will prove to be crucial to providing the theoretical and methodological grounds for the current dissertation.

1.1 The birth of modern linguistics and its roots in semiotics

1.1.1 The dichotomies of the linguistic sign: Saussure and the Prague School

The birth of the notion of modern linguistics as a scientific field of study and academic discipline dates back to the posthumous publication of Saussure's course *Cours de linguistique Générale* in 1916 (Wintle 2002; Chapman and Routledge 2005). While earlier attempts to define language as a structured system of signs with its own observable,

empirically testable laws of composition had been made by Wilhelm von Humboldt in the XIX century, Saussure's novel ideas laid the foundation for the systematic and empirical study of language as a set of semiotic resources to create meaning, thus proving to be crucial to the definition of linguistics as a separate discipline among the social sciences (François and Ponsonnet 2013).

Saussure is considered to be one of the founding fathers of modern linguistics due to his novel approach to the investigation of linguistic production in human interaction and to his focus on current, synchronic patterns of word combinations. Indeed, he was the first scholar to view language as a system of units of meaning that are defined by virtue of their structural interconnections; for this reason, he is also regarded as the founder of *structuralism* (Bloomfield 1924; Graffi et al. 2013) and an important contributor to the study of signs and the development of semiotics, together with Peirce. From an epistemological perspective, Peirce and Saussure diverged on their understanding of the relationship between signs and the reality outside the human mind. Indeed, Peirce considered the concept (or *interpretant*) and the external reality to which it referred as two separate entities, while Saussure claimed that reality and its mental representation were one the product of the other (Yakin and Totu 2014).

Saussure's interest in the study of language as a structured set of semiotic resources whose use could vary not only across time but also in a specific timeframe across contexts led to the conception of dichotomies which generated different, productive research streams in linguistic studies throughout the twentieth century. The most influential of these are 1) the Prague School and its structuralist view of language; 2) the London School and its functionalist approach; and 3) the generativist, formalist framework developed by Chomsky, which was later contested by descriptivist and functionalist approaches as well as by cognitivist studies (Harris 1993). While the third approach will not be dealt with in this review for reasons of space, attention will be devoted to the critical discussion of the first two, the second of which is considered by scholars to be a development of the first.

Saussure's pioneering work – especially if considered in its period, the early XX century, and the lack of academic focus on framing a solid theory of language – conceived linguistic understanding as having two parallel and complementary sides in terms of knowledge representation and internalization (the sign as *signifier* or form and as *signified* or concept), production (*langue* or competence and *parole* as actual use),

choices (paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations), and tracking (synchrony and diachrony).

The concepts outlined by Saussure were developed differently according to the focus and influence by other humanist traditions. Indeed, neuropsychology and philosophy affected somehow the reception of *langue* and *parole* and led scholars such as Chomsky to view Saussure's conception of *langue* and the internal, rule-based abstract structure of linguistic knowledge as the core of human linguistic knowledge and as an innate competence in human beings at a universal level (Matthews 2001). London School's Firthian and NeoFirthian traditions, on the other hand, did not believe that a superordinate set of abstract structures and grammatical categories could exist and be shared by all human languages; moreover, this alleged system could not be analyzed in isolation, i.e. outside its context of production (Harris 1993). Possibly building on approaches to language that were prominent at that time – such as pragmatics – they saw *parole*, i.e. the performance and usage of a word, as more indicative of linguistic knowledge construction and actual use in a specific context. In other words, they considered the latter to be the realization, as well as dynamic, and natural evolution of knowledge, and not as a deviation from the perfect, abstract linguistic capacity (Butt 2019).

In order to be able to understand the line of research that led to the development of socio-semiotic and systemic approaches such as Systemic Functional Linguistics, it is important to describe the main points of focus and members of the Prague Linguistic Circle, and to explain which innovative views it brought to the field of phonology, phonetics as well as syntax.

Saussure's stance on the nature of the relationship between signifier and signified, indeed, was challenged – or clarified – by Benveniste, a member of the *Cercle Linguistique de Prague* who, together with the other members, set out the principles of structural functional linguistics (Young 2011), i.e. the foundation of systemic functional approaches to grammar. Benveniste contributed to the modern concept of sign for linguistics-based semiotics by arguing that the nature of the relationship between form and content was not arbitrary, and that the choice of words for similar concepts across languages was necessary and culture specific. Recent works in social semiotics not only support this view, but also claim that the relationship between the linguistic sign and the reality is not casual, as it is affected by the cultural, personal

background, views of reality, and it is always the product of reasonable choices that takes the context into account. For example, Kress, a linguist and semiotician who developed a *visual grammar* based on SFL and social semiotics (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996; 2006), also demonstrated that the signifier is not arbitrary either, as some Greek letters derive from hieroglyphs, which were visually motivated and related to the reality. Or again, he argued that children use visual signifiers, or drawings, that are both visually and mentally motivated[1] (Kress 2010). These connections are key in this study because they underpin and justify the theoretical and methodological framework developed for the analysis of visual and linguistic signs in contemporary tourism discourse.

In conclusion, it could be argued that the Prague Linguistic Circle provided the first systematic formulation of semiotic and linguistic structuralism, which gave birth to the fields of functional linguistics and social semiotics. As a matter of fact, the contribution made by the Prague School in the field of phonology was taken as a point of departure and applied to other fields of linguistics, with particular focus on semantics and grammar. Firth's research was crucial to this development.

1.2 Firth and the origins of Systemic Functional Linguistics

The analysis of the *substance* through the investigation of the *form* was initiated by Firth, the first professor of General Linguistics in England (1944) and the most prominent member of the London School (Butt 2019,11). As an advocate of structuralism as well as functionalism and meaning stratification, Firth was an innovative scholar who stood out among his contemporaries. Due to his lack of belief in language universals or in the idea that other fields of knowledge defined language construction, indeed, he distanced himself from other theories of language which were gaining popularity at that time (Butt 2019, 12). Among these, we should mention Bloomfeldian positivism, Chomskyan formalism, the work of semanticians (Searle and Searle 1969) and pragmaticians (Grice 1989). In particular, he did not consider linguistics to be a "branch of cognitive psychology" (Chomsky 1972, 1); instead, he sought a language-based linguistics with a focus on the role of language in construing *meaning* and making statements about reality (Butt 2019, 12-13). More precisely, he was interested in the

[1] A discussion about this topic is included in Chapter Three.

expression form and its context, at the level of phonology, grammar, stylistics, situation, and texts. Even though he did not attempt primarily to make statements about speakers' intention and thoughts – which, from his perspective, were "for other disciplines" (Firth 1957a; Firth 1957b; Mitchell 1957; Palmer 1968) –, he paved the way for the application of his approach to *content* form and the study of meaning strata (extended by his student M.A.K. Halliday), including discourse semantics and social, extra-linguistic context.

1.2.1 From *langue* to choice of *parole*: the importance of situated speech in *context*

Firth's main research focus was the systematic study of meaning construction at different linguistic levels, in order to discover regularities and patterns of use in observable behavior. His view of grammar was an empirical, but most importantly functionalist one: he conceived language as a structured system of choices based on their function, role and meaning in context and society. In line with this view, semantics could be understood primarily from language analysis, as opposed to sources of knowledge extrinsic to actual linguistic exchanges, such as a) formalist, abstract theories of syntax, b) philosophical and speech act theories, or c) maxims of conversational logic (Kibbee 2007).

As his epistemological stance was both empirical and functionalist, he shifted his attention from the Saussurean focus on a prescriptive, abstract and static view of *langue* to the descriptive investigation of *parole,* i.e. actual linguistic behavior and use (Palmer 1968, 206). Indeed, according to Firth, linguistic production was more than a mere combination of a prescribed set of arbitrary signs and abstract symbols; instead, he believed the meaning of a word was defined by its function and role in a specific co-text and broader economic, social structure and discourse (Palmer 1995, 270).

Despite his belief in the importance of the analysis of the context and of the function of a word to unveil its meaning (Graffi and Scalise 2013), he never entirely rejected Saussure's structuralist belief in the existence of underlying, superordinate and abstract categories of grammar, which speakers refer to in language production. In his view, "Dealing with speech-events will involve the systematic deployment of analytical constructs and categories" (Love 1986, 33) and speech events are the expression of the abstract language system from which they arise. However, his approach involves a

different conception of this abstract structure of knowledge (the *langue),* as it only exists in fictional terms – with no ontological status – to allow linguists to better understand *parole* and find as well as schematize patterns of speech. In other words, it is a strategy devised by researchers to best describe real performances of language, and which generates different, "*ad hoc* [abstract] *structures and systems*" to enable the understanding of specific discourses and genres (Palmer 1968, 106).

1.2.2 Meaning creation through multilayered choices of language in context

If contextual analysis reveals the reasons why certain linguistic events occur and what kind of functions language may fulfil in a particular context, it may be interesting to look for *patterns* of *semantic* meaning, i.e. of functions of a linguistic form in a context. Since meaning is realized at different strata, according to Firth, one should analyze meaning creation at different levels, including the phonological, grammatical and semantic ones (Love 1986, 37). As a result of Firth's interest in Jakobson' s work on distinctive features and functions, including purposes and participants in communicative situations, and Malinowski's ethnographic discoveries concerning the understanding of other populations' speeches studies (1944), he developed his theory of language as functional in context. In his works on phonology, Firth continually stresses the importance of co-text and its role in defining the form and meaning of a word. Indeed, Firth firmly believed that semantic meaning could be identified by looking at its "situationally identified utterance and its context", and that the paradigmatic choice of a form in a system of potential substituents depended on the geographic and cultural context (Love 1968, 39-43); this view became the breeding ground for the development of Systemic Functional approaches in terms of *choice* of *meaning* in *context* (Halliday 1978). Not all scholars, however, believe in the consistency of Firth's work. Indeed, in his theory, he argues that phonetic transcriptions should not encode the phonological meaning derived from specific uses and pronunciation of the same word by different speakers; this statement stays in contrast with the assumptions concerning contextually based, meaning variation that were mentioned above. This tendency to rely on Saussurean, structuralist approches is supported by Firth's belief that 'standard' versions of pronunciation are intelligible to any speaker due to their inner knowledge of underlying abstract invariants (Love 1986). This viewpoint is incompatible with his functionalist view of abstract systematization, which

considers linguistic abstractions to 'exist' and have the potential to formalized *post* utterance, in order to allow scientists to draw inferences on patterns of use. In other words, there should not be any influence of an alleged abstract system on linguistic production; contrarily, the influence operates in the opposite direction. With this approach, new meanings or uses of words that develop over time in a particular socio-cultural context can be tracked, motivated and included in grammars, leading to an expansion of the overarching abstract system. This assumption led specifically to the birth of Corpus approaches to the analysis of naturally occurring language, or *parole*, in context.

1.2.3 Linguistic structure as a *polysystemic* network of trackable choices in context

The concept of *probabilities* of co-occurrences, or *mutual expectancy of words* in the co-textual, or syntagmatic production of strings of words from a series of available paradigmatic choices and linguistic functions in social contexts (Butt 2019, 18) became one of the most solid tenets of Corpus Linguistics (McEnery and Hardie 2012). This was also true of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014) and Sinclair's work on lexical grammar (2004). In particular, the study of collocations and colligations that define the semantic prosody of a text enables linguists to unveil established rhetorical roles or social positioning fabricated by discourse (Butt 2019, 20). Therefore, linguistic research was able to contribute to the discovery of how established, discourse-based uses of language in social contexts shape social expectations, views, behavior and, consequently, meaning (Butt 2019, 21). It also allowed scholars to explore how particular configurations of language reveal patterns of use which are shared by individuals and occur as part of a wider 'fashion of speaking' – and thinking – in culture (Whorf 1956, 158).

In conclusion, one might argue that Firth's scholarship pushed linguistic studies towards a more systematic, scientific as well as comprehensive view of language. Indeed, he firmly believed that linguistic analysis could not be performed without taking into consideration the extralinguistic context and multiple (co-)occurrences of context-based co-textual behavior – paradigmatic choices of language – to track and motivate patterns of use across situations and individuals. By putting together co-textual and contextual analysis within a structured theory of language, scholars would

become able to both predict the behavior, intentions, choices that motivate linguistic production, and understand how these patterns contribute to the perpetration of discourse. The combination of these approaches gave rise to fruitful lines of research which rely on social semiotics and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL; Halliday 1978), Corpus Linguistics, and Discourse Analysis, which are the theoretical and methodological grounds of the current study. As will be shown, particularly, the premises of SFL will be crucial to advancing the hypothesis that linguistic semiosis may be compared to visual semiosis in the tracking and analysis of ideological meaning in digital tourism discourse.

1.3 The formalization of a polysystemic architecture of meaning potential and semiotic function in context: NeoFirthian approaches

Building on Firthian functional linguistics, from the 1960s onwards, Halliday developed an approach that defined language as a network of syntagmatic correlations which are the result of paradigmatic choices in language construction with *stratified meaning potential*, and whose meaning is related to the function of language in a social context (Thompson et al.2019; Halliday and Webster 2009). His theory may be regarded as a continuation of functionalist, *parole*-driven studies in linguistics as opposed to concurrent, generativist approaches that built on Saussure's concept of superordinate, abstract, linguistic *competence* (Halliday 1978).

In particular, Hallidayan Linguistics conceives of linguistic production as an act of meaning creation that may be examined (as well as performed) by looking at the contextual variables that circumscribe the meaning potential of a particular situation, and which may be instantiated through distinctive and intentional configurations of discourse semantics in terms of (meta)function(s) in the context. Again, language is seen as a semiotic process, the main aim of which is to realize meaning through linguistic choice, which is done according to the context and the participants (Rotimi 2006). It follows that linguistics should describe the "how" and the "why" people use language, by analyzing interactions in naturally occurring social context.

Halliday's main contributions were the systematization of Firth's assumptions concerning the relevance of context to the definition of the potential functions, or uses, of language for the creation of meaning at different levels, and the establishment of clear, formalized and *trackable* interconnections between all these variables. In order

to attempt to provide a systematic as well as detailed overview of his theory that underpins the current study, this section presents the theoretical background of Systemic Functional Linguistics as a socio-semiotic approach to linguistic production and as a necessary step to systematize accounts of social interaction, with a scientific approach. This section also reviews the literature concerning the description of each meaning stratum in his architecture of language. The notion of meaning in context, in particular, will be investigated, and the way in which meaning makes up social reality and communication through language may represent a useful tool for the analysis of the reception, internalization and perpetration of ideologies and practices, including promotional language. His work also paved the way for the development of a socio-semiotic theory as a comprehensive, structured approach to the analysis of visual communication and beyond (Thompson et al. 2019; Thompson and Alba-Juez 2014), which was adopted and adapted to carry out a visual and linguistic analysis of tourism strategies on Instagram and company websites

1.3.1 A socio-semiotic approach to language

1.3.1.1 Understanding of meaning through situated use

The focus on language as a resource to create meaning stems from Saussure's definition of language as *signs* with both form and concept, which could be connected with each other through context. The Prague school later went on to expand this notion to add the strata of *expression* and *content* planes to account for the richness of linguistic units to express meaning. Halliday built on both the notion of sign and the notion of function in context to provide a multidisciplinary representation of language that considered language to be *one* of the means, or, signs, available to society for the encoding of extra-linguistic reality and making sense of the world. He believed specifically that language could help process extra-linguistic experience by providing the tools for the construction of individual versions, which could be shared with others through intersubjective interpretation of experience. This, in turn, was the reflection as well as representation of personal attitudes, events, intentions as well as conventions in a specific communicative event. In other words, he could not consider language outside its socio-cultural context and without its semiotic power of making meaning that varied according to the situation. Indeed, since reality is a social construct, and since a social reality is a semiotic construct, language may only be a socially established

means of communication that enables individuals to think, speak and act according to its meaning and function (Halliday 1978, 2).

If meaning exchanges could not be understood without looking at individuals' behavior in context (Halliday 1978, 10), other disciplines needed to be taken into account, in order to provide an accurate view of social language use. This may be understood by viewing Halliday's scheme of the academic disciplines related to linguistics in his seminal work "Language as social semiotic"[2] (1978). The interpretation of language as "behavior", or as a social practice, and "system", or means for communication, led to fruitful, scholarly work that connected linguistic studies with sociological and semiotic studies, giving rise to different fields of inquiry that are considered in the current dissertation, including systematic discourse analysis, systemic functional computational (O' Donnell and Bateman 2005) and the increasingly pervasive field of social semiotics (Matthiessen 2009, 18-23). Therefore, language as one of the main means of human expression plays a major role also in the communication, legitimation and perpetration of social constructs and practices – or 'shared systems of value and of knowledge' (Firth 1957; Halliday 1978, 12). This is why language, in order to be dissected and analyzed, needs to be investigated together with its context.

1.3.2 Meaning strata: the social context

At the basis of Halliday's discoveries is his observation of the child language learning process in the first years of life, which allowed him to extend the notion of *context of situation* and social roles to encompass the definition of specific contextual parameters and strata of meaning realization (Halliday 1978, 28). . When children start learning articulated encoding systems to understand new concepts and classify the unmediated reality already experienced (Halliday 1978, 21), they also start acquiring knowledge about their social use in the context. In order to make sense of the extralinguistic experience, children develop an organization system of meaning which has

[2] A graph describing the connections between linguistic studies and other fields of inquiry (Halliday 1978, 11) is available at the following link (Matthiessen 2009, 17): bit.ly/3JDXLzY (Last visit: 31/01/2023)

experiential-logical, interpersonal, and textual strata (Halliday 1978, 27). These systems enable them to think rationally about external experience, to interpret it through internal events, such as thoughts, evaluations, and emotions, and to convey it to others (Halliday 1978, 21-22). It follows that each individual's thinking, behavior and views are shaped by the social and cultural context in which he or she is raised and lives, and that no prejudices can be made to, for example, linguistic varieties which are not one's own (Halliday 1978, 23-26).

All these premises were important to describe the process that led NeoFirthian, functionalist Halliday to develop his own theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics. While the previous section introduced his view of language as set of systematic resources for meaning making that are shaped by the environment and their potential function in it, the following sections will expand the notion of meaning strata, functions and classification of linguistic resources within a systemic framework that connects extralinguistic context to language use through the notion of *semantics* (Halliday 1978, 79). As may be seen in Figure 1.1, Systemic functional Linguistics consists of five hierarchical levels of meaning, each one (starting from the context, the superordinate variable), affecting the subordinate ones:

1) The social context of culture (genre);
2) The social context of situation with the variables of *field, tenor,* and *mode* (register);
3) The discourse semantics which offers a tripartite set of meaning-making resources according to the context and which allows for the actual realization of meaning through the function language may have in the contextual variable of *field* (ideational meta-function), *tenor*, (interpersonal meta-function), and *mode* (textual meta-function);
4) The lexico-grammatical resources of language;
5) Phonology and graphology.



Figure 1.1: Martin's architecture of language in SFL (adapted from: http://www.uefap.com/grammar/gramfram-intro-sfl.html)

The register, in particular, represents the extralinguistic environment which affects the creation of meaning through specific lexicogrammatical resources that fulfill a (meta)function in a determined context. While *register* proved to be a source of fruitful and consistent scholarly work due to its direct contact with the stratum of discourse semantics and its key role in the metafunctional realization of context-based meaning, the context of culture, or *genre,* was object of critical and sometimes ambiguous scrutiny, especially in terms of its relation to register. The context of culture is useful specifically for the investigation of the strategies of legitimation of institutions or power relationships between organizations and individuals, and which serve as regulatory entities consisting of small, organized communities that create cultural norms of conduct and rules for other members of a community across situations (Malinowski 1944, 154-55; 2014, 33). These norms are perpetuated through language, which becomes a key tool to shape institutions as crucial to the satisfaction of human needs (Matthiessen 2009, 44). By defining rules for others, they have the authority to define and perpetrate what they consider to be acceptable behavior for the members of a specific organization or society. Hence, from this socio-discursive and anthropologist perspective, culture is inextricably connected to the society in which it is developed, and is disseminated through institutions and their registers (45). It also means that culture or genres may be described by examining the different contexts of

situation that are available within that institution, thus representing the cultural potential of a society (Matthiessen 2009, 47). Other approaches to *genre* in Systemic Functional Linguistics (Bowcher 2019) have different starting points but lead to similar implications, perhaps due to the fact that they draw upon more or less the same presuppositions. Martin, for example, who built on Hjelmslev's definition of expression plane (or "denotative semiotic', 1961) and connotative plane[3], argues that the variable of context and the sub-variables of culture (genre) and situation (register) coincide with connotative meaning, as it may be understood only by taking into consideration the actual socio-cultural environment in which it is created (Bowcher 2019, 160).

Taken together, genre and register make up the *context plane,* as can be seen from Figure 1.2. The expression plane, in line with a Prague school and London school' interpretation, is the actual linguistic, denotative plane, which consists of the other three strata of meaning in SFL. Genre, therefore, acts as a variable that provides specific linguistic use and which allows individuals belonging to a specific culture and society to use the tools to shape practices of register patterns with a goal-oriented approach (Eggins and Martin 1997).

[3] The notion of the sign was elaborated from a linguistic perspective by a scholar of the Prague School, Hjelmslev, who claimed that language is a *stratified* system of signs in which both form (signifier) and substance (signified) may have planes of both expression and substance (Hjelmslev 1961 in Martin 2016). In particular, expression and content *form* refer to actual linguistic resources, which may be either phonetic/orthographic (*expression* form) or lexical, grammatical ones (*content* form) (Martin 2016, 36-38). Hjelmslev was a staunch supporter of Saussure, who argued that "Linguistics…works in the borderland where the elements of sound and thoughts combine: *their combination produces a form, not a substance"* (original emphasis, Saussure 1966, 113). Substance, on the other hand, is what the form refers to, i.e. the signified, the concept, the underlying meaning in our mind that is constructed through our experience of reality. This has two levels, 'strata', of meaning i.e. 1) semantics and 2) grammar.

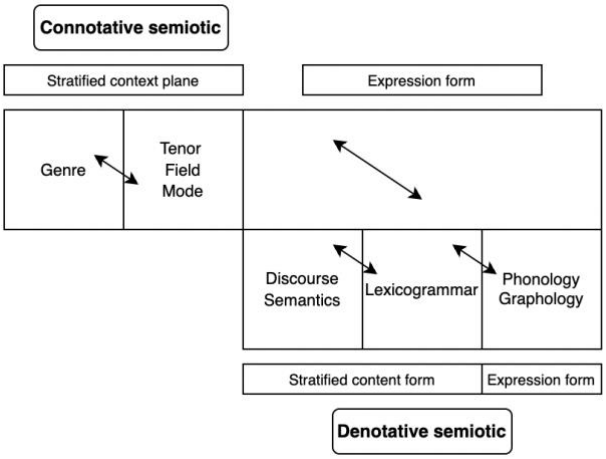


Figure 1.2: Martin's model of connotative semiotic (context plane) and denotative semiotic (expression form) (adapted from Martin 1999, 40 in Bowcher 2019, 160).

1.3.2.1 Genre and its relationship to register and language

The discussion about the relationship between genre and register was key in this study, as it provided a solid background for the classification of registerial variables, including their role in the detection of new generic conventions and purposes across digital channels and modes. In this sense, genre becomes a variable that 'accompanies' register in a process of mutual exchange. On the one hand, the context of culture affects the context of situation; on the other hand, new patterns of linguistic and metafunctional use may give rise to new registerial conventions and communicative aims.

O'Donnell discusses the points of contact and differences across linguistic traditions and within Systemic Functional Linguistics literature. By relying on Swales' (1990) and Paltridge's (1996) research on genre, O' Donnell argues that this term is usually associated with the definition of a main purpose behind the text and the rhetorical conventions, stylistic features that group communicative events and make them 'recognizable' (2019). To support this view, he quotes also Martin, who claims that text types are a fusion of a "externally defined purpose and a linguistic means of achieving that purpose" (O' Donnell 2019, 216). In this sense, this notion is similar to both other key definitions of genre (Bhatia 1993) and Halliday's definition of register, i.e. a set of expected patterns of language, whether lexical, grammatical, or semantic. Therefore, broadly speaking, genre and register seem similar. It looks like it is a matter of deciding

from a theoretical perspective where genre may be positioned in the meaning strata provided in Figure 1.2.

According to Webster, for example, the context of culture "represents the systemic potential for choice" of register and successively of language (2019, 48), thus seeming to follow Martin's superordinate collocation of genre, as introduced by Figure 1.3. However, Webster does not mention openly if he considers genre to be a synonym for context of culture and, therefore, he does not seem to provide a clear positioning of genre within the SFL framework. On a different note, Hasan assumes that there is no distinction between the two contextual variables (Hasan 1978, 230), and that if a choice were to be made, then she would opt for the collocation of genre in a dependent, lower stratum compared to register, not the other way round (O'Donnell 2019, 219). According to her, genre should simply be considered at the same level of register and interfacing directly with the linguistic choices, or be at a lower level compared to register. More specifically, contextual features should determine generic structure, the latter of which is outside the linguistic system but can brought within the architecture of language through register (a stance shared by Halliday 1978, 134). In other words, generic structures are linguistic patterns "that realize particular situation types" (O'Donnell 2019, 222), and in particular through the registerial variable of *mode*. To summarize the points made so far, Figures 1.3 and 1.4 represent visually the additional categorizations of genres according to Halliday and Hasan/Matthiessen (to be compared with Martin, Figure 1.2):

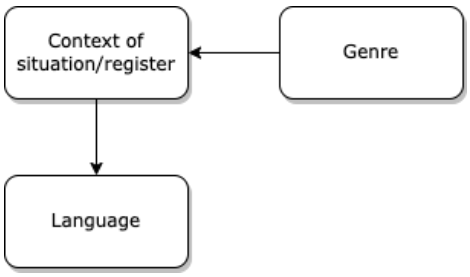


Figure 1.3: Halliday's collocation of genre in SFL

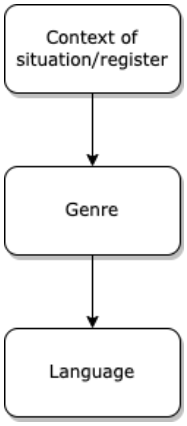


Figure 1.4: Hasan's collocation of genre in SFL

Martin tends to adopt a different stance with respect to this matter; to him, genre is the context of culture and belongs to an upper level of contextual realization compared to register, thus serving the purpose of defining the register and structure of a text (O'Donnel 2019, 220). While this may sound a reasonable solution at this point, other important implications have to be kept in mind if one agrees with this model. Having genre at the superordinate level means that it is the main variable which defines all the other variables, including the context of situation and register, which is not always the case, according to Hasan.

In conclusion, it might be wiser to consider genre and register to be part of the same variable *context* (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014), thus acknowledging that they can affect each other in the restriction of the meaning potential available to the discourse semantics and lexicogrammar at the same level. A few problems arise however, if some texts do feature more types of registerial features but belong only to one genre (Bateman 2008, 185). Martin's view may be considered to be valid as well, but it raises the question of how possible changes of context of situation in a text (register) that lead to different choices of language and styles (O' Donnel 2019, 225) could be acknowledged and treated. Additionally, much work is still needed to "describe registerial shifts in written texts, such as are usually explained by generic structure" (225).

1.3.2.2 The context of situation: the variables of register

The definition of register or context of situation as well as its role in affecting the semantics of language is particularly relevant to this study, as it analyzes generic

variation in tourism discourse across digital channels by relying on the notion of *register* and *genre* according to Systemic Functional Linguistics.

In the early developments of Systemic Functional Linguistics, the extralinguistic environment was defined as *situation*, while context was categorized as the semantics of language (Bowcher 2019, 142), thus concerned with the discovery of patterns of language behavior, following Firth's *context of situation* and Malinowski's ethonographic understanding of other populations' speech in their cultural contexts (Malinowski 1923, 306; Gregory 1967, 178; Matthiessen 2009, 43). Successively, context became context of situation, and the study of the semantics, or meaning, of language, gained its own separate place and terminological definition in Halliday's architecture of language (Bowcher 2019,143). Firth's context of situation was a useful tool to classify communicative exchanges in terms of participants, verbal and non-verbal actions, objects and effects relevant to intelligibility (Bowcher 2019, 144), but further work was necessary to distinguish between contextual elements and systemic networks of meaning possibilities (meta-functions) that could be related directly to linguistic choices. In his seminal book (1978), Halliday offers a definition of register after claiming that "language comes to life when only when functioning in some environment" and does not have meaning in isolation (Halliday 1978, 28). He argues that the context of situation may be realized and vary according to three parameters:

1) What is taking place (variable field);
2) Who is taking part (variable tenor);
3) What role language is playing (variable mode) (Halliday 1978, 31).

This set of questions may help individuals understand how they decide – consciously or not – how they create and process meaning in any context, as "we do not, in fact, first decide what we want to say, independently of the setting, and then dress it up in a garb that is appropriate to it in the context […] (Halliday 1978, 33).

In particular, registerial use varies according to three contextual variables, namely the field, tenor and mode. These are the main categories which instantiate the context of situation by prescribing a set of linguistic choices available (Halliday 1978, 35). When these choices are repeated in the same context across time and exchanges, they give rise to registers, or varieties of language, i.e. configurations of linguistic meanings and semantic choice (Halliday 1977, 195) that model the relationship between language and

the environment (Bowcher 2019, 150). While the *field* concerns the nature of the socio-semiotic activity occurring in a particular context and the related domain of experience – i.e., the topic – the *tenor* focuses on the kind of relationship that is constructed during the exchange, including the institutional roles, the social status and power position, the degree of intimacy and affection and socio-cultural values imbued in the domain (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). The mode, finally, analyzes the nature and role played by all semiotic systems and their division of labor in the meaning- making process between language and other semiotic systems (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 36-41), thus helping to assess the emergence of new configurations of meaning and generic conventions (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 34). Indeed, due to its intrinsic cohesive function in the overall textual configuration, the mode is also defined as "generic structure potential" (Hasan 2014, 9-10).

The interconnection of choices in all these parameters defines the multi-dimensional semiotic space that must be investigated in language analysis, as different combinations determine different meanings and uses of language that resonate – in a bi-directional relationship of influence – with meanings in subordinate strata. For example, the tenor *variable of power* and *solidarity* is reflected in and leads to different uses of pronouns and, consequently, influences the linguistic construction of the text (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 35). Depending on the topic, the relationship between speakers and the purpose of communication (that defines genres and discourse) – as well as the channel and medium – registers vary. If one considers the nature of the socio-semiotic activity that constitutes a situation, different meanings can be shaped and observed according to the context. Matthiessen and Halliday (Matthiessen and Halliday 2014; Matthiessen 2009, 31; O'Donnell 2019, 218-219) offer a classification of potential socio-semiotic activities. Language may be used, for example, to reconstrue some imaginary experience (variable field) as well as sharing emotions, events or promote particular views (variable tenor and partly field, Bowcher 2019, 1558-159; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). Orientation towards tenor suggests specifically that the intended outcomes of the situation concern the creation or maintenance of a certain relationship between speaker and addressee, also by urging the addressee to agree or comply with the evaluations proposed, a topic studied by Appraisal analysts and in the current study (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 41).

Both technological advances and the development of web-based technologies (i.e. social media) "have changed the possibilities of sharing" (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 42), leading to interesting changes in patterns of interpersonal meaning making, especially on the part of the companies, which are increasingly focusing on leveraging individuals' need for sharing and have shifted the orientation of their promotional texts towards the interpersonal. As will be seen in in the following sections and in Chapters Seven and Nine, the analysis of interpersonal meaning proves crucial to the definition of new registerial patterns in persuasive communication; indeed, these were demonstrated to negotiate agreement with prospective customers by conveying highly positive attitudes towards products or services through evaluative and emotive content. For example, the establishment of a relationship of superiority with natural destinations or of close contact with wild animals was shown to fulfill strategically individuals' needs for control or exclusive possession (Messaris 1997; Francesconi 2014).

If the registerial parameters realize the context of situation (and culture) in a Systemic Functional Linguistics network of choices (Bowcher 2019, 155), one may wonder how these choices in these superordinate meaning strata are realized by and reflected at the functional and linguistic level. By analyzing the stratum of discourse semantics and the concept of metafunctional meaning, one may understand how the subordinate strata play a key role in communication by offering a network of systemic options for the linguistic realization of a function in a specific context (Simon-Vandenbergen et al. 2003).

1.3.3 Meaning strata: *discourse semantics* and the three *metafunctions*

If we have seen previously how context may affect linguistic production through the variables of genre, register, channel and media, now it is time to turn to the stratum in the structured system of language that mediates context and language: the semantics of discourse. Halliday provides a first definition of semantics in 1978, 79, by stating that:

"The semantic system is an interface, between the (rest of the) linguistic system and some high-order symbolic system. It is a projection, or realization, of the social system; at the same time it is projected onto, or realized by, the lexicogrammatical system."

Taverniers (2019) explores further this definition and surveys different conceptions of semantics and related architectures, or structures, of the linguistic system across SFL traditions. Indeed, she claims that there are four definitions of, or approaches to semantics, which re tied to particular aspects of Saussurean/Praguean structuralism or Firthian functionalism, and which may all be intertwined and complement each other (59). The approach that serves well the purpose of this study defines semantics as a functional or function-oriented meaning potential (also argued by Halliday 1978, 79) which is encoded, or realized, in linguistic forms, which are chosen because of their function in the context. In other words, it is a network of systemic options for the encoding of some extralinguistic semiotic system (79).

If the existence of the stratum of context has been justified by the literature provided in this chapter, there is still no clear reason why the stratum of semantics should be there and how it may support in the investigation of meaning creation for persuasive purposes. Why is semantics conceived as a separate level of meaning creation, and why is it collocated between context and lexicogrammar? Taverniers provides an answer to these questions, by arguing that semantics acts as a high-level systemic organization that features semantic components (called meta-functions) that serve a twofold purpose: they a) regroup lexicogrammar into semantic domains, and b) represent patterns of meaning or system networks which provide different possibilities of meaning realization at the linguistic level (59-60). It follows that a particular meaning may be realized in different ways through different choices, according to the individual and socio-cultural context, including the purpose of an utterance. In other words, semantics accounts for variation of meaning that is reflected in linguistic production, i.e. choices of language dependent on all the variables of context.

What Taverniers is trying to do is to formalize Halliday and Hasan's assumption (Hasan 1995) that there is not a one-to-one relation between context and expression. For example, the register variable of *field* is not realized singularly in the experiential metafunction (Bowcher 2019, 155). For this reason, Taverniers formulates the following hypotheses concerning the relation between expression form (language) and meaning (content plane):

a) either one meaning is dispersed over different expression forms – a possibility that includes

1. the choice of different words or
2. the choice of different combinations of words

b) or one form is the expression of different meanings (2019, 61). These two cases can also occur in combination and potentially, there can be a one-to-one relation in very formal or terminological terms.

This leads to the conception of "different meaning" and to the need to have an internal stratification of the content plane, i.e. that mediates the extralinguistic, multisemiotic and socially based context and the actual language (Taverniers 2019, 62). The different meanings that may be realized are called experiential or logical, interpersonal and textual meta-functions of language. The reason underlying the use of *meta-function* is possibly due to the fact that they are the reflection of the contextual means to assign to language a specific function and a set of discursive, semantic resources to choose from to perform that function linguistically.

The presence of different meanings and the absence of a one-to-one relationship between those meaning and linguistic instantiation leads to the necessity to establish what these meanings are and how they may be realized (point a)), including the possibility of being realized simultaneously by the same linguistic forms (point b)).

According to Martin and colleagues (Martin and Rose 2003; Martin and White 2005), discourse semantics comprises six systems, of which three are relevant to this study:

1) ideation for the linguistic construction of an alternative and imaginary view of reality, i.e. the tourist experience and participants in holiday destinations (ideational or experiential metafunction)
2) Appraisal for the expression and negotiation of positive attitudes towards the travel experience that stimulate agreement (interpersonal metafunction)
3) Identification which, similar to the mode (subsection 1.3.2.2) allows for the definition of the role played by language in the meaning-making process (textual metafunction). In other words, this metafunction makes a cohesive and coherent whole of ideational and interpersonal meanings and turns them into discourse, as was used for the analysis of textual meaning and (inter)semiotic distribution of labor across modes for the definition of new registerial conventions and communicative aims on Instagram (Webster 2019, 35).

As suggested by the list above and its correspondence with the list provided in Halliday (1978, 31) and earlier in this section, the first metafunction is concerned mainly with the construction of the register variable *field*. One of the tools provided by this semantic system are resources of ideation, i.e. the semantics of participants and events (Martin 2019, 359). The interpersonal system, on the other hand, enacts the variable tenor, which is "concerned with the relations of power and solidarity whereby speakers position themselves as interlocutors in discourse" (Martin 2019, 360). Appraisal, in particular, provides a set of resources for evaluation and expression of attitude through emotionally charged lexicon that stimulates a similar response based on a trigger (Affect), or aesthetical assessment (Appreciation). If each one of these choices construes the semantics 'available' to a specific register in a context, one may assume that contexts, or registers, are predictive of specific semantic and linguistic choices, which are made to comply with registers' conventions (Halliday 1964). Another implication that emerges from this discussion, and particularly point b), is that each one of the linguistic resources available in a specific context may realize meaning at different levels and fulfil a function both in terms of field tenor and mode at the same time. Let us consider, for example, the use of the pronoun *you* in tourism discourse (Dann 1996). The choice of this pronoun can be used to define tourists (ideational metafunction), which are addressed directly and informally to shape a friendly and intimate relationships (interpersonal metafunction) that, through cohesive ties such as repetition or parallel visual representations of enhances the persuasiveness of the discourse and stimulates agreement with particular value positions (Mocini 2015).

1.3.3.1 The relationship between content and form: grammatical metaphor

Both the above points, a) (how meaning may be expressed through different linguistic resources) and b) (the ways in which language may realize different metafunctions at the same time) have been subject to discussion by many scholars, including Taverniers and Webster (Taverniers 2003, 6; Webster 2019, 45-47). By building on Halliday's first introduction to grammatical metaphor (1985), Taverniers claims that the content plane, or the semantics, may be realized through either a congruent form or metaphorical form, and that an expression form may be the realization of a literal meaning or metaphorical meaning (Halliday 1985, 342). In other words, "different

types of configurations can be compared as expressions of the same meaning" (Taverniers 2003, 7; Simon-Vandenbergen et al. 2003).

For example, the clause (my emphasis) "Mary saw something" may have the following variants: "Mary came upon a wonderful sight", "A wonderful sight met Mary's eyes" (Taverniers 2003, 8). In the first variant, the verb see is nominalized and turned into an object; in the second variant, agency is assigned to something inanimate and abstract, and passivity is assigned to an animate agent. The choice of metaphorical variants (in this case, ideational), changes the relationship and the nature between the participants as well as the meaning of the verb, potentially assigning features of extra-ordinariness to the sentence or technicality, feelings of "unchangeable" assumptions, as it happens in scientific as well as other types discourse. These considerations were useful also in the conduction of the current study; indeed, as will be shown, Instagram tourism discourse seem to use more nominalizations of verbs compared to promotional language on the tourist websites, and turns inanimate, or abstract entities into animate ones by assigning them agency, or a material verb, an in the second variant mentioned above. Through this kind of representation of events, the external reality depicted distances itself from the everyday life, thus attracting the attention and stimulating the imagination of readers.

Halliday (1976, 1978, 173, 1984) and Taverniers (2003, 28; 2004, 15) support these assumptions by arguing that nominalizations are also used to crystallize definitions and bestow credibility on findings or evaluations (Melrose 2003). Indeed, the content becomes more ambiguous and undecipherable, exactly because it is outside reality, and it packs condensed units of meaning for the purpose of not letting readers understand the meaning or contest an interpretation. Also, it is a strategy to 'freeze' a particular world event and turn it into object of scrutiny, thus providing stability and structure (Melrose 2003, 427). In general, this procedure allows authors to take an ideological, asymmetrical stance of superiority and exclusivity compared to the reader in terms of knowledge and power (424; Melrose 2003, 418).

In terms of probabilities of forms of instantiation of meaning potential, Taverniers argues that metaphors represent something less likely but yet very innovative, which can be introduced thanks to the paradox of dynamic openness and meta-stability of Systemic Functional Linguistics:

"As a meaning potential (which is virtually stable and thus learnable), language predicts what forms and meanings can be actualized in a certain context, and at the same time it is responsive to new requirements in those contexts […]. Hence language is constantly open to allow and incorporate what appear as 'innovations' within its system, but what are in fact nothing more than actualizations of the system in interaction with different environments." (Taverniers 2019, 70)

1.3.4 Meaning strata: lexicogrammar

1.3.4.1 System in structure: the networks of lexicogrammatical resources

After reviewing both the reasons behind the existence of meaning strata in SFL and their actual nature, it is now time to turn to the actual sets of resources which are provided by language to realize the three metafunctions of discourse semantics in a specific socio-cultural context. This sub-section will be crucial to the definition of the theoretical framework of the current study, which compares the lexicogrammatical resources used in both tourism language and imagery across modes, and which provides insights into the metafunctional meanings shaped through each resource and realizing a different context of situation and culture. Many scholars offer an overview of what SFL resources are available for the creation of meaning in context; Webster (2019), when defininig language, argues that it is "the instantiation of an indefinitely large meaning potential through acts [and strata] of meaning which simultaneously construe experience and enact social relationships" (35). Halliday enriches this definition by highlighting the difference between *paradigmatic* and *syntagmatic* choices (Halliday 2009, 62-63), and system and structure, which is a "configuration of functional elements" (Halliday 2009, 71) and specifically

[…] [A]t the rank of the clause […] the grammar integrates the three metafunctional components (experiential, interpersonal and textual) into a single integrated structure. The configuration of Agent • Process • Medium is experiential; it will be mapped into some kind of interpersonal structure, perhaps involving a Subject and some kind of predicating element (e.g. Subject • Finite • Predicator • Complement); and also into a textual configuration such as Theme ^ Rheme. Any constituent of the syntagm will thus have three simultaneous values in the structure (Halliday 2009, 71)

In other words, Halliday argues that the notion of *structure* allows syntagms to realize a function and become functional elements (or called lexicogrammatical resources), and to shape configurations of all three levels of metafunctional meaning simultaneously. This notion is important as it was used as the basis for the image tagging system developed, in which the size, positioning and perspectives of participants provides information at all three levels, and for the discussion of linguistic units in terms of Transitivity and Appraisal resources (such as verbs and nouns). Indeed, n order to be

able to articulate strings of linguistic constituents that have particular configurations of meta-functions in a specific context, it is necessary to have a system of choices for each one of these levels. Halliday develops three systems of lexicogrammatical resources for the paradigmatic instantiation of the meaning potential, of which two are taken into account for the purposes of the current study:

1) the system of TRANSITIVITY, which enables speakers to construe their view of the world;
2) the systems of MOOD and MODALITY (Halliday 2009, 66; Webster 2009) to which the system of APPRAISAL is added by Martin and White (2005), which allow for the communication of views and evaluations depending on the specific objectives in the communicative event and the social role of the participants;

In order to create meaning by performing a function in context, language relies on these systems of choice, which turn grammatical *units such as word groups or clauses* of grammatical classes or syntagmatic associations of nouns, verbs, adjectives into configurations of metafunctional meaning (Webster 2019, 38). (Webster 2009, 6; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 4).

1.3.4.2 Transitivity and Appraisal: the construction of particular views in discourse

Halliday's systemic classification of lexicogrammatical resources as a set of paradigmatic choices with particular functions in different contexts provided scholars in linguistics with the methodological means to approach the study of language and meaning realization with a systematic and context-based approach (Thompson and Alba-Juez 2014; Eggins 2004). Indeed, the possibility of classifying the paradigmatic instantiation of meaning layers systematically could prove to be useful for the categorization of linguistic units and the measurement of their variance and combinations across contexts. While structuralists did not believe in the validity of this approach, as they argued that contextual variables could not affect linguistic production, Firthian linguists saw these advancements as an opportunity to track

registerial changes and demonstrate the existence of different discourse semantics (Martin and White 2005; Thompson et al. 2019)[4].

Different strands of linguistics have adopted SFL systems to analyze meaning realization in context; indeed, studies in news as well as tourism discourse have shown that SFL systems of choice may provide new insights into how ideological views and relationships of power are constructed and perpetuated systematically (Bednarek 2006; Francesconi 2014; Mocini 2015). In the current study, particularly, the Transitivity system was crucial to classifying choices of processes and participants and exploring the types of participants involved and their grammatical role, function in the clause (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 21; 30-33; 87)[5]. This procedure shed light on the ways in which travel agencies promote, speak about the destination and the subjects represented across channels (Francesconi 2014, 45).

Prior studies such as Eka et al. (2017) and Trčková (2016), by relying on Transitivity analysis, provide insights into the presence and position of the main tourism discourse participants, i.e. the tourists/travelers, the advertisers and the destination, which shape relationships of power between the participants for profit purposes. Thus, by classifying the different types of phrases, i.e. nouns, verbs and circumstantial elements in clauses (Eggins 2004; Francesconi 2014; Manca 2016), one may access patterns of

[4] Alternative perspectives concerning this issue are offered also in Chapter Three in relation to multimodality. Critical discourse analysts such as Ledin and Machin adopt a critical stance towards Systemic Functional Linguistics; in particular, they do not consider it to be a theory that may assist scholars in unveiling potential ideological views in narratives, due to its overreliance on text and lexicogrammar as a major source for contextual realization (2018). One of the points on which Ledin and Machin (2018) and scholars in the multimodality field agree, for example, is that Systemic Functional Linguistics offers a generic and abstract interpretative scheme, which groups all potential choices of meaning regularities and their consequent characterization under the umbrella term *metafunction* (Bateman 2019a, 533). This preestablished and apparently rigid classification scheme may hinder an awareness of the context and its variability, which is a main feature in discourse analysis (Ledin and Machin 2019). In particular, these authors challenge the fact that the choices made in a decontextualized SFL network may lead to interpretations that are not related to or representative of the context (Bateman 2019a, 534). However, as Caple (2019) argues, the *metastability* of the SFL network may enable scholars to test and adapt metafunctional classifications to the data under investigation. This leaves room for novel insights into linguistic production that take into account the role of context in affecting meaning realization through lexicogrammar.

[5] The NeoFirthian system of Transitivity developed by Halliday builds on previous studies on verbs and grammatical roles in the construction of linguistic meaning that were carried out by the Prague school's members, particularly Tesnière. Indeed, he was the first scholar to develop a new approach towards syntax, which regarded the verb as the as the main category of a structural, hierarchical order of words of a sentence, according to which different participant roles are created. In other words, he discovered the "valency" intrinsic to the nature of the verb, which became the foundation of much scholarly work in linguistics (Tesnière 2015; Orešnik 1994).

construction of external experience, or views of the world, and intepretations of facts. All these patterns are constructed consciously or unconsciously by individuals to share with others for specific communicative aims, including perspectives on events and both external and internal experiences that relate to the dimension of emotions and thought.

In this study, this was possible by combining a quantitative approach based on Corpus methods and wordlists and qualitative analysis of patterns of co-occurring words in context. This approach helped identify new communicative aims and generic conventions based on the tracking of topics, subjects and objects (Francesconi 2014, 16-25, 29-39; Bhatia 2002, 22; Bakhtin 1986; Maci 2020; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014).

The different types of processes according to Transitivity and which were used in the current study are provided in Table 1.1. Here, each process differs from the others in terms of experience and overall purpose of the communicative event.

Process	**Function**	**Participants**	**Example**
Material	Describe physical action in external world	Actor, Goal (or Range), Beneficiary	play, do, create, go, give
Behavioral	Describe physiological processes, psychological states, habits	Behaver (and Range)	cry, laugh, sleep, breathe
Mental	Project ideas and emotions, i.e. inner process of perception, emotion, cognition	Senser and Phenomenon	feel, think, know, see, want
Verbal	Report verbal expression	Sayer and Verbiage	say, tell, ask
Relational	Describe attributes or identities of entities	Carrier and Attribute Token and Value	be, have, seem
Existential	Describe the process of existing	Existent	there + to be

Table 1.1: Classification of processes according to the Transitivity system (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014)

With the same approach, attitudes may be classified and quantified in their context through the lens of Appraisal, a SFL-based framework elaborated by Martin and White (2005) is a classificational system of the lexicogrammatical resources that enable individuals to convey particular attitudes and construct, maintain relationships of power through the appeal to specific emotions and assessments (Martin and White 2005, 12-13). Indeed, it was defined as "a framework for understanding, classifying,

and describing the linguistic resources to express evaluation" (Cavasso and Taboada 2021, 6), which may affect the perception and reception of communicative events.

In other words, this system realizes the interpersonal metafunction but, as opposed to other frameworks for the analysis of interpersonal meaning, it provides scholars with the opportunity to categorize and quantify paradigmatic, lexicogrammatical choices, the overall prosody of evaluation and the subjective stance in discourse (Thompson 2008; Martin 2017, 22).

The understanding of the encoded, ideological mechanisms of persuasion (Said 1991, 21; Bhatia 1993) in the promotion of the travel experience across digital channels, therefore, may be improved by integrating an analysis of the attitudinal meaning conveyed to the prospective tourists towards the perception of the destination. By being constructed in promotional narratives, the attitudes are positive in their evaluation of the tourist experience; however, an analysis of their types, frequencies and context might provide a more comprehensive overview of how and why such persuasive mechanisms are effective. Indeed, there seems to be the need to analyze in detail Appraisal resources in the construction of positively connotated semantic prosody (Sinclair 2004; Mocini 2015) in this type of discourse, supported by significant results in the analysis of promotional or digital narratives.

The most widely analyzed and applied sub-system in the literature so far has been Attitude (Cavasso and Taboada 2021; Bednarek 2006), as it is considered to be the most comprehensive set of evaluative resources. Attitude, in fact, may be expressed through many types of lexicogrammatical entities such as verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs, to 1) convey feelings and boost emotional response; 2) evaluate human behavior in terms of morality and according to a normative system; 3) provide an aesthetic assessment or evaluation of things and natural phenomena (Martin and White 2005, 34-36). Graduation may add elements of quantification or intensify the degree of gradable attitudinal resources, either by upscaling it or down toning it; as such, this system presupposes the presence of Attitude in the discourse. Finally, Engagement analyzes how language helps speakers position themselves as either incontestable holders of truths or negotiators. Figure 1.5 offers an overview of the Appraisal framework, while Figure 1.6 provides a concrete example of instantiation of Appraisal through the Attitude sub-system.

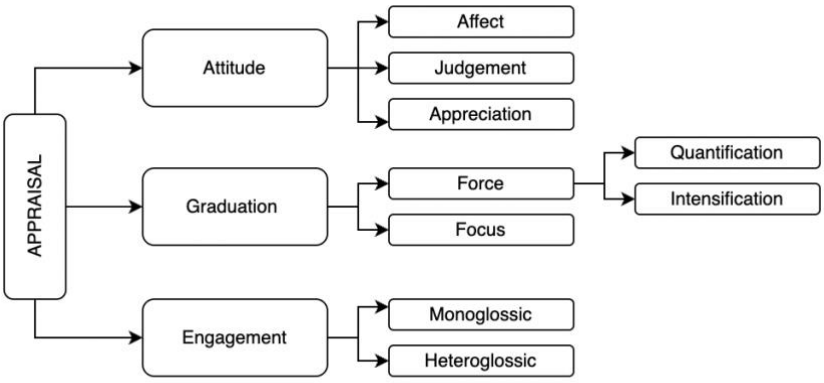


Figure 1.5: The Appraisal framework (adapted from Martin and White 2005)

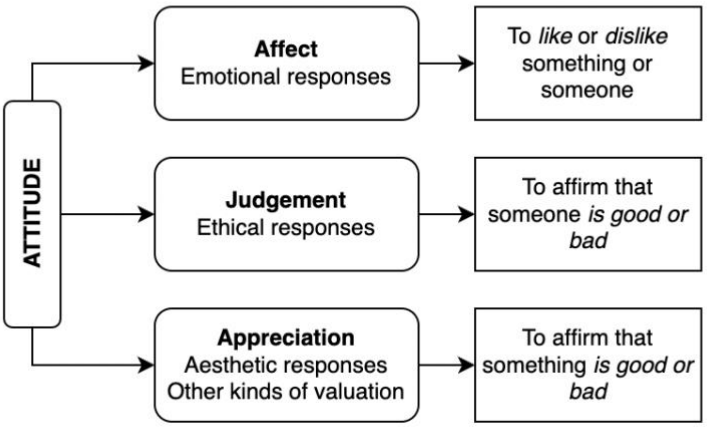


Fig.1.6: The Attitude sub-system (adapted from Thompson 2015)

The Attitude sub-system provides specifically a set of categories that may be leveraged to quantify instances of evaluation and discover patterns of use. The literature provides many examples of this practice, either in news discourse analysis (Bednarek 2006), social media and Twitter (Zappavigna 2012), or online comments (Cavasso and Taboada 2021, 1). All these studies highlight the presence of recurrent evaluative language which has a tendency to upscale its attitudinal meanings (Zappavigna 2012, 67). However, Social Media discourse has rarely been the subject of analysis from the viewpoint of Appraisal, including tourism discourse on Instagram. In a recent study (Cavasso and Taboada 2021), the manual annotation and analysis of a corpus of online news comments according to the Appraisal sub-systems enabled the authors to identify

patterns of occurrences of specific evaluative resources and to demonstrate the presence of negative evaluative language in this type of genre by means of Judgement and Appreciation resources of Attitude (2021, 27).

Extensive work in terms of Appraisal analysis has been carried out also by White (2002; 2003; 2016) and other scholars in the analysis of political discourse and news stories (Coffin and O'Halloran 2006), along with some studies on narratives (Macken-Horarik 2003), casual conversation (Eggins and Slade 1997) and different types of reviews (Taboada, Carretero and Hinnel 2014; Hommerberg and Don 2015). This framework has also been adopted to study other types of genres such as company corporate responsibility reports and CEO letters to explore trust and transparency in communication (Fuoli 2012).

Few attempts have been made also by scholars in tourism discourse and in particular in the analysis of brochures (Mocini 2015; Jalilifar and Moradi 2019); these revealed the presence of highly evaluative and positive content in tourism discourse, which is deployed to promote the destination with different lexicogrammatical resources and increase the perceived value of a tourist destination through up-scaling processes of grammatical structures, either in terms of quantification or intensification through the sub-system of Force (Mocini 2015, 160). Therefore, the analysis of discourse with Appraisal may assist researchers in identifying patterns of lexicogrammatical units that are included to negotiate, through evaluation, approval of and solidarity with the value position advanced by specialists.

1.3.5 NeoFirthian Linguistics: the quantitative study of naturally occurring language

The growing scholarly interest in systemic, functional studies for the analysis of linguistic and semiotic choices led researchers in linguistics to formulate hypotheses about the systematic study of instances of linguistic data in definite extra-linguistic contexts and linguistic co-texts. In this sense, Firth's scholarship contributed to the development of a descriptive and empirical approach to large bodies of linguistic data, or *parole,* which goes under the name of Corpus Linguistics (McEnery and Hardie 2012). In this study, Corpus Linguistics enabled the detection of patterns of use of the most frequent verbs or typical terms used by travel boards on Instagram and company websites; this approach, combined with Transitivity and Appraisal classification and

analysis of the main collocates in the context of use, allowed for an investigation of the similarities and differences in terms of experiental meaning realization across channels (Kilgarriff 2012). In particular, the collection, compilation and analysis of linguistic data in specialized language becomes the main source of empirical evidence for the investigation and description of the structure and use of naturally occurring language[6] (McEnery and Hardie 2012, 147; Egbert et al. 2020; Meyer 2002; Sinclair 2004; Brezina 2019). In line with Firth's view of language, Corpus Linguists firmly believe that linguistic analysis may help identify and motivate patterns of linguistic production and use across situations and individuals by exploring context-dependent co-textual behavior. Indeed, by analyzing systematically repeated occurrences and co-occurrences of linguistic choices in large bodies of data, linguists could become able to predict the attitudes, views and intentions that are conveyed intentionally, and which contribute to the perpetration of particular discourses (Bednarek 2009). by providing both reliable and reproducible interpretations (Tognini-Bonelli 2001).

If we look at Corpus Linguistics from a critical perspective, we may argue that the automatic annotation of linguistic units favored the application of theories that view language as a set of paradigmatic choices (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014); indeed, the generation of single-unit wordlists and keyword lists – i.e. words which appear more frequently in specific contexts – supported and guided the qualitative analysis of linguistic instances in contemporary linguistics research (McEnery and Hardie 2012; Taylor and Marchi 2018). However, as recent studies on statistical methods (Egbert et al. 2020; Brezina 2019) suggest, an excessive reliance on computed measures may lead to inaccurate results and misinterpretations (Egbert et al. 2020, 30-32). The majority of scholars in Corpus Linguistics argue specifically that the analysis of the co-text surrounding a linguistic choice as well as its broader context are crucial to ensuring an understanding of communicative events (Meyer 2002; Baker 2010; Baker and Egbert 2016; Gabrielatos and Baker 2008). These assumptions justify the adoption of a mixed methodological approach that takes into account also the co-text and discursive context from a qualitative perspective (Chapters Eight and Nine).

This NeoFirthian approach to language, which assumes that the meaning of a word may be grasped by "the company it keeps" (Firth 1957a, 179) was adopted and

[6] https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/corpus-linguistics (Last visit: 20/12/2022)

developed further by John Sinclair, (McEnery and Hardie 2012, 122-123) who shifted the attention towards the analysis of syntagmatic, co-textual choices (Sinclair 2004; Harris 2006) and provided both the theoretical and methodological grounds for the definition of the *prosody,* or connotative meaning, and *semantics* of a discourse through the exploration of the correlation between lexical items. Indeed, he demonstrated how the detection of the repeated occurrence of particular lexical items and their co-textual environment, or concatenations of both grammatical and lexical units, could shed light on the construction and purposes of communicative events by analyzing bodies of text manually (Harris 2006; Sinclair 2004, 131-137). He argued specifically that individuals convey particular attitudes and connotations in linguistic production and assign a "consistent aura of meaning" to a specific word by means of its collocates (Louw 1993, 157). Similarly, the classification and quantification of the semantic fields of the collocates of particular lexical items could provide insights into the cognitive and discursive associations between entities in external experience. For example, by studying the connotations and semantic field of the adjectives and verbs of social identities and constructs – such as the role of parents and gender, or the perception of refugee and asylum seekers – one may understand how these are constructed and perceived by society and news media (Baker 2010; Baker and Egbert 2016; Gabrielatos and Baker 2008)[7].

In conclusion, one might argue that Corpus Linguistics grew out of Firth's revolutionary view of linguistic meaning as a combination of linguistic units that are used repeatedly in a context by individuals for specific purposes. If Halliday's SFL theory contributed to the development of research practices that favor the analysis of paradigmatic choices and which may be identified by means of corpus tools such as keyword analysis and wordlists, Sinclair provided the theoretical and methodological tools to unveil patterns of meaning creation by exploring collocations, i.e. lexical bundles which are unusually more frequent (Brezina 2019). Eventually, these may assist

[7] Strictly in terms of corpus creation, corpus linguists highlight the importance of following specific guidelines, including corpus balance, size and representativeness to ensure the falsifiability, replicability and validity of results (McEnery and Hardie 2012, 10; Egbert et al. 2020; Leech 2007, 143-144).

in the identification of co-textual choices, such as nouns and emotionally, charged, evaluative pre-modifiers (Maci 2020) that assign a particular meaning, or prosody, to the texts under investigation for a particular purpose, and which may reveal underlying intentions and assumptions in the perpetuation of a particular view, as was demonstrated in previous studies in tourism discourse and in the current dissertation. Therefore, the combination of Sinclair's and Halliday's approach through the application of different Corpus Linguistics techniques – including wordlists, keyword analysis, collocation analysis, and KWiC – may help researchers systematize their approach to language and gain a deeper knowledge of the prosody of a certain discourse by detecting patterns of meaning construction.

1.3.6 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to provide an overview of the history of Systemic Functional Linguistics and its innovative approach to language – including its potentially fruitful combination with NeoFirthian Linguistics analysis of large datasets of naturally occurring language. Due to its degree of systematization of linguistic resources in relation to the extra-linguistic context, SFL has an enormous potential for application to the analysis of any kind of discourse or genre. In particular, the formalization of the notion of function as a sign through the structured formalization of meaning strata, metafunctions, and the range of lexicogrammatical resources has allowed linguists to consider language from a 'scientific' as well as multidisciplinary perspective. Because of this approach, language may be regarded as a system of semiotic resources that may be 'quantifiable' and trackable in any context. This opens up new paths for the analysis of other systems of meaning-making that may be compared with language through the notion of metafunction and contextual variables. In summary, we could argue that Systemic Functional Linguistics made two main contributions to the study of language in previous, contemporary as well as future lines of research:

- **Systemic**: Language may be investigated at different levels, which range from the detailed identification of units of meaning creation to the analysis of key variables in the context that directly affect the socio-semiotic process of linguistic production. The possibility of identifying clear units of language,

particularly, allows for the detection of patterns of meaning making in the realization of the three metafunctions across different contexts, i.e. at the level of genre, register, discourse, media (also called *modes*, Kress 2010) and channels;

- **Functional**: Language is considered a set of resources for meaning making that are selected carefully and intentionally to fulfill a specific function (at three levels) in the context. Specifically, it is a system that needs to be adaptable to the extra-linguistic environment in order to be sensitive to contexts and allow for the selection of apt resources for a specific purpose. This leads to potential innovations in terms of methodology and application to a potentially infinite range of communicative situations. In particular, the analysis of other semiotic resources is supported by the provision of a multidisciplinary framework that considers language to be only one of the signs designed by social beings for the interpretation, reproduction and construction of knowledge about reality.

As Matthiessen argued in the introduction of the 2014 edition of Systemic Functional Grammar, Halliday was the first linguist to give a "sense of the overall organization of language as a complex semiotic system" (2014, xvii). Additionally, Halliday's theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics paved the way for the development of the socio-semiotic theory of multimodality, which established connections between various semiotic resources by focusing on the function(s) each of these fulfils in the construction of discourse (Kress 2010). This theory is discussed more completely in Chapter Three.

Chapter Two

Technological advances for *media* development and epistemological crisis: the shift towards i*mage-centric, socio-semiotic practices* of coded reproduction for consumption in the *digital* era

The previous chapter provided an overview of the development of Systemic Functional Linguistics as a framework for the obtainment of comprehensive and structured understanding of human exchanges and knowledge construction. Indeed, it underlined both the relevance of the extra-linguistic environment to the understanding of practices of linguistic use, and the increasing centricity of other types of signs in the act of meaning creation; these signs need to be taken into account for an accurate examination of contemporary reproductions of ideological views for persuasive purposes.This chapter seeks to describe the development of visually centric communicative practices that began spreading due to technological and social change. In particular, the current chapter argues that three major technical developments have affected the production, reception and perpetration of social semiotic practices that go beyond the established use of language: 1) the advent of photography as a substitute for art and evidence-based writing during the Industrial Revolution; 2) the advent of mass media; and 3) the dissemination of computers as a turning point in the development of 'digital consumption' and possibly agency such as semiotic creativity and participatory use in online communication, and social media (Web 2.0). Following a chronological order of the historical events, this section will attempt to explain how technological advances, social change and semiotic use have contributed to and intersected in the production of new socio-communicative practices; this approach will help unveil the reasons for and the strategies behind contemporary communication, and it will provide the tools for the informed production and reception of communicative events in contemporary society. Figure 2.1 shows the reading path adopted to describe the development of contemporary socio-semiotic practices, which will be illustrated in this chapter.

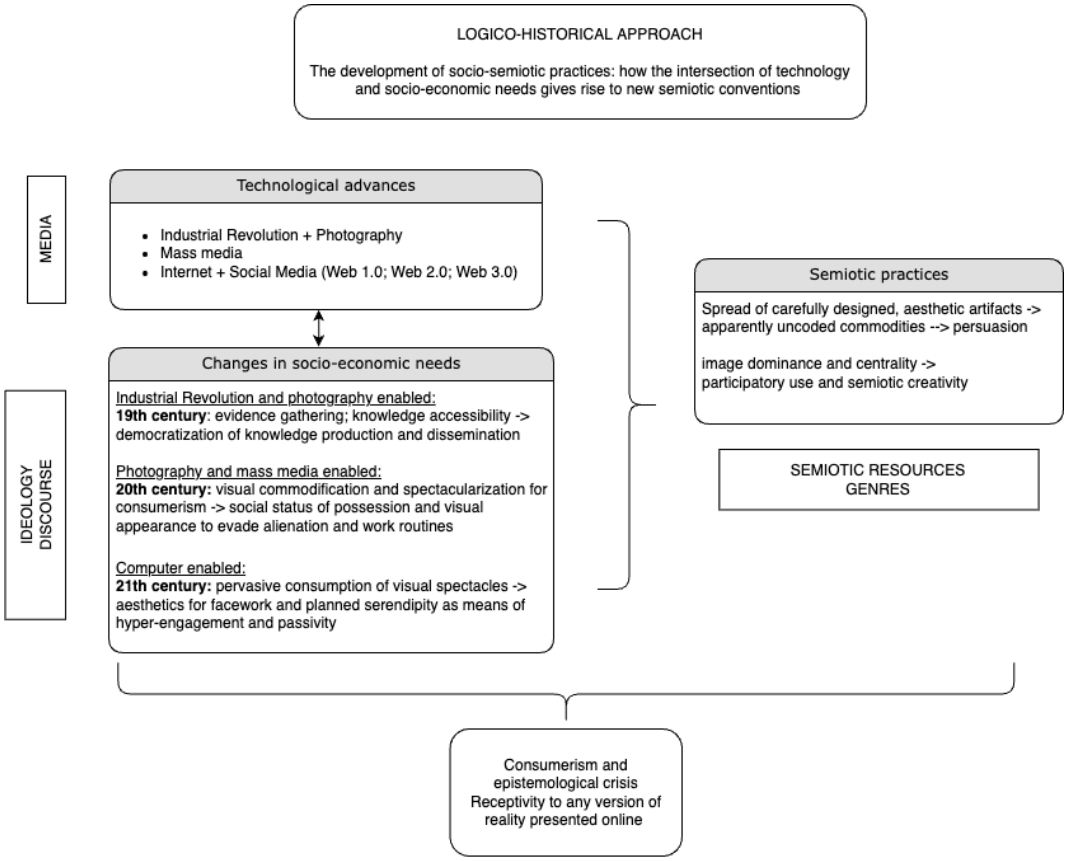


Figure 2.1: The development of socio-semiotic practices through the convergence of technology and socio-economic needs

In order to demonstrate this theory, the history of photography as a visual practice will be outlined, with a focus on its role as the first visual medium for the democratic reproduction and dissemination of representations of social events that has contributed to the spread of capitalism and consumerism (section 2.1). This will be followed by a critical discussion of mass media communication and sociological implications, including the narcotic effects of postmodern, visual commodification of spectacles (section 2.2). A final section will be devoted to digital communication and its role in both promoting a pervasive consumption of visual representations and in assigning a potential agency to individuals who wish to fight social constructs in an increasing epistemological crisis (section 2.3). The final section will conclude with some insights into semiotic creativity and current socio-semiotic trends.

These sections will be crucial to ensuring an understanding of past and current trends in semiotics as well as the semiotic shift towards pervasive practices of image-centricity that have been said to characterize the XXI century and digital communication. This chapter will also represent the starting point for the introduction, in chapter three, of

the socio-semiotic approach to communication, which is adopted in the current study– *multimodality* – and which builds on the linguistic theory presented in chapter one, i.e. Systemic Functional Linguistics (Kress 2010; Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006).

This section is important because it lays the groundwork for the understanding of current socio-semiotic practices that define human exchange in all spheres of contemporary society, and it does so by examining previous technological and socio-semiotic developments. These may account for the development of novel strategies, purposes that have changed or have been adapted to new semiotic uses, technological practices and social needs. Indeed, technological change occurs because there is socio-economic 'breeding ground', and it inevitably affects the semiotic landscape by creating new social practices and rhetorical strategies (Bateman 2014a).

Following the logico-historical approach that was mentioned above, this section will show how technological advances in the 19th and 20th centuries (photography, mass media and internet) answered to and shaped emerging socio-economic needs in an increasing capitalist and consumerist environment. This represented the breeding ground for the development of new communicative practices based on democratic access to information, participatory as well as creative use of semiotic resources to communicate, leading to novel multisemiotic practices designed to construct, or "package" particular representation of events and convey viewpoints for persuasive purposes. In other words, this chapter will show how these historical developments in terms of technologies and ideology have led to 1) an increasing epistemological crisis in a consumerist society in which everything is "sold" as the only truth, through 2) new communicative practices in which the evocative, aesthetically appealing and apparently uncoded 'visual' meaning is dominant, pervasive, and superordinate compared to written communication. In particular, it will be demonstrated how the persuasive power of photography lies in its ability to appear as an *uncoded mirror of reality,* thus representing a semiotic resource needed by postmodern individuals, as they look for certainty, simplicity, and fulfilment of capitalist-driven desires in a (virtual) world which is characterized by abundance of content and multisemiotic mechanisms of persuasion that resort to imagery to attract attention, instill desire and bestow authenticity at the same time.

2.1 The rise of the visual culture of commodity after the Industrial Revolution

2.1.1 Access to information and need for certainty: the automated dissemination of the *visual* as an apparently uncoded mirror of society

The idea that a shift towards ubiquitous, image-centric practices in the current media sphere, which has occurred since the 19th century, is shared by scholars working in different fields, ranging from media to photographic studies (Wells 2015; Price and Wells 2015; Debord 1967; McLuhan 1964; Levinson 2004; Manovich 2017; Ramamurthy 2015) and also to semiotic studies (Barthes 1977; Benjamin 1969; Berger 1972) and socio-semiotic research (Kress 2010; Stöckl et al 2020; Bateman 2014b).

A clear description of the "historical turning points and theoretical concerns that have informed and sparked debates about photography from its inception" is offered by Price and Wells, among others (Price and Wells 2015, 12; Ray 2020; Davenport 1991). Scholarly research shows how photography has increasingly permeated each aspect of our lives after the Industrial Revolution and has been acting since then as a principal repository of information about world experience. However, it also shows how photography has satisfied different needs depending on the historical period and technological developments. In the early days of the photographic practice, this technology fulfilled the desire to maintain or acquire social status through original, unique 'portraits'. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, it began to be seen as an indisputable source of uncoded evidence about facts; finally, it became a widespread, accessible technology for the creation of any kind of meaning - including ideological – for any kind of purpose and with an increasing focus on appealing aesthetics (Price and Wells 2015, 9-74). What is shared by most scholarly works in the fields mentioned above is the fact that the use of images use was boosted by the Industrial Revolution but was not solely contingent on technological advances (Stöckl et al 2019, 1). Indeed, the impressing material-technological advances of the 20th century undeniably provided the breeding ground for the birth of photography; still, this was promoted and then enhanced by the sociocultural need to reproduce facts faithfully and uncontestably and to inform and move audiences (Stöckl et al. 2019, 2; Ray 2020, 144-145). This makes photography both the cause and consequence of social change. As Price and Wells argue,

"New machinery is normally presented as the agent of social change, not as the outcome of a desire for such change, i.e. as a cause rather than a consequence of culture. However, it can be argued that particular cultures invest in and develop new machines and technologies in order to satisfy previously foreseen social needs" (Price and Wells 2015, 13).

Afterwards, they also claim that

"Once a technology exists, it may become adapted and introduced into social use in a variety of both foreseen and unforeseen ways. As cultural theorist Raymond Williams has argued, there is nothing in a technology itself which determines its cultural location or usage (Williams 1974). […] In addition, new technologies become incorporated within established relations of production and consumption, contributing to articulating – but not causing – shifts and changes in such relations and patterns of behaviour" (Price and Wells 2015, 14).

What is important, therefore, to review critically, is *why* photography was invented and spread in that way – i.e., being used and gaining status as a response to particular social needs.

2.1.1.1 The Industrial Revolution: from art to science

The Industrial Revolution was a turning point in the economic history of production and dissemination of goods, including photography. Price and Wells (2015)'s definition of technical and social changes contribute to our understanding of the effects of the Industrial Revolution on urban life and work routines. Indeed,

"Important changes included the transformation of the economy through new techniques of production; the development of new materials and commodities; the growth of industrialisation and, related to this, the expansion of towns and cities as people moved to live in centres of employment; the creation of new kinds of communication systems and forms of display. In Britain, France and elsewhere, such changes were underpinned economically through imperialism (which made available raw materials and cheap labour from other parts of the world) and through the low pay and poor working conditions experienced by industrial and agrarian labour at home. All these factors contributed to the increasingly public and urban nature of modern life, and to emphasising the separation of the aristocracy (in Britain), the professional and entrepreneurial middle classes, and the workers" (Price and Wells 2015, 65)

If mass production and consumption emerged in modern times as uncontested, natural consequences of the innovation-driven practices of automation, the birth of associated values and ideologies – such as capitalism, i.e. the process of production for consumption and profit – became the object of intellectual inquiry. This was inevitable especially because the market eventually became saturated and consumption turned into consumerism, i.e. the desire to consume for the sake of spending and owning.
In order to describe the development of capitalist ideology and show how it led to contemporary postmodern practices, it should be clarified how the Industrial Revolution answered to emerging social needs and impacted emerging visual trends,

leading to the birth of photography as *realist*, uncoded representation of social reality, and more objective form of art.

2.1.1.2 Realism and socially aware photography: the convergence of positivism and automation

Realism in photography developed from realism to become artistic movement in novels and paintings between 1850 and 1880. The 19th century, indeed, saw the emergence of the positivist method, i.e. the desire to represent reality without a distorted, filtered, and subjective viewpoint in a modernist society, which rejected art for its too subjective nature as unfaithful representation of reality. This led contemporaries to start considering photography as the successful experiment of scientific research and potential means to reproduce the external world without distortions (Alù and Hill 2018). In a society, which is enthusiastic about the potentials of industrial processes and innovation due to the introduction of automation, photography started soon to acquire an important socio-semiotic status, i.e. a means of communication that could make knowledge easier to access and disseminate (Price and Wells 2015, 16-17). The photographer Eastlake even argued that this technology and medium caused knowledge to be classless and ubiquitous, as well as void of prejudice (1857, 93-94).

The main characteristic of realism was the accurate and unembellished depiction of everyday experience and subjects without any distortions or artificiality for aesthetic purposes. Thus, realism in the arts advocated the rejection of traditional artistic conventions (Ray 2020).

In other words, we might say realism in the arts developed as a response to 1) *positivism* (from a scientific and epistemological perspective), and 2) the *Industrial Revolution* (from a sociological and economic perspective). Indeed, it was considered to be a way to

1) record, by means of close observation, visual appearances with accuracy (Comte 1975);
2) document real life struggles instead of idealizing life events of contemporary society. It attempted to portray the lives – including the appearances and problems – of lower classes, such as laborers in factories or peasants in the countryside (Ray 2020, 141)

3) provide a simplified image of urban life and reassure the public on the complexity and uncertainty of society (Benjamin 1931)

In relation to the first point, *realist photography* is the result of a methodological perspective advanced by modern Western philosophy and has become a widespread approach to science from the 18th century onwards. This theory, advanced first by Comte and influenced by Enlightenment and the importance of rational thinking and reasoning, poses the notion that all knowledge may be discovered by means of the unmediated observation of reality and hypothesis testing; it also repudiated any speculation concerning the nature of reality beyond empirical evidence (Rosenblum 2007). This pushed modern scientists to believe the understanding of external experience could be achieved objectively through processes that involved logical reasoning (Price and Wells 2015, 29). Photography could fit this narrative well for it seemed, right from its first developments to fulfill these epistemological and epistemic needs, i.e. the necessity to learn about socially mediated (not only natural) events through unmediated processes of collection of incontestable evidence.

From a sociological perspective, realist photography contributed to exposing, as impartial record, the social inequalities the automated production of goods for profit was exacerbating, and was used as a vehicle for social and political criticism. In particular, the low pay and the poor working conditions of workers in factories and urban settings involved alienating procedures of intensive labor. The very printing of photographs needed intensive processing for their mechanical reproduction (Benjamin 1931). Photography, then, started to be seen as a means to reveal "the underside of the urban scene" (Ray 2020, 144) and depict moments of urban life such as work injuries, traffic accidents, as well as crime scenes and murder victims.

Additionally, this type of photograph also allowed individuals to *feel* informed about world events, and to "regain a grasp of a world in flux" (Ray 2020, 1455) and in which the focus on profit had led to a 'bewitched and distorted world' (Marx 1991, 969) through the culture of objects and the erosion of subjectivity in automated processes of production of goods.

2.1.1.3 Is objectivity possible? The ambivalent ontological status of realist, socially aware photography

The need to see photography as an *objective* record of reality was a product of an increasing focus on empirical as well as impartial, unbiased methods for the understanding of world events. Empirical testing through photography soon became subject to critical discussion by American scholars, who claimed that photography could not be considered to be a transparent and uncoded method for the collection of evidence, as it involved the selection of a subject matter and angle by another subject. Indeed, the *decisions* made by the photographer concerning the circumstances under which photographs were produced – including the selection of what to capture, what to leave out, and the reasons why – constituted a series of subjective choices that were considered to hinder the objective appraisal of facts. For these reasons, it could not be used as a 'disinterested' source of representation. There can be no singular meaning behind photographs (Price 1994). In other words, the presence of direct referents in the reality depicted made photographs both verified and selected representations of experience.

One may argue, then, that realist photography, due to its mechanical nature, had the potential to reproduce reality more faithfully compared to paintings; however, this did not imply that it was completely unfiltered and unbiased (Ray 2020, 140). In relation to this, scholarly research questioned the ontological status of photography, in an attempt to explore its potential to inform the public. Ray argues that photography was considered by artists and philosophers to have an ontological uncertainty (2020, 142). Baudelaire was one of the first artists to theorize and question the ontological status of photography, arguing that this technology was both science and art that originated from the need to support intellectual enquiry. He considered it to be a mechanical reproduction of human experience – in other words, free form selective discriminations – as well as a dispassionate recording that hinders artistic creativity (Baudelaire 1859). Photography may figure in a diverse range of contexts, such as travelers' albums as evidence of good memories (Alù and Hill 2018), or naturalists' libraries. However, it also had the power to "impinge on the sphere of the intangible and the imaginary" (Baudelaire 1859, 297), and to become the 'spiritual' antidote to the "positivist interest in measurement and statistical accuracy" which characterized the 19th century (Price and Wells 2015, 15). Baudelaire may be portrayed as the

embodiment of the ambivalent sentiment that accompanied the evolution of photography, i.e. the fascination with *pictorialism* – i.e. the aesthetic representation of the beauty of a subject, rather than its documentation – and with *realism.*

Philosopher Walter Benjamin enriched this discussion by arguing that photography fulfilled two functions, due to its ambivalent nature: that of *reporting* reality and that of *evoking imagination,* for it is "a space informed by human consciousness [that] gives way to a space informed by the unconscious" (Benjamin, 2015, 91). In other words, photography may unveil "invisible phenomena" (Roy 2020, 145) by appealing to the subconscious. This meant that the visual representation of social and natural events or subjects (such as factories, workers, cities) by means of mechanical reproduction could be considered to be evidence of the existence of such subjects and events (as an *index* of reality) but also fostered thinking and feelings due to its proximity to the psychic, cognitive structures of imagination and its power to allude to an emotional sphere (Smith and Sliwinski 2017, 9). This was possible also because photography could point to both the referent (the subject) of the photograph and the photographer, thus enabling the sharing of a certain view, or angle of the events with a wider audience (Kelsey and Stimson 2008: xi).

2.1.1.4 Conclusion

In summary, it may be argued that photography developed as a by-product of positivism and thanks to the Industrial Revolution; however, it soon began to be viewed as a tool for 1) raising awareness of social events in a potentially vast audience and 2) fostering critical thinking about the (negative) effects of contemporary socio-economic trends through the appeal to imagination and the emotional sphere. Photographs were defined as

> "[…] social documents which it is impossible not to read. They make us aware of the world around us and what is right and wrong with it, whether we like it or not. If it has done nothing else, the camera has made the pleading of ignorance – the ostrich-like burying of our heads in the sands of illusion – a very thin excuse (1939: 19)" (Roy 2020, 152)

The appeal to the imagination and emotional sphere that has been discussed in this section was leveraged by photographers not only to foster critical thinking and social change; indeed, it started soon to be used to persuade individuals of the *authenticity* of a certain representation of events for the purpose of generating profit. For this reason,

an understanding of the mechanisms behind the advent of capitalism and as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution is necessary, and section 2.1.2 will explain how its spread as an ideology and practice affected the design and reception of visual practices and contributed the development of new ones.

In conclusion, if the Industrial Revolution in modern times went hand in hand with the development of a socio-philosophical and scientific need for *realism* – which provided a positivist, empiricist interpretation of photography, in a firm rejection of all forms of artistic, subjective forms – the development of mass production and consumption gave rise to critical debates concerning the *authority, originality* and *objectivity* of widespread forms of mechanical reproduction provided by few organizations and accessible to a variety of subjects. In particular, sociologists, philosophers and semioticians began to question the purely denotative nature of this medium and the disinterested purposes of its representation, while also shedding light on its power as socio-individual expression of concerns and rejection of authoritative, imposed views of reality.

2.1.2 Photography as cause and consequence of capitalism and consumerism: The effects of the Industrial Revolution

The impact of imagery in the postmodern era has also been studied from a philosophical perspective. The Industrial Revolution of the 19th century, indeed, which coincided with modernism and both technological and economic improvements, saw the emergence of capitalism. The theory of capitalism developed by Marx and the sociological implications explored by contemporaries and present-day intellectuals are considered to be a key approach to the understanding of both past and more recent events (Best and Kellner 1999). The fact that it developed as a consequence of the same historical events that gave rise to photography and the culture of mass commodity makes it relevant to the current dissertation, which focuses on current social practices of meaning-making and the reasons why they are shaped in a particular way and are effective. The next sections will introduce the concepts of commodification and spectacularization of reality as means to ensure consumerism and profit (2.1.2.1); this will be followed by some insights into the consequences of these practices in terms of individuals' degree of passivity and alienation (2.1.2.2-2.1.2.3) and continue with the description of the emergence of visual practices, or *signs*,

as mechanically reproduced representations carrying an apparent aura of authenticity and originality (2.1.2.4). This discussion will be accompanied by the classification of photography as an aesthetic commodity for the mass promotion and consumption of social needs (2.1.2.5-2.1.2.7). Finally, the section will end with some considerations on the ambivalent nature of postmodern imagery from a semiotic perspective (2.1.2.8) and a summary (2.1.2.9).

2.1.2.1 Spectacularization of the *ordinary* and commodification of *immateriality* as means to ensure consumerism

The Industrial Revolution and automated, standardized production of large quantities of goods brought about an increase of the goods available to the public and a consequent decrease of their price. To amortize the cost of innovative machines and production processes, however, industries had to continue producing goods at a mass level, leading to a surplus of offer that needed to be marketed. This is a mechanism that accelerated a shift from *production* for democratized access to goods to *consumption* for mere profit. (Best and Kellner 1999, 30-31).

The *Situationist International* movement and other philosophers as well as sociologists attempted to explore the nature of this shift and the phenomenon of mass marketing and consumption, also in relation to the postmodern need to include the representation of altered versions of reality, or spectacles, for the legitimation of consumerism (Gotham and Krier 2008, 160; Debord 1967; Lukàcs 1968; Lefebvre 1958; Plant 1992).

The spectacularization of ordinary aspects of life and its promotion as entertainment or leisure, and the adoption of its logic and principles, is a theory that stems from Marx's conception of early capitalism and its ability to "transform social relations into commodified exchange relations" (Gotham and Krier 2008, 161; Marx 1978, 305) which, according to him, have lost their intrinsic value due to the increasing power of money. Reality, then, is turned into a commodity for the mere purpose of fostering exchange of money, and value is created only through money, not through the nature or actual use of something. This process of making money powerful enough to buy even immaterial goods and qualities such as social status, beauty, intelligence, and to make social relationships commodities is called fetishism (Gotham and Krier 2008, 162). This is also what legitimizes the nature of capitalism and the exchange power of

the *capital,* and what makes people think that labor and capital relationships are just, egalitarian, and efficient (Gotham and Krier 2008, 162). Indeed, Marxist theories argue that everything in society is the product of capitalist ideology and mass culture – which expanded the potentialities of means of production and consumption –, and that these are what make individuals often unaware of the money- and profit-oriented narratives that have been imposed on them (Gotham and Krier 2008, 156).

2.1.2.2 Alienation and passivity: Legitimizing consumption and profit through narratives of commodification and possession for satisfaction and social status

The need to amortize the cost of cutting-edge machinery was accompanied, after the Industrial Revolution, by a desire to exploit the alluring potential for profit. For this reason, industries started marketing everything by making goods look more appealing and necessary, and by channelling socially (i.e. capitalist) driven, human-based inner desires – such as the need to feel part of a community, to feel special and in control, or "to be looked at", noticed – into something that was externalized and which seemed controllable, satisfiable in the short-term (Plant 1992). The purchase of goods as a marker of social status and personal satisfaction in terms of exclusive possession and appearance, in turn, would legitimize the need to work and contribute to this ideology, making access to goods and the exclusivity of monetary affordance the most important drivers of satisfaction in individuals of society. The effectiveness of the illusionary, ephemeral satisfaction and power deriving from capitalism would then be increased through the setting up of representations and products of entertainment and leisure, which would enchant, distract the masses from the real injustices and low levels of happiness deriving from work alienation (Gotham and Krier 2008, 156). Leisure and tourism, in particular, were conceived as an alluring, imaginative counter-reality that would contribute to the legitimization of this type of ideology.

Lukàcs (1968), a philosopher interested in the effects of commodification in capitalism, enriched the discussion by adding that the phenomenon of fetishism soon led to the reification of every realm of reality and relationship constructed in capitalist societies. In other words, people became convinced of the fact that social structures were unchangeable and beyond control, for they were considered to be natural, with an intrinsic, unquestionable value (Plant 1992, 11). Acts of regulation of labor contracts

and benefits made people feel protected and safe, and the system of the capital and inequalities based on money and possessions was perpetrated. In other words, most individuals in capitalism submitted passively to indoctrination, rather than deciding to develop their own thinking, which could be free of socially driven epistemological constraints and acts of mystification of reality (Gotham and Krier 2008, 163-164).
To achieve this kind of alienation, leisure played an important role; indeed, its commodification in a world regulated by money and work constraints is crucial to legitimizing its desire and passive involvement. As Gotham and Krier argued:

"In a section of the Critique of Everyday Life entitled, "Critique of Needs," Lefebvre argues that leisure and entertainment invert human values and relations through the creation of "fictitious, artificial, and imaginary needs" ([1958]1991, p. 161). Thus, advertisers, marketers, and other capitalist producers manufacture the need for leisure, vacations, and other "breaks" from work through the dissemination of advertising images, signs, and other simulations of pleasure and fantasy. Anticipating Marcuse's (1964, 1968, pp. 159–200) contention that capitalism replaces authentic human needs with false ones, Lefebvre argued that the manufacturing of needs dovetails with the tendency toward the abstraction, homogenization, and quantification of human relations, embodied in the abstract commodity form. The image of advertising is of pleasure and enjoyment while the reality of capitalism is a mammoth increase in reification that blurs the distinction between the real and the non-real. As Lefebvre puts it:

"We are now entering the vast domain of the illusory reverse image. What we find is a false world; firstly because it is not a world, and because it presents itself as true, and because it mimics real life closely in order to replace the real by its opposite; by replacing real unhappiness by fictions of happiness, for example-by offering a fiction in response to the real need for happiness-and so on. This is the 'world' of most films, most of the press, the theatre, the music hall: of a large sector of leisure activities. How strange the split between the real world and its reverse image is. For in the end it is not strange at all, but a false strangeness, a cheap-and-nasty, all-pervasive mystery ([1958], p. 1991, p. 35; emphasis in original)" (Gotham and Krier 2008, 166)

It is clear from these passages how the act of consumption of immaterial goods such as services, feelings or needs is packaged and proposed as a commodity ready to be consumed through the vehicle of *images*. Indeed, if all aspects of life are designed and represented in a way that fosters consumption, then profit increases.

2.1.2.3 Spectacularization of simulations of reality to ensure passive consumption

With regard to the spectacularization of reality through the use of images, Guy Debord – as a member of the *Situationist International,* an international organization consisting of intellectuals, artists and political theorists who criticized capitalism – laid out a multidisciplinary theory that combines capitalist theories with sociological and semiotic implications to provide an explanation of the key role of signs in the perpetration of capitalist ideology (Debord 1981; 1990). Generally speaking, the movement argued

that capitalism in the 20th century was supported by the deliberate construction of moments (or *situations*) of life for the purpose of instilling as well as awakening socially driven desires, such as the need for adventure and to escape an everyday reality that was characterized by time constraints and work routines (Plant 1992). In his volume "La Société du Spectacle", Debord posits the notion that we live in a society of the spectacle, in which images and signs mediate and enact capitalist, social relationships by building a particular representation of events and conveying particular attitudes and beliefs (Debord 1970, paragraphs 1-2, 35-41, 57; Gotham and Krier 2008, 167). Through the separation of work and life, production and consumption, solitude and collectivity, alienated individuals are led to believe that they exist only due to their function at work, which then legitimizes the existence of their life. Individuals are brought together only by their power of spending and consuming; if they do not consume, they do not either work or live and are not part of society (Plant 1992, 11; Debord 1970, paragraphs 25-30).

By being assigned a role – and a role of passive acceptance, or submissive consumption of feelings of alleged satisfaction, fulfilment of needs (Gotham and Krier 2008, 174-175) that only creates more dissatisfaction -, individuals end up in passive contemplation and satisfaction of pre-established needs, and become spectators of their own lives (Debord 1970, paragraphs 13-14, 21; Mirzoeff 1999). Needs and desires are pre-established, and deviations from them are considered abnormal; goods are unquestionably believed to bring happiness and gratification. Mystifications of reality coincide then with *illusions* (Debord 1970, paragraph 155) or *simulations* (i.e. manipulated copies of reality, also called *simulacra*, Benjamin 1969) whose consumption allows for the survival and reproduction of capitalist processes of production and consumption (Gotham and Krier 2008, 182-183):

> "While the representation of spectacles connects to issues of political and economic power, the interpretation of spectacles is filtered through prior experience, one's social location and identity (race, class, gender, and so on), and one's conversations and engagement with others. Understanding the cultural construction of spectacles requires addressing a range of processes from encoding the practices of institutions involved in the representation of spectacles to individual and collective responses to these dominant representations" (Gotham and Krier 2008, 180)

This is supported by Best and Kellner's interpretation of being a spectator of one's own life, which results from ideological, pervasive processes of socio-semiotic encodings of spectacular representations of reality:

"The philosophization of reality, on the other hand, separates thought from action as it idealizes and hypostatizes the world of the spectacle. It converts direct experience into a specular and glittering universe of images and signs, where instead of constituting their own lives, individuals contemplate the glossy surfaces of the commodity world and adopt the psychology of a commodity self that defines itself through consumption and image, look, fashion, and style, as derived from the world of the spectacle. Spectators of the spectacle project themselves into a phantasmagoric fantasy world of stars, celebrities, and stories, in which individuals compensate for unlived lives by identifying with sports heroes and events, movie and television celebrities, and the lifestyles and scandals of the rich and infamous. Hence, many individuals in the society of the spectacle constitute themselves in terms of celebrity image, look, and style. Media celebrities are the icons and role models, the stuff of dreams, whom the dreamers of the spectacle emulate and adulate. But these are precisely the ideals of a consumer society whose models promote the accumulation of capital by defining personality in terms of image, forcing one into the clutches and clichés of the fashion, cosmetic, and style industries. Mesmerized by the spectacle, subjects move farther from their immediate emotional reality and desires, and closer to the domination of corporately controlled consumption:

"The more [one] contemplates the less he lives; the more he accepts recognizing himself in the dominant images of need, the less he understands his own existence and his own desires ... his own gestures are no longer his but those of another who represents them to him."(Debord 1967, 30)." (Best and Kellner 1999, 143)

Therefore, visual encodings of spectacles are designed to seduce people and lead them to believe there is something real about the hyperreality promoted, and that they are not alienated from it.

In conclusion, it may be argued that the Industrial Revolution and the advent of photography were a primary source of social developments and semiotic changes in the communicative practices of the 19th and 20th centuries, and helped both fulfill already existing social needs and create new ones. In particular, the emergence of visual practices based on the spectacularization of reality was the direct consequence of previous technological and socio-economic developments, i.e. the capitalist need to perpetrate consumerism by playing on individuals' desire for external validation, admiration based on aesthetic appearance, lifestyle, as well as need to feel part of a community and construct, share a special social status. In other words, society has found in technology and mass media a means to construct increasingly complex and impulse-based semiotic practices as a way to perpetrate capitalist ideology.

2.1.2.4 Signs in capitalist ideology: questioning authority and authenticity

The shift towards mass production and consumption and the increasing commodification of images led scholars to reposition critically the role of photography during postmodern times (Benjamin 1969; Mitchell 1994). This is substantiated by the emergence of a plethora of sources which testify to the relevance of this technology and medium to social and economic postmodern practices. Walter Benjamin and later

Mitchell were two of the main contributors to the construction of a more informed, critical understanding of the role of imagery and photography in mass production times. Benjamin was specifically the first scholar to examine the question of *authority and authenticity* in mass semiotic practices from a critical perspective (Benjamin 1969; Price and Wells 2015, 18-19). In particular, he argued that both terms could be seen as misleading; indeed, not only could they not be interpreted as synonyms for an *objective* representation of evidence, but they were also wrongfully considered to be an incontestable, disinterested source of knowledge legitimated by an alleged objective nature of technological practices and by the power of social organizations and institutions. This misconception originated from the modernist and positivist need to live in a world which could be

> " […] cleansed of traditional forms and hierarchies of values […], one in which we would be free to see clearly without the distorting aesthetics of the past (Price and Wells 2015, 23).

However, the production and dissemination of *copies* of *signs* which characterized society after the Industrial Revolution soon changed this perspective, leading to a questioning as to the degree of *illusion* caused by the visual *spectacularization* of ordinary aspects of life to boost consumerism. As Feuerbach stated,

> "But certainly for the present age, which prefers the sign to the thing signified, the copy to the original, fancy to reality, the appearance to the essence, [...] illusion only is sacred, truth profane. Nay, sacredness is held to be enhanced in proportion as truth decreases and illusion increases, so that the highest degree of illusion comes to be the highest degree of sacredness." Feuerbach, Preface to the second edition of The Essence of Christianity, 1843)

Similarly, Mitchell claims that photography has become the means through which the distortions of ideology may be represented visually and subtly through the 'optical illusion' of the camera obscura (1994). Due to its mechanical nature, the latter may be seen as a scientific and impartial instrument that cannot reproduce any encoded beliefs; however, by being manipulated by individuals in the act of photographic production, this technology may enable the encoding of values and subjectivity, which is indeed what makes photographs seem authentic and realistic and enhances their credibility.
The shift caused by the Industrial revolution and the advent of capitalism, then, may be summarized with the following assumption: the masses have moved from being absorbed by art – in acts of contemplation – to absorbing art – in acts of consumerism and fluxes of imagery that do not leave time to engage and reflect (Benjamin 1969, 17).

In other words, the innovations intrinsic to modernism and realism (including the access to knowledge, capital and goods, and the desire to search for truth) ultimately led to the postmodern belief that truth, or the authentic representation of events, was not held by uncontested authorities. Throughout the 20th century, the spread of mass communication and information networks and the free flow of information as well as capital was to nurture the conviction that individuals could be freed from uncontested, master narratives as well as from gatekeepers such as institutions (press, politics, education system), and continue the process of democratization that had started during modernism Price and Wells 2015, 24). The ease of duplication and dissemination of goods and signs in society led scholars to argue to the following:

> " […] we inhabit a world of dislocated signs, a world in which the appearance of things has been separated from authentic originals" (Price and Wells 2015, 24).

The fragmented nature of communication in all spheres of society which derived from the uncontrolled spread of mass practices of production and consumption was at the center of debates among philosophers as well as semioticians. While philosophers were interested in the ontological status of *signs*, or mass semiotic practices, semioticians were concerned also with the array of meanings that ubiquitous, widespread and decontextualized signs such as images could have. In particular, first Benjamin and later Marxist philosopher Jean Baudrillard and Mitchell (1994) called into question the existence of originals and authorships in an overwhelming and uncontrolled number of copies available to the public or clones of life forms. According to them, original artifacts do not exist, and society is pervaded by devalued *simulacra,* i.e. manipulated copies that 'resemble' reality (Benjamin 1931, 1936; Price and Wells 2015, 25). According to Benjamin, the absence of originals leads specifically to the loss of an *aura of authenticity* (Berger 1972, 18-21; Price and Wells 2015, 18-20) in contemporary semiotic practices. If we were to compare photography with art, then, we would come to the conclusion that the former could never be original due to its *aspecific* and *ahistorical* status (Benjamin 1969, 2-3). Indeed, photography may be created in a specific context but, compared to artistic paintings – which find their place in exclusive, sometimes inaccessible locations – it may be decontextualized from the setting in which it was created and be used for a variety of contexts and purposes (Mitchell 1994).

This social process was boosted by technological advances, and it was stimulated by the capitalist desire for consumption and democratic possession for mere "exhibition

value" (Benjamin 1969, 8) in an emerging pictorial turn (Mitchell 1994). Similarly, photography may lack a fixed contextualization and the opportunity for real contact with the audience because of their need to be consumed by a wide range of individuals for profit purposes (Benjamin 1969, 10), leading to a sort of 'estrangement' or alienation. Then, one could argue that the repetitive, mechanical reproduction of *simulacra* achieved two opposite, yet related effects:

1) It made knowledge more accessible and reproducible;
2) It turned knowledge and signs into commodities to be consumed.

In other words, Benjamin succeeded in demonstrating that *authenticity* and *originality* is not a feature of postmodernist semiotic practices, due to the availability of widespread consumption of knowledge (*signs).* This process led to a situation where people became more informed and prone to discussing 'truths' and rejecting authorities, but it also created the desire for possession.

2.1.2.5 From accessibility to knowledge to the advertisement of social reality and needs

If we were to sum up the points made so far, we could say that postmodernism was (and is) a time in which the past, unchallenged beliefs started being questioned. In particular, individuals began to look critically at how institutions and social practices constructed knowledge and perpetrated selected versions of facts. Due to their nature as *simulacra,* these become commodities ready to be consumed but, more importantly, they become crucial to the shaping of the subjectivity of individuals in society (Price and Wells 2015, 67). This change of perspective is tackled also by sociological studies, which describe postmodern photographic practices as a continuation, or the long-term effect, of the *modern* way of seeing:

> "Our ways of seeing will be changed because we can observe the world from unfamiliar viewpoints, for instance, through a micro- scope, from the top of high buildings, from under the sea. Moreover, photography validated our experience of 'being there', which is not merely one of visiting an unfamiliar place, but of capturing the authentic experience of a strange place. Photographs are records and documents which pin down the changing world of appearance" (Price and Wells 2015, 21-22)

Therefore, the attempted response to the modern need for authenticity paradoxically led to an unwanted, if not opposite, effect, i.e. the absence of authenticity and

originality. It follows that postmodern, economic trends developed in such a way that they started assigning more importance to the mere perceptive, aesthetic *appearance* of visual content, in order to attract the attention of prospective customers who were flooded with offers. Indeed, as Benjamin would argue, the more there is for mere *exhibition*, the more it may be contextualized, or framed, and focused on the aesthetic, to stimulate desire for possession and to appear in a certain way to others (Benjamin 1969, 22).

2.1.2.6 Photography as new form of art in postmodern, capitalist times

The revolution brought about by the camera and photography caused not only an increase in production and individual accessibility to and use of visual products, but also the emergence of an awareness of how individual thinking is shaped by the surroundings and the social environment which, in turn, shapes visual practices. By focusing on the importance of *seeing* in postmodern times, and by drawing upon Benjamin's work, art critic John Berger critically reviewed the culture of commodity and appearance by arguing that:

> "It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world, we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it. The relationship between what we see and what we know is never settled" (Berger 1972, 7)

If seeing is the most meaningful act that characterizes human beings, it follows that records of visual perception and its subjective internalization may represent an essential and natural means to fix, convey and construct knowledge:

> "Images were first made to conjure up the appearances of something that was absent. Gradually it became evident that an image could outlast what it represented […] An image became a record of how X had seen Y. this was a result of an increasing consciousness of individuality" (Berger 1972, 10)

With regard to this phenomenon, Berger also argued that "The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe" (Berger 1972, 8). It would be logical to add at this point that the way we see things is affected by the way knowledge has been framed – visually and linguistically, i.e. semiotically – for us in our previous experience, and that this previous experience will affect the way we interpret and construct future knowledge for ourselves and others. In other words, the way we learn, interpret and internalize knowledge affects and frames our future reception of information. Since knowledge is conveyed through communication with others and the physical contact,

perception of external world, then imagery may be leveraged to resemble this bodily experience to construct, or stage particular representations of reality and convey them as authentic.

2.1.2.7 Photography as an aesthetic product for consumption: the need for exclusivity through appearance and possession

Berger succeeds in demonstrating the persuasive power of photography due to its *indexicality*[1] by focusing on promotional practices and their increasingly pervasive, ubiquitous use of imagery to convince customers to purchase goods. Building on Benjamin's arguments (Berger 1972, 34), Berger claims that postmodern imagery differs in terms of nature, meaning and role from paintings, even if the desire for possession of the feelings and ideologies they reproduce remains and is enhanced by capitalism (1972, 84-87, 142-143, 154). Indeed, although the feeling of exclusivity and superiority was evoked by paintings through their aura of authenticity and rare, original nature and positioning in a particular physical context, mass pictures could now reproduce and disseminate – at a pervasive level – symbols encoding lifestyles and social statuses of wealth that were taught by society to be *seen* as desirable and glamorous, or "envied"- which is different from "happiness", which does not depend on external judgement (Berger 1972, 132-133, 147, 24-33). Therefore, the desire to own an intrinsic value of authenticity, originality due to irreproducibility, was being replaced by a desire to appear as unique, especially due to the actual purchasing power to reproduce visually the same idea of exclusivity. And the ubiquitous nature of postmodern images not only represents a concrete means of pre-consumption of these socially driven desires, but it can also be easily manipulated, or 'packaged', according to context and medium, to achieve a specific aim, especially in advertising. This means that pictures, like language, cannot be produced and analyzed without having the context in mind, i.e. the communicative aim, the audience, and the channel (Price and Wells 2015, 43; Berger 1972, 18-19).

As discussed in sections 2.1.2.2 and 2.1.2.4, the desire for the exclusive and unique possession of goods or appearance became the breeding ground for the practice of consumerism and of "owning the means to purchase" which, in turn, was imbued with an additional aura of exclusivity. As a consequence, having the means to buy soon

[1] See sections 2.1.2.3-4 for additional insights into the notion of indexicality.

became the synonym for a social status of superiority, uniqueness and *display* of what one had (Berger 1972, 129-135). The act of seeing turned naturally into the most significant aspect of evidence checking and desiring.

In order to appeal directly to these social needs for exclusivity, status of wealth and possibilities, marketers needed to construct an 'embellished' visual representation of goods within real-life situations. Indeed, the appeal to direct experience only makes the advertisement of a product more realistic and genuine, made to actually help individuals live a better, aesthetically appealing and comfortable life (Berger 1972, 140-141). This act of mystification and alleged unmediated reality led individuals to be unconsciously affected by the standards, values, and promised effects of satisfaction and comfort shared by advertisements, causing an increased, passive need to own and display the objects embodying these values, and to show them to others. The trope of being defined by one's possessions, of "you are what you have" (Berger 1972, 139), is therefore perpetrated with a hint of nostalgia, as happened in previous centuries through paintings. Life is said to become better if we own some objects or purchase special experiences, but we must change and we must act in order to change our life, not "passively" buy products.

In other words, Berger shows how the postmodern, socio-semiotic practice of advertisement through visual appeal is the quintessential nature and logical consequence of modernism and capitalism, which will always work because it legitimates the work-driven, alluring way of *looking* at and evading reality through the illusionary power of financial means. This, in turn, stimulates inextricably the passive, often unconscious acceptance of the social and psychological impact of owning, displaying on individuals' everyday perception of frustrations and constraints.

If sections 2.1.2.3-2.1.2.7 showed an increasing focus on signs and imagery for their major role in legitimizing capitalism and consumerist practices through apparently unmediated and truthful but instead constructed, embellished version of reality, the last section will describe from a purely semiotic perspective the symbolic nature of imagery in the advertising of products.

2.1.2.8 Symbols with an aura of indexicality: the rise of advertisement in the mechanical reproduction of visual practices for consumption

The culture of commodity and appearance was also tackled by semiology scholars (Barthes 1977) and later semiotics (Messaris 1997) with different but complementary approaches depending on their epistemic stance on the ontology of visual means of communication (Bateman 2018). In particular, the communicative act of promotion was investigated from a linguistics-based perspective by Roland Barthes (1977). Starting from the assumption that postmodern signs – by being representations of commodities – are without intrinsic value and refer to social values and needs promoted by capitalism, he examined the role of context in *fixing* on purpose specific connotative meanings in pictures, particularly from a semiotic perspective, rather than a sociological or artistic one, thus enriching the understanding of the contemporary meaning-making processes.

Building on the Saussurean dichotomy of linguistic signs as well as Pierce's classification of signs in relation to their representation of real objects of reality[2] (Price and Wells 2015, 36; Culler 2002), Barthes argued that advertisements display mostly *symbolic* meanings rather than *indexical* or *iconic* ones, even if the use of photographs might hinder individuals' awareness of their highly encoded nature. In other words, promotional imagery and language do not rely merely on indexical meaning-making (such as the visual representation of smoke, or footprints, as evidence of the presence of fire or living beings) or iconic semiotic processes (a sign depicting the physical resemblance of some entity in external world, such as the picture of a dog), implying that advertisements' meaning cannot be grasped without its sociocultural context, due to their symbolic nature and distance from the represented objects in reality.

By studying printed advertisements in magazines and newspapers, Barthes developed his own theory of signs and formulated the following hypotheses:

1. Advertisements are assemblages of signs, i.e. *signifieds* (concepts, values) and *signifiers* (expression).
2. The *signified* (meaning) may be encoded by
    - different *signifiers* (via images or language), and
    - at different levels, (denotative or connotative) (1977, 33-35).

[2] A discussion of Peirce's view in relation to signs is provided in Chapter Three, which focuses on multimodality as a socio-semiotic and empirical approach to the analysis and understanding of multisemiotic forms of communication.

3. Each *signifier* might
    - encapsulate different *signifieds*
    - and create different relationships between semiotic resources according to the partitioning of meaning.

In essence, Barthes' seminal work led to a new insight into human acts of meaning creation in society, arguing that *signifieds* (concepts, views about external reality) do not have a one-to-one relationship with their *signifiers* (the means of expression), and may leverage different semiotic resources to convey more unambiguous (denotative) or symbolic meaning (connotative).
In other words, he attempted to explain how meaning may be *encoded* by advertisers through the assignment of particular concepts, values (the *signifieds*), to the visual representation and textual promotion of goods (the *signifiers*), also demonstrating how the intentional use of pictures as systems of signs with meaning potential may vary according to the purpose, the audience, and the channel, etc, i.e. the variables of context (1977, 32). Hence, in order to unravel the meaning of advertisements by decoding the *signified* which was encoded in the *signifier*, social and cultural structures of values and ideals, opinions needed to be investigated (Price and Wells 2015, 253, 43).

We may, indeed, notice here a potential correspondence with Hjelmslev's multilayered description of signs (1961), as well as Taverniers' discussion of grammatical metaphors and non-univocal relationships between expression and meaning as intrinsic to systems of codes (2003; 2019). We now will explore what these mean in relation to the example Barthes introduced in "The Rhetoric of the Image" (1977). In his analysis of the advertisement of Panzani pasta and tomato sauce[3] depicting the products in a half-open bag and surrounded by fresh vegetables, he identifies the *signifieds*, or the following coded messages (Table 2.1):

Signified	**Signifier**

[3] https://williamwolff.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Barthes-Rhetoric-of-the-image-ex.pdf; https://foodphotographycommunication.wordpress.com/2015/01/12/barthes-and-panzani/ (Last visit: 08/09/2022)

Freshness	**Visual**: the presence of vegetables and of a half-open bag
Authenticity and familiarity	**Visual**: the imagination of the context in which the bag is opened (the kitchen of one's home, for the preparation of a homemade meal) **Linguistic**: the name of the Italian brand. The correspondence between the language used and the origins of the product
Italianicity	**Visual**: the presence of pasta (a typical Italian product) and tomato sauce, the presence of the colors of the Italian flag in the photograph Linguistic: the brand
Comfort of provision of service	**Visual**: the idea that everything is arranged for cooking
Pureness of natural environment	**Visual**: the presence of raw vegetables, which also index the content of the tin

Table 2.1: List of signifiers and signifieds identified by Barthes in "The rhetoric of the Image" (1977)

Therefore, *signifiers* and *signifieds* are combined and constructed through the combination of multiple semiotic resources that fit a particular communicative purpose. This semiotic process shapes the coded (or *connoted*) iconic message of photographs, which feature also the *denotative* meaning (i.e. the natural, unfiltered representation of objects, Barthes 1977, 42-44) and the *linguistic* message. These three meanings intertwine and shape different relationships between language and imagery, according to their overall role in the multisemiotic artifact. Language may fulfill one of these functions:

1) *anchorage* – when the linguistic message is denotative and descriptive or illustrative (as in Figure 2.2);
2) *relay* – when the linguistic message fixes the potentially polysemous meaning of the image to construct and guide the interpretation (Barthes 1977, 47-50). Examples of this may include the visual representation of an event or subject without a clear focus on the goods or service promoted.

By unveiling the complexity of semiotic processes intrinsic to imagery in postmodern practices, Barthes succeeds in showing how photography does not only feature

denotative meaning and is not a subordinate means of meaning creation. Denoted meaning seems to permeate imagery and is what makes photographs seem innocent, because of their apparent status as mere index of reality that reproduces an alleged unmediated representation of it. Additionally, they relate directly to bodily and perceptive experience, which is shared by any human being.

Barthes' view may be considered to be partly in line with hypotheses advanced by semioticians such as Messaris (1997), who sees images as intrinsically iconic and indexical for their resemblance to or for being evidence of events and objects in real life experience. However, compared to linguistics-based traditions, as remarked also by Scott (1994, 252-260), Messaris believes that visual meaning may be grasped and affect individuals *primarily* for its resemblance to its object in reality, and not for its symbolic status, which is only characteristic of language. In other words, imagery's persuasive power resides in its iconic nature, which allows images to be understood without any conventions or learning process; in this sense, they may be used to elicit previously experienced emotions and responses to events in society in a way that influences memory and evaluation faster compared to language (Hodel 1998), simultaneously reducing information processing burden. Other scholars support this view (Liu 1986; McQuarrie and Mick 1999) and argue that imagery has a stronger emotional impact on individuals and generates pleasure because of its iconic nature and its impossibility of forming strings of symbols, or words, that need to be decoded. For Mitchell (1994), particularly, images are primarily iconological units, i.e. 'emotional' signifieds, 'coded resemblances' that are evoked by a physical signifier, or material support, which is perceived and cannot be arbitrary.

In conclusion, we may argue that most semioticians agree on the persuasive nature of imagery due to its 'connotative plane'; however, for some scholars, that is due mainly to its materiality or iconicity, which is perceived without any preconceptions because of physical and perceptual experience of analogous objects in external reality; for others, the symbolic meaning attached through social practices is what makes a visual sign meaningful (Bateman 2018). As will be shown in Chapter Three, this distinction has some implications in terms of analysis of visual meaning from a methodological perspective. Indeed, considering images to be meaningful signs first for their iconicity and then for their potentially symbolic nature may lead to a scientific and impartial understanding of visual knowledge construction through a process of abduction from

the materialities of signs rather than simple and untested deduction from socially attached meanings.

Nevertheless, Barthes' pioneering work on multisemiotic, persuasive communication may be seen as a confirmation of the shift from the modern search for (and illusion of) *realism* in photography to the postmodern attempt to understand its sociocultural, occasionally fixed role in humans' subjective creation and interpretation of meaning, knowledge. Indeed, it is the unnoticed, not easily traceable attaching of socioculturally established assemblages of meaning for a specific purpose and through particular means (both semiotic and technological) that assigns a particular encoded message to a sign, and which makes the whole message persuasive. Using Barthes' words, it is the "syntagm" of denotators that creates connotation with a 'naturalized' essence and subtle discourse (Barthes 1977, 50-51).

2.1.2.9 Conclusion

These sections showed how technological advances facilitated the emergence of the visual practice of photography as well as socio-economic and ideological changes which, in turn, contributed to changing the nature and role of photography. Indeed, photography became, after the Industrial Revolution, a tool to perpetrate consumerism and the social needs promoted by capitalism through aesthetically appealing representation of real-life events and products. This not only fostered passivity to the reception of these values and signs, but it was also a key element, contributing to the ensuing epistemological crisis, for it supplied individuals with a series of allegedly unmediated 'truths' and accurate social representations that were presented as the key to satisfaction and happiness. This ideological and epistemological turn was amplified by the spread of mass media such as television and radio and later digital media. These two technological shifts will be introduced in the following sections (2.2 and 2.3); in particular, the third technological shift will be accompanied by a detailed reflection on the implications of (digital) media in terms of agency and socio-semiotic creativity.

2.2 Mass media: the narcotic effects of visual spectacularization and commodification

If the philosophical and semiotic perspectives presented in section 2.1 showed how visual means became an essential tool for the perpetration and legitimation of capitalism and consumerism in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the second half of the 20th century witnessed another major technological shift that presented the opportunity to promote capitalist ideology at a wider level through mass media and television.

Indeed, the development of mass media technology represented a ground-breaking innovation in the field of communication and transmission of information, because it allowed us to disseminate and share knowledge about facts and views, opinions on a large scale and mostly visually (Sorlin 2013). Examples of mass media include print media (such as newspapers and magazines) and electronic media (such as television, radio). From a technical perspective, mass transmission allowed for unidirectional flows of homogenous messages to anonymous masses, thus enabling businesses to reach a potentially infinite audience of prospective customers. New theories regarding the spread of technology and mass accessibility to media and capitalist-based genres of communication (such as advertisement) emerged, for sociologists began questioning the role of mass media in the reception of knowledge. Particularly, they expressed concerns about the implications such technological advances would imply for the perception of information and communication, i.e. their effects on social behavior and practices. Among them, we may mention McLuhan, who played a major role in redefining the theories and epistemological stance of mass media information, through his seminal work "Understanding Media" (1964, 1994), which will be introduced and discussed in the following sections. More specifically, section 2.2.1 will describe McLuhan's sociological interpretation of mass media, including their effects on knowledge reception and social behavior; section 2.2.2 will introduce McLuhan's taxonomy of media and the potential of 'media ecology' to predict future communicative trends by taking into consideration the social context; finally, section 2.2.3 will draw some conclusions and question the active role of individuals in the 'consumption' of mass media content. This section will bridge the gap between post-industrial, capitalist times and mass consumerism; it will also pave the way for the introduction of contemporary communicative trends and the rise of ubiquitous,

accessible production, promotion and consumption of digital visual content for personal and business profit.

2.2.1 Mass media communication: "the medium is the message"

McLuhan was the first sociologist who focused on the impact of mass media communication on our view of reality and internalization, or the dissemination of knowledge. McLuhan's theories have been the subject of debates over the decades which offer different stances. While for some he was considered a luminary who, through his ideas, predicted and justified the arrival of digital and social media – a scholar who was misunderstood for his precociousness (Levinson 2004, 3), as sometimes only "rear-view mirrors" can help us look critically at past developments, Levinson 2004, 14) – others think that he was too ambiguous and non-scientific in his writing. Indeed, he preferred to provide evidence for his hypotheses via metaphorical language and short paragraphs rather than logical arguments and extensive, detailed reports and discussions (Levinson 2004, 4). The majority of critical stances concern his view of the relationship between content and medium and his famous quote "the medium is the message" (McLuhan 1964, 7; Strate 2008, 130).

According to Levinson, one of his former students and then colleagues, McLuhan was indeed interested in the relationship between the reception of information and the type of medium which was used to frame and convey information (Levinson 2004, 1). Basically, McLuhan's aim was to investigate the role of a specific medium in the construction and reception of knowledge, by asking himself questions such as: "[…] how is reading the news different from hearing it on radio, and how is that in turn different from watching it on TV?" (Levinson 2004, 1; McLuhan 1994, 308-337).

With such interrogatives, McLuhan aimed to stress the importance of thinking critically about media communication when conducting life in society and constructing one's version of it. For these reasons, he argued that the use of a medium may not only impact individuals' understanding of information, but it can also shape new practices of content representation and aims (McLuhan 1994, 62-76; Levinson 2004, 4). "There is no such thing as a medium without content" claims Levinson when attempting to explain the novelty of McLuhan's ideas (2004, 4); indeed, he considers media to be more than the product of technological advances, or an assemblage of electric light and cables. They are not mere physical means for the automatic transmission of

information. They become truly media when they are observed not only from a technical perspective, but also from a sociologically relevant one; this may facilitate the understanding of the ways in which they exert influence on their audience during content streaming (McLuhan 1994, 7-21, 355; Levinson 2004, 5). In other words, the *process* of using a medium (watching television, listening to the radio) has a greater impact on our lives than the *content* of any broadcast program, which is only a piece of meat "carried by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind" (McLuhan 1964, 32; Levinson 2004, 35). Put succinctly, the *how* and *why* we use media are more impactful than the *what*.

In an attempt to support McLuhan's ideas and refute negative stances, Strate, whose focus was communication, makes a comparison between media and weapons from the viewpoint of their role in promoting certain behaviors. Indeed, he mentions the U.S. National Rifle Association slogan "guns don't kill people, people do" to argue successively that the mere presence of guns increases the potential for violence, as confirmed by research[4] (Strate 2008, 130). The same may be said about media. Indeed, content cannot exist and be shaped, disseminated, without a channel. Also, for McLuhan the medium is the content because the content is manipulated to fit the medium and the overall context, i.e. the audience' s interpretation and the communicative aim (Strate 2008, 132).

2.2.2 Mass media: an introduction to McLuhan's taxonomy

McLuhan was the first scholar to propose a taxonomy of the media in terms of how it engaged with individuals' mentalities and the types of effects it has (McLuhan 1994, 21-32). In particular, he classified media as either *hot* or *cool*. According to Levinson, McLuhan developed his concepts of *hot* and *cool* media by drawing upon jazz terminology (my emphasis):

> "McLuhan's invocation of hot and cool derived from jazz slang for brassy, big band music that overpowers and **intoxicates the soul (hot)** versus wispy, tinkly sketches of sound that **intrigue and seduce the psyche (cool)**. The brassiness of the big hot band bounces off us, knocks us out—we neither embrace it nor are immersed in it—in contrast to the cool tones that breeze through us and bid our senses to follow like the Pied Piper. McLuhan's first full-blown presentation of this dichotomy and its application to communications media appears in *Understanding Media* (1964), which builds upon his discussion of **HD (high definition) versus LD (low definition)** media in his 1960 typescript "Report on Project in Understanding New Media." His idea was that **hot media have loud, bright, high-**

[4] One such example is provided by the Harvard Injury Control Research Center, https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/hicrc/firearms-research/guns-and-death/. (Last visit: 31/01/2023)

profile deliveries of information that accost and sweep over our soon satiated senses, in contrast to cool media whose blurry, soft, low-profile demeanors invite our involvement to complete or bring to life the quiet evening" (Levinson 2004, 106)

In other words, McLuhan argued the following:

1) bright, high definition, fixed as well as loud media (also referred to as *light on*, *hot* media, such as photographs or radio) evoke less involvement, as they 'intoxicate' the soul and satiate the senses;
2) soft, blurred and non-fixed representations such as TVs, which are "light through" (Levinson 2014, 101), intrigue and seduce the mind of the viewer, and stimulate more involvement for the presence of the need to understand and keep up with the narrative (McLuhan 1994, 308-318).

In McLuhan's view, the intensity, clarity, as well as the physical use and affordances of each medium govern social behavior (Levinson 2004, 9) by having a specific impact on our senses at different levels. This raises questions about the degree of agency of individuals when using media – and seeing images, as discussed by Berger in the analysis of advertisements – which will be introduced in the following section (2.2.3) and later in 2.3, when discussing agency and passivity in digital communication and proposing a taxonomy of digital media (section 2.3.2).

Indeed, with his taxonomy McLuhan provided the tools for critical thinking about current and future development of media. This may be fostered by answering four main questions on any media and its impact, or tetrad (my emphasis):

"What does it enhance or amplify in the culture? What does it obsolesce or push out of prominence? What does it retrieve from the past, from the realm of the previously obsolesced? And—and here the tetrad projects into the future—**what does the medium reverse or flip into when it reaches the limits of its potential?** Radio, for example, enhanced oral communication across great distances; obsolesced aspects of written communication, such as the newspaper as the leading edge of news delivery; retrieved some of the prominence of oral communication from pre-literate times; and reversed into broadcasts of sounds and images—television. The new medium can in turn be similarly examined. Television enhances instant visual long-distance communication; obsolesces aspects of sound-only radio, whose serials and soap operas moved to TV; retrieves some of the visual elements that radio had obsolesced, such as the cartoon […]" (Levinson 2004, 16)

All of these implications are in line with current approaches to media which will be discussed in section 2.3.3 (Bateman 2014a), which see the medium's affordances and practices, its communicative aims and audience as variables paramount to effective meaning transfer. In other words, McLuhan's media ecology (Levinson 2000) is the

study of the environment in which information is shaped, including the semiotic resources adopted to create and convey a particular meaning with specific medium affordances to a particular audience and for a specific purpose (Islas 2016). Therefore, McLuhan's theory is a socio-semiotic approach to the study of communication, and not a mere taxonomy of media; additionally, by analyzing the development and transformation of media (through his 4 tedrads), one may understand better current social practices and predict their future developments (Islas 85).

As Strate (2008) argued, "McLuhan's goal was the liberation of the human mind and spirit from its subjugation to symbol systems, media, and technologies" (130), thus confirming a sociological as well as semiotic interest in the affordances and nature of technological advances and their impact on human lives.

2.2.3 Conclusion: the question of agency and receptive engagement as new way of 'living'

A final point made by the literature in an attempt to rebut other criticism concern McLuhan's determinism and his idea that media and the automated transmission of information have dulling and narcotic effects on people, making them subject to passivity and alienation (Islas 2016, 88; McLuhan 1994, 4-6, 346-359). Indeed, scholars have divergent opinions about the alleged coolness and degree of involvement of mass media, based on one-to-many information systems (Stearn 1967; Rosenthal 1968; Blisset 1058; Morrow 1980; Bliss 1988).

Levinson, for example, claims that media do not have overwhelming powers that neutralize or affect completely individuals' choices and intentions, especially because their effects are temporary (185). Yet, thinking and social behavior are inextricably connected to the context, and the more we are exposed to some influence, the more we are prone to be influenced by it in the long term (Strate 2008, 133). Other scholars, conversely, wish to refute determinism by arguing that it is not true that the laws of the media do not account for the influence of institutions and subjective experience. Indeed, it is the other way around: subject agency is present and is shaped partly by the media; by studying the media, one may understand how technology is used by individuals to extend, retrieve, negate, reconfigure relationships in society and act with more awareness in socially constructed representations of reality (Grosswiler 2010).

In conclusion, it may be argued that McLuhan's work paved the way for the development of critical thinking (as opposed to passive compliance) in understanding the effects of media, by taking into consideration not only their technical affordances due to technological advances but also their sociological implications and reasons. The next section (2.3) will conclude this chapter on media, society and semiotics by exploring the social effects of the advent of the Internet on individuals' and businesses' ideological positioning and consumerist behavior (2.3.1); it will also include a section on the notion of agency in postmodern, digital times (2.3.2), also exploring the reasons behind the semiotic shift towards image-centricity in the XXI century and investigating new trends of meaning creation (2.3.3).

This chapter, together with Chapter One, will finalize our understanding of the importance of the socio-discursive context and semiotic choices (as described in Chapter One through the notion of genre, register, metafunctions and lexicogrammar in SFL) in the analysis of the complex, socio-semiotic orchestration for consumerism and profitability of contemporary tourism, multi-semiotic practices. Indeed, while Chapter Three of the literature review will be devoted to the description of the most recent and SFL-based approach to communication, i.e. multimodality, the final chapter will review the history and trends of tourism narratives from a linguistic, discursive and multimodal perspective. This will allow us to introduce, in Chapter Five, the theoretical, methodological and analytical tools adopted to carry out the corpus analysis of contemporary tourism narratives in the digital sphere.

2.3 Digital communication

The final section of this chapter will introduce the third technological shift that impacted the spread, nature and use of visual communication in society. The chapter will open with a section on the advent of Internet and Web 1.0, 2.0 (section 2.3.1), which will allow for a discussion of economic and sociological implications in terms of postmodern capitalist needs and fulfilment of those needs on digital platforms (sections 2.3.1.2 and 2.3.1.2, respectively). After drawing some preliminary conclusions (section 2.3.1.3), some attention will be devoted to the impact that both media and discourse have on individuals' agency, particularly in terms of ubiquitous and immediate production and consumption of content (section 2.3.2). This section will start with an introduction to the definition of agency (2.3.2.1) and move to the

discussions of the advantages and disadvantages that digital communication offers, ranging from the question of hyper-engagement (2.3.2.2) to the role of cybersituations (2.3.2.3), and ending with some reflections on the role of language and imagery in challenging social constructs both digitally and in real life (2.3.2.4-2.3.2.5). Section 2.3 will end with some insights into the participatory use and semiotic creativity that are characterizing the current century (2.3.3). Here, a brief discussion on the nature of text as fragmented entity of interconnected, multisemiotic units will be provided (2.3.3.1); this will pave the way for a review of emerging trends of text-image relations, including the contemporary semiotic shift towards image-centricity (2.3.3.2) and the phenomenon of *meaning multiplication* (2.3.3.3). Finally, sections 2.3.3.4-2.3.3.5 will shed light on the nature of contemporary digital imagery and conclude this chapter. This section will be crucial to the advancement of the hypothesis that current communicative events are pervaded by text-image relations in which imagery has a 'superordinate' role in impacting our perception of reality.

2.3.1 The advent of the Web and digital communication: pervasive consumption of visual representations of reality

The development of new technologies of communication and information, or ICTs (particular the computer and the Internet) and the consequent spread of Web 2.0 and social networks have affected social interaction and information creation and sharing considerably (Garrigos-Simon et al. 2012). For this reason, scholars working in a variety of fields such as media studies, linguistics and semiotics have shifted their attention to the analysis of communication in the digital sphere, exploring the nature of and the reasons behind online communication, and defining it as a set of semiotic practices, which have been established and disseminated as a response to particular socio-economic needs (Herring 2013; Thurlow 2013; Jones et al. 2013; Stöckl et al. 2019; Bateman 2014a; Manovich 2017).

The first 'version' of Web technologies, which spread in the last decade of the 20th century, simply enabled the transfer of content from traditional mass media, such as newspapers or magazines, encyclopedias and dictionaries, to online pages (Herring 2013, 3). Conceived as a private network for the exchange of encrypted information for military purposes, the Internet and its potentialities were leveraged and expanded to extend the access to online networks and information sharing to a wider public. The

phenomenon of Web 1.0 represented the first major transition of communication to the digital environment, keeping, however, the main functions and design of traditional media, such as static content and unidirectional dissemination of homogeneous messages to an indefinite mass of people. Conversely, the phenomenon of 2.0 Web ICTs led to a profound change in how information was created, edited, shared, disseminated and read (Gretzel and Yoo 2014). Indeed, new genres emerged from the combination of new semiotic and technological possibilities. Informal and personal blogging, collaborative participation in creating and editing online encyclopedias – such as Wikipedia – and the sharing of visual or multisemiotic content are an example (Herring 2013). Towards the end of the 20th century, attention shifted even further to the social sphere of the digital environment and revolutionized the way people communicate. Indeed, facilitated and real time interaction among individuals became the key aspect of digital communication, and increased the focus on human cooperation (Fuchs et al. 2010). This shift, in particular, occurred when the increasing amount of online activity for the creation, editing, and sharing of content

Social Media and online interaction came about as the direct and logical consequence of the information technology evolution; however, they soon became an outlet for the perpetration and fulfillment of increasingly pressing business and individual purposes. As we have seen in section 2.1 and 2.2, capitalism and the epistemological crisis were 'able' to spread thanks to the Industrial revolution, which led to the mass production of products to be sold; however, the availability of products and the increasing focus on the purchasing power of individuals created the social need to work which, in turn, created the need to feel less alienated in one's own work life and to consume in order to obtain apparent satisfaction and a social status – which were based merely on external validation through aesthetic appearance and possession.

For these reasons, sharing perspectives, life events and social status with a wide range of individuals and instantaneously made social media the perfect tool to obtain satisfaction and external validation, and to easily design a new version of one's own life (Safko and Brake 2009; Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). These digital practices have become so widespread that almost 5 billion people use social media today, and Instagram is among the 5 most used social media networks[5]. If online activity in Web

[5] https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-july-global-statshot (Last visit: 31/01/2023)

2.0 may be used by individuals to create 'new realities' and 'controlled' identities only with a computer and an internet connection, it may also be monitored by technologies, which share targeted content with specific customers based on their activity on the web, eventually persuading them to purchase a product or service (Garrigos-Simon et al. 2012). The presence of rich online activity is confirmed by the statistics on online search behaviors provided in Figure 2.1. In essence, most individuals use Internet and social media to perform specific activities and fulfill particular social desires, including traditional ones such as searching for news content and information (with 82% people using today digital content as their news source, compared to 24% who resort to print sources[6]) and new ones such as staying in contact with friends and family and finding inspiration for new activities[7].

This brief discussion on online communication has hopefully served the purpose of illustrating briefly the complexity of the nature of contemporary socio-economic interactions. Sections 2.3.1.1 and 2.3.1.2 will explore the questions as to how and why particular socio-economic practices are carried out and negotiated on the web daily.

2.3.1.1 Economic needs in the digital era: planned serendipity

As briefly mentioned in the previous section, online communication is designed by both entrepreneurs and users to construct new realities, identities and relationships (Thurlow 2013; West and Trester 2013). Companies may build their own online identity by creating a social media profile; this, in turn, allows them to track the reactions of their followers – whether it is viewing, liking, commenting, or sharing – and change their content accordingly. The promotion of this practice as something incidental and as an interaction "without an agenda"– introduced to help customers express their ideas – was defined by Saker and Frith *planned serendipity* (2018). As a product of capitalism, planned serendipity is designed on purpose to track customers' reactions and control their behavior, turning communication into a product itself (Thurlow 2013, 227-231). The idea that by liking, commenting, sharing opinions and locations individuals would be considered 'social', accepted, and part of a community was disseminated in order to trace consumers' attitudes, preferences and manipulate

[6] https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-july-global-statshot (Last visit: 31/01/2023)
[7] https://influencermarketinghub.com/ebooks/SMM_BENCHMARK_REPORT_2022.pdf (Last visit: 31/01/2023)

their perception and emotions to generate business profits. Indeed, any kind of social media activity – be it clicks, likes, comments, visualizations, posts or hashtags – is traceable by social network algorithms, which help companies analyze their consumers' attitudes and preferences and adapt their content to them. Furthermore, all these activities boost the image and the visibility of a company, leading to the generation of new leads or purchases. By promoting online conversation and engagement through its aura of casual, friendly and accessible interaction, companies often succeed in convincing prospective customers of the credibility of their brand and of the positive representations, descriptions and benefits of their products (Jones et al. 2015; Thurlow 2013).

2.3.1.2 Social needs in the digital era: aesthetics for facework

In the online environment, products are marketed as the necessary means of achieving particular social status by *owning* particular attributes or *performing* particular actions that they can *share* with others, that are there for others to *see, admire, notice*. This is why perfumes are sold for their power to make people sexy and desired, or why creams and beauty care make women eternally young and aesthetically appealing. Or again, this explains why the latest smartphones always enable the performance of additional, exclusive activities, including high-quality photography.

The need to be in control of one's own image and actions and to show exclusive possession of particular features has always characterized human society and interaction (Brown et al. 1987). As Goffman argued in his seminal work "On Face-Work" (1955), people present a "facework", i.e. "an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes" (Goffman 1955, 5) every time they perform a social act of communication. This event is constructed through "the pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which [the speaker] expresses his view of the situation and... his evaluation of the participants, especially himself" (Goffman 1955, 213).

Brown and Levinson (1987) developed this idea further and claimed that everyone can accomplish both positive and negative face. While the former is adopted in order to be accepted and liked by society, the latter fulfils a desire to feel free from social obligations, and may result in a *face-threatening act* (FTA). FTAs are practices against others' positive facework; they are performed through the exercise of power or disrespect for others (West and Trester 134- 136). According to West and Trester

(2013), Barton (2013) and Lee (2013), social media (such as Facebook, Flickr, Instagram, TikTok) perform and accomplish facework every day. According to the 2022 *Instagram Engagement Report,* Instagram is one of the most popular platforms for the sharing of visual content[8], with emerging trends of image carousels and videos capturing natural environments and travel experiences[9]. Like Flickr, Instagram is a social network, which focuses mainly on *positive* facework, accomplished by sharing purely visual content that may be discovered through hashtagging. Indeed, content on Instagram cannot be disseminated without sharing visual content – either via temporary stories or via posts –, whereas written captions are an option. The order of visualization of the content in the followers' newsfeed varies according to each follower's preferences, which are detected by the social network algorithm (Fatanti and Suyadnya 2015; Huey and Yazdanifard 2014). In this process, facework is accomplished when one's personal posts appear in followers' newsfeeds. Indeed, they provide other people with staged, designed visual representations of particular moments, *situations*, and subjective perspectives of a person's life, and they are used to share particular attitudes, attributes, or assumptions about that person's life experiences. In other words, they are a 'packaging' of *subjective* self-promotive content, which is shared as the 'only' possible view of an event, and which increases visibility thanks to the commodification, or visual embellishment of its content (Berger 1972). By posting or sharing in the story pictures that depict a perfect landscape, a perfect couple, or simply a smiling person in good shape, individuals try to construct and 'market' their identity and social status (Mahay 2013, 86); they negotiate a particular facework in order to secure external validation and acceptance by others, thus creating also affiliations and ingroup identifications (West and Trester 2013; Zappavigna 2012, 2018).

Additionally, the social practice of hashtagging – in which keywords are attached as labels to visual content for other online users to find and engage with (Barton 2013, 51). – suggests that social interaction may be quantified and turned into a commodity,

[8] https://influencermarketinghub.com/ebooks/SMM_BENCHMARK_REPORT_2022.pdf (Last visit: 31/01/2023)

[9]Link to the report: https://www.hubspot.com/hubfs/Instagram_Engagement_Report_2022_CXD_V2.pdf?hubs_signup-url=offers.hubspot.com%252Finstagram-engagement-report&hubs_signup-cta=Download%2520Now&hubs_offer=offers.hubspot.com%252Finstagram-engagement-report&_ga=2.62616623.243981324.1663221408-83978286.1663221408 (Last visit: 31/01/2023)

or source of income, by any kind of user: indeed, the more engagement a content receives, the more visible it becomes in searches (Barton 2013, 56), consequently resulting in an increased number of visits to particular profiles.

2.3.1.3 Conclusion

The *staged* authenticity and spontaneity which is designed in business-to-consumer (B2C) and consumer-to-consumer (C2C) digital interactions through the careful orchestration of visually appealing content raises a series of concerns about the degree of influence digital content may have on individuals' perception of reality and their agency. The following section attempts to discuss these issues by providing some insights into the notion of agency and involvement from a multidisciplinary perspective. Indeed, section 2.3.2 will bring together the theories developed by philosophy (Marx 1978; Debord 1967; Plant 1992), discourse and linguistic studies (Ahearn 2001; Foucault 1978; Urban 1991; Bakhtin 1981) sociology (Strate 2008; Islas 2016; Levinson 2004; Grosswiler 2010) and anthropology (Ortner 1989; Giddens 1979; Sztompka 1994; Bourdieu 1991). It will be a key contribution to the critical reflection on the actual role individuals may play in reproducing or changing particular representations and social values; indeed, it will explore whether and how individuals may challenge the epistemological crisis that is increasingly defining a society pervaded by attractive, evocative and apparently umediated content provided for the consumption of some and the profit of others.

2.3.2 Agency before and in the digital sphere

The concept of *agency* has been an object of study in different fields of scholarly research, including philosophy, linguistics, and sociology. To begin with some interesting contributions to this matter are surveyed by linguist and anthropologist Ahearn in "Language and Agency" (2001). In this paper she investigates the existence of agency in human society and behavior and individuals' degree of passivity and receptivity (or active elaboration) in terms of receptivity and internalization of information. She does so by analyzing the role of institutions and communication in the perpetration of particular interpretations of events, shedding light on the possibility or impossibility of individuals changing institutions and established practices by rejecting the same narratives that shape society (2001, 111).

2.3.2.1 A definition

In order to improve the understanding of this phenomenon, the author attempts first to provide a definition of agency. She believes that the possibility of assigning to social individuals the attribute of agents depends on the interpretation of the concept of agency. If agency were considered to be a synonym of *free will*, i.e a fully independent action, then agency in society would not exist (Ahearn 2001, 114-115). Indeed, individuals are 'constrained' by the rules and views imposed on them by society from birth, and they often act upon the reception and internalization of external events or stimuli, the interpretation of which is already provided by society and others. This process leads them to acquire knowledge and be affected by it without questioning it (Ahearn 2001, 116-117; Foucault 1978, 93-95).

In other words, as individuals live in a society, it is difficult to understand to what extent we act depending on what we have experienced in the past and still experience in the present, in terms of internal and external stimuli, including in particular other individuals' actions. This is especially true of institutions such as schools and political organizations, which serve the purpose of imparting and perpetrating beliefs, attitudes that have developed over time in a society (Ahearn 2001, 109-113). This notion can be developed further by considering Foucault's notion of discourse and use of language for ideological positioning (Foucault 1978). In his view, language is used to establish and perpetrate relationships of power that make individuals accept roles, teachings, and opinions on reality passively. According to this position, agency cannot exist, and language would seem to be useful only to remain 'passive' and conform to standards and norms which are pre-established.

In this regard, media plays an important role, for they are the tools through which discourse or certain dominant narratives are conveyed, perpetrated as well as justified. For example, news programs on events happening in the world are streamed through television; nowadays, political figures may post their opinions on Twitter and Instagram through their personal accounts, which have become official spaces for the sharing of views which are supposedly not mediated by any institutional power. Additionally, the type of media may reinforce the notion of passivity. For example, one-to-many traditional media such as television or radio do not allow for a response from the recipient(s) of the message, ruling out any possibility of response on the part of the recipient of the message.

So far, we have acknowledged the importance of two variables that inevitably affect our reception of information, whether we choose to react to it or not: the variable of media and that of discourse. In terms of discourse, capitalist ideology was a product of the Industrial revolution that, thanks to globalization and the dominance of market laws and monetary power in every sphere of society, has continued to spread in the western world. If we consider Marxist theory and in particular, from the discussion in "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte", we may gain additional insight into this debate:

> "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living" (Marx 1978, 595).

Therefore, the existence of certain mechanisms or narratives in a society cannot be said to be *only* a consequence of *passive reception* by individuals, as these grow up in a society, which is already in flux, and are affected by it throughout their whole lives, especially before being able to develop critical awareness of it. Individuals may *create* new aspects in society and preconfigured circumstances by *actively* playing a role in it, not by only being compliant with everything they learn about or experience in their life.

In this regard, Practice theory (Ortner 1989; Giddens 1979) offers a clearer perspective with which this seemingly paradoxical phenomenon can be tackled. Ortner (1984, 1989, 1996) defines practice theory as a "a theory of the relationship between the structures of society and culture on the one hand and the nature of human action on the other" (1989, 11). Society influences action and agency; therefore, human action and the same notion of agency cannot be considered "in isolation from the social structures that shape them" (Ahearn 2001, 117). Giddens enriches this debate about agency and structure by arguing that social structures are those which enable social action; therefore, it seems impossible to bring about social change without reproducing, recreating or reinforcing those social structures. In order to find a solution to this conundrum, a distinction between praxis and agency is made (Giddens 1979, 56; Sztompka 1994). While agency is the potential for action or the socioculturally mediated ability to act of each social individual, praxis is the actualization of agency and may reshape and, in time, change it (Sztompka 1994, 276).

Sociologist Bordieau adds that this phenomenon may lead to change when praxis is turned into a habitus, a generative process in which the production of practices and representations conditioned by structures generates a number of possible perceptions, interpretation, internalizations and actions which are imbued with socially and culturally constructed meanings, but which can recreate or challenge these meanings. Individuals are predisposed to think, behave in a way that reproduces existing narratives – of inequalities, or capitalism –; nonetheless, they can resist and change those narratives. This leads to the following question: how may individuals *challenge* culturally constructed meanings through socially mediated actions? May they leverage the opportunities offered by the digital world?

2.3.2.2 Hyper-engagement in the digital sphere as passivity? Revising McLuhan's taxonomy

If one takes into consideration contemporary media and social media, one can notice how the ubiquitous and synchronous sharing of content, as well as individuals' interaction with it, seems to encourage a greater degree of involvement. Supposed activity and involvement have increased at a pace which has never before been seen, as underlined by Levinson:

> "Online communication—e-mail, group discussions, digital text in cyberspace—is by all standards the most fully interactive medium in history, and much more ephemeral, sketchy, wide-ranging, fast-moving than print fixed on any paper. Online text thus seems cool to the point of approaching Kelvin's zero. " (Levinson 2004, 107)

However, the actual nature of these phenomena needs to be evaluated in terms of their actual degree of free, 'unconstrained' creativity in the design of pre-packaged, shared, semiotic actions (such as likes, sharing possibilities). Also, the influence of affordances such as instantaneity, a-synchronicity and richness needs to be taken into consideration when attempting to understand how interpretations of communicative events are framed (Levinson 2004, 39). Thus, it remains to question to what extent alleged involvement may be simply a product of new practices of consumerism that make individuals addicted to the 'easy' interactivity, accessibility and pervasiveness of the digital world without being aware of how they themselves take part in it. In this sense, the increasing availability of content and possibility of creation of meaning have led individuals to devote less time and cognitive effort to content, pushing them to discard

accurate and rational evaluation of the semiotic orchestrations they encounter online and the way they approach content from a productive to consumptive perspective (Levinson 2004, 38).

If we look at McLuhan's classification of hot and cool media, we may find some reasons behind the desire to take part in the social media world without developing critical awareness of how to change particular narratives, especially in the physical world. Social media may be defined as the perfect blending space of hot, intoxicating 'light on' media (such as static visual content) and cool, engaging 'light through' media (such as moving visual content) (Levinson 2004, 10). For this reason, online photography may be categorized as a hot medium, which stimulates irrational response with a lower degree of involvement for its ability to shock and seduce the viewer; however, by being a 'light on' medium encapsulated in a 'light through' screen (the computer) and in an interactive digital environment, online visual content may push viewers to perform *passive* actions based on impulse and without too much questioning, just for the need to connect through this portal into an imaginary world, i.e. the Internet (Levinson 2004, 101, 103). This is why social media have become the perfect breeding ground especially for such type of 'uninvolving' hyper-engagement and high degree of digital interactivity which translates into passivity in the real world. Conversely, TV - a type of cool, traditional, one-to-many media – might seem to invite the viewers to engage more because they are "stimulated to participate by a medium that does not permit it" (Levinson 2004, 112). In this sense, social media cannot be cool; however, the kind of engagement they afford is impersonal – similar to one-to-many media – and individuals' interest in potentially more personal agency may arise when associated with electronic text, a cool medium for its high degree of interactivity. Therefore, the interplay between photography (*hot*) and online text (*cool*) in a cool medium (social media in a light through screen) may lead viewers to engage passively at a maximum level, thus representing the perfect means of promotional communication and persuasion.

If prolonged exposition to certain views and narratives through digital media shapes subjective experience and indirectly affects social behavior (Strate 2008, 133), this does not make people entirely subject to narcotic effects (Islas 2016, 88), and it does not neutralize individuals' choices and intentions (Levinson 2004, 185); indeed, this depends on their reactions as well. As mentioned in section 2.2.3, individuals' agency

is shaped only partly by the media; by studying media and communication practices, one becomes aware of how technology is leveraged by individuals to perpetrate and reproduce views, to reconfigure relationships in society and act with more awareness in socially constructed representations of reality (Grosswiler 2010).

2.3.2.3 Agency in the digital age: do cybersituations hinder agency in real life?

The possibility of 'intoxication' and 'dullness' when watching and reacting to ubiquitous and pervasive online content in the current digital sphere seems to increase distance from real life interaction and action (Levinson 2004). Indeed, by mediating combined representations of reality (such as photographs, videos and texts) through another level of medium and engagement (social media), the digital world captures the attention of individuals and changes their behavior, pushing them to contribute to these practices of consumerism by (re)producing similar content only to fulfil social needs that are not fulfilled in their real life experience – and this is when reality and hyperreality are not distinguished from each other. This might be due to the fact that people are so alienated (i.e., they feel unable to change their life in a world dominated by an ideology in which working and spending are inevitable actions, in order to survive) from concrete events and needs that they eventually believe in reproductions (Plant 1992, 6-9). Plant concludes the discussion on Debord's contributions by arguing the following:

> "Above all, the notion of the spectacle conveyed the sense in which alienated individuals are condemned to lives spent effectively watching themselves. It suggested that, far from being inevitable attributes of the human condition, the boredom, frustration, and powerlessness of contemporary life are the direct consequence of capitalist social relations. […] A spectacle can only be watched and enjoyed at a distance, from where it appears glamorous and desirable; participation may be possible, but its form and extent will be predetermined by the context in which it appears. The promises of self-fulfilment and expression, pleasure and independence which adorn every billboard are realisable only through consumption, and the only possible relation to the social world and one's own life is that of the observer, the contemplative and passive spectator" (Plant 1992, 10)

In other words, she suggests that alienation in the society 'of the spectacle' extends inevitably to leisure (not only work); individuals do not know anymore what they need to feel satisfied in their lives. Thus, they are led to enjoy and see leisure as a solution to human needs in a capitalist society (Plant 1992, 11, 25) and to see the intoxicating, supposedly engaging (pre)consumption of digital representations of leisure as the only way to act and have their senses satiated (McLuhan 1964). There must be alienation

and illusion in order to preserve a need to buy commodities, which provide a sense of satisfaction and gratification, and agency (Plant 1992, 12).

Best and Kellner (1999) offer a less deterministic view of this issue. After arguing that current digital environments increase the possibilities of *infotainment* – 'situations of spectacles' which intoxicate and distract the audience through their power of providing extra-ordinary representations of reality which increases the desire for something different, some reward from real life sacrifices (Best and Kellner 1999, 138-140) – they also see current digital practices as cybersituations and opportunities to resist the 'spectacle' and construct counter narratives. indeed, they may engage individuals in the performance of activities that:

> " […] fulfill their own potential, further their interests, and promote oppositional activity aiming at progressive change and alternative cultural and social forms. This could consist of using cyberspace to advance struggles in the real world, such as a political demonstration, action, or organization. It might include the construction of a website, computer-mediated space such as chat rooms, or discussion groups that provide alternative information and culture. Such cybersituations could engage individuals who are usually excluded from public discussions and enlarge the sphere of democratic participation. In these self or group-constructed environments, individuals can develop both form and content, using new technologies to further their own projects, to express their own views, and to interact in ways that they themselves decide. Constructing cybersituations involves the appropriation, use, and reconstruction of technologies against the spectacle and other forms of domination, alienation, and oppression" (Best and Kellner 1999, 149)

Therefore, the digital environment is not only a 'circumstance' that is leveraged by social institutions and businesses to construct increasingly complex and impulse-based semiotic practices as a way to perpetrate ideologies and views, including capitalism and consumerism. Indeed, it may offer *new* opportunities for the rejection of present narratives and the creation of counternarratives. The participatory use and semiotic creativity that characterize contemporary media may be seen as tools for the development of practices that *change* established trends of discourse. Before delving into the discussion of contemporary meaning-making practices, a theoretical solution to this matter is proposed in the next section.

2.3.2.4 Critical awareness of interaction and semiotic use: resorting to language and imagery to *fight* social constructs and ideology

In summary, we may argue that although media have caused the spread of increasingly intoxicating digital practices and the passive indoctrination and epistemological crisis of individuals in the converged realm of hyperreality and reality, they also present the

opportunity to shape counternarratives that change the 'current state of things', or view of events that are ideologically biased.

This leads to the following questions:

1) How does change actually occur?
2) How may individuals *challenge* culturally constructed meanings through socially mediated actions?
3) How may they reconfigure relationships in society and act with more awareness in socially constructed representations of reality?
4) May they create cybersituations of change that may have consequences in real life?

Learning to reflect on the use of language and other means of communication in the digital sphere and their potential impact in real life may raise awareness of how and why social practices of meaning making are designed in a certain way. More specifically, developing a critical understanding of how semiotic resources – i.e. choices in the use of language, imagery, and their combination – are orchestrated for a specific purpose and for an intended audience may become crucial to becoming aware of the intended perpetration of particular views and open the pathway for the design of new narratives. In conclusion, we might say there are three possible stages of response to narratives, which differ in terms of degree of involvement and elaboration of information, and which may be viewed in Table 2.2:

Response to the presentation of an interpretation of events	**Possible effect on narratives**
Acceptance and internalization (*passivity*)	Reproduction
Active elaboration, or reflection (*reception*)	Potential for action and social change
Interpretation, awareness and proposal of a counternarrative (*agency*)	Social change

Table 2.2: Stages of response to social narratives and possibility of agency

In other words, the elaboration and interpretation of choices and strategies in content design – which is nowadays multisemiotic, not only linguistic – is a tool for social action and may be used to adhere to or fight social constructs and partial views imposed by institutions, thus assigning to individuals the power to shape society, not only to be shaped by it (Urban 1991). Therefore, language, like imagery, needs to be understood as an action that any individual may perform to mediate events happening

in external reality and construct subjective representations of external events. Particularly, attention needs to be shifted to the variables that affect such representations, including a critical understanding of the purposes, views, attitudes, professional identities of the people behind communicative events (Bakhtin 1981, 293). For example, being aware of why "individuals mistakenly consider a standard dialect or style of speaking to be truly superior to the way they themselves speak, rather than an arbitrary difference afforded social significance" (Ahearn 2001, 111; Bourdieu 1991, 170) promotes the active construction of new knowledge through the proposal of alternative representations of events, which are based on facts (Ahearn 2001).

When spending time in a virtual environment, individuals seem to be more prone to suffering from passivity and an illusion of agency, due to their physical inactivity in the external world. This leads to the following question: May individuals actually participate in social change by clicking on social media political petitions or by participating in virtual conversations? A potential solution to this conundrum is provided by the following assumption: every small action in the social media world may play a role if it is accompanied by critical awareness. In particular, one should develop a critical awareness of:

- the reasons why a specific action is performed (by us or others), and if there are alternatives in terms of semiotic use and ideological positioning;
- an idea of how an action or response to an action may impact individuals and particular representations, views of reality;
- the way in which more can be done in terms of semiotic and social participation and construction of new perspectives both digitally and in the physical world.

In conclusion, we might argue that *agency* in contemporary society may exist and even be 'amplified' by the digital sphere; however, in order to develop such ability to understand and react with awareness to dominant representations of reality, one needs to look critically at how semiotic resources are currently being used to shape specific views and why. In this sense, the social and semiotic trends of meaning creation need to be investigated. Indeed, if the capitalist and consumerist power of photography lies in its designed combination of apparently unmediated content and embellished, evocative composition, one might study how imagery is designed today digitally to avoid being influenced by it. Or again, if online text provides new opportunities for

hyper-engagement in the digital world, one may learn how to analyze it and develop counternarratives that may be applied to the physical world as well.

2.3.2.5 Conclusion

Section 2.3.2 allowed us to understand how agency is a complex notion that needs to be understood in relation to its context and, in particular, to the ideology and social needs that are perpetuated and constructed through discourse and media. To end the section and the chapter, a brief discussion on the semiotic shift that has occurred in the digital sphere will be introduced; this will allow us to establish a relationship between socio-economic developments and their transformation through media and new semiotic trends that have developed as a result of the convergence of digital affordances and renewed socio-economic needs. This will be useful to the description of newest approaches to the understanding of communication and the reasons behind the emergence of multimodality as a socio-semiotic practice of meaning making in society.

2.3.3 Participatory use and semiotic creativity: from traditional text to fragmented, multisemiotic interaction

The shift towards digital environments for communication has changed the way people communicate for a variety of reasons. Indeed, the ease, speed and ubiquity with which people can talk to each other virtually despite the distance between them, has provided increased opportunities for the exchange of content and opinions and the collective building of knowledge (Safko and Brake 2009; Garrigos-Simon et al. 2012). With digital platforms such as blogs, collaborative projects, virtual worlds, and social media, individuals may design their own content and react to others' immediately, easily, and synchronously (Constantinides and Fountain, 2008). This has led to the development of *pervasive* practices of communication, which are subject to constant changing, encoding and decoding practices.

In other words, ICTs have brought about a shift from more controlled and exclusive forms of communication – available only through one-to-many transmission formats, such as TVs, printed newspapers, radio, in which response was not possible and it was targeted to a collectivity without distinctions (Shannon and Weaver's 1964) – to accessible formats, in which content is shaped by endless possibilities for responses

and reactions that potentially go beyond the passive decodification and internalization of a message.

2.3.3.1 Questioning the role of language in a fragmented, multisemiotic environment: a first attempt

If this ease of participation through social interaction and content sharing has increased the possibilities for content design for business or personal purposes, it has also provided the opportunity to use and combine resources for meaning making in new ways. New practices and conventions in the use of language have emerged, leading to the increasing need to study new forms of textual creativity that challenge the traditional notion of text in terms of cohesion and meaning construction (Jones et al. 2015). This set of digital practices is called *Computer Mediated Communication*, and it needs to be explored in order to classify new types of language and semiotic use, patterns and texts that reach a large number of people in a very short amount of time (Herring 2013, 5; Laudon and Traver 2017). Contemporary, digital texts may include conversations, written comments, videos, photographs, drawings, websites, software interfaces and "any other aggregate of semiotic elements that can function as a tool for people to take social action" (Jones et al. 2015, 5). Francesconi (2014) defines these semiotic aggregates as "clusters", which highlights their fragmentary nature and disposition, also due to the fact that each cluster may be connected to a number of others through the use of hyperlinking, leading to the creation of 'interaction among texts' that may have different semiotic nature (2014, 154-156).

It follows that a new awareness of how fragments of text and visual content combine with each other to construct coherent and cohesive semiotic entities is needed (Barton 2015). This discussion will, therefore, now turn to recent approaches to text-image relations and connections that may pave the way for the introduction of multimodality, the most recent approach to the study of contemporary communication.

2.3.3.2 Text image-relations and the shift from language towards image-centricity

As discussed in section 2.1.2.8, Barthes' work was the first attempt to define the types of semiotic relations between language and imagery in postmodern times. Later scholars were so fascinated by his novel approach that they decided to build on his

theories. In this regard, Bateman (2014b) offers a comprehensive review of approaches to the text-image relations which came after Barthes, and which affect current digital practices of meaning construction. In particular, Bateman's volume offers a series of insights that shed light on the history of semiotics and the different stances, tools that have been adopted to tackle the complexity of text-image relations. The major hypotheses he formulates concern the theoretical and methodological framework that may be adopted for the analysis of multisemiotic artifacts and the intrinsic significance of meaning combination. He does so by first revisiting Barthes' theory, and arguing that anchorage and relay may be 'performed' by imagery and accompanied by an additional type of intersemiotic relation, that of illustration. According to him, images may be:

1) anchorages, when they further explain the meaning of the related text, which at the same time amplifies the image's meaning;
2) illustrations, when the image elucidates, realizes the connotative meaning of the text, which however retains the real meaning and "rationalizes" the image's meaning (building on Barthes 1977).
3) Relays, when the meanings promoted by both modes are complementary, interdependent and in equal positioning, therefore in a more syntagmatic relationship.

A review of Barthes' theory has been conducted also by Stöckl et al. (2019) and Stöckl (2019) as a response to the increasing pervasiveness and salience of imagery in digital communication (Stöckl 2019, 20). The recent advent of computers and the Internet – the most pervasive technologies in human history – have made access to and manipulation of information so convenient that they have caused a shift of meaning-making practices towards image-centricity (Stöckl et al. 2019, 1-2; Caple 2019, 153). In other words, the already volatile meanings of images have increased potential in terms of semiotic "dominance" and "centrality" (Stöckl 2019, 20) thanks to the spread of digital media, and in particular social media. Indeed, the digital and social sphere has allowed individuals to create and share a potentially endless number of completely artificial and manipulated, fictional versions of reality through visual semiotic resources on intangible platforms. This has pushed scholars to both question the ontological status of digital photography (Price 2015, 93) – and to define it as impossibly real, as

attested by the emergence of the phenomenon of "hyperphotography" (Price and Wells 2015; Ritchin 2013, 57) – and to discuss the current nature of the relationship between texts and images.

By building on Barthes' work (1964; 1977), Stöckl et al. argue that images have become the superordinate element in text-image artifacts, thus earning the status of *anchorage* which, according to them, may lead the mutual mode (i.e. semiotic resource) elaboration (2019, 6). Conversely, verbiage-centric practices position images as *illustrators*, and entails a direction of semiotic elaboration that starts from the text (Stöckl et al. 2019, 7). Following Bateman's tripartite categorization, Martinec and Salway (2005, 343-345) add the possibility of complementary elaboration of meaning and equal status of images and texts, which combine "to form part of a larger syntagm" (Martinec & Salway, 2005, 344), thus echoing Barthes' relay (1977, 156). The assumptions made by Stöckl et al. are supported by the inclusion in their volume of a series of case studies which demonstrate the dominance of visual practices in contemporary communication and either text subordination or equal status. Hence, language in the digital environment either elaborates images in a subordinate position, or co-elaborates meaning. As Stöckl et al. argue:

> "Consequently, text subordination to us may mean both a semantic centrality of the image that allows it to lead the interpretation of the multimodal text, and a perceptual dominance or salience given to the image that makes it the textual 'entry point' for reading paths and meaning construal. In any case, for an effective elaboration or complementary modification of the superordinate image-meaning to be achieved by the text, linguistic elements are paramount that directly relate to the image and can perhaps only be understood in relation to it. This means that, in image-centric texts, we need to look primarily at deictic elements pointing to the image and at any further expressions that construe intersemiotic cohesion between text and image" (Stöckl et al. 2019, 7).

If imagery has become more salient and pervasive in contemporary communication, and if emerging theories are discarding the previous importance of language in defining the overall meaning of all acts of communication, it remains to explore what kind of functions imagery fulfills in the meaning-making process, particularly in relation to the language. In this respect, two opposite schools of thought have sparked scientific debate: one considers linguistics to be the departure point for the theoretical classification of the types of cohesive chains and semantic functions of multisemiotic events; the other assumes that linguistics cannot be seen *a priori* as the perfect model for the analysis of the nature of other semiotic resources (Bateman 2014b; Bateman 2019b).

Martinec and Salway's approach (2005), for example, builds on Systemic Functional Linguistics' logico-semantic relations and functions of language to define the potential roles of images in relation to text and viceversa. These authors stand out for identifying concretely intersemiotic chains with a linguistics-based approach. Indeed, they point out that the unequal status of anchorage and illustration may be seen as instances of *elaboration* (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014), through which one semiotic resource meaning is restated through specification or generalization in the other (Martinec and Salway 2005, 341). Relay, on the other hand, may be a synonym for *extension* (the addition of unrelated information) or *enhancement* (the addition of circumstantial information). Also tackled by Bateman (2014b, 188–190, 195–197) and applied successfully in research studies (Caple 2013), this approach may be a solution to the analysis of cohesive ties and meanings of different semiotic resources.

Another approach to this tradition of linguistics-based intersemiotic relations (2014, 161–174), is that of intersemiotic cohesion or texture (Royce 1998; Bateman 2014b, 165–172; Stöckl 2019, 37-38), which determines text-image relationships in terms of synonymy, hyponymy, hypernymy etc[10].

The Grammar of Visual Design follows yet another linguistics-based tradition, reviewed by Bateman (2014b; 2019). This approach developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) builds specifically on SFL clause transitivity and the detection of participants, events and circumstances in both texts and images – thus applying, according to Royce, intermodal complementarity (Royce 2002; Bateman 2014b, 167). This framework, in fact, will be described in detail in chapter three after the introduction of multimodality, the socio-semiotic theory of communication which is the focus of the current dissertation (Kress 2010). Indeed, the Visual Grammar is a direct application not only of SFL, but also of the social semiotics theory developed by Kress, which will also be revisited in light of emerging approaches which belong to the second tradition advocated by Bateman.

[10] A list of similar approaches is offered by Bateman (2014b), including the ones developed by Bardin (1975), Moles (1978), Spillner (1982) and Noeth (1995) (Bateman 2014b, 43-47); by McQuarrie and Mick (1996), Marsh and White (2003) (Bateman 2014b, 124-130), and by Schriver 1997 (137). However, for reasons of space and relevance to the current dissertation, they will not be discussed here.

2.3.3.3 Meaning multiplication

According to Bateman and other scholars in empirical multimodality (Bateman et al. 2017; Pflaeging et al. 2021), visual, semiotic resources should be analyzed also from a perspective which does not take into account linguistics-based approaches, due to the different nature of imagery (Mitchell 1994; Messaris 1997). By drawing upon Lemke's concept of meaning multiplication (Lemke 1998) – according to which the combination of modes gives rise to a meaning which is new and more complex, rather than just the sum of the two modes if one considers the modes separately (Bateman 2014b, 6) –, Bateman assumes that meanings deriving from text-image relations should also be integrated, as these are intentionally designed together for a specific communicative act (Bateman 2014b, 5-7). However, in order to find and explain this 'addition' or multiplication of meanings, one must find some common grounds of comparison between the two modes, without however seeing a mode and its features, i.e. semiotic affordances, through the theoretical and methodological approaches of another. Indeed, this procedure might lead us to overlook features proper of the visual (Stöckl 2004, 18) and to consider the visual sign as less meaningful or inferior compared to language (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001, 30).

Therefore, the aim of multimodal (i.e. multisemiotic) studies of text-image relations is to detect and interpret "*new structural organisations* correctly, recombining and recontextualizing basic properties" of semiotic resources, without assuming that these are more similar to one another than they actually are, and without applying semiotic linguistic affordances to imagery (Bateman 2014b, 7). Essential to this theoretical stance is the assumption that the design of multimodal artifacts is artificial, intended (Bateman 2014b, 26), and has a specific meaning. The phenomenon of *meaning multiplication* described by Bateman has been acknowledged by many other scholars working on multimodality, who have defined it as "mutual elaboration" (Jewitt et. al 2016, 91), "co-determination" of meaning (Spillner 1982, quoted in Bateman 2014b, 37) and 'complementarity' or 'synergy' (Royce 1998).

In line with these conceptions, then, one could define the contemporary dominance of image-centricity as a new social practice, which sees the directionality of semiotic elaboration and meaning multiplication from image to language, and which assigns more semiotic 'weight', or salience (*centrality*) to visual means of communication. This phenomenon has shaped new genres of communication (Stöckl et al. 2019; Caple 2013;

Pflaeging 2020) which, according to Bateman, may shape particular power relations with the audience as well as specific attitudes that language might not be able to convey on its own (2014b).

2.3.3.4 The ontological status of Instagram imagery: aesthetic symbols with an aura of indexicality

Regarding the phenomenon of image-centricity in contemporary communication, contributions from other disciplines offer similar perspectives. Computer scientist and sociologist Manovich, for example, showed in "Instagram and Contemporary Image" (2017) how contemporary digital communication is pervaded by image-centric practices, especially on social media. By analyzing 16 million photographs shared on Instagram in 17 global cities since 2012, he proved the existence of novel trends of visual promotional and cultural practices that could be developed thanks to the convergence of accessible technology (smartphones with cameras) and pervasive image-based media (Instagram), and which has affected current photography production and dissemination through the values of aesthetics, visibility and accessibility. For these reasons, he considers Instagram to be the "most pure visual and medium from a theoretical and research perspective" (Manovich 2017, 12), which has democratized and standardized society's accessibility to visual practices and specifically professional photography. Indeed, individuals do not need specific or expensive devices (including printers) to take visually appealing photographs. Instagram was, in fact, designed to include cutting-edge technologies for photography processing that would enable the distribution of aesthetically pleasant imagery and the creation of cultural communities of practices, named "instagramisms" (Manovich 2017, 71-80). These include three main visual practices: 1) casual photography, 2) professional photography – which is leveraged by companies and individuals to promote evoking representations of reality (Manovich 2017, 58-70), and 3) design photography (Manovich 2017, 99-104).

Therefore, it may be argued that Instagram promotes a mediated, artificial version of reality, which is called "super-realism" (Manovich 2017, 61-62, also described by Kress as "hyper-realism", 2010) and, by being founded on the principles of aesthetics and careful design of visual strategies, it may be considered to be the contemporary marketing medium par excellence (Manovich 2017, 4). The principles of aesthetics and

careful design contribute in fact to the appeal, attractiveness of a picture and may convey particular attitudes towards the product or service depicted. However, it is also used by individuals in general to perform social facework (as described in section 2.3.1.2) with patterns of verbal and nonverbal acts through which the speaker "expresses his view of the situation and... his evaluation of the participants, especially himself" (Goffman 1955, 213). It seems then, as mentioned in section 2.1.1.2, that meaning-making in postmodern times occurs not only for profit-oriented purposes, but also to maintain human relationships and acquire social prestige (Manovich 2017, 117). Instagrammers are referred to by Manovich as "aesthetic workers", living in an aesthetic society, who propose aesthetic representations of products to increase visibility for either social or financial reward (Manovich 2017, 118). In other words, Instagrammers, both in the representation of personal experience and in the commodification of experiences for others, aim to present a lifestyle of happiness, perfection, experience, *of being, feeling* rather than *doing* (117, 125-128). This kind of practice, without critical awareness, may lead both content producers and consumers to 'live' and react in the digital world through passive contemplation, acceptance and compliance with social norms and dominant narratives.

2.3.3.5 Conclusion

This chapter attempted to demonstrate how a critical review of the relationship between technological advances, socio-economic needs and semiotic uses may assist in the understanding of the major, superordinate role and aesthetic nature of contemporary imagery. In particular, by focusing on the Industrial Revolution, the advent of mass media and then Internet and social networks, this chapter showed how technological progress succeeds in answering to, defining and spreading new narratives which become dominant and often difficult to resist, specifically due to their social and pervasive nature, which affects all individuals.

While the Industrial Revolution led to the emergence of capitalism and accessible photography, photography became the technology that perpetrated capitalism through the commodification and dissemination of embellished, subtly mediated representations of real-life events that promised, with their aura of authenticity, to fulfill capitalist- and work-driven social desires of *owning* and *showing* for social validation and status that were created and legitimated by capitalism. Indeed, imagery

commodifies needs and values that are created by capitalism for its survival, and which push individuals to work in order to spend, in an attempt to feel satisfaction in an alienating world and evade reality through the illusionary power of financial means.

For these reasons, the focus on imagery was the perfect way to demonstrate how such technological and socio-economic processes intertwine and converge, leading to novel forms of semiotic combinations and visual orchestrations that may be observed today, and which work because of the symbolic, evocative power of imagery and its combination of aesthetics and indexicality. In an increasingly complex and accessible participatory use of semiotic resources to create visual content, imagery continues to be one of the main 'advocates' of capitalism, and one of the main causes of consumerism.

In this sense, it is difficult today to distinguish between accurate representations of events and manipulated versions of reality; first, because any representation is subjective and partial; second, because behind any communicative act there is intention. For this reason, it is important to 1) look critically at any event, in order to be able to resist reproducing and being influenced by norms and standards, and 2) challenge its meaning and veracity by developing critical awareness of how and why it is constructed the way it is. This is possible by studying language and imagery in the current world and investigating the socio-discursive and mediatic context, which is what chapter One and Two set out to do.

The next chapter will outline the most recent approach to communication, i.e. *multimodality,* and offer both the theoretical and analytical tools to understand contemporary semiotic practices in the digital sphere. This will be accompanied by the presentation of the most recent methodological developments of this approach, which may help researchers – and consequently all individuals – gain a better and more faithful understanding of how ideologies and partial views are perpetrated and may be challenged today, resisting the urge to merely consume them for the profit of others.

Chapter Three

Understanding discourse by studying meaning-making practices: How to develop multimodal discourse literacy by integrating the semiotics of 'materialities' into linguistics-based approaches

The previous chapter outlined the development of imagery from a logico-historical perspective. This took into consideration the socio-economic processes that generated particular technological advances, and the effects of which have caused the emergence of imagery as the dominant semiotic practice in the digital era. Particularly, the previous chapter, similar to Chapter One, highlighted the importance of the *context* as the main variable that affects social and communicative practices, including *discourse, media,* and the *intentions* behind the perpetration of views which today may be resisted through critical awareness and use of linguistic and non-linguistic resources. The concept of *agency* proved to be crucial to the explanation of how difficult it is to unveil hidden communicative purposes in an increasingly complex semiotic world. Indeed, the latter is pervaded by symbolic and evocative means that resort to aesthetics and an alleged 'indexicality' to construct particular views (Benjamin 1969; Barthes 1977).

The current chapter seeks to continue this discussion by exploring further the nature of imagery by relying on the concept and process of *semiosis*, or signification, in the understanding of world experiences; this will be done by reviewing different perspectives and attempting to integrate them (Peirce 1931; Bateman et al. 2017; Bateman 2018; Kress 2010) from a theoretical and methodological perspective in order to enable an understanding of how contemporary communication and discourse work. In this sense, the chapter attempts to demonstrate that it may be possible to analyze visual communication *critically* and *systematically*, and in relation to language, in order to develop the analytical skills to become an *active* and aware 'rhetor' (Kress 2010) in the current society. In particular, it will present the theory of *multimodality*, as the focus of the current dissertation is the analysis of written linguistic and static visual semiotic resources in digital tourism discourse.

This chapter is crucial since it describes the development of current socio-semiotic practices and scientific methods for the investigation of their complex nature. It represents

a 'theoretical and analytical bridge' that fills the gap between by a *purely Systemic Functional Linguistics* framework (Chapter One) and a *historical*, *philosophical*, *semiotic* and *sociological* approach that explained emergence of visual practices in the 19th century[1]. In both chapters, *context* – be it technological advances, socio-economic needs, the environment in children's language acquisition process – played a major role in generating new socio-semiotic practices that both satisfied and amplified those needs, often in the interest of others.

The relationship between context, human communication and cognition will be demonstrated to be evident and mutually contaminating, leading to some considerations on the difficult dichotomy, or tension, between accepting passively the context and others' views and pursuing agency through the development of counternarratives. In this regard, multimodality represents a comprehensive framework that connects linguistic and any other resource available to humans for the construction of meaning, thus providing the actual theoretical and methodological tools to approach and analyze how humans shape world and inner events.

Literacy, in this sense, is paramount to becoming active agents and understanding how to interpret, internalize, and decide whether to reproduce or produce new meaning according to each one's individuality, interests, values and beliefs. Additionally, *corpus* and *empirical methods* associated with a critical awareness of theories, particularly of (social) semiotics, Systemic Functional Linguistics and discourse studies, represent the building blocks for an informed and scientific analysis of contemporary meaning creation. Systemic connections between materialities, discourse, media and context may then be unveiled, especially through manual annotation and statistical techniques of quantification and measurement of strategies occurrences. This procedure may help both researchers and individuals discover new communicative practices that reflect the emergence of innovative socio-economic needs, intentions, purposes, and *apt* ways to achieve these purposes.

[1] Chapter Two, indeed, explored the nature of the relationship between technological advances – such as the advent of photography, mass media and social media – and capitalist ideology; together, they gave rise to the contemporary 'society of the spectacle' which is characterized by pervasive and ubiquitous visual communicative practices and multimodal, promotional genres.

By the end of the chapter, one part will be missing in the journey towards the understanding and analysis of contemporary digital, multimodal, promotional practices: a detailed review of the sociological approaches implemented by tourism discourse as ideological response to the social, driving needs of the capitalist, postmodern tourist. In this regard, the description of the actual linguistic and multimodal frameworks applied by the literature for the detection and discussion of promotional strategies will conclude our literature review in Chapter Four and contribute to the understanding of all the variables involved in this study. This chapter, in particular, will provide the basis – in terms of criteria and methods for carrying out empirical research – for the introduction of the methodology, as it provides the tools for the detection of specific modal behavior of tourism discourse across digital channels, and which supported to the discovery of the image-centric, Instagram genre of tourism discourse. Indeed, this dissertation wishes to integrate a linguistics-based, theoretical framework and a data-driven approach to tourism communication that starts from the detection of patterns of visual and linguistic *materialities* to test hypotheses and draw inferences about trends of metafunctional realization of meaning as well as social uses of semiotic resources.

In order to demonstrate how the analysis of meaning-making practices may assist in the development of a literacy and understanding of contemporary discourse, the chapter will explore different approaches that see the act of meaning creation differently (section 3.1); this has some important methodological implications in terms of analysis and investigation of semiotic resources and genres that do not only include language. In particular, the chapter will compare the theory of multimodality as a linguistics-based, socio-semiotic approach to communication (Kress 2010; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006) and the theory of signs developed by Peirce and expanded by Bateman and colleagues (Bateman et al. 2017; Pflaeging et al. 2021) that approaches multimodal communicative events from an empirical and purely semiotic perspective. Section 3.2 will explore the advantages and disadvantages of SFL-based, quantitative studies and discuss the implications of an empirical approach that seeks to validate theory-based assumptions by means of data-driven annotations and advanced statistical analysis. Eventually, this chapter will show how these linguistics- and semiotics-based views may be integrated for a structured

analysis and reliable interpretations of patterns of linguistic and visual data, thus justifying the research design adopted for the current study.

3.1 Semiosis and the process of significance as means to access world phenomena and meaning creation and interpretation: different approaches

The current section describes and compares different approaches to the creation and understanding of visual meaning that stem from different scholarly traditions. On the one hand, the development of multimodality as a linguistics-based, social semiotic approach to communication will be reviewed, in order to provide insights into its theoretical assumptions and both its advantages and disadvantages in the analysis of signs. Indeed, social semiotics is a theory that takes into consideration the socio-economic and technological context, the ideological stance, the three metafunctions any semiotic resource fulfills to achieve particular goals, and the modes as well as affordances available to do so with critical awareness and informed agency. In this sense, multimodality is similar to Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL); for this reason, it may represent a powerful means to decode multisemiotic practices in contemporary communication and support in the development of the analytical tools for the current dissertation. Additionally, by showing how human, visual literacy develops and may be taught, individuals may learn how to communicate and have an impact on society (Insulander and Lindstrand 2013)

Conversely, an approach based on an understanding of sign creation *without* any reliance on the structure and nature of language as co-constructor of meaning in context may contribute to an informed understanding of how visual modes signify, may be studied and used in contemporary society. Indeed, the visual mode is claimed by semiotics scholars to signify primarily in the process of perception of external reality (Mitchell 1994; Messaris 1997, 1995, 2014; Peirce 1931; Bateman 2018)[2].

In order to review these approaches critically, section 3.1.1 will summarize the implications drawn so far by establishing some connections between the contextual variables of SFL and semiotic creativity. This will lead to some considerations on agency and awareness of

[2] See Chapter Two for some preliminary insights into the nature of imagery from the perspective of Peircean semiotics (Mitchell 1994; Messaris 1997).

choice in a digital and visual epistemic crisis, and it will continue in section 3.1.2 in terms of motivated sign making. These sections will prove useful to link the previous chapters of this dissertation to the main subject of discussion of the the current chapter, i.e. a socio-semiotic approach to communication, and shed light on potential contaminations between Hallidayan and Kressian socio-semiotics and Peircean semiotics and the different role of context and nature of signs in the process of signification and interpretation. Sections 3.1.3-3.1.4 will introduce Kress' theory of multimodality by describing visual agency and creativity in children's meaning-making processes and textbooks, which demonstrates the importance of understanding visual meaning creation in communicative events. This section will also include some insights into visual literacy from the point of view of perception and visual studies. Section 3.1.5 will explore the importance of discourse and ideology in the process of meaning interpretation, by assuming that meaning creation differs from meaning communication and interpretation due to varying purposes and intentions. This discussion will lead us to the Kressian concept of metafunctional tripartitioning of meaning in imagery as an additional layer of semiosis that may be useful for the analysis of visual signs; this will be argued to be appropriate if supported by Peircean abductive processes of underlying, social meaning understanding through the concept of materialities, qualisigns and legisigns (section 3.2).

3.1.1 Strengthening the connections between contextual variables and semiotic creativity: agency and awareness of choices in a digital, visual epistemic crisis

The first chapter provided the theoretical tools to understand the complexity of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as a theory of language with preestablished as well as *metastable* systems of choices and exhibiting a high degree of applicability to the systematic analysis of a wide range of communicative contexts (Martin 2016). Indeed, SFL allows individuals to study the act of meaning creation as a systemic variable that is affected primarily by the context – i.e. the genre, the register, the medium, the socio-economic needs – which, in turn, affects the systematic range of choices and *functions* language and other semiotic resources may fulfill to achieve specific goals that make sense according to the context (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). In this sense, the three metafunctions realize

the *discourse* semantics of a communicative event, as they describe the participants, the events, the settings, the intentions behind particular representations and the technical-semiotic affordances as well as use of meaning making according to the practices established in a particular medium and for a particular audience (Thompson 2009; Stöckl et al. 2019). In the second chapter, we have seen how social, economic and technological progress intertwine and affect each other in the development of new semiotic practices that serve particular communicative purposes; particularly, this was reflected in a change of the *context* in terms of media, affordances, and social users, leading to the digital pervasiveness of visual, engaging material that is currently affecting all individuals in society (Bateman et al. 2017). The lack of cognitive resources – including time, effort, attention on the part of social media users – as well as methodological insights into visual communication make it difficult to analyze this kind of complex phenomena critically and systematically. It was within an increasingly complex, social and semiotic context that Gunther Kress' scholarly work was initially undertaken (Boeck and Pachler 2013). Kress was interested in the act of meaning creation through language; however, his interest in pioneer semiotics studies such as Barthes' (1977), and in linguistic theories based on social semiotics such as Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday 1978; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014) led him to focus primarily on visual meaning making processes (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006; Kress 2010, 54; Boeck and Pachler 2013, 1). Kress' focus on children's learning process led him to question the role of images that accompanied written language in textbooks from a pedagogical perspective. During these years, he conceived a 'multimodal' view of communication, i.e. one that featured 'modes' or, as Jewitt defined them, "semiotic resources for making meaning that are employed in a culture – such as image, writing, gesture, gaze, speech, posture" (Jewitt 2014, 1; Kress 2010, 79). At this point, new hypotheses concerning the possible ways of combining word and image started being formulated and aimed to investigate how this semiotic relationship affected the overall creation of "meaning" (Jewitt 2014, 2). In this sense, social semiotics developed as a theory of communication which sees human exchange as both individually designed and socially negotiated through the intertwining of different semiotic systems and choices of definite resources to intentionally convey meaning (Kress 2010, 26-32, 123; Kress and Hodge 1988).

Both from a theoretical and analytical perspective, Kress' work paved the way for the definition of a critical – i.e. culturally and socially embedded – yet systematic approach to the study of communicative events that included different semiotic resources. He did so by relying on SFL and its notions of context and metafunctions for meaning creation, and by shaping the concept of *mode* as *semiotic resource* that is available in *social* settings (Adami 2016). However, this preliminary definition of modes raises some concerns about the ways in which these socioculturally available semiotic resources for knowledge construction and meaning making may be recognized and analyzed in contemporary society. In particular, Kress wished to provide an answer to the following conundrum: How may a theory of modes enable an understanding of contemporary communication as well as an active participation in it? Kress brings his fresh, unique perspective to the matter in his seminal volume *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication* (2010), an extension of the book he wrote with Hodge (1988) on the role of sign systems in the perpetuation of discourse and as resources for social change. In his view, modes and their combination are used in contemporary society to create and convey meaning in every communicative event due to a "web of intertwined social, economic cultural and technological changes" (Kress 2010, 5). As discussed in Chapter Two, the globalization and technological advances, indeed, have changed the way people communicate; particularly, traditional repositories of knowledge as well as established modes – such as books and written language, respectively – have increasingly lost ground compared to emerging technologies and platforms such as digital devices, the Internet, and social media (Stöckl et al. 2019). It follows that the creation of signs and the study of their meaning "needs adequate theoretical tools to deal with the current social and cultural situation" (Kress 2010, 7). The growing interest in this field of study in the new millennium, indeed, derives from the fact that the employment and visibility of different semiotic systems, or *modes*, such as image, language, layout, gesture, have increased due to the affordances of communication channels (Bezemer and Jewitt 2010; Bateman 2014a, 11; Adami 2016). Social networks and online channels do not privilege the linguistic *mode*; instead, they leave room for the visual design of meaning making processes, which effectively and immediately attract the attention of the recipient, convey constructed meanings and boost specific reactions (Kress 2010). This *image-centric,* contemporary media sphere which was

described in Chapter Two (Stöckl et al. 2019; Mitchell 1994; Messaris 1997) is pervading every aspect of society and genres, ranging from documentaries and news to advertising and tourism promotion (Garrod 2009), and demonstrates how multimodal theories serve well the purpose of this dissertation.

What characterizes Kress' approach to visual meaning is the emphasis on the role of the social environment in sign making. Like Halliday, he believed that individuals make signs according to specific contexts – at a cultural, social and situational level (Halliday 1978). However, in his view, the influence or 'restrictions' due to the context of semiotic production do not impede active agency by the participants, who still may make a choice among a wide variety of technologies, media, modes, genres, registers, and lexicogrammatical resources depending on personal attitudes, interests, purposes and intended audience (Kress 2010; 26-27; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 20, 44, 69, 73). In other words, the interest, the identity and the will of the creator of the meaning, the 'rhetor and designer', is fundamental in order to create meaning in an apt way and to do "semiotic work" that may be understood clearly (Hodge and Kress 1988, 11; Kress 2010, 32). For these reasons, knowing how to navigate restrictions and possibilities offered by the socio-cultural macro-context and the micro-context – including the register variable – is necessary to develop adequate rhetorical skills in the contemporary physical and digital communicative environment, and to deconstruct meanings, i.e. partial views and intentions, which are encoded in different modes. He believes, therefore, that the process of signification is inseparable from the social context and starts from a choice between media and modes, interests and attitudes in the socio-cultural environment. However, such approach may hinder an objective understanding of visual signs, as they are argued to signify first by virtue of their resemblance to reality, and cannot be studied with approaches developed for the analysis of other modes (Bateman 2018, 4).

The following sections will offer a review of the major innovations brought about by social semiotics and its most prominent scholars in the early stage of its theoretical development, along with some case studies that show its implementation and effects. This section will also include a critical review of the main points of this theory that may contribute to the development of a combined approach to the study of multimodal communication.

3.1.2 Agency and awareness of systemic choice in semiotic practices: motivated sign making from different perspectives

The social semiotic theory of multimodality developed as a response to the need to systematize the way in which we find, create, and understand meaning in semiotic practices which do not only include language. According to social semiotic multimodality theory, meaning is actively created and shared in social interactions through sign making. In 1988 Kress and Hodge started laying out a theory of social semiotics, drawing on Michael Halliday's writings and previous structural, functional theories[3] (Kress 2010, 54). By relying on the notion of sign and its subdivision into form and meaning, or *signifier* and *signified*, they argued that signs are always motivated and never arbitrary, thus discarding previous assumptions based on the linguistic sign (Saussure 1916). Indeed, the motivated relationship between form and meaning relies on the assumption that signs are newly made every time out of the interest and the interpretation of the sign-maker, who has an active role in making them and in searching for the most suitable, 'apt' sign that conveys a specific meaning (Hodge and Kress 1988; Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006).

Kress came to this conclusion by interpreting Peirce and by believing in the existence of an active interpreter, an assumption that is shared by most scholars in multimodality (Bateman et al. 2017; Bezemer and Jewitt 2010; O'Halloran 2011; Adami 2016). Peirce's theory of sign, in fact, includes an additional variable in the construction of signs, compared to Saussure's dichotomous view *signifier-signified*, or *form and meaning*. As shown in figure 3.1, one may see that there are three variables: the representamen (the linguistic or semiotic form), the interpretant (the mental representation or meaning as decoded by the individual), and the external object. In Peirce's view, in fact, the recipient of a sign actively interprets it by forming an interpretant, i.e. a mental representation of the meaning of that sign that is stimulated by the perception of an external stimulus, which may be an object, or an event (Peirce 1931). Conversely, in the Saussurean conceptualization of sign, the signified is the inner concept in the individual's mind that is shared by an entire community, and the signifier is the materialistic representation of it, as the utterance, a

[3] An overview of the theories of social semiotics and Systemic Functional Linguistics is provided in Chapter One.

written word, a phonological transcription of it, are "linked in a relation which is arbitrary and bound by convention" (Kress 2010, 63). Therefore, Saussure did not seem to acknowledge the existence of a 'communicative' power in individuals' acts to shape new signs and meanings, which were not the product of already established, social norms. Indeed, everything was related to a conventionalized, social system (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 6). Kress supports his assumption by providing an example made by Wittgenstein (1953). If during a chess game, he recounts, two friends discovered that a piece was missing, they would use a small object, a button, to replace the pawn. In other words, they would resort to new social uses of semiotic entities according to the needs and peculiarities of a specific context. This seems to confirm the idea that the relation between form and meaning is both arbitrary and conventional, as both parties agree on this rule violation for the duration of the game (Kress 2010, 63). However, by simply choosing an object like a button for its physical resemblance to the missing pawn – both in terms of form and color, i.e. intrinsic properties of the object – they make a motivated choice that is interpreted correctly because of mutual agreement.

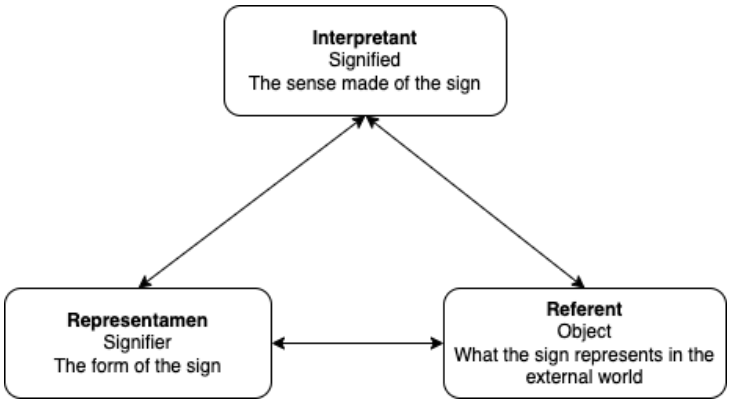


Figure 3.1: Peirce's triadic model of signs or process of semiosis

The importance of individuals and intrinsic properties of external objects in the act of semiosis is highlighted also by scholars analyzing semiotic resources from a purely semiotic perspective (Bateman 2018; Messaris 1997, 2014; Mitchell 1994). However, these scholars do not believe that the process of signification occurs only when individuals make

motivated choices in a particular context. According to media scholars such as Mitchell and Messaris, semiosis starts when individuals *perceive* external reality and produce an internal visual representation of it (interpretant, or *image, Mitchell*), which, through the materiality and constraints as well as characteristics of a form (the representamen), becomes a sign (Messaris 1997, ix; Mitchell 2015, 30-33). In this sense, signification is argued to take place primarily after the perception of external experience and its visual internalization and production through materialities or forms (Bateman 2018, 4-5); these cannot be interpreted as socially dependent semiotic resources that are the main sources of meaning making, as it would lead to an integration of sign creation through subjective interpretation. In this regard, Bateman argues, in particular, that semiosis should be approached by relying on Peircean multi-layered subdivision of signs (Bateman 2018, 14, 18, 20); indeed, these may help, both at a theoretical and methodological level, examine signs and patterns of semiosis strictly by looking at their intrinsic properties, or qualisigns. Compared to Barthes' notion of symbolic, connotative aspects as main source of meaning, Bateman explains that Peircean theory sees signs as primarily icons, in accordance with the concept of 'firstness of images' (Peirce 1931; Bateman 2018, 7). Qualisigns are the first signs that are made in the process of semiosis, when the process of signification is made through the perception of external reality through resemblance. This first layer of signification should be analyzed on its own for an objective understanding of how meaning is created. As we will see later in this chapter, this theory led to the distinction, in Bateman and Kress, between 'materialities' and 'affordances' of modes. Additional layers of meaning or semiotic work – such as interpretation of the intentions behind a sign – may be considered when trying to connect patterns of perceived materialities or forms to potential social uses, and to abduct reasons behind such social uses instead of deducing them from socially attached meanings (Bateman 2018, 2, 11). This stays in contrast with Kress' notion of signs and meaning making, as social semiotics sees signs as the product of the interaction of individuals with the social and cultural context. These assumptions may also have some implications when trying to apply preestablished, metafunctional and social meaning categorizations that may not give space to an impartial and empirical, perceptual understanding of signs, or when attempting to explore how visual literacy may be taught. Nonetheless, Kress' approach provides a framework for the understanding of

how signs are interpreted and why – also in relation to linguistic forms – and this dissertation argues that its theory may be combined with a more empirical approach for scientific investigation of multimodal communicative events.

In conclusion, we may argue that Kress' view may have contributed to developing an understanding of how people have the opportunity to *actively* choose the semiotic resources available to communicate (Kress 2010, 64; Kress and van Leeuwen 2001; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006), as "the meaning made in the interpretation can become the basis of a new sign-complex in the making of a new message" (Kress 2010, 37), even though, at the ontological level, this process occurs *after* and *thanks* to the perception of a qualigns. This notion is in line with previous definitions of agency which were proposed in Chapter Two, which assumed that *awareness* and *active elaboration* of signs – instead of passive acceptance – are key to the development of critical thinking and behavior. Kress develops this concept further by claiming that the *interpretation* and *construction* of meaning are two separate, yet connected events that take place in two or more beings in the process of internalizing, re(producing) and communicating signs to *others;* additionally, these may be made 1) transparent or 2) nontransparent for specific purposes. Accepting and reproducing signs as already available interpretations of reality, then, does not assign to individuals the role of active interpretants, nor do these processes grant the latter? the power to deconstruct meaningfully and critically the selected views that are provided by dominant narratives and institutionalized discourse practices.

This notion of interpretation as synonym for agency and challenge of social constructs stands in contrast to mass media and Shannon and Weaver's view of communication as mere unidirectional transmission of information from a sender to a receiver (1948). The introduction of feedback characteristic of digital environments and discussed through Debord and McLuhan's lens[4], indeed, may offer individuals the opportunity to resist socially mediated views of reality through language and other signs. What is novel in Kress' theory is the concept of *inter-action* between individuals, and the fact that for meaningful communication to happen, active interpretation is inevitable (Kendrick and McKay 2002).

[4] See Chapter Two for a discussion about the relationship between Debord's and McLuhan's views of mass media communication in capitalist times.

We create signs in order to communicate them to others. Obviously, this does not imply that we are always aware of what we communicate, or that we are in control of how people interpret the signs we make. This reinforces the following assumptions:

1) meaning creation differs from meaning communication and interpretation, as meaning interpretation of *others*' views occurs before and/or after meaning *creation* and *communication for others,* thus with different purposes and conditions;
2) we are not in control of which signs are interpreted and how.

The impossibility of guiding others' meaning construction, communication and interpretation is due to the fact that sign making occurs for the purpose of communication between *different subjects*; this means that the sign which is created and shared is never objective or unambiguous (Boeck 2016). The context, and the other variables, including ideology, media, and modes, need to be taken into consideration; this reinforces the need for a literacy, which is more than awareness, as mentioned in Chapter Two. Additionally, by benefitting from socially framed semiotic resources and their affordances, social actors take part – either consciously or unconsciously – in the process of "renewing, the remaking and the transformation of their social environment from the perspective of meaning" (Kress 2010, 34).

In summary, communication is the social process that enables people to produce new meaning and bring about social change. In this sense, the social and the individual sphere become deeply intertwined, as the individual interest in some aspect of the social interaction produces a response to a prompt that has a socially-driven, yet actively shaped meaning. Communication is, after all, the expression of a specific representation of the reality around us, where inner perspectives design specific 'realities', which are shaped both by subjectivity and the social, cultural environment (Kress 2010, 34-35). Apt and effective ways to create, 'communicate', and understand these realities may be taught through 'multiliteracies' and may be formalized in a grammar of multimodality, which offer the opportunity to explore the connections between different modes and learn to construct multimodal meaning coherently and cohesively (Cope and Kalantzis 2009, 361-371; Cope and Kalantzis 2020).

These considerations lead to the following question: in this chaotic world made of ubiquitous signs, how may we develop a literacy of sign making that allows us to 1) create signs according to our interests, being aware of the context and to 2) understand others' intentions? How can we understand visual narratives that are constructed by specialists, such as marketing experts in tourism discourse?

3.1.3 Developing literacy by means of semiotic, intentional choice: individuals as active rhetors

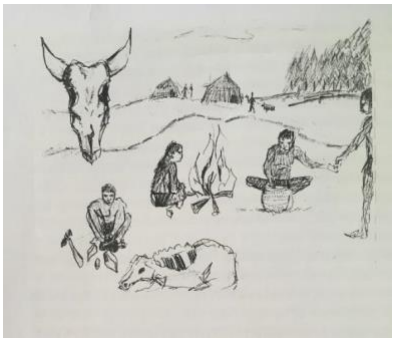
An answer to both questions is provided by Kress and his colleagues, who developed the concept of literacy and agency by studying children's and adults' drawings. Indeed, by researching individuals' choices in the visual representation and interpretation of external events, one may understand how these are framed according to cognitive resources, individual interests as well the communicative context (Boeck 2016, 1-21; Kendrick and McKay 2002, 45-60; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). As we mentioned earlier, meaning-making is for Kress the result of the social and cultural context as well as individuals' interest – which becomes a synonym for agency when the decoding, or interpretation, of a message, is subject to critical awareness and reflection. Section 3.1.5, in particular, will focus on the impact of intentional, partial representations of reality on the *communication* and *guided, misleading interpretation* of one's representation (Archer 2014; Rowsell and Pahl 2013).

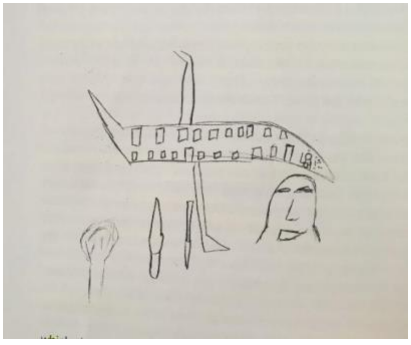
Children's drawings represent an interesting object of study because they unveil processes of meaning that are affected by the context but may lack critical awareness of it, and may support the assumptions shared by social semiotics (Boeck and Pachler 2013). An example worth mentioning is provided by both Kress and three researchers who participated with him in an international research project called "The Museum, The Exhibition and The Visitors: Meaning Making in a New Arena for Learning and Communication". Indeed, together with Kress, Sophia Diamantopoulou, Eva Insulander and Fredrik Lindstrand in their work discuss the importance of individual motivation, interest and agency in the making and in the interpretation, design of signs (2012). The research project was developed to investigate visitors' interpretation of museum exhibitions and their use of

semiotic resources, or *modes*. The modes used by visitors and successively by researchers for the collection of data included interviews, digital photos and maps.

In the following pictures, it is possible to view some maps and see how visitors, in this experiment, personalized their conception of map; as may be seen from Figures 3.2 and 3.3, they resorted to the visual mode to draw a sketch on the basis of their needs, interests and situation (Diamantopoulou et al. 2012, 11-29). The maps are extracted from two different exhibitions – the first one is called "London before London: the prehistoric camp" and the second one is "London before London: Heathrow" – and were drawn, respectively, by an 18-year-old woman and an 11-year-old boy. Both were the response to a specific prompt; indeed, the subjects were asked to represent their "sense of the exhibition" (Kress 2010, 39).

In particular, the picture on the left represents a landscape with typical, prehistoric activities, which seem to be part of a narrative, or story; furthermore, the presence of a larger object in the top left corner – the skull of an animal – highlights the author's intention to assign importance and salience to it, and it is, indeed, the first semiotic entity our eyes detect (Diamantopoulou et al. 2012, 24-25). Conversely, the other picture shows a series of objects which are placed one next to the other, without an apparent link. These drawings show how the conception of map may vary according to each individual's experience, understanding, and personal interests; in neither case, however, is "the notion of map a conventional spatial one" (Kress 2010, 41; Diamantopoulou et al. 2012, 22-23). As a matter of fact, both maps are a visual record and creative, spatial arrangement of the most significant objects for the individuals who represented them (Kress 2010, 41).





Figures 3.2 and 3.3: Concepts maps drawn by different visitors (taken from Diamantopoulou et al. 2012)

What one can infer from this type of experiment is that individuals frame the prompts they receive actively and individually: the response is the intersection of personal interest, interpretations based on previous experience and the representation of those interpretations (Kress 2010, 40-42; Diamantopoulou et al. 2012, 28). Additionally, as Kress points out when commenting the work by Diamantopoulou et al. (2012), other variables come into play in semiotic activities, i.e. the specific content and design of the *prompt* – which is another term for previous semiotic work – along with the number and role of participants who take part in its realization. Indeed, all these contextual variables play a role in pre-designing the meaning potential (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014), or range, nature of choices available to the receivers of a message (Kress 2010, 44-46). This is confirmed by Insulander and Lindstrand (2013) and their work at the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities and the Museum of National Antiquities, in Stockholm. As a matter of fact, the analysis of a 12-year-old's spatial map – which was the response to a prompt similar to one presented in the experiment by Diamantopolou et al. (2012) – revealed the presence of both the girl's engagement and personal interest in the exhibition and the influence of the communicative environment, including her mother, who had accompanied her. The evidence of these assumptions may be found in the inclusion, in the drawing, of the names of the objects that her mother had regarded as significant[5], and in the absence of objects in which she had shown interest in the video documentation (Insulander and Lindstrand 2013, 230-233). However, a certain degree of *agency* was presumed by the researchers after realizing that she had deliberately chosen an imaginary space arrangement of the objects, which differed in terms of size and location from the actual disposition of the elements in the exhibition (Insulander and Lindstrand 2013, 233). In relation to the abovementioned experiments which may be taken as an example of the nature of any semiotic activity – we may argue that the design of a complex semiotic object

[5] In this particular experiment, the subject (Anna) had rearranged the visual disposition of the exhibition and chosen deliberately to include the objects preferred by the mother (antique jewelry) and exclude others which she was interested in. The experiment is described by both Kress (2010) and Insulander and Lindstrand (2013) and confirms the existence of some interesting connections between individuals' degree of agency and the inevitable influence of the context. It also questions, as mentioned so far, the ontological nature of agency and its actual existence.

like an exhibition raises in the mind of the prompt receiver (at an unconscious level, without critical awareness) questions like the following:

1) What is the environment, or context of communication?
2) Who are the participants?
3) What do I wish to communicate, and what are my purposes?
4) What is the particular type of power relationship between me and them?

An interesting series of questions was designed by Cope and Kalantzis (2009) and reported below, for they developed further the concept of *awareness* of semiotic activity and attempt to *systematize* its understanding and design by proposing a multimodal grammar of meaning creation. In essence, these authors argue that each *mode* creates five types of meaning, which may be explored by answering five questions[6]:

1) What do the meanings of each mode refer to in external experience? (representational meaning)
2) How do these meanings connect the people involved in the semiotic act? (social meaning)
3) How do these meaning hang together? (organizational meaning)
4) How do these meanings fit in the context? (contextual meaning)
5) Whose interests are served through the communication of these meanings? (ideological meaning)

This kind of question should be addressed *consciously* when analyzing any kind of content in the contemporary ubiquitous communicative environment. Indeed, these assign social and semiotic agency to the recipients of any *prompt* by fostering critical awareness, reflection, and involvement (Kress 2010, 44-46; Insulander and Lindstrand 2013, 230; Insulander 2007). Without critical awareness, in fact, one may not understand if a communicative event is the result of active participation in it or if it is a simple reproduction of others' interests (Foucault 1978).

[6] Adapted from Cope and Kalantzis 2009, 36.

Despite the importance of such approach, the focus on the interpretation of others' intentions to become active rhetors is claimed by other scholars not to be strictly necessary to develop a visual literacy. According to Mitchell, and in line with Peircean semiotics, the process of signification starts from the perception of visual information in contemporary media that may be 'decoded' and become an intepretant by virtue of imagery's resemblance to unmediated, real-world experience and objects (1994). The analogous nature of visual elements, then, becomes the primary means to make sense of visual media conventions and derive meaning "by drawing on their real-world perceptual skills rather than on any specific knowledge gained from previous encounters with movies or other visual media" (Messaris 2014, 41-42). Meaning internalization, then, occurs primarily with analogical representations that shape an umediated correspondence between pictorial elements and real-worlds informational cues, and is not the result of individuals' assimilation of the representational standards of a particular social and cultural context.

However, Messaris mentions in another paper that the understanding of pictorial elements may sometimes be hindered if individuals have no knowledge about media conventions such as editing of shots in movies (1995, 52-55) or of visual advertising, thus highlighting the importance of contextual, ideological uses in understanding pictorial cues and particular patterns of forms and choices in film editing.

To combine both views for a critical approach to multimodal theories and justify the methodological steps undertaken for this study, we may argue that Kress' work sheds light on the necessary semiotic work in the understanding of non-transparent signs (Perice) and perform *agency*, i.e. reflect on the role and nature of the context of any message before the act of internalization and response. The context, as we have seen in Chapter Two, includes also the participants and the relationships of power between them, as well as the informed use of different modes and the reasons behind particular visual or linguistic choices. Awareness, agency and modal literacy may lead specifically to 1) communicative efficacy and 2) transparency (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006; Kress 2003). However, relationships of power may hinder significantly individual's awareness and capacity to *act* in communication, even when there is *awareness of it*. The next section provides some examples of informed and apt 'modal' use for the purpose of communicative efficacy in

knowledge dissemination and internalization, whereas section 3.1.5 focuses on partiality of interests and the creation – as well as potential resistance to – ideological meaning.

3.1.4 The increasing importance of visual information in learning processes and digital spaces: visual literacy for conveying and internalizing knowledge

The first attempts to analyze semiotic agency for the purpose of communicative efficacy were made by Kress and were applied successfully to the teaching environment with the support of John Ogborn, professor of Science Education at the Institute of Education, University of London, as well as by Messaris, as mentioned in the previous section (2014). By studying the role of images in the understanding and internalization of knowledge, both Kress and Ogborn came to the conclusion that visual communication is the most intuitive and effective way of disseminating knowledge, since humans are primates, visual animals (Ogborn 2013); for this reason, visual elements should be implemented in courses to support learning. Perceptual empirical studies confirm that visual experience is the most dominant learning mode for humans, as images are the basic mode of communication in the brain (Barry 2004, 53). Thus, visual information is crucial to building synaptic connections and knowledge, which is acquired through perception. These studies, therefore, show that perception is the primary means to access reality and make meaning, which is intrinsically related to emotions (Barry 2004, 46, 48, 49; Messaris 1997, 4), as also suggested by Mitchell in his definition of *image* (1994)[7]. In other words, images become effective and persuasive semiotic resources not only because of their perceptual resemblance to reality, but because they are perceived by the brain in the most intuitive way; this process stimulates emotional learning, consequently framing thinking, behavior, and attitudes (Damasio 1994).

Kress and Ogborn's experiment shows specifically how complex physics concepts may be conveyed and understood through schemes, scannings, graphs and charts in textbooks, as they convey information in a clearer, more intuitive and appealing way, compared to the written word (Ogborn 2013, 186-194). In order to prove this point, Kress and Ogborn investigated the function and role of imagery in the dissemination of information in

[7] Chapter Two explains in more detail what the *image* is according to Mitchell (1994).

science texbooks from a diachronic perspective, showing an increasing adoption of the visual mode in science teaching. The results confirm what has been already discussed in Chapter Two with regard to text-image relations and contemporary, emerging trends (Berger 1972; Bateman 2014b; Stöckl et al. 2019); indeed, the increasing role of imagery as co-elaborator of meaning and mode that equally adds information to the explanation of concepts suggests a shift of the visual mode from mere illustrator to anchor, and of the written mode to an equal – if not subordinate – meaning elaborator (Kress 2010, 48, 143; Kress 2003). This strengthens the connections between the previous and current chapters of this thesis, and continues the discussion on the need for visual literacy in order to *act* in the contemporary communicative environment.

By relying on the theory of multimodality, particularly on the notion of modes as intentional and sociosemiotic resources for meaning creation, and on the nature of their relationship in learning environments, Kress demonstrates that multimodal, spatial arrangements of signs contribute to the classification of visual meaning as a key semiotic resource to the understanding of information. In other words, the arrangement of image and text on the pages, i.e. the layout, serves as a means to assign coherence and cohesion to the cluster of information (Kress 2010, 88-92, 142-143). Additionally, in relation to what was discussed in section 3.1.3, this experiment may be considered to be a successful application of Kress' concept of *awareness* of the context of communication; indeed, it shows that individuals may design transparent and effective communicative events by crafting carefully a prompt for their receivers (the students), for a specific purpose (teaching and learning), and with apt sociosemiotic resources and their combination (Cope and Kalantzis 2009).

These considerations, in order to be useful for the development of agency in all spheres of contemporary society, require some general reflections on the current digital sphere from a multimodal perspective. Indeed, the convergence of modes and digital media has shaped a communicative environment that expands the reach and increases the complexity of such modes, assigning to them influential, communicative power and a major role in contemporary processes of configuration, representation and communication of worldviews and knowledge (Kress 2010, 96). In this sense, an aware, informed use of modes and their affordances in each context of production and dissemination seems

paramount when resisting an influence of other individuals' representations and intentions. As we have discussed in the previous chapters, developing critical awareness of the context of linguistic and visual 'uses' – including the underlying purposes and media – is an important prerequisite for individuals to become active participants in society. Thus, it seems necessary to learn more about each *mode's* affordances, resources, and limitations, and to learn what kind of meanings and effects may be constructed with modes in the various cultures and *media* (Kress 2010, 97; Kress 2003). In other words, developing a *literacy* of modes and their use in context may enable us to become competent and informed communicators. These assumptions draw upon Halliday's conception of social semiotics and importance of context in meaning making processes, which were illustrated in the first chapter of this thesis (Halliday 1978), and may be linked to the considerations outlined in Chapter Two with regard to media effects and capitalist ideology.

This idea was shared not only by Kress, but also by many of the scholars working in the field of linguistics and media studies (Jewitt et al. 2016; Jewitt 2014; Adami and Kress 2014; Bachmair and Pachler 2014; Jones et. al 2015). In particular, Carey Jewitt, in *The Handbook of Multimodal Analysis* (2014) – a major contribution to the theory and application of multimodality in which authors engage with multidisciplinary approaches – investigates the relationship between modes and media and argues that modes, by being abstract systems for the organization of the communicative use of material signifiers, need channels and their affordances for the actual transmission of messages (Jewitt 2014, 2). Brian Street, in *Multimodality and New Literacy Studies*, agrees with this definition, and claims that new literacies will be required in order to be able to use, read and communicate with the new ICTs, including the Internet (Street 2014, 109).

To summarize the points made so far, Kress and his colleagues claim that a literacy of modes is needed for the following reasons:

1) Visual and multimodal communication have always been present, in children's first modes of expression as well as in writing;
2) Digital media require a literacy on their own, in relation to the affordances and effects of the modes which are spread easily and ubiquitously thanks to new media's affordances and social purposes;

3) Literacy of modes as sociosemiotic resources for meaning making emphasizes the concept of choice and assigns agency to individuals, also for communicative efficacy and transparency.

In this regard, the following section will focus on the notion of transparency and conclude our discussion of the theoretical premises of multimodality, which aimed at showing how such a social semiotic approach is needed to decode and encode contemporary signs actively; the remaining sections will describe and classify modes and communicative situations in order to provide the tools which will enable individuals to exercise their agency concretely in the contemporary social environment. Finally, by comparing different scholarly traditions, the focus of this chapter will shift to more empirical and systematic approaches to the *scientific* analysis of multimodal artifacts, which may increase individuals' awareness of contemporary trends of discourse practices.

3.1.5 Expression and semiotic choice in the past and at present: partiality of interest

As the previous chapter showed, visual information is emerging in the current semiotic landscape as the main, superordinate source for conveying constructed representations of events (Stöckl et al. 2019), especially for its symbolic and apparently uncoded nature, even though it has always been a primary means to convey meaning in cultures relying on image-based scripts (such as the Egyptian iconic hieroglypich representations) or Australian aboriginals (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 22; Kress 2010, 97-99; Street 2014, 104-105). It follows that the visual mode, like language, may be considered to be a semiotic system which displays its own set of organized rules. Examples of genres proving such transformation include children's stories, print and electronic advertisement, online newspapers, tabloids, magazines, blogs, social media updates (Kress 2010). Despite the presence of complex semiotic processes that intertwine different modes, the educational system may sometimes lack awareness of the need to teach how to create and understand meaning in this environment; consequently, this phenomenon produces illiterates (Kress and van Leewen 2006, 17; Kress 2003; altri). The lack of cognitive, theoretical as well as methodological and analyitical skills to approach communication has been claimed to be

the breeding ground for the exercise of social control, which may be encoded subtly in imagery; its meaning, if not decoded, may not be approached critically and questioned, and cannot stimulate the design of counternarratives (Archer 2014; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 26-28, 30-34). This phenomenon, already described by Barthes in Chapter Two and in this chapter by Messaris (1997), raises questions about the intentional degree of intelligibility and transparency of contemporary promotional communication, and on the role an adequate literacy on media and modes may play in helping individuals express their intentions and agency when confronted with such ubiquitous and pervasive promotional practices (Rowsell and Pahl 2013, 163; Kress 2010, 73-74, 110-116; Kress 1997, 1). As also Theo van Leeuwen argues (2006), communication, by being a socially mediated reality and product of society, has an intrinsic, ambivalent nature:

> Communication requires that participants make their messages maximally understandable in a particular context. They therefore choose forms of expression which they believe to be maximally transparent to other participants. On the other hand, communication takes place in social structures which are inevitably marked by power differences [...] Representation requires that sign-makers choose forms of expression of what they have in mind, forms which they see as most apt and plausible in the given context (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 13)

In conclusion, modes may become powerful tools for the expression of one's personal views, attitudes, interests and for the informed response to those of others. Knowing how to use their affordances in context is a literacy that combines informed social action and apt semiotic use of complex "technologies of transcription", of production and dissemination (Kress 2010, 96) in the current digital and capitalist communicative environment. The next sections will focus on the definition of these affordances and of the different layers of meaning modes may construct and convey, in an attempt to show how meanings and events are framed modally at an individual and socio-discursive level (Kress 2010, 122-123; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 8-11).

3.1.6 Modal affordances: enhancing intentionality and moving towards systematic analysis of meaning

In order to become aware of other people's intentions, and to become active designers of context-driven, interest-driven interpretations and representations of external events, one needs to learn the different nature and role of modes in the contemporary sociocultural

environment. Different scholarly traditions focus on this topic from complementary perspectives; in this regard, two main contributions should be mentioned: the one by the Kress and his colleagues (3.1.6.1) – together with a direct application of his theory through the description of the Grammar of Visual Design, the main approach adopted in this thesis (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, section 3.1.6.2) –, and the one by Bateman and his colleagues (3.1.6.3), which will be described separately for the sake of clarity. The next two sections will attempt to answer the following questions according to both perspectives:

1) What are modes?
2) How may they be distinguished and used? For what purposes?
3) How do they make meaning?
4) How may they be connected with one another for the critical understanding of multisemiotic acts of meaning making?

Indeed, the intersection of these theoretical and methodological approaches in the explanation of the semiotic nature and potential of modes will allow us to gain a deeper understanding of the role multimodality plays in contemporary society and research on socio-economic, ideological processes of meaning making.

3.1.6.1 Kress' approach: modes as social resources and semiotic affordances

Modes in the Kressian tradition are socioculturally established resources which are available to the members of a particular society to create signs and make meaning (Jewitt 2014). Compared to previous scholarly traditions in semiotic analyses[8], Kress provides a theoretical and analytical set of tools for the categorization and critical analysis of semiotic resources that go beyond language. Indeed, by relying on and connecting with a fresh perspective Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (2014) and social semiotics (1978), he lays out a systematic method for the analysis of metafunctional meaning making processes across and thanks to the affordances and resources of each mode. By defining modes as semiotic resources that are acknowledged and used by society, Kress also

[8] See Chapter Two for an overview of semiotics studies.

includes the notion of social and cultural context, thus taking into consideration their influence on the establishment of particular communicative, generic practices and social uses on different media. At this point, however, it is important to distinguish and describe the properties of each mode according to social semiotics; this procedure, indeed, will be useful to shed some light on current scholarly debates about theoretical and methodological implications and inadequacies.

This theoretical distinction proves to be important in the understanding of Kressian terminology and later discussions. In Kress' view, every mode has different affordances, resources and limitations; furthermore, each mode has a reach, i.e. a certain degree of significance and frequency, which varies across societies and cultures (Kress 2010, 80-81). While the term *affordance* refers to personalized uses of modes based on individual needs and interests in specific communicative situations, the term *resource* determines uses that have been socially and culturally acknowledged (Insulander and Lindstrand 2013, 226). In addition to these terms, Kress proposes a further distinction between *individual* affordance and *material* affordance, in order to highlight the functions and potential uses of modes due to their physical and ontological properties (Kress 2010, 81, 125; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 35). For example, speech may be realized and classified through different *sounds*, their *variation* and *rhythm*, *words*; imagery, however, imagery cannot rely on these features to express meaning, but it can use *drawings* and *graphic elements*. The mode of writing, on the other hand, features both graphic resources such as *font, size, color, spacing, bolding* – as analyzed extensively by van Leeuwen (2011, 2021) – and more structural and abstract elements such as *sentences* and *paragraphs* (Kress 2010; 79-80). A diagram summarizing these conceptual and terminological distinctions is provided in Figure 3.4.

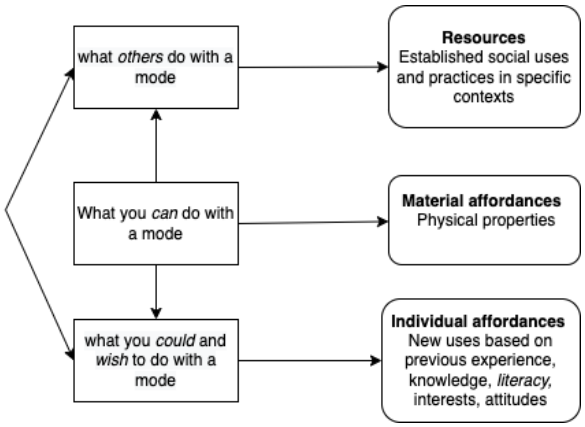


Figure 3.4: Kress' conceptual and terminological distinctions in the definition of modes

It follows that communication may be defined as the product of a tension between *established* and *innovative, personal* uses of modes; this phenomenon generates a mutual enrichment that depends on the degree of both the 1) multimodal 'material' and 2) 'social' literacy developed by the people who contribute to these sociosemiotic events. In other words, both societies and individuals rely on modes to construct particular views and convey them for particular purposes. Multisemiotic literacy, then, may be developed by individuals by studying the material affordances of each mode and how they may be used to achieve particular goals, and by investigating the reasons why certain societies use specific modes in particular domains of knowledge. For example, the Western literary and cultural tradition has preferred, for centuries, the written linguistic mode in the domain of public communication preserve power relationships, limit access, and to avoid transparency (Kress 2010). However, that is not the case in other types of public domains, such as politics, among others, which rely heavily on gestures; this assumption attracted scholarly interest also in the field of media studies applied to tourist sociology, as demonstrated by Jaworski's and Thurlow's analysis of tourist performance and of the role of gesture and kinesics in mediating actions with the environment (2009).

Kress demonstrates the different material uses and sociosemiotic effects of modes by focusing on his experience in teaching and learning, and this approach has been applied and extended by a large body of scholarly contributions (Insulander 2017; Yeo and Nielsen 2020; Lim et. al 2022; Magnusson and Godhe 2019; Pramono and Suherdi 2019). While

this section does not seek to provide a detailed review of different applications of Kress' work, it wishes to stress the importance of distinguishing between modes and the meaning they may construct, including the effects, and the interpersonal metafunction. This will be followed by some critical reflection on this matter by Bateman and his colleagues and the outline of the Grammar of Visual Design, along with some methodological advances that enhance its reliable and reproducible applicability.

An example worth mentioning is the experiment carried out by Kress during science classes in London, as it shows unequivocally how meaning may be realized and framed depending on different modes; due to its self-explanatory nature, it is presented by both Kress and by the co-author van Leeuwen (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996). During the experiment, two 13-year-old students were asked to redesign the topic of blood circulation by writing a story in which they were impersonating a blood cell traveling in the body (Kress and van Leewen 2006, 41). The two students decided autonomously to tell the story in two different modes, i.e. *writing* a diary and *visualizing* the journey with a diagram; indeed, these reflected their different approach and attitude to the subject and engagement with that world. Both of them can be considered suitable and effective; however, they differ in terms of the effect they have thanks to their material and social affordances. While the diagram looks more structured on first impressions, the diary looks more engaging and 'relatable' through the use of the first-person pronoun. The different semiotic logic organization, additionally – the diagram's spatial, hierarchical arrangement of concepts and the diary's temporal and chronological sequencing – enables the students to represent the topic by focusing on different aspects and views of the topic, which resonates with their attitudes and may be leveraged in diversifying and boosting learning processes (Kress 2010, 94-95, 162-163; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 41). This result is confirmed by Insulander's work on pupils' use of different modes to express their knowledge using multimodal learning design (2017).

The notion of affordances and resources in meaning making processes is crucial to the classification of modes and to the analysis of how these make meaning (*material affordances)*, and why they are used (*modes as resources)*; this procedure will be useful to draw some connections with empirical approaches to multimodality, in order to offer an integration of both perspectives for reliable analysis of visual signs. In essence, Kress relies on the

notion of metafunction and lexicogrammar to explain how meaning may be created by visual means. As illustrated in section 3.1.2 of this chapter, Kress argued that any meaning making process starts with the *reception* and *internalization* of meaning that is *created* and *conveyed* between *subjects*. In other words, signs and their meaning are first conceived and represented in participants' minds and subjectivity, and they are successively negotiated between participants (Kress 2010, 87). This in line with SFL's conception of linguistic construction of actions, states, events in the world and is referred to as the *ideational metafunction*, and is enriched by the semiotic work any mode performs to realize interpersonal meaning (Kress 2010, 87; Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 43), i.e. to "project the relations between the producer of a (complex) sign, and the receiver/reproducer of that sign" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 42).

Finally, the *textual metafunction* refers to the semiotic capacity of a mode to form texts, complexes of signs, which cohere internally and externally with the context.

For the visual mode, the subdivision of the different meanings, or functions is summarized in Table 3.1. This will be important in the discussion that follows and in the methodology section of this dissertation.

	Ideational/ Experiential	**Interpersonal**	**Textual**
(Meta)functions of visual mode	Reception, internalization and construction of worldviews	Communication and negotiation of worldviews and related attitudes, emotions, evaluations	Visual arrangement of information in a coherent and cohesive way 1) at an intrasemiotic level; 2) at an intersemiotic level 3) by taking into account the surrounding social context (including the medium, the participants, the ideology)

Table 3.1: The three metafunctions as applied to the visual mode according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006)

Despite the role of such approach in providing the means to categorize and compare semiotic resources across modes, Kress' reliance on metafunctions leads us to consider modes as resources which are related inextricably to social context to realize meaning. This is not necessarily true, as semiosis, as was mentioned previously in this chapter, is a process

that occurs by perceiving the intrinsic qualities of a phenomenon in the external world. Modes, then, represent the constraints, or material affordances, through which a qualisign is represented and communicated to others; the qualisign has the potential to become a legisign and to be understood as such if designed according to particular conventions to fit in a specific social context for particular purposes (Bateman 2018, 11). However, the analysis of modes and signs according to their symbolic value (as legisigns) should not be a task of analylists, for it does not provide objective insights into meaning creation through modes. Nonetheless, an analysis of the materialities by means of data-driven, theoretically based labels may help test and confirm the role of modes in constructing social and metafunctional meaning. This idea will be expanded in the next sections.

3.1.6.2 A practical grammar of visual design: applying Kress' theory to the classification and analysis of static imagery

Drawing on Kress' assumptions about modes and SFL's three metafunctions, Kress and van Leeuwen designed a classification scheme for the analysis and understanding of meaning-making processes in static imagery, by detecting and discussing visual, lexicogrammatical resources in different types of images (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 15; Halliday 1961, 1985; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). Many authors have underlined the novelty of their theoretical and analytical approach to visual communication, and they strongly support their theory of visual design (Hodge 2013, 7-15; Jagodzinski 2013, 71-78; Gogolin 2013; Serafini 2010). This type of analysis has been widely applied to different research areas, including tourism discourse, which is the object of the current dissertation (Francesconi 2014, 81; Manca 2016). For the sake of clarity, this section will describe schematically the Grammar designed by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996; 2006), and compare it with previous scholarly work on imagery (Messaris 1997; Argyle 1975; Tuchman 1978; Lombard 1995; Mandell & Shaw 1973; Kraft 1987; Millum 1975; Hall 1966) without discussing the implications of such an approach in too much depth. This classification represented, indeed, the foundation of the data-driven, tagging system developed for the analysis of promotional imagery on the Instagram accounts and company websites of the three popular English-speaking tourism boards under investigation. The following sub-sections, then, will focus on recent scholarly work that

questions the scientific reliability of the application of this contextually based, analytical framework for its lack of empirical testing on large amounts of data, which may lead to potentially inaccurate interpretations and non-generalizable findings (Bateman et al. 2017). Kress and van Leeuwen structured their contribution in the following way: they first 1) describe the visual lexicogrammatical resources used to fulfill the ideational metafunction – i.e. the relationship between objects, actions and their representation – by grouping images into *narrative* and *conceptual*; then, they 2) provide a classification of the visual resources to realize interpersonal meaning and the relationship between the producer and the receiver of the sign, in order to analyze images' degree of *interaction*. Finally, they analyze visual imagery's textual metafunction, and its capacity to structure, through *compositional* strategies, a coherent whole (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 41-44).

3.1.6.2.1 The ideational metafunction: narrative and conceptual representations

As mentioned in section 3.1.6.1 and in Chapter One, the ideational metafunction in social semiotics construes social reality by means of representation of entities, the labeling of which may help examine how reality is represented and communicated by individuals. Both Kress and van Leeuwen refer to *represented* entities as "represented participants", as distinguished from "interactive participants", i.e. the sender and the receiver of the message (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 47-48; Francesconi 2014, 82). Visual participants may be either living beings in real life settings or abstract entities (Halliday 1978, 1985). While abstract representations mainly involve the identification of boxes, arrows and words, or the absence of a living subject or action – as occurs in diagrams, or maps – the representation of real life settings often include humans (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 48-50, 54 57). For this reason, the latter are called *narrative representations*, whereas the former are *conceptual representations* (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 50). Therefore, the subdivision into narrative and conceptual representations may help gain a better understanding of the ways in which external events are framed, and of the reasons behind particular 'partialities of interests' (Archer 2014; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 26-28, 30-34; Rowsell and Pahl 2013, 163; Kress 2010, 73-74, 110-116).

The action in narrative representations is represented by a vector – like an arrow, or an imaginary line, including eyelines – which does not occur in conceptual representations.

Conceptual representations, in particular, classify and describe a structure or a meaning of an entity as a whole (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 59-62). As may be seen in Figure 3.5 below, narrative representations may feature either action or reaction processes. In the diagram, *verbal*, *mental*, and the *conversion* processes are not included, as they are not distinguished in the current dissertation (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 68-69; Watson and Hill 1980).

The Actor in *action processes* is usually represented as the most salient participant by means of size, place, contrast, color saturation and sharpness of focus (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 63). When action processes feature also a Goal, they are called *transactional* [9]; when they only feature one Actor, they are called *non-transactional*. The visual structure of vectors in narrative processes is often leveraged by marketing strategists to make an impact on their target (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 66); this is particularly evident with *non-transactional,* narrative representations featuring an eyeline as a vector. In this case, the process is *reactional*, and the represented participants are respectively *Reacters* and *Phenomena*, respectively (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 67). If the inclusion of participants stimulates processes of inclusion and identification in the target viewer (Francesconi 2014, 82), the exclusion of the object of observation in non-transactional reactional processes has been claimed to become "a source of representational manipulation" (Francesconi 2014, 68). Finally, narrative processes may include secondary participants, the *Circumstances*, which may be related to the setting, the tools used to perform the action or an additional character, who does not perform any action but who is somehow related to the *Actor* (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 72). A similar distribution of participant roles is outlined by Verstergaard and Schroder in *The Language of Advertising* as well (Vestergaard and Schroder 1985, 27-32).

[9] The use of the term *transactional* builds on Halliday's system of Transitivity, which was described in Chapter One.

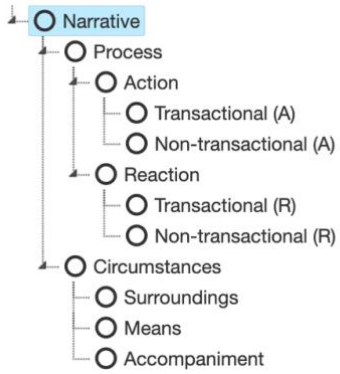


Figure 3.5: Narrative constituents (adapted from Kress and van Leeuwen 2006)[10]

Conversely, conceptual representations focus on the construction of entities in terms of class, structure or meaning (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 79), and are called *classificational, analytical and symbolic,* respectively (see Figure 3.6 below). A classification of conceptual classifications and constituents may help individuals understand the relationships between the entities involved in the many types of diagrams, maps, or 'visual' arguments. In particular, classificational processes link the represented participants by means of hierarchical relationships and a taxonomy, which features superordinate and subordinate elements. This kind of image is used in advertising to connect a range of products belonging to the same brand, and to create a sense of in-group identification in individuals using those products (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 79). Furthermore, these taxonomies may also establish relations of power; indeed, classificational structures such as tree diagrams may be designed to draw genealogies as well as reporting companies' hierarchical structures, which are social structures of power (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 82-84).

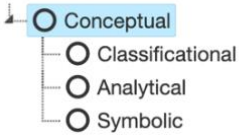


Figure 3.6: Types of conceptual images (adapted from Kress and van Leeuwen 2006)

[10] The diagrams proposed in this section were designed with Statistically Reliable Image Tagging (http://xor.isti.cnr.it:8000/login.html). This software technology was developed to carry out the visual annotation of the image corpora that were collected for the current dissertation. More information on this resource will be provided in the Methodology section.

Analytical processes, conversely; do not connect the participants hierarchically; instead, they construct relationships between a *Carrier*, and its possessive *Attributes* (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 87; Jewitt and Van Leeuwen 2001). This type of conceptual relationship usually occurs in fashion shots, in which human subjects are represented as *Carriers* of complex outfits, or in topographical representations, such as maps (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 87-90). Analytical structures usually display only essential features, for their main communicative purpose is informative. Furthermore, they do not engage emotionally with the viewer by means of human presence or gazing. Other examples of analytical representations include advertisement products or textbook images (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 89-94).

The last type of conceptual structure is the *symbolic process*, which encode a high level of connotative meaning. Symbolic representations describe the meaning of a *Carrier*, which may be embodied by the *Carrier* itself (*symbolic suggestive representation*) or its *Attributes* (*symbolic attributive representation*, Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 105). *Symbolic attributes*, in particular, are usually objects that carry a symbolic value that assigns meaning to the whole picture. For example, fruit like red apples may symbolize temptation, as they become a reference to the myth of original sin. Human participants, when present, tend to pose for the viewer and are not involved in any action. Symbolic suggestive processes and this kind of representation in general play an important role in promotional imagery[11]; indeed, these assign a specific meaning to the whole picture, which is called *atmosphere,* or *mood*, the effects of which are difficult to detect and interpret (Francesconi 2014, 87). An example of symbolic suggestive imagery are expressionist landscapes, which do not depict a specific moment but a *generalized essence, a condition* (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 106).

One of the criticalities of such classification, on which linguists such as Ledin and Machin (2019) and empirical multimodal agree, however, is that Systemic Functional Linguistics offers a too generic and abstract interpretative scheme, which groups all potential choices of meaning regularities under the umbrella term *metafunction*. This preestablished and apparently rigid classification scheme may hinder an awareness of the context and its

[11] The term and notion of *symbolic* meaning was first outlined by Barthes in his work *Rhetoric of the Image* (1964) and discussed in second chapter of this thesis.

variability, which is a main feature in discourse analysis (Bateman 2019a, 533). In particular, these authors challenge the fact that the choices made in a decontextualized SFL network may lead to interpretations that are not related to or representative of the context. This position will be clearer in the review of the textual metafunction.

3.1.6.2.2 The interpersonal metafunction

Compared to the ideational function, which focuses on the relationship between the *represented* participants, the interpersonal function shapes a relationship between the *interactive* participants, i.e. the producer of the semiotic object and the viewer, and between the *represented* and the *interactive* subjects, "who produce and make sense of images in the context of social institutions" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 114; Jewitt and van Leeuwen 2001). By representing an interest through the design of a visual sign, a producer communicates a specific meaning and view of events to another subject, who interprets and negotiates the sign according to their own interest and attitude. In contemporary society, however, the contact between the producer and the viewer is often *mediated* by a medium, like a digital website or a printed magazine, and is made easily available to the public *after* its production and in *different places*; this generates a disjunction between the context of production and reception (Kress and Van Leeuwen 114-115, 130; Francesconi 2014, 73). For this reason, the producer *addresses* and communicates with the viewer not only through the participants and their actions, the setting (the ideational metafunction), but also by means of their *gaze* (*contact*), camera *shot* (*social distance*), and *angle* (*attitude*) from which the picture is taken. The use of these features, then, may help individuals realize interpersonal meaning; their detection, on the other hand, may guide analysts in the formulation of hypotheses on the intentions and attitudes of the designer of the visual message. These features are illustrated in Figure 3.7:

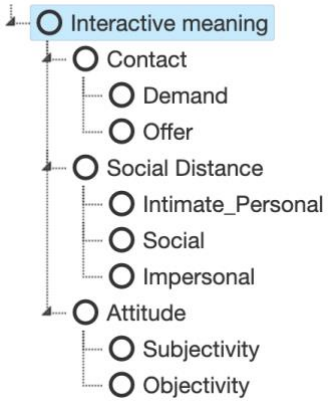


Figure 3.7: Interactive meaning (adapted from Kress and van Leeuwen 2006)

A considerable amount of scholarly work has investigated the role of the "direct eye gaze" (Messaris 1997, 21) in directing the attention (Millum 1975, 96, 115, 139), reflecting 'liking' (Argyle 1975, 162) or reproducing engaging social interaction (Messaris 1997, 21-23). Building on these assumptions, Kress and van Leeuwen argue that images may contribute to shaping a relationship between the represented participant and the viewer through the direct gaze of a represented live participant. When the gaze is directed toward the viewer, the relationship is called *demand*; indeed, the participant's gaze is an attempt to establish a relation based either on equality, identification, admiration or power and subjugation (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 116-118; Francesconi 2014, 89-90). In particular, Messaris adds that close contact with animals stimulates feelings of affection and nurturance, and can thus be used to foster agreement and compliance with the reality represented (Messaris 1997, 40-41; Martin and White 2005). On the other hand, when participants' gazes are directed at something else inside or outside the picture, the producer wishes to establish what is knonw as an *offer* relationship, in which the participants become objects of contemplation and sometimes of disengaged, objective scrutiny. A gaze directed somewhere else might also represent a visual strategy used to suggest a lack of artificiality, contrivance or to arouse curiosity (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 119-124).

The second dimension of the interactive features that build a relationship with the viewer is related to the size of frame. Indeed, previous visual studies stressed the role of camera shots in conveying an idea of physical promixity and social distance, which reflect different degrees of intimacy and formality (Messaris 1997; Hall 1966). While close-up shapes an intimate relation between the interactive and represented participants, as it reproduces

human interaction and allows viewers to focus on facial expressions and feelings (Messaris 1997, 47), the medium creates a social, or formal relationship. Finally, long shots suggest a very impersonal relationship between the viewer and the depicted participants (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 124-129; Harrison 2003). Close shots, for example, usually serves the purpose of triggering sympathetic reactions or even feelings of devotion towards the subjects (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 125); on the other hand, long shots are used to convey a detached view of individuals or scenarios, which turns them into either strangers, 'others', or objects of desire without feelings or personality (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 126). Empirical studies have confirmed that close-up shots stimulate both attention and involvement (Lombard 1995; Messaris 1997, 29). Messaris, in particular, focuses the attention on the use of *rear views*, in which the back of a person is depicted. As Paul Messaris comments, "in our real-world interactions with others, this view from the back can imply turning away or exclusion" (Messaris 1997, 24). In travel advertisements, this strategy is usually combined with long shots of landscapes or medium shots to invite viewers to join in an act of contemplation at natural wonders in a Romantic fashion, away from society and everyday life (Messaris 1997, 24-7).

Finally, interpersonal meaning may be analyzed by investigating the producer's choice in terms of attitude, which may be subjective or objective. Subjective images include the selection of an angle, or *point of view* – the perspective – which establishes a particular relationship between the represented and interactive participants (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 129), whereas objective images feature a *direct frontal angle* or a *perpendicular top-down angle*, which neutralize perspective distortions in order to offer the most detached and perfect image possible (Kress and Van Leeuwen 144). This often occurs in conceptual representations (i.e. diagrams, maps, charts). In particular, *subjective angles* may be realized through the adoption of a 1) *horizontal* angle and/or 2) *vertical* angle, the latter of which may express power and supremacy, authority and control (*high angle)* (Messaris 1997) an equal relationship (*eye-level angle*) or a submissive one (*low angle*) (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 140-143). Visual studies as well as empitical studies confirm that low angles suggest vulnerability, subservience, and a sense of intimation and menace, and that any subjective angle stimulates involvement and Participation (Messaris 1997, 38; Mandell & Shaw 1973; Kraft 1987),

3.1.6.2.3 The textual metafunction: composition

Both internal and external visual coherence are achieved by resorting to the resources of the textual metafunction, the analysis of which may support in the understanding of the overall visual meaning and of the role of each element in directing viewers' attention. In particular, textual meaning is constructed by sign makers through *compositional choices* (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 176; van Leeuwen 2003; Serafini 2010). These shape a relationship between the represented and interactive elements in a meaningful and coherent way by means of three interrelated systems, which are shown in Figure 3.8:

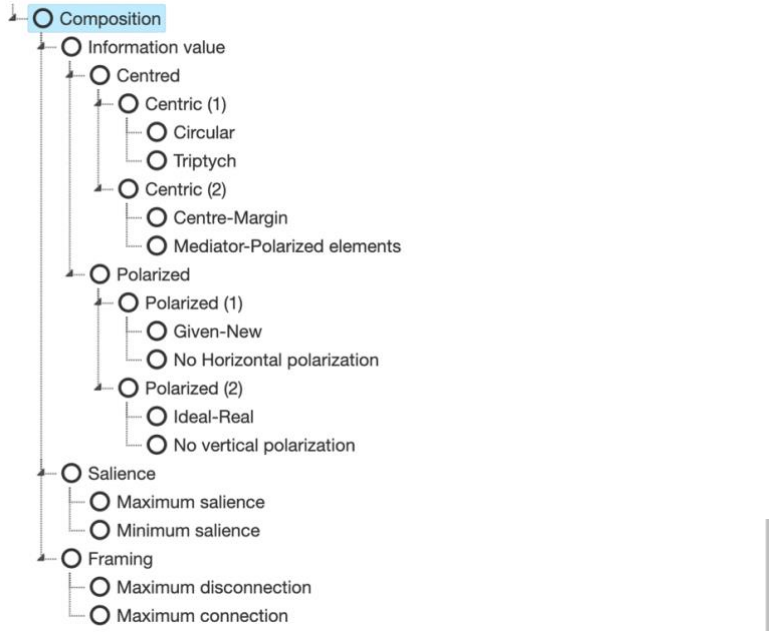


Figure 3.8: Compositional constituents in images (adapted from Kress and van Leeuwen 2006)

These three sets of options allow both the sign producer and recipient to understand the meaning behind particular dispositions of the elements and choices in terms of salience and framing strategies (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 177). In particular, *information value* concerns the placement of the represented participants in specific areas of the visual composition. By placing an entity in a particular area of the picture, specific assumptions about its meaning and importance may be inferred. While centric pictures feature an element in the center, polarized pictures may have four dimensions – i.e. the right or the

left part, and the top or the bottom part (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 209). However, the disposition and the meaning of these elements may vary depending on the cultural and social context. For example, in Western cultures, the left side of a picture represents the "given" or known information, whereas the new piece of information usually appears on the left. The reason lies in the fact that Western societies use a writing system that arranges letters' order from the left to the right (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 180-181; Verstergaard and Schroder 1985, 21). On the contrary, the top-bottom dichotomous disposition serves the purpose of distinguishing an abstract concept or ideal, such as the promise of a product in an advertisement or some theoretical assumption, and the concrete reality, which provides real facts and examples of that concept. The subdivision of the image into an upper part, the *ideal* concept described by the image, and a lower part, the *real*, has been contested by empirical multimodal scholars, for it represent *a priori* categorization that is 'imposed' on visual entities (Bateman 2019a). Indeed, this classification is based solely on theory and is not tested empirically on sets of data of different contexts for its validation and potential generalization (Bateman 2019a, 534; O'Halloran 2011; Ledin and Machin 2019; Caple 2019).

The disposition of the elements in a picture may also be accompanied by particular salience and framing strategies, which guide the attention and interest of the viewer by means of size, contrast, sharpness of focus, color (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 177); these features, however, need to be formalized in data-driven annotations and multiple testings to generate objective knowledge about the uses of modes' affordances and their purposes. This section showed how a 'grammar' of visual design is useful to detect the visual strategies that contribute to the construction of meaning in contemporary society; however, the adoption of this framework may not inform on the actual uses of the visual mode in context because it *imposes* certain classifications and interpretations without actually verifying their accuracy throughout data and contexts. These considerations may be viewed as a turning point in the description of the *methodological* shift in multimodal research towards data-oriented approaches to multimodality, which will be introduced from the next section onwards. Bateman, in particular, encourages scholars to provide a systematic application of theory and detection of patterns of materialities through empirical testing of context-driven hypotheses, and promotes a reorganization and

development of a stronger multimodal theory and supportive, empirical methodological tools that will enable analysts to provide "*situated discourse* interpretations of material patterns" (Bateman 2019a, 535).

3.1.6.3 Bateman's approach: modes as material and semiotic forms, and the role of media, discourse semantics in the definition of new genres

The theoretical subdivision and direct application of SFL tenets that were introduced by Kress have led to some concerns in terms of terminological clarity, methodological reliability and degree of generalizability, applicability in different contexts and data (Bateman 2014b; Bateman 2019a; Bateman 2019b; Bateman et al. 2017; O'Halloran 2011; Ledin and Machin 2019). This section, in particular, will offer a review of Bateman and colleagues' view of multimodal processes of meaning making. This section will also attempt to answer the following questions:

1) How does Bateman's view differ from Kress' notion of contextual analysis of modes as social semiotic resources?
2) What are the major implications of this conception in terms of multimodal analysis?

This section represents the starting point for the description of current empirical and quantitative studies, which this dissertation positions itself. In particular, section 3.1.6.3.1 will illustrate the concept of *material regularities* and show their role in the determination of patterns of modal construction of meaning; section 3.1.6.3.2 will link this discovery to the process of empirical analysis and the detection of *canvas* versus its interpretation; finally, section 3.1.6.3.3 will explore the connections between modes, discourse, and media in the definition of new genres of communication in contemporary society.

3.1.6.3.1 Material regularities as unequivocable *traces* of semiotic meaning in canvases

In terms of terminological distinctions, Bateman and colleagues (Bateman et al. 2017) argue that previous definitions of mode (Kress 2010; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006; Jewitt 2014; Boeck and Pachler 2013) do not succeed in setting sufficiently clear boundaries between *materiality, medium, semiotic form, genre,* and *texts* (Bateman et al. 2017, 112-130). This may be due, as mentioned briefly in Chapter Two, to the overreliance of Kress' theory on concepts that derive from linguistics. Indeed, this poses a theoretical and practical problem for multimodal analysts who work with texts that do not contain language, or who wish to work with concepts outside linguistics. In this sense, a clear distinction between modes, media, genres and canvas – a new theoretical and methodological tool introduced by Bateman's school – may support scholars in the development of tailored research tools and methods for more empirical analyses that observe data when applying untested concepts (Bateman 2019b).

Some of the major methodological contributions and application of this line of research include Bateman's GEM work and definition of a classification scheme for the systematic analysis of multimodal documents (2008), which was followed by Hiippala's empirical analysis of tourist multimodal brochures' layout (2015); the analysis of visual layout of comics and graphic novels (Bateman et al. 2017b); the investigation of cohesion chains for the tracking of film elements (Tseng 2013); 5) Wildfeuer's (2014) and Wildfeuer and Bateman's (2016) work on systematic fim analysis; and, finally, Stöckl et al. (2019) definition and classification of image-centric genres, which was introduced in Chapter Two and will be discussed more thoroughly in section 3.2.1.5.

In their contributions, Bateman and colleagues do not wish to refute the tenets of multimodality; rather, they wish to develop robust methods and empirical stances that may be acknowledged by a wide range of scholarly traditions, and which may suit the increasingly data-driven, quantitative approaches humanities are adopting to verify and ensure reliability and reproducibility of results, in an attempt to contribute to social understandings in novel and 'measurable' ways (Sayers 2018).

This research goal may be achieved by giving equal balance to materialities and semiotic contributions (Bateman et al. 2017, 133-118); in concrete terms, this implies a redefinition

of the role and nature of modes and by connecting the different variables of context for data-driven and systematic analysis. Indeed, modes should be classified and analyzed separately in terms of their 1) material forms (Kress' *material affordance)*, which are related to the sensory channels that are used to *perceive* them and to their actual physical properties and potentialities (Bateman 2021, 42), and of their 2) *semiotic* form, which concerns the meanings that are given by their users. In other words, meaning *construction* should be kept separate from meaning interpretation, and the latter should not affect the scientific detection of patterns of material uses in these meaning making processes.

The detection and quantification of patterns of *material regularities,* in this sense, become the objective and empirical grounds for contextualized and discourse analysis of particular communicative events, or *canvas* (Bateman et al. 2017, 87; Bateman 2021, 59), even though the perception of materiality cannot be entirely divorced from social practices and experiences of a perceiver (Bateman 2019b). In other words, a canvas is the material support in which the material regularities of one or more modes *can be* inscribed, can intersect, and may be *interpreted* as regularities of use and purpose that should not lead to biased preconceptions or expectations; instead, they should lead to abductively obtained hypotheses that need empirical testing (Bateman et al. 2017, 69, 114, 140-141; Bateman 2021, 47). They should not be considered as "ready-formed principles of multimodal organisation in general" (Bateman et al. 2017, 119). A canvas, in particular, "characterizes just those material distinctions or regularities that are necessary for that specific mode to operate" (Bateman 2021, 49); thus, it *supports* the material traces modes demand, and which are the "*semiotic* construction of *access* to that material (Bateman et al. 2017, 101) and *material that can carry the traces of modes*. This also defines the semiotic possibilities and constraints, i.e. 'what can be done' in a communicative event, and what material traces of modes it supports (2021, 53); these traces may be 1) permanent or transient (such as marks in printed books or chalk marks on blackboards, or conversations versus printed brochures), 2) static or dynamic (a cartoon versus a film), 3) 2D or 3D, and 4) also left by observers (like book readers) or players (such as in video games), with important implications in terms of the definition of patterns of material regularities and successively meaning making (Bateman et al. 2017; Bateman 2021, 51).

If we were to compare this construct with Kressian or Hallidayan views of communicative events, we might argue that the definition and labeling of material distinctions in a way that *does not* include the *uses* made – i.e. that keeps *materialities* and *uses* separate – also considers metafunctional diversification to be a secondary – if applicable – step in the empirical process (Bateman 2019a; Bateman 2019b). This assumption is what positions Bateman's approach as distinct from most SFL-based perspectives. Nonetheless, an empirical approach such as the one mentioned above may provide more reliability to the Kressian classification and exploration of acts of meaning creation, reception, interpretation and internalization, and is what what this study intends to do.

3.1.6.3.2 Different layers of meaning potentials: detection versus interpretation

To explore in detail the terminological and methodological distinction between material, or physical, and *social* affordances, an example may serve to increase our understanding of the potential role of the *media* in realizing the *semiotic* meaning and *discourse semantics* of modes and in generating new communicative practices, or *genres*. Indeed, according to this distinction, apparently similar media become entirely different in their nature and use for their physical and social affordances. Paintings and photographs, for example, become different modes because of the distinct use of their visual affordances or *materialities* and the different meaning attached to them (Bateman 2021, 40-43); this has some important implications in terms of ideological and metafunctional meaning realization and communicative purposes. "[E]xpert users of a semiotic resource (such as a professional photographer) might use those resources to in a way that composes distinct material effects to create meanings that are simply not available to the novice [user]" (Bateman et al. 2017, 115). These assumptions can lead to a configuration of semiotic meaning as grammatical, i.e. intentional, in which specific meanings may be negotiated consciously by discourse specialists, and whose mechanisms may not be available to the recipients, putting the producers in a position of power and control (Bateman 2017, 115-116; Kress and van Leeuwen 2001, 113).

In other words, a focus on this terminological distinction in analytical processes may assist us in 'generating' novel interpretations of social behavior, as well as in the discovery of new uses and constraints of semiotic modes that are based on a solid, empirical detection

of materialities. This means that even if *uses* of modes and their consequent *traces* are inevitably connected to one another and are also generated by an *external* context of production, which represents the third, parallel step of the analysis, or of the *canvas,* this should not affect or hamper the empirical observation of modes' material behavior. In this sense, Bateman et al. *separate* social understanding and awareness of the context from empirical observation of material traces of particular uses. This distinction enables researchers to use and integrate different ways of approaching, accessing and formulating hypotheses on social knowledge. Indeed, an empirical stance may lead to the generation and scientific validation of discoveries, intepretations that are generated through a socially constructed view of knowledge, communication and reality (Sayers 2018). This view might be considered to be in line with the Hallidayan viewpoint and all stress the fact that an awareness of the medium, its social use and particular uses of modal affordances for specific purposes is important, whether to 'make sense' of the data in research studies (Bateman et al. 2017) or to exercise individual agency in communication (Kress et al. 2000, 43). Indeed, as also described in the previous sections, Kress (2010), Gee (2013), Jewitt (2014) and Mavers (2013) have developed the concept of multimodal agency, or 'proactive design' further – i.e. sign creation through interest-driven, apt use of modes' affordances in the context (Gee 2013, 44-47) – by focusing particularly on the installation and analysis of multimodal digital environments in musems; these were claimed to have succeeded in engaging visitors and fostered critical thinking, debate, and creation of new social identities and relations (Kress 2010, 6, 132) by means of bodily movement, participation and vocal recording of feedback (Jewitt 2014, 74-93; Mavers 2013, 175-176).

To sum up, one might argue that the objective of Bateman's and colleagues' scholarly work is to provide a series of essential principles, tools, and techniques for the *classification og* communicative situations that is based on robust and systematic methodologies and empirical research of modal, *material* behavior. In line with Kress and Halliday, scholars belonging to the semiotics and empirical tradition consider context to be a key variable in the *preliminary* and untested classification of genres; however, they believe that a qualitative analysis of modes without a systematic categorization that is based on modal, empirical observation may not lead to the discovery of multimodal patterns of social communicative behavior and intentions, or genres. These assumptions are consolidated in Pflaeging et. al

2021, which validates, by means of theoretical, methodological and statistical observations and case studies, the hypothesis that previous knowledge and theoretical may support an understanding of data *after* empirical and quantitative study, *without* impositions and *undergoing* a process of questioning (38). Previous research or intutions on particular generic and medium contexts may only help shape the research questions and the communicative situation (or a hypothesized canvas); successively, the hypotheses must be subject to empirical testing[12]. In this sense, Kressian multimodal research has paved the way for the generation of hypotheses based on qualitative analysis of semiotic works and multimodal arrangement, or design, of "ensembles" (Kress 2010, 136; Mavers 2013; 176) that keep the situated social context into consideration – as was shown in section 3.1.3 (Kress 2010; Cope and Kalantzis 2009).

In conclusion, research on and interpretation of modes' uses in context that turn *materialities* into sources of *practices* is considered a separate step in empirical analysis (Bateman et al. 2017). This three-step procedure is visualized in Figure 3.9 and integrates 3.1.6.3.1 and 3.1.6.3.2 for it provides an interpretation of a *canvas*. As can be seen from Figure 3.9 below, an understanding of the material traces of semiotic work – together with the correlated canvas constraints – may inform, through data-driven statistical analyses, on the established uses of a multimodal artifact that generate, over time, developed modes of expression and gives rise to new communicative practices, which are both the product and cause of social practices and contexts. This oxymoronic assumption resonates with the claims made in the previous chapter (as well as in SFL): changes in communication occur both because of and to fulfill particular socio-economic needs.

[12] See section 3.2 for more details on newest empirical methods.

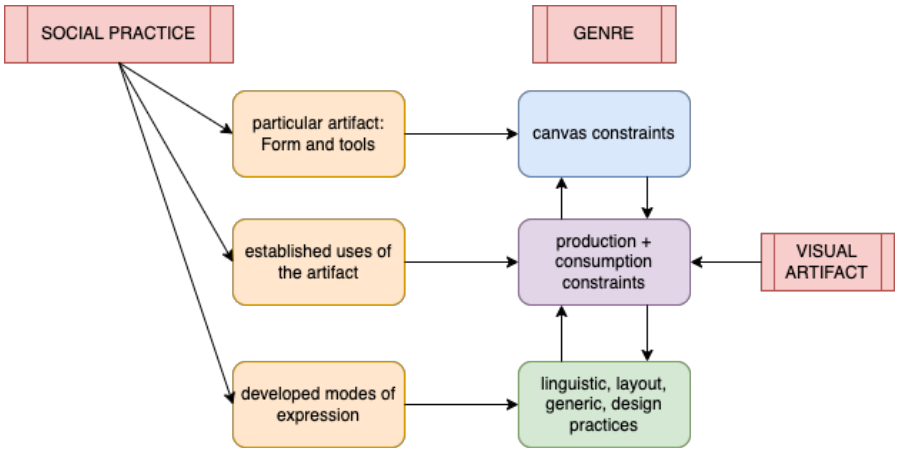


Figure 3.9: A model of Canvas (adapted from Bateman et al. 2017)

As can be inferred by looking at the diagram, multimodal analysis does not only require researchers to identify the canvas and the modes involved in specific multimodal events; indeed, the identification of both the receiver and the recipient of the canvas, i.e. the sign makers and the sign consumers, and an investigation of the relations between media, modes and society is essential for a valid interpretation of the empirical findings. In Bateman's view, a medium is "an historically stabilized site for the deployment and distribution of some selection of semiotic modes for the achievement of varied communicative purposes" (Bateman 2014a, 123); therefore, these established communicative forms or "sociohistorically-situated medial practices" (71) – such as newspapers, e-mails, online channels – are variables that affect the *contexts* of production and dissemination, which include communicative aims and socio-economic needs, and give rise to particular practices and genres (126).

3.1.6.3.3 Modes, discourse and media in canvas: defining new genres for a better understanding of conventions and aims in digital communication

At this point, we might argue that in any communicative scenario *media* play an important role, for they assist in contextualizing the findings and contributing to the production and dissemination of new patterns of material regularities, communicative trends and genres. Therefore, contextual variables, as also mentioned in Chapter One, define the uses,

dominance and centrality of modes across social practices; it follows that by analyzing the behavior of modes *empirically* – through the detection of patterns of material regularities – the methodological rigor inherent in this process may increase, and new sociological trends and communicative purposes may be unveiled. In other words, empirical multimodality may lead to new discoveries that make sense and realize the context, and may be useful to infer connections between modes and context more objectively (Pflaeging 2021; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). The concept of purposes is connected to the notion of *genres,* which are "bundles of strategies for achieving particular communicative aims in particular ways, including selecting particular media" (Bateman 2014a, 131); this means that when communicative aims change and when media are chosen for their social purposes new genres are created. This definition, in particular, is important if we wish to unveil the existence of new conventions and communicative purpose on digital media, which influence our perception of events and attitudes towards them (Herring 2013). Discourse semantics, in particular – the secondary or parallel step in the empirical process – relates "*particular deployments of 'semiotically-charged' material to the contextualized communicative purposes they can take up*" (Bateman 2014a, 116).

Nonetheless, it is not always entirely clear if detected material regularities and potential new uses of modal affordances are due to the presence of new communicative aims and audiences – and therefore genres – or are simple 'renewed' uses and genres. This, in turn, may have an impact on researchers' ability to discover new genres. Indeed, the presence of media as 'mediators' between material regularities and context may affect the use of a mode and its affordances in a way that is not intrinsic to the materiality of the mode but is related instead to the affordances of the medium (Bateman 2014a, 119). A discussion of this phenomenon is offered by Bateman (2014a), who explores the ways in which one may determine if modes' uses and semiotic *weight*, or role – also called dominance and centrality, as mentioned in Chapter Two) – depend on the medium's affordances/constraints or are related to varying rhetorical functions (Bateman 2014a, 70).

In Allori et al. (2014), Bateman argues that a solution is the empirical investigation of the use, weight and role assigned to modes throughout different media and communicative situations. By doing so, one may determine whether genres have simply developed by leveraging media's affordances or if entirely new genres are created. By building on Swales'

notion of genre (1990) – according to whom genres are communicative events/artefacts that share formal, stylistic and content regularities with a schematic structure for a common social purpose (Swales 1990) - Bateman claims that two main patterns need to be detected in order to demonstrate the existence of novel *rhetorical strategies* and new genres:

1) a new employment of the mode and its affordances, and
2) a redistribution of the multimodal semiotic weight, scope and role in relation with other modes, which results in a consistently different organization of the message and use.

In particular, *new uses* of modes may be unveiled by looking at their behavior and distribution across different media. For example, the move of a printed newspaper to an online newspaper is a simple reproduction and renewed use of the same genre, as the main aim and audience do not change (Bateman 2014a, 237); indeed, the different 'mode of consumption' is related to the presence of different medium affordances and constraints (i.e. the page-flow in printed media versus layout and hyperlinking on websites (Bateman 2014a, 251). Some rhetorical functions, such as the provision of specific clusters of content, in fact, can be realized by different modes and different patterns of discourse semantics. Therefore, the occurrences of configurations of similar rhetorical strategies across media through different modes may symbolize the presence a common genre (Bateman 2014a, 252). If, instead, a mode fulfills different functions through different patterns of material behavior that are not related only to the medium's constraints but also to its communicative functionalities, a new genre may be detected, as it occurs in Tik Tok recipe videos (Bateman et al. 2023, to appear). In particular, new media become co-creators of new social practices and generic conventions when trends of patterns of *formalities* may be detected by relying on data analysis and statistical measurement (Bateman et al. 2023, 28). Variance in these formalities across media, in particular, may indicate that media shape new communicate tasks, aim and semiotic work for a particular social goal. In this regard, Pflaeging argues that formal features indicative of a genre may be recognized if they are regularly reoccurring perceptible features employed by semiotic

systems; indeed, these may become indexical of stabilized sets of usage conventions (Pflaeging 2019).

The discovery of new multimodal genres, therefore, may be facilitated not only by freeing oneself from both generic expectations (Todorov 1990) and biased assumptions, but also through empirical observation, testing of a large number of multimodal artefacts in specific communicative contexts, by comparing the 1) same modes, 2) in the same discourse, 3) across different media with similar constraints. Therefore, in order to be able to talk about 'new genres' or 'old genres' in the multimodal era, researchers should be aware of the field's terminological and conceptual distinctions, and assess the existence of new rhetorical functions of multimodal artefacts with unbiased methods and intentions.

3.1.6.4 Conclusions

The previous section illustrated the concept of empirical methods and quantitative studies in multimodal research by connecting Kress' social semiotic theory and Bateman and colleagues' approaches. These advancements in theory and methods allowed for the construction of a research paradigm that advocate for a change in traditional multimodal research, which is supported and legitimated by an overreliance on theories and linguistic frameworks that may not represent the complexity and situatedness of the data, or materialities of the modes in the context under investigation. A theoretical and methodological distinction between materialities, modes, and context – including media and discourse – is fruitful also for the scientific discovery of new communicative practices that reflect the emergence of novel socio-economic needs and audiences.

The explanation of this procedure proves to be important in the current dissertation for it represented the starting point for the detection of specific modal behavior of tourism discourse across Instagram and website channels; this led to the discovery of the image-centric, Instagram genre of tourism discourse. This theoretical framework will be complemented in the next section, which focuses on newest trends of multimodal research and actual methods and criteria for carrying out empirical research, and chapter Four, which analyzes tourism discourse from a sociological and economic perspective.

3.2 Bridging the gap between old and new theories: moving from a linguistic-oriented, qualitative analysis of meaning to an empirically based, quantitative analysis of semiotic processes

The growing interest in quantitative analysis in static imagery, together with the emergence of recent scholarly approaches that explore multimodality beyond linguistics-based frameworks, has led to the definition of new lines of research, including empirical studies on static imagery (Stöckl et al. 2020) that is seen as "large-scale multimodal design strategy with far-reaching effects on text structure and perception" (2019, 5). Given the widely established dominance and centricity of imagery (Stöckl 2020), scholars in this field demonstrated that contemporary imagery has become the superordinate element in the *majority* of multimodal artefacts in the digital space, and that the elaboration of the multimodal message and meaning construal *often* starts from the visual mode, thus reversing Barthes' *anchorage* system (Stöckl et al. 2019, 7). Knox, for example, revealed the existence of image-nuclear genres, where images are centric elements and essential signs for meaning making in communication design (Knox 2020, 233-254). Nonetheless, equal and complementary statuses of modes may still exist, "when an image and text are joined equally and modify one another", in a *relay* relationship (Martinec and Salway 2005, 343).
In conclusion, we might argue that an interest in static imagery and with an empirical, quantitative approach is necessary to understand the shift towards the centricity of visual features and the consequent decentration of language and its categorizations, in the sense that:

> "The danger in contrasting two modes, however, is that we tend to somehow look at one mode in terms of another. So, mostly, due to language's dominance, we seem to be asking which linguistic properties images have. Thus we run the risk of overlooking some important design features of images which are outside of the linguistic perspective." (Stockl 2004, 18, in Bateman 2014b, 14)

This section will specifically explore the advantages and disadvantages of contemporary, quantitative approaches to multimodality, including SFL- and corpus-based studies and the most recent trends of empirical research. The advances described in this literature review will be useful to explore both the advantages and disadvantages of linguistics-based approaches, which may be integrated with empirical methods for the analysis of contemporary digital, promotional communication. Therefore, this section will point to

future directions of the field and introduce the methodological grounds of the current dissertation.

3.2.1.1 SFL-based approaches and the increasing interest in corpus approaches: benefits and challenges

3.2.1.2 SFL-based studies of modes: moving towards corpus analysis

One of the primary benefits of following a SFL-based approach is its claim of establishing a common language between the different modes in the realization of communicative events; this theoretical assumption paved the way for the development of a new line of research, i.e. *Multimodal Discourse Analysis*, but left room for new, complementary theories as well (Bateman et al. 2017, 50). Pivotal studies that applied the concept of the three linguistic metafunctions to the analysis of other semiotic systems were carried out by Kress and Van Leeuwen, together with Caple (2013) who analyzed static imagery (1996; 2006). Other visual and static modes such as layout, color and visual art have been investigated by Kress (2010), van Leeuwen (2011) and O' Toole (1994), whereas speech, sound and music have been analyzed by van Leeuwen (1999). The analysis of movement and gesture, instead, has been conducted by Martinec (2000), as well as by Burn and Parker in their research on moving imagery (Burn 2013; Burn and Parker 2003).

These are the main works from which a multimodal line of research, which was entirely based on SFL and a social semiotic theory of communication, was initially developed.

Discourse analysts and corpus linguists, in particular, drew upon these works and developed their own line of research, thus contributing to the enrichment of the field but also challenging previous theoretical and methodological assumptions. Among these new traditions, we may find Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA, O'Halloran 2011, section 3.2.1.3); Corpus-Assisted Multimodal Discourse Analysis (CAMDA), (Caple 2018, as outlined above in section 3.2.1.4), and empirical multimodality (Bateman et al. 2017; Bateman 2019b; Pflaeging et al. 2021) with renewed attention to static imagery (Stöckl et al. 2019; Bateman 2014b; sections 3.2.1.4 and 3.2.2).

3.2.1.3 Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) and quantitative methods

Systemic-functional multimodal discourse analysis, therefore, may be considered to be the conjunction between linguistics-oriented multimodal research and discourse analysis, and has led to interesting results in the field of education studies (Jewitt 2005, 2008), scientific text analysis (Lemke 1998), business discourse (Maier 2011) and web interactivity (Adami 2015).

Nonetheless, we may argue that this approach has started to provide reliable interpretations and potential applicability and generalizations of findings in particular through the introduction of digital technologies and quantitative methods (O'Halloran 2009). The simultaneous development of dynamic digital platforms for the integrated analysis of different resources—such as audio, imagery, gesture, proxemics—and innovative techniques for information collection, archivial, labelling and retrieval is, indeed, allowing multimodal analysts from many research fields to investigate large samples of data and improve the systematicity and objectivity of their methods. It is precisely this procedure, furthermore, that may help researchers obtain reproducible findings (Jewitt 2013). O'Halloran, for instance, has also recently developed a software package for the multimodal analysis of images, videos and websites[13].

All these computational tools serve the purpose of mapping and analyzing the patterns of inter-semiotic relations in the current complex, digital environment. These resources, if used to annotate and analyze large amounts of data, may lead to quantitative findings based on the discovery of regularities in the functioning of each mode and, consequently, of discourse (O'Halloran and Smith 2012; Adami 2016). The pervasiveness and impact of digital discourse analysis is confirmed by the presence of a large number of studies on social media; among these, we may mention investigations into Facebook (Bezemer and Kress 2014; Bianchi 2017), web design and pictures (Adami 2015; Francesconi 2014) and Instagram photos (Manovich 2016; Zappavigna 2016).

Many scholars in this field have advocated and adopted a quantitative approach to the study of multimodal discourse. Jewitt and O'Halloran, particularly, acknowledge the fact that systematic analyses, computational automated techniques and annotation tools should

[13] https://multimodal-analysis-lab.org// (Last visit: 31/01/2023).

increasingly be implemented in multimodal research, especially through the development of software and the collection of multimodal corpora (O'Halloran and Smith 2012; Jewitt 2013). Multimodal corpora of recorded human behavior and intersemiotic processes of meaning making – including speech, gaze, body language, and gesture – have been created and expanded in the last decades for the presence of both adequate tools for their analysis and scholarly efforts in manual annotation (Foster and Oberlander 2007; Knight 2011). Knight also mentions the challenges multimodal corpus analysis (MCA) will be facing in the near future, in relation to the requirements mentioned in this section. In particular, she addresses the need for standardization and automation in the coding and annotation of data, and the development of query skills for the interrogation of the data/metadata through the implementation of software technologies and statistical methods.

These technical and methodological advances will be possible also through the use of monomodal corpus analytical tools such as Sketch Engine (Knight 2011, 408).

3.2.1.4 Corpus-assisted Multimodal Discourse Analysis (CAMDA): static imagery

Other solutions regarding the collection, annotation and analysis of multimodal corpora have been provided by Caple, who analyzed political campaigns and their effects by investigating static Instagram posts (2018, 2020), together with Bateman (2014b), who classified empirically document genres with the GeM project (2008), other types of multimodal corpora (as mentioned in section 3.1.6.3.1) and laid out the foundations for new theories and methods in multimodality (2017, 2019a, 2019b). Studies on still imagery with empirical, corpus-based approaches are only recently gaining attention in linguistics or social semiotics (Caple 2018, 85, 88; Stöckl et al. 2019), also due to the recent semiotic shifts in digital media towards image-centricity (Caple 2013). While the emergence of this phenomenon was introduced both in Chapter Two and Chapter Three from a theoretical perspective, its direct applications and studies are mentioned in the next sub-section.

Despite the growing scholarly interest in multimodal corpora and imagery, large-scale multimodal studies are time consuming and challenging from a methodological perspective, due to the fact that they involve multiple methods, software technologies and the investment of both expertise and time spent collecting and analyzing large amounts of

data (Caple 2018,85). For this reason, according to Caple, "research engaging fully with the multimodal aspects of social media texts is still in its infancy" (Caple 2018, 88).
The CAMDA approach (corpus-assisted multimodal discourse analysis) is an attempt to capture and explore the complexity of multimodal static corpora, and it is a good example of multiple methods implementation that allow for the quantification and tracking of modal behavior at a quantitative level. First used for the analysis of small corpora of films and TV series (Bednarek 2015), this approach was successively applied to the investigation of news value construction through a relational database that aligned still visual and verbal streams of analyses (Bednarek and Caple 2017). The scientific relevance of this innovative framework to academic research and its interest in understanding social behavior resides in its capacity to offer reliable quantitative tools and measures for the obtainment of reproducible and generalizable through the integration of multimodal software tools and expertise in various fields (linguistics, semiotics, corpus analysis) (Taylor and Marchi 2018). linguistic modes contributed to the construction and interpretation of individuals' thoughts and reactions.

3.2.1.5 Recent works and the shift towards a non-linguistic, empirical approach

The over-reliance on theoretical and methodological frameworks which build on linguistics (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006), which assume that the visual and written modes are similar with respect to their communicative function, may lead to oversimplification, without accuracy and contexualization. Indeed, as mentioned also in the previous sections, visual meaning cannot be understood through pre-established choices: the meaning of a picture may, in fact, be grasped by studying the communicative situation (Bateman et al. 2017) through a "holistic interpretation of the scripto-pictorial" (Noth 1995, 453; Bateman 2014b, 47), and in an abductive process of hypothesis testing and revisiting through evidence (48). In other words, in order to understand multimodal meaning and intersemiotic relationships, language and images should be considered as two different semiotic systems, with different resources and affordances, which may be 'read' through linguistic theoretical frameworks only with empirical testing, observation and adaptation (Bateman 2014b, 250). Here, our aim is to illustrate the methodological challenges and quality criteria intrinsic to such approach; indeed, if we consider the role of discourse

semantics to be an *abductive* proposal of situated and contextualixed interpretation of detected material regularities, 1) *theory* needs to be questioned and *adapted* to large amounts of data, and 2) *context* needs to be taken into account to determine the type of *canvas* and purpose, and to test new data-driven tagging models for systematic tagging (Bateman et. al. 2017, 128-129). In this sense, theory and context represent the *starting* point for the categorization of the ways in which context is realized through text; their major role only in the preliminary analysis, however, offers the opportunity to explore how context affects meaning creation and generates new generic trends without any preconceptions.

3.2.1.6 Steps and quality criteria of empirical research: data-driven pattern tracking, measurement of variance and reliable generalizability of results by means of replicable, statistical procedures

By taking into account everything said so far, we might argue that a good knowledge of 1) theory and contextual variables (the preliminary step, Bateman et al. 2017, 230), as well as 2) annotation of large bodies of data and statistical measurement will ensure the generation of new and reliable 'knowledge' about social uses, practices and genres of multimodal communication. This will be due specifically to the adoption of empirical and statistical methods for the identification, tracking, and eventually contextualization of patterns of material regularities (Bateman 2014b, 248; Bateman et al. 2017, 152-154)

To carry out these steps and ensure *solid* and *transparent* empirical methods in the design of multimodal studies, Pflaeging et al. (2021, 17-24) propose a series of quality criteria that may satisfy and should be used as guidelines; for this purpose, Bateman and Hiippala (2021, 70-75) illustrate a series of sophisticated *statistical* and *coding* procedures for the *reliability*, *reproducibility* and *generalizability* of the findings – thus enriching, also through case studies, the descriptions provided in the 2017's textbook (Bateman et al. 2017). Indeed, the satisfaction of these criteria is key to the successful conduction of research studies and, especially, "when it comes to disclosing the details of methodological procedures of data collection and analysis" (Pflaeging et al. 2021, 17). This is possible by:

1) completing the "empirical feedback loop" (Pflaeging et al. 2021, 1) which sees:

a. an adaptation of theory to the data under observation through decisions concerning the classification, scales of measurement of variables and annotation, and
b. the adoption of data-driven processes of quantification and exploration of frequencies and correlations through inferential statistics and statistical modeling (Bateman and Hiippala 2021, 70-75);

2) achieving objectivity of the procedure through
    a. the use of reliable tools, such as software technologies and
    b. replicable annotations, statistical procedures and results, including
    c. the application of a particular framework and conceptual categories in a way that may be reproduced by any analyst with similar outcomes and in similar data sets – which is not dependent on any subject interpretation.

Following Bateman and Hiippala's suggestions, indeed, (Bateman and Hiippala 2021, 70-75), the agreement rate between independent annotators of the data with the same categories was calculated by means of Inter-coder reliability measures such as Cohen's kappa and Krippendorff's α to explore the extent to which both the coding processes, their interrelated results and regularly reoccurring patterns "agree more than might be expected by chance" (Bateman et al. 2017, 199), thus avoiding bias in the results that might be due to subjectivity (Bateman et al. 2017, 199-203). Statistics becomes specifically a helpful tool particularly when it is tailored to the needs of the specific research it is being adopted for, and when it assists in testing a particular hypothesis (Bateman et al 2017). In this sense, some knowledge of the statistical measures available is required; indeed, it will enable researchers to make sure a particular test 'fits' the data and will reveal interesting patterning, if present (Pflaeging et al. 2021).

If one of the main aims of descriptive statistics is to retrieve patterns, or clusters of data, as well as establishing the "normality" of the data, the main aim of inferential and exploratory statistics is to draw inferences about the potential future behavior of data, also

by means of hypothesis testing[14]. In this regard, T-tests, ANOVA tests, One-way ANOVA, Chi-square analysis are the most popular ways of determining statistically significant variation in patterns of data (Bateman et al. 2017, 193-207) and were indeed carried out in the current dissertation for the detection and measurement of tourism, visual strategies across Instagram and website channels. The description of data patterns through exploratory, bottom-up analysis and statistical modeling to see "to what extent the annotations allow the data to be grouped into clusters" may be done by means of Principal Component Analysis and Correspondence Analysis (Bateman and Hiippala 2021, 73), which group data according to similarities in the occurrences of particular features in the data and by exploring correlations between these features. This procedure, which was carried out for this study and is presented in Chapter Six, allows for the generation of data-driven hypotheses and the mapping of the generated statements to derive patterns of change and variance in the data. The inclusion of top-down procedures through the adoption of "sets of categories from the theory that the theory suggests may serve as conditioning role for the technical features or annotations" (Bateman and Hiippala 2021, 73, 75) may help understand whether there are variables that actually condition and predict the values of particular features, or dependent variables. These analyses were useful for the definition of a significant correlation between the tags, i.e. .e. labels used to annotate data, and a predictor variable that generated such variance, i.e. the channel of dissemination.

In relation to the implications and interpretations of patterns based on the analysis of their correlation with contextual variables, Bateman and Hiippala argue the following:

> […] collections of technical features (and the units they classify or measure) are grouped into equivalence classes given by the conditioning categories […] The conditioning categories that serve as anchors for patterns may either be 'external' to the data or be forms of further categories derived from the theory for the description of units. […] internal categories are more related to particular units in the data and might include assumed conditioning factors such as genre, rhetorical relations, boundaries between units, degrees of visual modality, classes of text-image relations, and so on […]. Whenever correlations can be documented between the conditioning features and the technical features, the

[14] Hypothesis testing explores whether any deviations from the mean in groups of variables and their values do not occur by chance, leading to the confirmation of significant variation between the means of those groups.

conditioning features can also be used predictively for the technical features. (Bateman and Hiippala 2021, 73-74)

Overall, these steps will lead to the obtainment of generalizable, reliable and replicable results, even if just tentative – since they are a proposal based on explanatory and abductive processes of hypothesis formation and testing, Peirce 1931; Pflaeging et al. 2021, 23).

3.2.2 Promoting an empirical turn in multimodal research: conclusions

This chapter confirmed the importance of multimodal theories and methods for a scientific analysis and critical understanding of the visual strategies, or *materialities*, that accompany texts in the contemporary digital environment. Indeed, the increasing pervasiveness of image-centric practices has becoming a pressing matter for the apparently uncoded, intuitive nature of photographs that persuades individuals to believe certain representations of facts without awareness of underlying communicative intents.

The focus on the understanding of meaning making processes and the possibility of choosing, designing signs for the achievement of a particular communicative goal in a particular social setting assigns power to individuals who develop critical awareness of the strategies behind any communicative act. Additionally, it may allow them to exert agency in contemporary society to fight social constructs and propose counternarratives.

This chapter also showed how the field of multimodality has flourished in recent decades and has generated new research trends that may provide novel insights into current trends of social construction of meaning across different contexts and discourses. Indeed, the final aim of empirical multimodal analysts is to implement gradually "an increasing range of quantitative work as well as larger-scale studies […] for the advancement of the field" (Pflaeging et al. 2021, 28). Corpus and data-driven methods may eventually support previous, qualitative findings or theory-based approaches to enrich our understanding of contemporary promotional communication, which is the main of this study.

Chapter Four

Reflecting the emerging social needs of the postmodern traveler through semiotics and evaluative, emotive language: Tourism discourse and the inner, visual consumption of the uncontaminated

The final chapter of the literature review continues the discussion by investigating the role of promotional and tourism discourse in contemporary social creation of meaning across digital media and modes. Particularly, it wishes to explore the theoretical and methodological proposals that have been put forward at an interdisciplinary level to shed light on the ways and reasons why tourism discourse is effective in the current capitalist society. Indeed, by questioning the role of persuasive language and imagery at the sociological and discursive level, one may develop the skills to resist capitalist-driven desires that manipulate individuals' thinking and behavior. The current media sphere and semiotically pervasive, complex materials seem to provide us with abundance of choices and opportunities for gratification, or *distractions*; however, as also Barthes (1977), Berger (1972) and Kress (2010) argued, there cannot be free choices of action and thinking that do not serve others' interests and profit, and which may bring long-term satisfaction, without an awareness of the strategies used in communication to manipulate individuals' perception of representations of events in real-life experience. For example, the promotion of an expensive aesthetic service as a means to fulfill the social need to appear attractive becomes persuasive if the prospective customers neglect to reflect on the reasons behind such need, or to respond to that need in different ways. As a matter of fact, persuasive communication may actually leverage the social conditions created by capitalism to legitimate its legacy, whilst perpetuating unequal, asymmetric relationships between human beings based on exclusive *possession* and *appearance* (Berger 1972) as well as providing the 'choice' to escape and evade a supposedly unchangeable reality that is controlled through that *capital*. Here, the 'society of the spectacle' as described by Debord (1967) succeeds in providing illusionary satisfaction and gratification, which are based on emotions and play on inner, capitalist-driven desires, to fulfill a promise of happiness that is never achieved.

To gain an understanding of the way this may happen, this chapter will explore how capitalist-driven desires and privileges are created and leveraged by discourse specialists through linguistic and visual semiotic resources, and thanks to new media affordances in the digital sphere. Postmodern travelers, indeed, see the regularization, planning of tourism activities for groups and the increasing accessibility to affordable consumption that emerged during the Industrial Revolution as something non-exclusive and mass-targeted, thus not different from everyday life experience (Stauth and Turner 1988). Tourism discourse and its inherent legitimation of travel as a fulfillment of human needs, particularly, will be shown to be promoting an exclusive, passive 'gaze' or set of expectations regarding the leisure experience (Urry 1990) that stimulate solitary, visual and emotive consumption as well as control over travel destinations for profit-driven reactions and purposes, by appealing to the extraordinary and the 'uncontamined', or 'unconstrained', especially at the digital level (Dann 1996; Urry and Larsen 2011). As will be seen, the tourist gaze, consequently, perpetuates the capitalist view and its 'ordinariness', and constructs it as something which is unchangeable and smooth-working but which can be evaded. In other words, it confirms the effectiveness of tourism discourse as a set of views and socially constructed representations that will always persuade postmodern individuals as long as work and financial means are required to survive.

4.1 Capitalism, its legitimation and spread through leisure activities of the spectacle: the development of the tourism industry

Most sociologists in the field of tourism trace the development of the tourism industry back to the Industrial Revolution and the spread of capitalist thinking (Urry 1990; Dann 1996; MacCannel 1973; Cohen 1972; Blackbourn 2002; Hern 1967). Indeed, as was demonstrated in Chapter Two by means of a logico-historical approach, any form of financial practice for gain and consumption was the direct product of the intersection of technological advancement with the benefits of fast, mechanical, and accessible production. By means of this combination, in fact, emerging human, social needs could become increasingly satisfied and amplified. As discussed by Berger (1972) and Barthes (1977), the design and apparent satisfaction of needs related to exclusive possession and

appearance through capital led to the establishment of symbolic and promotional photographic practices, which would enchant and convince masses of people to purchase products and continue to work to afford exclusive products or treatments. In this scenario, the legitimation of capitalist practices was both controlled, enhanced and secured by the increasing regularization of leisure activities, which facilitated the development of an industry of its own, i.e. the tourism industry (Urry and Larsen 2011). Like any industry, the alluring possibility of leveraging the potential of automatic procedures to produce goods or services, or the idea of selling to *large* numbers of customers for profit, caused the emergence of promotional practices that would focus on creating particular desires that could be satisfied by this industry (Maci 2020). In this way, the creation of extra-ordinary expectations concerning leisure activities *outside* work constraints became a profitable activity that ensured its success due to the usual logic of capitalism: money and work constraints inevitably create desires which are leveraged by others to create profit and legitimate the idea that work is necessary to earn, survive, and be happy.

In all this, photography, as we know, and as it was used commercially, developed as a semiotic practice that could commodify and package particular, 'spectacular' versions of reality in which goods or products were pictured together with smiling people, and which could be consumed easily from a mental and emotive perspective to guarantee some degree of gratification whilst shaping, in the meantime, carefully constructed expectations and desires (MacCannel 1973; Cohen 1972). For this reason, both an analysis of the root causes of the persuasive nature of the tourist practice at a sociological and historical level and a discussion about its visual and linguistic promotion may contribute to raising awareness of social needs and techniques which make alternative views of reality so appealing, this affecting one's ability to question particular views and bring about change in real-life experience.

The current section explores these mechanisms of persuasion and manipulation by relying on a socio-historical approach that explains the phenomenon of leisure activities and mass tourism in the modern and capitalist period (4.1.1); this will form the backdrop for the description of the sociological approaches that have been adopted to understand this economic and ideological view and the desires and expectations created on purpose by such an industry (4.1.2); section 4.1.3, conversely, will shift the focus to contemporary

practices of globalized, post Fordist and postmodern tourism in the digital era, both from a semiotic and sociological perspective. These three sections will pave the way for the discussion of current attempts to investigate and categorize different genres of tourism discourse, including a systematization of techniques and features characteristic of promotional language and visual communication (4.2). The latter, indeed, may assist in the construction and dissemination of a particular travel experience, which stimulates socially driven desires and expectations at the digital level.

4.1.1 Mass tourism in the capitalist era

As mentioned in the introduction of the current chapter, the concept of leisure and tourism activities emerged with the advent of capitalism and the definition of the social construct of work. As Urry and Larsen define it,

"Tourism is a leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely regulated and organised work. It is one manifestation of how work and leisure are organised as separate and regulated spheres of social practice in 'modern' societies. Indeed, acting as a tourist is one of the defining characteristics of being 'modern' and is bound up with major transformations in paid work. This has come to be organised within particular places and to occur for regularised periods of time." (Urry and Larsen 2011, 4).

In essence, tourism activities started gaining popularity with the establishment of regularized shifts of intense labor as well as time schedules for leisure activities. These, indeed, could be enjoyed by spending earned *capital*, which became a powerful tool to guarantee satisfaction and not only survival (Marx 1978; Debord 1970). In this sense, tourism activities and the organization of holidays turned into a new *product* that could be marketed to individuals in the 19th century, and which promised fulfillment as well as contentment while, at the same time, legitimating the construct of paid work. As the United Nations World Tourism Organization defines it,

"Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which involve tourism expenditure." (UNWTO)[1]

[1] https://www.unwto.org/glossary-tourism-terms (Last visit: 17/01/2023)

In other words, this market spread because it represented a way to evade the *ordinary* lifestyle, which was characterized by strict time schedules and work constraints in increasingly polluted, overcrowded areas and industrialized townscapes (Cohen 1972). The desire to visit, *view*, experience uncontaminated landscapes and 'relaxed' atmospheres which were *different* and *unknown,* or out of the ordinary, was intrinsically related to the pervading presence of its opposite in ordinary experiences (Urry and Larsen 2011, 4). Additionally, the emergence of photography and consumerism as profit-driven practices contributed to the commodification of any kind of product or service that promised to fulfill particular, capitalist-driven desires. Photographs could, and did, create a sense of anticipation, possession, and gratification of the senses, which, in turn, meant that the tourism industry could benefit from this practice (Urry and Larsen 2011, 155-158). For example, as other scholars in the field of tourism discourse and marketing argue (Dann 1996; Garrod 2009), watching a landscape from a distant and high position could allow for the visual consumption and imagination of an *extra-ordinary* scenery that combined detachment, possession and control; for these reasons, *gazing* became a practice that was "reproduced, recaptured and redistributed over time and across space" (Urry and Larsen 2011, 4, 160) in a spectacular fashion.

4.1.1.1 The systematization of mass tourism practices

The emergence of such systematized, profit-driven practices, with reference to tourism, dates back to the building of the first seaside resort in nineteenth-century England (Urry and Larsen 2011). In this regard, Urry and Larsen (2011, 32) and Blackbourn (2002) mention the dissemination of spas throughout Europe and the practice of sea bathing for rejuvenating and purification purposes, including the cure of diseases. This practice was first promoted in Scarborough, England, due to the presence of a spa by the sea (Hern 1967, 21). Most scholars recognize the significance of this event in the history of mass tourism (Maci 2020; Cohen 1972; Dann 1996; Urry 1990), although Allen (1999) mentions the presence of spas for entertainment purposes already in the 1st century BC. Dann, in particular, mentions the fact that the desire to *travel for business or pleasure* was already present in ancient Greek times and during the Roman Empire (Dann 1996, 69). Even at those times, indeed, positive and negative sides of this activity were highlighted by influential

individuals such as Plato or Seneca and Petronius (O' Gorman 2010). In this regard, sociologists and classicists argue that the benefits deriving from the construction of new accommodation and the implementation of new strategies to attract, satisfy newcomers and boost the local economy soon outweighed individuals' fear of welcoming different cultures, which could lead to overpopulation and a lustful lifestyle (Dann 1996; Allen 1999).

4.1.1.1.1 Leisure activities during and after the Industrial Revolution

In the industrialized nineteenth century, particularly, the increasingly pervasive phenomenon of overpopulation and pollution due to the intense labor activities in factories caused the emergence, in all kinds of social classes and individuals, of a desire to escape from urbanized centers and to engage in less fast-paced and intense activities, such as the contemplation of natural wonders (Dann 1996, 71; Rojek 1993). In this scenario, short holidays to spa resorts near the beach became a popular destination of many individuals who were yearning for regeneration at a physical and emotive level (Urry and Larsen 2011, 33). This type of mass leisure activity was the consequence of different social processes, including 1) an increasing economic welfare of the majority of the working class, 2) the urbanization of public spaces, 3) the overcrowding and spread of diseases due to water and airborne pollution (Hern 1967). All of these factors contributed slowly to a decreasing quality of life and to an increase in unhappiness (Culler 1981). As a result, regular and collective 'escapes' started being organized and provided some sort of relief, both in terms of physical, emotive, and perceptive unwinding, despite the persistence of activity constraints and schedules, or "rationalisation of leisure" (Urry and Larsen 2011, 34).

4.1.1.1.2 The Romantic shift towards solitary appreciation of natural wonders

In addition to this, the development of the Romantic movement in the early 19th century generated a shift in values that correlated with an increasing emphasis upon intensity of *emotions* and *sensations*, thus towards a state of feeling and *perceiving, seeing, being* rather than doing (Gotti et al. 2017; Urry and Larsen 2011, 36). In this sense, two types of gazes started to emerge, i.e. the gaze of 1) tourists who wished to participate in organized, collective and effortless activities in sumptuous environments, with the support and comfort of an array

of amenities, and the 2) solitary, romantic appraisal of nature in solitude (Urry 1992). The popularity of the latter, in particular, was due to the fact that resorts and places by the beach soon became overcrowded during holiday time. The accessibility of traveling to such destinations was enhanced by further improvements as well as accessibility of rail transport, cruise transfer, and air travel (Urry and Larsen 2011, 40-46). Eventually, these phenomena led to the construction of the concept of travel as an accessible, comfortable and enjoyable, panoramic spectacle (Debord 1967).

The democratization of means of transportation and organized tours – such as the Cook tours – furthermore, led to the emergence of mass consumption of tourism and leisure activities, which is an inevitable consequence of post Fordist capitalism (see Chapter Two; Urry and Larsen 2011, 72-73). As a matter of fact, most scholars agree on the fact that mass tourism turned into a profitable industry and pervasive, economic practice in the 1950s and 1960s "thanks to a combination of economic liberalization, economic growth, and travel" (Maci 2020, IX). The contemporary, strong predilection, on the part of travel agencies, for visual communication strategies that include the representation of natural, unspoilt landscapes confirms the importance of attracting the audience by means of the *romantic gaze*; this type of gaze seems effective also because individuals are considered to be more sensitive to *scapes* rather than everyday life or personal moments (Urry 1990). Indeed, the presence of human subjects demystifies the apparent eternity of time which is represented by a natural, unchanged natural environment (Garrod 2009, 355).

4.1.1.2 From production to consumption: the contribution of photography and the reproduction of *gazing* practices

As was described in Chapter Two, the combination of photography as a reproducible and accessible practice with late capitalism and the emergence of mass media played a crucial role in reproducing, disseminating and legitimating practices of consumption for the alleged satisfaction of capitalist-driven desires. These phenomena generated new trends in the perception of reality and social behavior that paved the way for the development of the ubiquitous and effective digital narratives of manipulation in the 20th century (Manovich 2017; Murray 2008). Indeed, the economy of signs of symbolic nature (Barthes 1977; Berger 1972) that spread in post Fordism and consumerism soon represented a

powerful means to distribute 'spectacular' views of products and experiences, and to enhance visual enticement as well as instant gratification easily (Urry and Larsen 2011, 85). The tourism industry of mass production and consumption benefitted from this, as it allowed marketers to promote and 'visualize' the tourist experience, despite its intangible nature, and to avoid expensive as well as physical travel (Benjamin 2015; Francesconi 2014). Indeed,

> "Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist technologies, such as film, TV, literature, magazines, CDs, DVDs and videos, constructing and reinforcing the gaze." (Urry and Larsen 2011, 7)

In other words, the Romanticist need to 'seduce the eye' (McLuhan 1964) and provide instant gratification to stimulate and satisfy 'daydreaming' desires in post-capitalist, mass consumerism generated a shift in marketing practices towards *reproductions* of products and services through visual and linguistic signs. As a matter of fact, these could be leveraged to channel and control socially driven desires, and be represented an 'alternative' reality that remained untouched by changes in society (Dann 1966). In particular, the economy of signs proved to be profitable in the post Fordist and consumption era, during which opportunities to obtain information on destinations and to purchase holiday packages increased, which was also thanks to the democratization of knowledge and financial accessibility (Gotti et al. 2017). However, this process slowly erased the sense of exclusivity connected with 'tour-ism' as a practice organized by experts that could turn "expensive, risky, unpredictable and time-consuming individual travel into a highly organised, systematised and predictable social activity for the masses, based upon expert knowledge" (Urry and Larsen 2011, 52; Brendon 1991). As a consequence, the aura of exclusivity that had characterized and commodified 19th and early 20th century holiday packages – such as Cook guided tours for groups to local, authentic attractions or crowded beaches and resorts by means of public transport – could only be restored through signs (Manovich 2017). Indeed, they had the potential to shape positive expectations about an intangible service such as travel at a 'mechanical' and 'virtual' level.

In late postmodern times, the digital promotion through signs soon became a means to shape tourism as an extra-ordinary opportunity that had nothing to do with tourism packages, which were designed for and sold to as many individuals as possible (Urry and Larsen 2011). As a matter of fact, these perpetuated a mass-targeted and non-exclusive consumption of social and planned activities, which was not seen as exceptional or 'out of the ordinary' in an era with increasing access to information and possibilities of independently organized and unconstrained travel (Francesconi 2014). Throughout the 20th and 21st century, then, consuming through imagery became a pervasive activity of anticipating as well as primary source of satisfaction of pleasure (Mitchell 1994).

As Urry and Larsen argue when discussing Campbell's analysis of the character of consumption and imaginative hedonism (1987),

> "Individuals do not seek satisfaction simply from products, from their selection, purchase and actual use. Rather, satisfaction stems from anticipation, from imaginative pleasure-seeking. People's basic motivation for consumption is not simply materialistic. Rather, people seek to experience 'in reality' the pleasurable dramas they have already experienced in their imagination. However, since 'reality' rarely provides the perfected pleasures encountered in daydreams, each purchase leads to disillusionment and to the longing for ever-new products and services. There is a dialectic of novelty and insatiability at the very heart of contemporary consumerism." (Urry and Larsen 2011, 50 -51)

While the implications of the digital revolution in tourism discourse will be reviewed in the final sections, attention shall be now turned to the discussion of the desires that constitute the driving forces of the postmodern tourist.

4.1.2 The desires of the postmodern tourist: sociological approaches

The previous section traced the development of tourist experiences as a mass, consumerist practice that *looked* alluring because of its promise that it could ensure a physical as well as mental, perceptive and emotive escape from the realities of industrialized life and the *ordinary* way of living. The spread of photography after the Industrial Revolution contributed specifically to constructing and promoting a particular act of *gazing at extra-ordinary* experiences or their representations (MacCannel 1973). As can be inferred from the previous section, the act of *gazing* is different from *looking*; indeed, *gazing* may be considered to be a synonym of the process of learning and internalization of framed views of reality, which create a set of expectations concerning the experiences represented and the pleasure they may generate. As Urry and Larsen state in the following passage,

"They [goods and services] are consumed because they supposedly generate pleasurable experiences which are different from those typically encountered in everyday life. And yet at least a part of that experience is to gaze upon or view a set of different scenes, of landscapes or townscapes which are out of the ordinary. When we 'go away' we look at the environment with interest and curiosity. It speaks to us in ways we appreciate, or at least we anticipate that it will do so. In other words, we gaze at what we encounter. This gaze is as socially organised and systematised, as is the gaze of the medic. Of course it is of a different order in that it is not a gaze confined to professionals 'supported and justified by an institution'. And yet even in the production of 'unnecessary' pleasure many professional experts help to construct and develop one's gaze as a tourist." (Urry and Larsen 2011, 1)

This excerpt suggests that actual representations as well as imaginary and photographic representations of experiences in the physical world are fused in promotional narratives for the creation of the tourist experience for consumption. In this sense, the act of anticipation, or imagination, of intangible products or services, or 'the image', as Mitchell would say (1994), is intrinsic to visual representations as well as being necessary to stimulate positive desires and expectations. Within this context, signs allow for the dissemination of socially constructed 'ways of seeing' of products which foster the passive internalization of capitalist driven desires and the purchase of tourist experiences (Gotti et al. 2017; Foucault 1976; Berger 1972; Kress 2010; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006).

In other words, people view world experiences through 'filters' – such as beliefs, expectations, desires –, which are imposed by different social realms and institutions, and in which one's identity develops over time (Foucault 1976). These may include social class, nationality, education, age, gender, and continue to be shaped by signs and media (Urry and Larsen 2011, 1-5). Particularly, in relation to the capitalist-driven desires that were reviewed critically in Chapter Two, the tourist gaze in promotional communication offers the opportunity to 1) pursue pleasure and evade reality through daydreaming and 2) display, or show, a certain *social status* by means of money. The latter, indeed, enable individuals to spend holiday time to restore mental and physical health, in order to be able to continue working (Urry and Larsen 2011, 6). Therefore, we might the tourist promotion of holidays reinforces the assumption that work and money are key to happiness in society; this, however, may lead to a passive acceptance and submission to ideological views that do not foster a sense of fulfillment if not related to money earning and spending.

The *tourist gaze* has attracted the attention of scholarly research in the field of sociology as well as discourse (Dann 1996; Manca 2016; Francesconi 2014; Maci 2020). Most sociologists (Urry 1992; Urry and Larsen 2011; Dann 1996; Culler 1981; Cohen 1972;

Bauman 1993; MacCannell 1973) agree that it spread at a pervasive level with the advent of accessible, mass tourism for *consumption* and the support of media and visual signs. As a matter of fact, individuals in postmodern times and capitalist societies are incessantly "in search of the signs of Frenchness, typical Italian behaviour, exemplary Oriental scenes, typical American thruways, traditional English pubs" (Culler 1981, 127; Urry and Larsen 2011, 30).

In their search for *typicality,* tourists travel to *view sites and objects* which are different from ordinary experiences and may be found only in particular destinations. In this sense, the literature considers tourists to be 'pilgrims' with a destination that has been constructed as *attractive* by the tourism discourse (Urry and Larsen 2011, 30). In promotional narratives, attractions are called as such for they epitomize a socially constructed view of an 'Other' that becomes commodified as object of consumption. This staged authenticity is packaged through the visual reproduction of typical locations or views such as the Eiffel Tower in Paris, Ground Zero in New York, the Grand Canyon in Arizona (MacCannel 1976; Urry and Larsen 2011, 10-15). In other words, the visual consumption and desire for these views are shaped by means of visual expectations, or *gazes,* that frame and promote aspects of foreign destinations that are considered to be *typical* and, therefore, *unique*. Before and during the travel experience, indeed, tourists become "semioticians, reading the landscape for signifiers of certain pre-established notions or signs derived from discourses of travel and tourism" (Culler 1981, 128).

4.1.2.1 Staged authenticity and uncontaminated other

The compliance with and the reproduction of the tourist gaze was also investigated by Dann and Boorstin, who argued that tourism discourse legitimates itself by reproducing an illusion of *authenticity* of experience, which fulfills the tourist's desire for a *different*, *sparkling*, but *existing* reality (Dann 1996; Boorstin 1987). Every part of a holiday, in fact, is 'staged' and meticulously prepared for mass tourists through the organization of the most comfortable and exclusive accommodation, or through opportunities for participation in traditional activities which are performed by locals for entertainment purposes (Dann 1996, 8; MacCannel 1973, 1989). In this sense, the *play* strategy of entertainment and abundance of ludic activities is orchestrated intentionally to generate pleasure and, thus,

works coherently in narratives of authenticity and gazes of collectivity and conviviality for consumption (Dann 1996, 18; Urry and Larsen 2011, 19).

Strategies of staged authenticity are deployed in tourism advertisements with the purpose of *sacralizing* attractions in order to suggest an idea of uniqueness and typicality that make a place worth visiting (Gotti et al. 2017; Dann 1996). Discourse specialists, in particular, construct this type of discourse also by associating tourist activities with sensations and concepts that relate to purification, ceremony, pilgrimage, nature and tradition (Graburn 1983, 1995). Consequently, they encourage this discourse by selling souvenirs that serve the purpose of reminding tourists and potential customers of a destination and the feelings associated with it (Dann 1996, 11).

Therefore, one might argue that intrinsic to tourism discourse is the quest for what is *different, out of the ordinary and not familiar* (Urry and Larsen 2011; Cohen 1972; Dann 1996). This concept, in particular, seems to integrate some notion of historical uniqueness and *temporal continuity* of a place into the *local specificity* of staged, authentic attractions, which may be typical landmarks, gastronomic traditions, historical sites, and which visualize the exclusivity of a place through gazes of collective consumption (Urry and Larsen 2011, 16). Indeed, crowds and organized activities in specific locations perpetuate the idea that the depicted activities are those that one has to perform, in places that need to be visited (Dann 1996, 21; Urry and Larsen 2011, 19). This is also suggested by Hallett and Kaplan-Weinger (2010), who believe that the combination of temporal continuity and local specificity are the traits that make a place *local* and worth visiting.

This idea of refamiliarization or contact with an 'other', however, coincides only to some extent with the concept of strangerhood, which reflects the capitalist-driven desire for the non-industrialized *uncontaminated*, which has become extraordinary as a result of mechanisms inherent to the Industrial Revolution, as explored above in section 4.1.1. It also adds the concept of untouched, unspoilt, fascinating, exotic, adventurous destinations in which human traditions or footprint are not present (Dann 1996, 12-15; Cohen 1979). This gaze, indeed, involves daydreaming and imagination, which is boosted particularly by landscapes (MacCannel 1999, 41). The emerging concepts associated with the strangerhood trope, therefore, are those of non-industrialization and non-socialization, which are reminiscent of the romantic gaze that developed during the nineteenth-century

Romantic Grand Tour or "scenic tourism". This was characterized by a passionate, private experience of the sublime and of beauty of landscapes (Towner 1985). Indeed, it involved the consumption of solitary experiences and spiritual contact with the uncontaminated other and primordial environments (Towner 1985, 19).

The strong predilection, on the part of travel agencies, for visual communication strategies that include the representation of natural, unspoilt landscapes confirms the importance of attracting the audience by means of the *romantic gaze*; this type of gaze seems effective also because individuals are considered to be more sensitive to *scapes* rather than everyday life or personal moments (Urry 1990). Indeed, the presence of human subjects demystifies the apparent eternity of time which is represented by a natural, unchanged natural environment (Garrod 2009, 355).

The connection with primordial and non-socialized settings might be considered to be associated with the concept of *dominated other, a* theory that was developed by Said (1978) and adopted by Dann (1996) in his description of tourism discourse. In particular, both authors argue that Western individuals are fascinated by representations that construe non-Western, or *exotic* cultures and destinations as inferior and in need to be dominated in postcolonial times (Said 1978, 12-21). In other words, they construct a relationship of authority and control between Western and non-Western countries due to a colonial belief that non-Western cultures are irrational and abnormal (Dann 1996, 24). This serves the purpose of maintaining an illusion of control over the 'domesticated other', and commodify a perception of superiority. This promotional practice, however, is dangerous as it perpetuates cultural inequality and justifies the dominance of other cultures or countries over others for political and financial gain; this, in turn, may accelerate the impoverishment of particular countries and decrease the chances of their development.

4.1.2.3 Conclusion

The discussion of the major sociological interpretations of the promotion of destinations and intrinsic desire to travel shed light on the development, in capitalist societies, of two opposing gazes, the *collective* and the *romantic* (Urry and Larsen 2011). The capitalist exploitation of shared, capitalist-driven desires for entertainment and a 'controlled view'

of the other generated practices of legitimation of collective consumption of typical places or traditions for profit purposes; these practices, then, became the 'ordinary' way of promoting tourist destinations (Francesconi 2014). As Francesconi claims, the most prominent form of tourism narratives has been so far simplistic, non-personalized commercial tourism, which is sold as an anonymized package by the tourist industry for consumption and profit and without interest in the host population or the environment (Francesconi 2014, 2-3; Turner and Ash 1976). Anti-tourist positions, on the other hand, which have emerged in the last decade, support the positive connotations of *traveling* as a solitary and *sustainable* practice. Indeed, travel is viewed as:

> "a responsible, sustainable, fulfilling activity practiced by independent, curious and refined human beings moved by an authentic interest and passion for what is remote, ancient and authentic" (Francesconi 2014, 2)

This notion is in line with the romantic gaze and Bauman's conception of postmodern travelers, who may be viewed as 'vagabond tourists' who wander without a destination or an itinerary (Bauman 1993, 241). In other words, contemporary travelers should be portrayed as pilgrims without any constraints, exploring 'off the beaten track' destinations in order to stimulate identification with postmodern individuals (Maci 2020).

In any case, both collective and romantic gazes may be considered to be forms of social control that are exerted by means of semiotic reproductions to manipulate the perception and pre-consumption of a destination and the expectations regarding the intangible tourist experience (Dann 1996, 73-78; Verstergaard and Schroder 1985, 133-138; Przeclawsk 1994). The main aim of this form of social control of tourists' behavior, presumably, is to successfully channel postmodern customers' desires in every part of the decision-making process, up to the purchase of the product on websites or at travel agencies' offices (Dann 1996, 76-77; Maci 2020).

4.1.3 Understanding digital trends: the postmodernism and a return to nonindustrial, non-socialized settings through a romantic gaze of exclusive, passive and emotive consumption

The previous section described the emergence of the *romantic gaze* as a way to escape from the *ordinary* way of living and experiencing holidays. The increasingly affordable opportunities for travel, indeed, led to a disenchantment towards the alluring view of travel that characterized the 19th century and which had prepared the ground for the exploitation of its potential by capitalism and later consumerism. Indeed, due to the fact that a large number of people could afford travel, the same practice lost its aura of exclusivity and pristine nature, both at a conceptual, emotive and perceptive level. 'Gazes' at mass tourist consumption became the standard way of conceiving travel experiences; for this reason, the desire for the *unfamiliar* and *uncontaminated* needed to be fulfilled through the visual consumption of a new *extra-ordinary* (Urry 1990).

In other words, the change in the desires of the postmodern tourist was the consequence of consumerism as a pervasive and 'accessible' practice (Urry and Larsen 2011, 50). In line with Vestergaard and Schroder' analysis of advertisement (1985) and Campbell's analysis of character consumption (1987), daydreaming and anticipation are the primary activities that generate satisfaction in customers and which need to be perpetuated. As a matter of fact, if the latter are not performed, the actual purchase and experience of a product or service that leads to disillusionment and insatiable longing for new products may never occur (1987). In essence, postmodern individuals search for pleasure-seeking activities, which only stay in the realm of their imagination and under their control.

4.1.3.1 Postmodernism as post-Fordist consumption of 'romantic' views

Urry and Larsen, in particular, contribute to the discussion about postmodernist individuals by arguing that postmodernism is characterized by a rejection of the separation of institutional and normative spheres – including economy, state, aesthetics, morality – and by an increasing dedifferentiation of all spheres of life (2011). For example, the mediatization and sometimes simplification of many forms of activities, including news reporting, political debates, parliamentary speeches, and advertisements has caused the spread of spectacularized forms of any kind of entertainment to keep viewers engaged by

'a screen' and persuade them to 'purchase' a particular view of reality. These, as also discussed in Chapter Two, seeks to prevent critical thinking and active resistance to ideological views (Debord 1967). Urry and Larsen agree implicitly with these assumptions, and support Benjamin's and Mitchell's view that contemporary communication is a form of anti-auratic reproduction of representations or 'images' of reality that lack originality and distinctive qualities, i.e. an 'aura', but which evoke emotions (Benjamin 1969; Urry and Larsen 2011, 98; Mitchell 1994). In this scenario, the solitary, elitist appreciation of 'magnificent scenery' (Urry and Larsen 2011, 100) – i.e. the romantic gaze – finds breeding ground, as it provides instant-pleasure seeking *views* that are out of the ordinary and in the safe and self-fulfilling realm of imagination.

This kind of 'imaginative hedonism', according to Urry and Larsen, has accelerated the development of post-Fordist consumption practices in contemporary society that are based upon the romantic ethics of an exclusive search for pleasure (Urry and Larsen 2001, 52; 105). This suggests that *consumption* and *customer-oriented commodification for consumption* have become the primary capitalist values that allow economies to move forward. As was discussed in Chapter Two, post-capitalism was the direct consequence of mass production and the increasing desire to profit from individuals' inner desires thanks to technological advances. The spread of the Internet and easy *copies* of *signs,* therefore, has boosted this process of imaginative consumption, and has developed new ways of benefitting from the need for instant gratification. This phenomenon offered specifically the opportunity to design signs that could focus on the needs of the postmodern tourist, including non-standardized and independent travel (Urry and Larsen 2011, 56).

4.1.3.2 The role of social media in disseminating signs of 'romantic consumption'

The change in tourists' expectations may also be connected to the easy accessibility to both organized and 'prepackaged' holidays and online information for independent research. Indeed, as was mentioned earlier, the romantic traveler in postmodern, capitalist societies harbors the desire to 'feel special' as well as regaining some control over reality and the tourist experience. However, time constraints and the pervasiveness of multimodal content have made the decision-making process and the gathering of information a time-consuming process, which requires careful consultation of a wide array of online sources

(Hays et al. 2012). For this reason, decision-making is currently influenced by campaigns of free digital promotion on the part of social media accounts that raise an awareness of socially driven needs through the promotion of travel destinations (Leung 2013). These marketing strategies, in particular, partly satisfy the desire for the *extra-ordinary* through processes of visual consumption for instant gratification and persuasion (Manca 2016, 56). The need for control, unfamiliarity and the uncontaminated that were mentioned in Chapter Two and earlier in this chapter are being satisfied in contemporary society by means of visual representations that combine aerial shots of rural and natural environments, as they stimulate both imagination and desire (Garrod 2009; Dann 1996; Urry and Larsen 2011; Manovich 2017).

In this regard, Urry and Larsen provide concrete examples of how visual representations may shape the romantic gaze of the postmodern traveler (2011, 108-113). According to them, images of countryside evoke a bucolic vision of a peaceful and comforting past, which secures the authenticity and non-ephemeral nature of heritage traditions as well as the extraordinariness of a peaceful, rustic, and remote paradise, as opposed to modern, industrialized societies, in which most actions are collective and planned (Urry and Larsen 2011, 108-109).

Similarly, the desire for the 'untouched' – i.e. for places without social or human intervention – generates an interest in viewing and controlling uncontaminated landscapes; this, in turn, stimulates imagination that may go beyond a framed shot (Urry 1990; Francesconi 2014). In other words, visual representations of natural views both reflect and legitimize gazing practices at wild, unspoilt nature, which is easily commodified through photographs that include unique details such as "the sunset, the mountain range or the turquoise-coloured sea" (Urry and Larsen 2011, 113), visual clichés – such as windows – or natural hollow places, such as caves (Dann 1996).

4.1.3.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, one may argue that the act of seeing, or *gazing*, is the primary means of obtaining satisfaction and perpetuation of the capitalist desire to possess and consume goods and services by watching and consuming spectacles (Debord 1967). Indeed, these practices of manipulating representations of reality by providing alternative views both

assign a sense of control and escape from reality and legitimize its passive acceptance (Berger; 1972 McLuhan 1964). In this regard, photography and the media work hand in hand to ensure the easy consumption of alternative and spectacular *views* and the passive performance of pleasure-seeking activities, a practice which is increasingly pervasive (Urry and Larsen 2011, 159). Here, the provision of aesthetically appealing and 'controlling' views enables postmodern individuals to imagine and find instant gratification in sceneries and sight-seeing acts, often without resorting to expensive and physical travel that might require efforts and lead to a potential disillusion (Crang 2006). Once again, this discussion demonstrates how technological advances intersect with historical and economic processes to support the construction and dissemination of semiotic practices, which perpetuate ideologically based views of reality. In this sense, digital, commercial photographic practices become machines of "world-making" (Urry and Larsen 2011, 167) or "desire-producing" (Urry and Larsen 2011, 173) in post-Fordist consumer capitalism, which fulfill the desire for "rapid delivery, ubiquitous availability and the instant gratification of desires" in a rapidly changing and uncertain world (Tomlinson 2007, 74):

> "The knowledge-power art of commercial photography involves crafting images that stimulate – and not substitute – desires for 'transporting one's body' to the photographed place. Imaginative mobility is clearly poor business for the tourism industry. More broadly, following Foucault, we can see this making of seductive images and destinations as an institutional mediation by expert gazed within which spectacle and surveillance intersect and power-knowledge relations are played out"

The final section of the literature review will describe how current trends of socio-semiotic practices succeed in perpetuating the *tourist gaze* and provide gratification that stimulates the purchase of holiday packages by raising awareness of needs and 'seducing the eye'.

4.2 Tourism discourse in contemporary society: how to legitimate and reverse capitalist ideology through an understanding of promotional language and semiotics in Web 2.0

The final section of this literature review seeks to offer an understanding as to how capitalist ideology is implemented in tourism communication. As shown in section 4.1 and throughout the literature review, lexicogrammatical strategies in semiotic modes represent the means through which one may 1) understand how a specific context of situation, or

register, affects human interaction, and 2) unveil the mechanism of realization and perpetuation of a particular discourse semantics. Additionally, the critical and systematic study of the types of choices in communicative events has proved to contribute to the development of *literacy* and to the *active involvement* of individuals in the process of creating counter-narratives, which, in turn, shed light on the discursive, asymmetrical relationships that are established to maintain power and generate profit.

As was discussed in Chapters Two and Three, technological development and socio-economic processes play a key role in shaping novel practices that perpetuate ideologies even though no critical awareness by individuals is developed at the same time; tourism discourse, therefore, continues to be effective because of its high degree of adaptability to the context – including media affordances and the capitalist-driven desires of the postmodern tourist – and its 'reflection' in the actual design of meaning in sign making (Francesconi 2014).

The current section, in particular, explores the major contributions to the field of tourism discourse in contemporary media, i.e. Web 2.0 and Web 3.0, in order to shed light on the ways in which the language and imagery of tourism have developed their leverage of *social media tourists*' consumerist desires.

4.2.1 The Discourse of tourism promotion: linguistic features

As mentioned in Chapters Two and Three, the analysis of discourse in contemporary communicative events has a great impact on the reception and understanding of underlying intents and ideologies in the construction of reality. Indeed, the systematic and critical investigation of trends in linguistic and semiotic practices may provide information relating to the type of choices of discourse encoding practices implemented in a particular socio-economic context and medium (Foucault 1978; Said 1978). In this regard, tourism discourse has often attracted the attention of scholars investigating the use of persuasive language to convince consumers of the necessity of a product as well as influencing their purchasing behavior (Maci 2020). Therefore, the analysis of tourism discourse may shed light on the ways in which the postmodern society in the digital era perpetuates capitalist views (Barthes 1977).

If Chapters One to Three revealed the theoretical underpinnings of linguistic and semiotic choices in meaning making practices throughout history and across modes and media, section 4.1 provided some insights into the specific theoretical framework for the understanding of tourism communication. According to Dann, particularly, the language of tourism affects the way individuals perceive the social construct of holidays and concurs to a change of behavior in the physical travel destination, and, as such, it may be considered to be a *discourse* (Dann 1996, 4-5).

In particular, the Web was proved to be the most powerful and widely used vehicle for persuasive communication design in the digital era, both at the verbal and visual level (Kress 2010; Jaworski and Thurlow 2010). Indeed, the ubiquitous presence and dissemination of multisemiotic representations across digital channels may shape the expectations of prospective tourists and provide idealized, attractive representations of goods or services that may be consumed (Maci 2020, 183). By adopting a critical stance towards tourism as a potentially destructive and inequal international business, which commodifies destinations and local aspects – including hosts – through the perpetuation of the tourist gaze (Kelly-Holmes & Pietikaïnen 2014; Bhatia 2004, 3; Francesconi 2004, 11-12), sociolinguists attempt to identify and unveil the linguistic and multimodal repertoire of strategies that contribute to constructing an ideologically based perception of the destination for profit purposes (Maci 2020, 127).

Several academics have engaged with tourism discourse over the years and have increasingly associated the language of tourism with terms such as *rhetoric, narrative, promotion,* persuasion (Dann 1996; Maci 2020; Manca 2016). All these concepts imply a relationship of power between discourse specialists of the tourism industry and their audience. In this sense, the incessant use and adaptation of promotional language and imagery to socio-economic and communicative trends may become a tool that ensures the profitability of the tourism industry in its global economic growth, by legitimating the constructs and dichotomic nature of work and leisure (Maci 2020, 3; 218; Francesconi 2014).

For these reasons, sections 4.2.1.1-4.2.1.2 will discuss contemporary approaches to the analysis of linguistic and visual strategies; finally, section 4.2.2, will conclude the chapter

by investigating the relationship between new forms of communication and control through social media and emerging generic trends in contemporary society.

4.2.1.1 Authenticity in the extraordinariness and remote: ideological representations

As tourism discourse continues to be legitimated by and to legitimize capitalist ideology, the main aim of this type of rhetoric is *financial profit*. The focus on visual and emotive pre-consumption through different types of semiotic resources, which characterize any kind of advertising (Barthes 1972) is particularly key in the promotion of an *intangible* service, which cannot be directly experienced before its actual purchase (Gotti et al. 2017, 9). Accordingly, the tourist message is orchestrated multisemiotically to maximize its impact on individuals' attention and emotions (Francesconi 2014). In order to persuade, the tourism industry moulds the perception of the travel destination by building a destination image that matches the tourist expectations, or 'gaze', with the industry's marketing interests. In this sense, images and language are manipulated and commercialized by means of tropes, or sociological, recurring themes, of *authenticity*, *strangerhood* and *extraordinariness* (Manca 2016; Maci 2020), as mentioned in section 4.1. These are intrinsically connected to the satisfaction of capitalist-driven desires such as an escape from time constraints and work schedules by means of representations of activities, adventures, or through idyllic and pristine, unchanged environments – which are defined by Cohen (1988) and MacCannel (1989) as *denial of time* and *timelessness* strategies, respectively. The latter, in particular, may be understood as a socially based desire of postmodern tourists to experience a crystallized "beauty of the location for eternity" (Gotti et al. 2017, 11).

Many linguists in this field have researched and detected tropes of authenticity and strangerhood – either in terms of 1) *unknown, unfamiliar,* or 2) *remote, pristine* – in all kinds of tourism genres, mostly by means of corpus analysis (Maci 2020; Manca 2016; Bianchi 2017; Gotti et al. 2017; Fodde 2017; Francesconi 2014; Mocini 2013).

4.2.1.1.1 The linguistic realization of tourism sociological tropes

The main findings of the research attempts mentioned above confirm the presence of a tension between the longing for a sacralized and mythologized past, which has remained

unchanged and untouched by modernity – including references to the eternality of idyllic and unspoilt, natural environments (MacCannel 1989) –, and an exciting, different, present or future reality which, in a similar way to the *denial of time,* constructs an alternative view characterized by unpredictability, leisure, adventure, and improvisation (Gottlieb 1982; Dann 1996, 51). In particular, Maci (2020) emphasizes the importance of the concept of 'off the beaten track' experiences, which assigns an aura of *unpredictability and independence, novelty* to the traveler's journey. Fodde (2017) contributes to the discussion by exploring the concept of accessibility to authentic traditions and pristine environments, which make the tourist's experience exclusive and attractive. In all cases, the authenticity and strangerhood of both traditions and environments seem to permeate tourism narratives, which promote magical experiences. Indeed, the latter suggest an *escape* from ordinary, real-life experiences through the recounting of mystified, ancient tales or descriptions of visits to as well as activities in natural environments. This is realized, at the linguistic level, through the use, for example, of lexical units such as "escape", "forget", "explore", "authentic", "pristine", "exciting" (Dann 1996, 55-62; Fodde 2017, 252-262; Verstergaard and Schroder 1985, 162-163). Therefore, the recurrent linguistic opposition between a sacralized and pristine eternality and an unpredictable, exciting future plays a crucial role in attracting the postmodern tourist's interest, as it suggests a solution to their dissatisfaction with their current condition. An overview of this tension from a conceptual perspective is provided in Table 4.1.

Binary structure of tourism discourse	**Sacralized, magic past and pristine eternality**	**Present-day capitalism**	**Unpredictable and pleasure-oriented future**
1.opposition	- sacralized and mythologized past (*unknown, unfamiliar*) - unchanged traditions (*eternal*)	- Familiar routines, work constraints and time schedules - Fast-paced, ever-changing reality	- Exciting, unpredictable future - Freedom and control - Leisure
2.opposition	Untouched, primitive environments (*remote, pristine, idyllic*)	Industrialized, overpopulated, polluted cities	Progress, technology

Table 4.1: An overview of the binary structure of tourism discourse

The strategic use of *verbs* and other linguistic resources such as *nouns* or *adjectives* to construct the tension has been investigated from different perspectives. Indeed, the analysis of tourism persuasive language may be not only conducted from a sociolinguistic perspective (Dann 1996; MacCannel; Maci 2020; Gotti et al. 2017), but also from a Systemic Functional Linguistics one (Francesconi 2014; Manca 2016; Mocini 2013). Contaminations between different approaches have proved to be fruitful to enrich and *systematize* the analysis of persuasive language. For example, the study of the frequency and collocations of pronouns that address, single out and engage directly the reader and its status – also called ego-targeting technique (Dann 1996, 185) – or the analysis of the *attributes* or *tokens, values* that are conferred to both tourists and aspects of the destination may be classified by means of both semantic categorization and ideational and interpersonal meaning.

Francesconi, in particular, offers a comprehensive analysis of tourism genres through the lens of Transitivity, MOOD and modals, and logico-semantic relationships, which were briefly examined in Chapter One (Francesconi 2014). The analysis of processes, participants, and settings in tourism discourse has revealed the systematic presence of *material* processes that connect the destination and tourist, and which seek to assign agency and an allegedly abundance of choice to a 'singled out' tourist, who is often designed as subject that controls and benefits from the different activities and aspects of the destination (Francesconi 2014; Manca 2016). In this sense, Transitivity offers the opportunity to study the role and collocations, as well as semantic prosody, of the language of tourism by means of classifications of all resources in terms of types of processes – whether they are material, mental, relational[2] – and grammatical roles of subjects and objects in the syntactic structures. Other linguistic strategies include the description of organized tours and different kinds of arrangements that may *guide* the inexpert tourist' sightseeing activity into a meaningful experience (Gritti 1967; Dann 1996, 82). From a linguistic perspective, this is realized by means of clauses such as "everything is arranged by us (Dann 1996, 74, 77). Additionally, more overt, imperative forms associated with material processes of action – such as "try", "take", "call", "hurry", "come", "see",

[2] See Chapter One for additional insights into Systemic Functional Linguistics and the Transitivity system.

"discover", "choose – reinforce the *call to action*, which induce prospective tourists to ask for additional information concerning the tourist experience or purchase holiday packages (Dann Dan 1996, 67-68, 83). Here, the co-occurrence of MOODS and verbs may be studied from a SFL perspective, which allows for the investigation of the connections between ideational and interpersonal meaning and in the classification of the relationships between the types and role of verbs, subjects and syntactical structures (Francesconi 2014). This type of analysis, in particular, may assist in the investigation of how hortatory tones urging some course of action may persuade a prospective customer to read more about an offer and make an informed decision (Andrlic and De Alwis 2016). From the point of view of language strategies, this is achieved through requests and commands that are realized by means of rhetorical questions and imperatives such as "Don't litter", or "Don't wait summer to book your holidays", "Isn't it time to think about yourself?", which may subtly lead consumers to acknowledge that something is missing in their lives (Burke 1966; Dann 1996, 79-80; Verstergaard and Schroder 1985, 68).

Relational processes, similarly, were demonstrated to occur often in tourism narratives, as they define holiday experiences in terms of *authenticity, uniqueness, extra-ordinariness*, and describe both temporal continuity and local specificity of traditional aspects of destinations (Francesconi 2014; Hallet and Kaplan-Weinger 2010). In essence, they are used to establish a relationship of either identification, characterization (through the verb *to be*) or possession (through the verb *to have*) between subjects and attributes or symbols that are carefully chosen for persuasive purposes. In this regard, metaphorical uses or "languaging" techniques (Maci 2020) may be studied and categorized to explore the type of associations between subjects and attributes that serve the purpose of evaluating different entities in positive terms. For example, destinations have been proved to be associated with popular destinations that display positive connotations; indeed, these contribute to amplifying the sense of exclusivity as well as "mollifying the effects of strangeness which are associated with a vacation" (Dann 1996, 171). In concrete terms, affirming that "Mopti is the Venice of Mali" transfers positive connotations related to a charming and familiar, Western location like Venice to a more exotic and remote destination like Africa. This type of strategy works in Western discourse for it legitimates

the idea of a euro-centric vision that sees other continents as 'others', as mentioned in section 4.1.2.1 (Tresse 2011; Dann 171-174).

With regard to evaluative terminology, the corpus analysis of the semantic load and connotation of specific words with sociologically established, positive semantic prosody may reveal the value position that is carefully constructed and conveyed by means of lexical units which trigger imagination, desire and action and stimulate agreement. Linguistic entities such as "adventure", "dream", "lust", "pleasure", "unique", "thrilling", "original", "escape", including vernacular expressions that describe traditions and customs, dishes in the native language, in particular, legitimate the escape from ordinary life experiences through the search and desire for the *authentic* and *unknown* (Dann 1996, 174-176).

The degree of alignment of the value position of prospective tourists' with discourse specialists' has been examined also at a systematic level by relying on the Appraisal framework, which is the linguistic framework adopted in the current dissertation, together with Transitivity (Martin and White 2005; Mocini 2013; Jalilifar and Moradi 2019). In particular, Mocini provides us with an example of application of the Appraisal framework to the analysis of Affect and Appreciation resources, which explore the types of evaluation and emotions that are evoked intentionally by discourse specialists through the use of adjectives, verbs and nouns (2013)[3]. In this sense, the number of instances of aesthetic, visual or emotive consumption of particular aspects of the destination may be classified, quantified and compared across different context; consequently, these may reveal associations between semantic prosodies and preferences that generate different responses according to the audience and purpose of particular genres (Manca 2016).

4.2.1.2 Imagery

Despite the crucial role of promotional imagery in shaping tourists' expectations and desires, it is only recently that scholarly interest in the analysis of tourism multimodal material has grown. Indeed, most tourism scholars have focused their efforts on the

[3] As discussed in Chapter One, Mocini's research demonstrates how Appraisal analysis may enable the classification of the types and graduation of positive attitudes that are conveyed by tourism narratives, also in terms of frequency and collocations with lexical units highlighting different aspects of destinations or entities.

systematic analysis of written, promotional material (Maci 2020; Gotti et al. 2017; Gotti 2006; Maci 2010; Manca 2013, 2017), whereas only few have engaged with the analysis of digital imagery or travel videos (Francesconi 2014; Francesconi 2017; Manca 2016; Manca 2018; Bianchi 2017; Maci 2017; Maci 2020). Most results highlight the pervasive presence of Dann's and Urry's *gazes* and driving, postmodern, desires in website and Facebook multimodal material. As was discussed in Chapter Two, the growing *centricity, centrality and dominance* of imagery on contemporary social media such as Instagram require an investigation of this emerging semiotic practice both at qualitative and quantitative level, and from a multimodal perspective. In this sense, the integration of SFL techniques and corpus methods applied to both imagery and language may assist in the analysis of novel trends of persuasive meaning making and unveil new forms of promotional communication.

In line with the authors mentioned throughout the literature review (Berger 1972; Barthes 1977; Debord 1977; Manovich 2017; Kress 2010), Dann (1996), Urry (1990) and Uzzel (1984) argue that imagery is key in tourism promotional discourse, which aims towards the fruition of an intangible service and the pre-consumption and satisfaction of particular capitalist-driven needs.

In particular, Dann suggests that photographs contribute to shaping at the cognitive and perceptive level an illusionary and idyllic representation of the tourist experience that represent the main 'product' that tourists are interested in, especially in the pre-trip stage of the purchasing process (Dann 1996, 65-67; 83; 87). Various studies, indeed, confirm the hypothesis that the large majority of tourist promotional material features illustrations, for they represent the main piece of information individuals look at when viewing promotional content (Dilley 1986; Mayo and Jarvis 1981; Dann 1996, 190; Borra 1978). From a marketing perspective, Picazo and Moreno-Gil (2017) and Shuqair and Cragg (2017) demonstrate that this is particularly true for images on Instagram, as they increase the chances for the message to be remembered and change the viewer's perception of the destination promoted. However, as Garrod remarks, the focus on the daydreaming process of fulfilment of increasingly higher or staged expectations might lead customers to purchase travel packages merely to "close the hermeneutic cycle" of anticipation of the

tourist experience, by taking and sharing photographs similar to the ones that first stimulated their imagination and desire (Garrod 2009, 347; Urry 1990, 140).

With regard to the persuasive nature of *romantic* views that stimulate imagination through uncontaminated "scapes", Uzzel (1984) and Williamson (1983) highlight the role of particular details of the tourist landscape or experience as triggers of unconscious and socially driven needs such as self-actualization, social interaction and sexual arousal. In particular, Uzzel argues that marketers often adopt medium or close up shots to represent an intimate relationship between a human subject and an object, which carries a symbolic meaning and 'transfers' the emotions and the social condition depicted to the viewer of the photograph (Uzzel 1984, 85-87). In this regard, Dann supports this assumption by suggesting that tourist pictures often rely on "indexical transference" to convey positive attitudes, particularly by means of objects that symbolize taboo infractions or visual cliches of gates, passages into the unknown (Dann 1996, 195). For example, the representation of female nudity with abundance of food or alcoholic beverages may imply moral, sexual inhibition and evoke a particular state of mind or being in the represented subject that is immediately transferred to the viewer (Dann 1996, 48, 207). In other words, the representation of subjects may stimulate imagination and desire when these are associated with entities that 'index' particular feelings or meanings, which are often related to the infringement of cultural and social norms; in this case, the identification process takes place, and the viewer is inevitably involved in the daydreaming stage of pre-consumption (Verstergaard and Schroder 1993, 153-155).

4.2.2 Changing promotional practices and generic trends: social media to raise awareness and provide instant gratification

The previous sections highlighted the importance of integrating multisemiotic strategies into the construction of effective tourism communication in postmodern times. It confirmed, particularly, the role of visual, meaning-making practices as means to legitimate ideological assumptions in increasingly digitally based, capitalist societies. Therefore, a critical and systematic understanding of emerging trends in popular media and discourses is pivotal to provide insights into inequalities and power relationships that are perpetuated for profit purposes; indeed, the development of analytical skills when engaging with

different signs may enable individuals to develop agency in contemporary times. Despite this, empirical research of persuasive strategies in corpora of static imagery and written text in the field of English Linguistics and tourism discourse in still in its infancy, particularly as far as Instagram is concerned. Knowledge about the systematic legitimation of ideologies at the multimodal and digital level, consequently, is still underdeveloped.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the affordances of the contemporary digital sphere have contributed to the spread of ubiquitous, pervasive promotional content that requires scholarly attention from an interdisciplinary perspective. Thus, critical discourse scholars and linguists have joined the discussion initiated by media and semiotic scholars by exploring new trends of digital, persuasive communication (Herring 2013; Jones et al. 2015; Gotti et al. 2017). Marketing studies, in particular, have demonstrated in the past decades that social media provides the primary tools for the creation of long-lasting relationship with prospective customers and emotional attachment by means of daily content sharing that, through visibility, creates awareness of needs and possibilities of fulfillment of those needs (Zeng 2013; Hays et al. 2013; Leung 2013). In other words, the use of social media allows for the generation of profit in any kind of industry through emotional content and engagement opportunities[4] (Harden and Heyman 2009).

Persuasion and behavior change, however, may occur only if the main aim, audience, and use of the different kinds of social platforms are taken into account in the construction of the promotional message. This suggests that content needs to be orchestrated with an awareness of both the opportunities and challenges of an accessible digital sphere. Indeed, the growing pervasiveness of content and information is pushing marketers to focus their efforts on high-quality content that attracts the attention of postmodern users who have a wealth of information but little time available (Leung et al. 2013; Hays et al. 2012; Ayeh et al. 2012). In this sense, reliance on highly evaluative and emotional content that persuades individuals to react instantly by being affected passively and unconsciously by visual and written material is crucial to ensuring persuasiveness and opportunities for profit. However, as was shown in this literature review, the desires and the *gaze* of tourists

[4] https://offers.hubspot.com/instagram-engagement-report (Last visited: 14/04/2019) [16] https://sproutsocial.com/insights/instagram-features/ (Last visited: 20/04/2019)

has evolved and shifted towards a more romantic, passive and contemplating view of control and possession of landscapes in uncontamined and nonindustrialized environments. The return to nature envisaged by Urry represents, thus, the main strategy for the immediate stimulation of the imagination and desires of postmodern tourists, which is more important than providing information (Gretzel and Yoo 2014; Ayeh et al. 2012).

Additionally, the inclusion of lexicogrammatical units that assign extremely positive evaluations based mainly on aesthetic appreciation and emotional impact fosters inner, mental and emotive consumption of natural or generic destinations, which align inevitably the value positions of marketers and customers, provide instant gratification and generate irrational reactions (Mocini 2013). This view is supported by the authors mentioned throughout these chapters, and may be enriched by integrating Manca's interpretation of the AIDA model of persuasion in the early pre-trip stage of tourists (2016) with Bateman's description of multimodal genre detection (2014a). Indeed, tourism promotional material on social media needs to attract the audience (A), stimulate interest (I) and desire (D), and action (A) before the actual decision to plan and purchase a holiday in a particular destination can be made (Ayeh et al. 2012).

In the decision-making process, intentional action and research for information in the purchasing process will be carried out in the fourth part of the marketing funnel of persuasion (A), which is currently possible on websites in the digital sphere (Xiang and Gretzel 2009). Scholars in marketing studies affirm that 84% of leisure travelers rely on websites to gather credible and concrete information for the organization of trips (Hays et al. 2012; Ayeh et al. 2012), and that most of the traffic to websites is generated by Google searches and social media (Leung et al. 2013; Torres 2010). Additionally, 66% of online travelers browse only visual material and user-generated content[5], and most

[5]https://www.statista.com/statistics/499694/forecast-of-online-travel-sales-worldwide/; https://www.statista.com/statistics/415795/main-sources-travel-information-european-union-eu/ (Last visited: 20/05/2019)

Instagram users' perceptions towards a travel destination and behavior in the pre-trip stage are affected by Instagram images (Shuqair and Cragg 2017; Huey and Yazdanifard 2014). The particular use of the 'material affordances' of the semiotic modes – as well as their role in the multimodal message - may support in the investigation of potential new trends of meaning making that do not merely depend on the technical affordances of dissemination channels, but on the needs and behavior of the audience and the main communicative aim, i.e. the context (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014; Bateman 2014a; Manca 2016 ; Maci 2020; Kress 2010, Francesconi 2014; Maci 2020; Bakhtin 1986). also Bhatia argued (2004), genre

> "essentially refers to language use in a conventionalized communicative setting in order to give expression to a specific set of communicative goals of a disciplinary or social institution, which give rise to stable structural forms by imposing constraints on the use of lexicogrammatical as well as discoursal resources" (23)

It follows that contemporary multimodal communicative events in tourism discourse have the potential to be classified systematically according to their main communicative function or purpose, audience, medium, topic, mode and trip stage, especially by unveiling trends of lexicogrammatical patterns at the multimodal level that realize a particular socio-economic context (Calvi 2010; Gotti 2006; Francesconi 2014, 13-17).

4.2.3 Conclusion

The literature review of the current dissertation showcased the research gap in the analysis of the visuo-linguistic strategies that are used for promotional purposes in contemporary society and media. An awareness of the influence and integration of these factors alongside a study of patterns of lexicogrammatical instantiation, indeed, may allow for an understanding of the emergence of persuasive, communicative and generic conventions which, according to Maci, "promote, determine and govern tourism and the tourist's experience" (2020, 220).

An informed and comprehensive understanding of contemporary legitimation strategies of tourism e-discourse may be achieved by investigating at a systematic level the functions that language and other forms of communication fulfill in the creation of context-dependent meaning. Particularly, the systematic analysis of corpora of text and images that

is carried out in the next chapters will shed light on new patterns of ideological meaning that construct a particular view, or *gaze*, at the travel experience, and convey positive attitudes towards it for profit purposes. Indeed, their detection may help provide reliable and novel insights into current expressions of persuasion that are being developed as a response to or activation of specific, social needs that characterize the postmodern individual in the era of social media. The study carried out in the next chapters, therefore, seeks to demonstrate the existence of highly persuasive strategies that vary according to channel of dissemination of the multimodal, promotional message; this type of knowledge may give individuals the opportunity to shape actively counternarratives to resist and potentially reverse capitalist ideology in the 21st century.

5. Multimodal research design and methods for the analysis of visual corpora

5.1 Aim of the study

The study described in the following chapters discusses contemporary trends of effective tourism strategies for the promotion of holiday destinations. The aim of this dissertation, in particular, is to demonstrate that multimodal tourism strategies are used on both Instagram and company websites systematically to manipulate individuals' perception of and attitudes towards destinations (Dann 1996; Urry and Larsen 2011). The study sought also to investigate how the multimodal design and narratives vary according to the channel of dissemination (Manca 2016; Stöckl et al. 2019). Indeed, it is argued that discourse specialists, depending on the platform, 1) construct different views of the travel experience, also by assigning different roles and degrees of agency to tourists; 2) convey different attitudes, emotions and evaluations towards the destination promoted (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014; Thompson et al. 2019; Martin and White 2005; Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006).

5.2 Objects of study and research questions

5.2.1 Research objects

To achieve the objectives mentioned above and gain an understanding of contemporary, digital, English tourism narratives, three popular travel organizations promoting anglophone countries on both their Instagram profile and official websites were selected as the object of this study. Indeed, these two digital channels differ in terms of communicative purposes: while Instagram is considered to be the most 'visual' medium and marketing tool for brand awareness and emotional attachment through content sharing (Manovich 2017), official websites are platforms with booking opportunities and main source of information and profit in the final step of the customer's journey. Accordingly, multimodal data consisting of still images and written text pertaining to "Tourism Western Australia" (@westernaustralia), "Tourism Ireland" (@tourismireland) and "Destination Canada" (@explorecanada) was retrieved and filtered in order to be analyzed, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and then linked to the findings resulting from the different modes and methods employed. The social media multimodal ensemble, i.e. *the post*, was analyzed as well as a cohesive

structure for a comparison with the website, multimodal construction of the promotional message.

The number and nature of the travel companies selected, which are based in three different English-speaking countries, were chosen after researching examples of carefully designed tourism communication online, the evidence of which was obtainable through both a subjective and an objective process. On the one hand, a preliminary analysis allowed for the discovery of rich and complex multimodal orchestrations – denoted by high-quality images and long captions – for the promotion of travel experiences to the states of *Western Australia*, *Canada*, and *Ireland* and the digital construction of these as attractive and out-of-the-ordinary holiday destinations. On the other hand, the significant engagement rate and number of followers in each page (respectively, 599.000, 718.000 and 1.800.000)[1] was interpreted as an indicator of the effectiveness of the promotional communication strategy.

Furthermore, with regards to the number of agencies taken into consideration for the current investigation, the author decided to conduct an analysis of a relatively low number of companies with the objective of providing a detailed, faithful and comprehensive portrait of effective promotional multimodal strategies. As a matter of fact, it is argued that these agencies may be considered to be representative of effective multimodal tourism communication online, for the reasons mentioned above: they have a large social media following and supply the reader/viewer with a considerable amount of daily shared high-quality images and carefully organized written messages. Only a limited number of additional travel organizations with such high engagement rate and quality/quantity of content in the anglophone environment was detected, and they promote the United States of America (@visittheusa), Scotland (@visitscotland), England (@visitengland), and each state of Australia (@Australias_southwest, @ntaustralia, @southaustralia, @visitnsw, @australia). The reason for choosing other companies than the ones just mentioned was due to multiple factors, which range from observing a stronger destination identity and branding, denoted by coherence of colors in the destination's images offered, to an unanswered or rejected request for using the content protected by copyright. Each travel agency was in fact contacted per email to ask for the permission to download and use its communication material for research

[1] These numbers were updated right before the submission of the dissertation for external review (20/02/2023).

purposes and noncommercial uses. These three agencies provided a positive feedback and granted the opportunity to conduct research on the content on their web pages and Instagram account. Before contacting each travel board, additionally, the terms of use and copyright web pages were accessed, in which permission to reproduce credited content was granted only for noncommercial purposes and via previous consent. Also, positive promotion of the travel destinations was warmly recommended[2]. Information on marketing strategies and trends in the different states focuses mainly on consumer-based perception and forecasts during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, whereas no website provides reports on the communicative strategies implemented[3].

The two modes and channels under investigation, on the other hand, were selected for the following reasons. First of all, as was already explained in Chapters Two and Four, it is widespread knowledge that social media communication nowadays exert particular influence over the society due to their pervasiveness and constantly growing number of active users. Instagram, in particular, has gained attention and attracted millions of people into its virtual platform, which soon became the 'virtual reality' in which one could share daily personal content, be updated about other people's life and follow businesses of interest. As a result, thousands of companies expanded and have been increasing their presence there. For its relevance in hosting contemporary promotional communication, the Instagram platform was chosen for the analysis of online tourism

[2] The official websites of these travel boards have changed their layout patterns as well as visual and linguistic content from 2021 onwards. However, the regulations concerning the copyright remained the same. *Tourism Western Australia* 's terms of use may be accessed at the following link: https://www.westernaustralia.com/en/pages/copyright, while the links to the remaining travel agencies under investigation may be found in the section *Works Cited* of the current dissertation.
Due to copyright and traceability reasons, all visuo-linguistic content retrieved from the three travel boards' Instagram accounts and company websites – and which is discussed in this dissertation – is credited to these boards as owners of the websites and Instagram accounts. Both visual and linguistic content were kept separated in the corpus analysis for research purposes, and specifically in an attempt to ensure clarity in the analytical process and multimodal corpus data discussion, a research area in its infancy (Pflaeging et al. 2021). Nonetheless, they are considered to be part of the multimodal orchestrations of *Tourism Ireland*, *Destination Canada*, and *Tourism Western Australia*, also to ensure scientific reproducibility of the current research. The names of the photographers who occasionally took the photographs for Instagram may be found in the corresponding post of the three travel boards' accounts, the links to which are available in the *Works Cited* section. The corpora are not openly accessible to the public for copyright issues but may be visualized by contacting the author. See footnote 6 for additional information on this possibility.

[3] In this regard, all three national travel boards dedicate a webpage to market statistics and destination insights either on their promotional or corporate websites. The link to *Destination Canada*'s latest research results is provided here: https://www.destinationcanada.com/en/research, together with insightful reports on consumer-based intelligence in different markets at the global level: https://www.destinationcanada.com/en/global-tourism-watch. Additional links to these sections may be found in the section *Works Cited*.

narratives. Additionally, this social network has not yet been the subject of quantitative, empirical studies of multimodal tourism communication involving still images. In particular, the research interest in still imagery was sparked by an increasing awareness of the *dominant* and *central, centric* role this semiotic mode plays in contemporary and persuasive communication (Stöckl et al 2019). On the other hand, multimodal promotional communication conveyed by official channels such as websites has been the subject of study of various disciplines, including Linguistics and Discourse Analysis, yet often without corpus-based analyses of imagery[4] (Francesconi 2014; Manca 2016; 2018; Gotti et al. 2017; Maci 2020)[5]; this study aims to connect these two popular virtual platforms for communication, which may seem similar but are so different in their construction and specific aims, even if they have the same main objectives, i.e. to promote and sell experiences. Facebook's multimodal communication was initially part of the investigation but, for reasons of space and time constraints, was not included in the analysis and represents a limitation of this study. However, the Instagram social media channel should deserve more attention as it is a relatively new field of inquiry for multimodal and tourism marketing studies.

This thesis, therefore, aims to carry out a multimodal investigation into tourism narratives on Instagram and the official websites through the quantitative, empirical analysis of a large number of both still images and written texts (*captions* on Instagram, and clusters of written information on the website) and the qualitative analysis of an evidence-driven set of instances of multimodal communication pertaining to these channels and their agencies. The objective is to demonstrate that 1) multimodal tourism orchestrations are designed on both Instagram and other channels, 2) differ in terms of specific communication functions, and 3) are designed in order to persuade

[4] The studies mentioned above offer an overview of linguistic patterns from a quantitative perspective but do not focus on visual corpus methods and analysis. Similar to other key contributions to discourse (Hallett and Kaplan-Weinger 2010) and corpus-based, socio-cultural analyses of online tourism language (Manca 2013; Manca and Bianchi 2013; Bondi 2021), the methodology and results of these studies advance the field of tourism promotional language by testing socially driven, intercultural theories through corpus techniques. An adoption of theory-based but data-driven approaches to the investigation and annotation of visual strategies, however, was proved to be crucial to the systematic measurement and reliable definition of verbo-pictorial connections – particularly through Systemic Functional Linguistics – and for a classification of current strategies and communicative trends of online tourism discourse (Bateman et al. 2017; Francesconi 2014). Therefore, quantitative analysis based on empirical, visual findings represents a research gap in the current literature that paves the way for novel research designs that are more suitable for the analysis of contemporary tourism discourse in the digital sphere.

[5] The author was not able to retrieve Manca's latest study of tourism websites (2018), as it was not openly accessible online.

the audience from an emotional, perceptual and therefore behavioral point of view. Particular attention was devoted to the visual mode, in particular, which led to the definition of a new multimodal genre, i.e. *tourism photography*. This section was originally intended to be followed by a marketing inquiry and the conduction of in-depth interviews with the business owners and semi-standardized surveys on a sample of followers of the three travel companies' Instagram profiles. These measures were intended to analyze the degree of intentionality and nature of the reception of the message on part of the specialist and consumer, respectively. Due to time constraints and the dissertation' s major focus on data analysis for Linguistics studies, however, the marketing research mentioned above was not included in the current study. Therefore, it represents a second limitation of this study. Notwithstanding, the inclusion of a marketing section to confirm or reject the linguistic and multimodal results shall be included in future studies, also by exploring the connections between the visuo-linguistic choices and the perceptual and cognitive processes of the customer effects, behavior in the journey towards purchase (Manca 2016) from a neurolinguistic or psycholinguistic perspective.

5.2.2 Research questions

The objectives of this study were achieved by answering specific research questions. The description of the specific inquiries of this project, which is provided below, allowed us to delineate both the theoretical, statistical and technological tools developed and the materials collected to answer the research questions.

The research questions are the following:

1. How do popular travel agencies realize their multimodal tourism discourse? How are the three metafunctions realized across modes? And if present, are they systematic in their multimodal, lexicogrammatical choices of metafunctional meaning realization?

    1.1 How do images and texts provide a manipulated representation of the travel experience in each channel?

    1.2 How do Instagram and website images and texts shape evaluations and convey positive attitudinal meaning, thus fostering an alignment between the value position of the discourse community of specialists and the

recipients of the promotional message, consequently creating an unequal relationship in which marketers rely on perceptive, emotive or informative power for persuasive purposes?

1.3 How do images create a coherent visual artifact? How are ideational and interpersonal lexicogrammatical resources connected?

1.4 How is intersemiotic meaning realized in each channel?

2. May the peculiarities detected in the statistical analysis and qualitative discussion of the multimodal realization of the three metafunctions on Instagram and official websites' communication unveil a new genre of tourism, digital discourse, which depends on the channel's specific communicative aim and targeted audience? Is the distribution of semiotic labor across channels relevant to this potential discovery?

In order to answer these research questions, a series of theoretical and technological tools was developed. It should also be highlighted that all research questions were answered thanks to the adoption of a mixed methodology, i.e. with both quantitative and qualitative measures. The adoption of a mixed methodology allowed for a greater degree of generalizability and replicability of the results, through a quantitative empirical study, and for the validation of their potential social and semiotic implications through a qualitative analysis.

Research questions (RQs) no. 1 and 2 coincide with the main objectives introduced in section 5.1; research questions no. 1.1-1.4 are additional questions that guide the research and analytical process implemented to answer RQ1. RQs 1.1-1.3 relate directly to the two main modes under investigation, i.e. the written text and the image, and focus on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the lexicogrammatical instantiation of the three metafunctional meanings across modes. Finally, RQ 1.4 aims to find connections between the quantitative and qualitative findings of the two modes, in order to demonstrate how different modes work together and are intentionally assembled into a unique message to convey a coherent message.

5.2.3 Materials

The six multimodal sub-corpora pertaining to the three tourism boards' multimodal communication on Instagram and official websites were collected in 2019 through

Instagram's application programming interface (API; six months of Instagram posts for each tourist board), web-scraping, and a web-crawling procedure offered by the text-mining software Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et. al.). All sub-corpora of texts and images were cleaned, renamed and uploaded using different software, and statistically measured for quantitative and qualitative analysis. In particular, instances of repeated materials were searched for in the textual sub-corpora, first automatically and then manually in the .txt file using regular expressions[6]. While the corpora of language were uploaded and analyzed using the Sketch Engine tools, the visual corpora were uploaded and tagged manually using newly developed software SRI Tagging[7], and measured statistically on Jamovi and R. The composition of the visual sub-corpora according to the tourist board (Tourism Ireland, Destination Canada, and Tourism Western Australia) and their channel is provided in Table 5.1, whereas the Instagram and website sub-corpora of written language are shown in Tables 5.2–5.4. In particular, Table 1 shows the number of images which have been collected across tourist boards and related channels and whose strategies have been tagged and measured statistically. Tables 2–4 show the composition of the six sub-corpora of written language grouped according to channels and with information regarding the number of tokens (the smallest units in a corpus, such as words, digits, punctuation), words (number of unique items in a corpus), its types/token ratio (TTR)[8], and the composition of the channel corpora in terms of tokens (%) per each sub-corpus:

Tourist Board	Number of Images (Instagram Posts)	N. of Images (Official Websites)	N. of Total Images per Tourist Board
Tourism Ireland	126	200	326
Destination Canada	180	160	340
Tourism Western Australia	178	158	336
Total	484	518	1002

Table 5.1: Subdivision of visual sub-corpora according to tourist board and channel

[6] The multimodal corpora and sub-corpora of Instagram and website tourism discourse collected for this study are not freely accessible due to copyright policies. However, for transparency and reproducibility purposes, they may be visualized by contacting the author at elena.mattei@univr.it. They may also be potentially used for research purposes.
[7] An overview of this software will be provided in section 5.3.3.
[8] See How to Calculate TTR (Types/Token Ratio).

Website Corpus	Tokens	Words	% (Tokens)	Types/Token Ratio (TTR)
Tourism Ireland	745,251	36,482	62.9%	4.9
Destination Canada	406,084	26,366	34.2%	6.5
Tourism Western Australia	34,094	5,399	2.9%	15.8

Table 5.2: Subdivision of written sub-corpora according to tourist board on the official website

Instagram Corpus	Tokens	Words	% (Tokens)	Types/Token Ratio (TTR)
Tourism Ireland (@tourismireland)	7,670	1,818	18.2%	23.7
Destination Canada (@explorecanada)	14,984	3,554	35.6%	23.7
Tourism Western Australia (@westernaustralia)	19,444	3,294	46.2%	16.9

Table 5.3: Subdivision of written sub-corpora according to tourist board on Instagram

	Total Tokens for Channel	Total Words per Channel	Types/Token Ratio (TTR)
Instagram	42,098	6,566	15.6
Website	1,185,095	49,721	4.2

Table 5.4: Subdivision of written sub-corpora according to channel

5.2.3.1 Instagram: Social Media posts

The Instagram posts were collected through the official Instagram database, the *API* (Application Processing Interfaces), in a temporal span of six months, from January 2019 to June 2019. The length of the temporal span was selected in order to fulfill two objectives. On the one hand, it was our intention to perform a quantitative analysis that could lead to statistically significant and potentially reliable findings, representative of multimodal communication and consequently generalizable. On the other hand, time, space and expertise needed to be taken into consideration in order for this analysis to be carried out. For these reasons, and for the fact that the agencies under investigation shared roughly one post per day, the temporal span of six months, i.e. 180 days, seemed reasonable. From January 2019 to June 2019, 484 Instagram posts were collected, divided as follows: 126 were shared by *Tourism Ireland*, 180 by *Explore*

Canada and 178 by *Western Australia*. Of the material retrievable through the *API*, only the image and the immediate caption were collected. Metadata information such as geolocation, likes and comments were not kept into consideration for the purpose of this study. The high engagement rate was discoverable through manual research but was not of particular interest. The publication date, on the other hand, was retrieved and attached to each image and text file, along with the name of the agency and the type of channel, in order to be able to connect the two post-related semiotic systems in further quantitative and qualitative analysis.

The text files (the *captions*) were then uploaded on Sketch Engine and formed a corpus of 43,452 words (42,098 tokens). The corpus was divided into three sub-corpora, each one pertaining to a different agency: 7,670 for *Tourism Ireland*, 14,984 for *Destination Canada* and 19,444 for *Tourism Western Australia*. On the other hand, the image files (484) were uploaded on the software *Statistically Reliable Image Tagging* (*SRI Tagging*) for manual tagging and statistical analysis. An example of Western Australia' s Instagram posts is available in Figure 5.1.

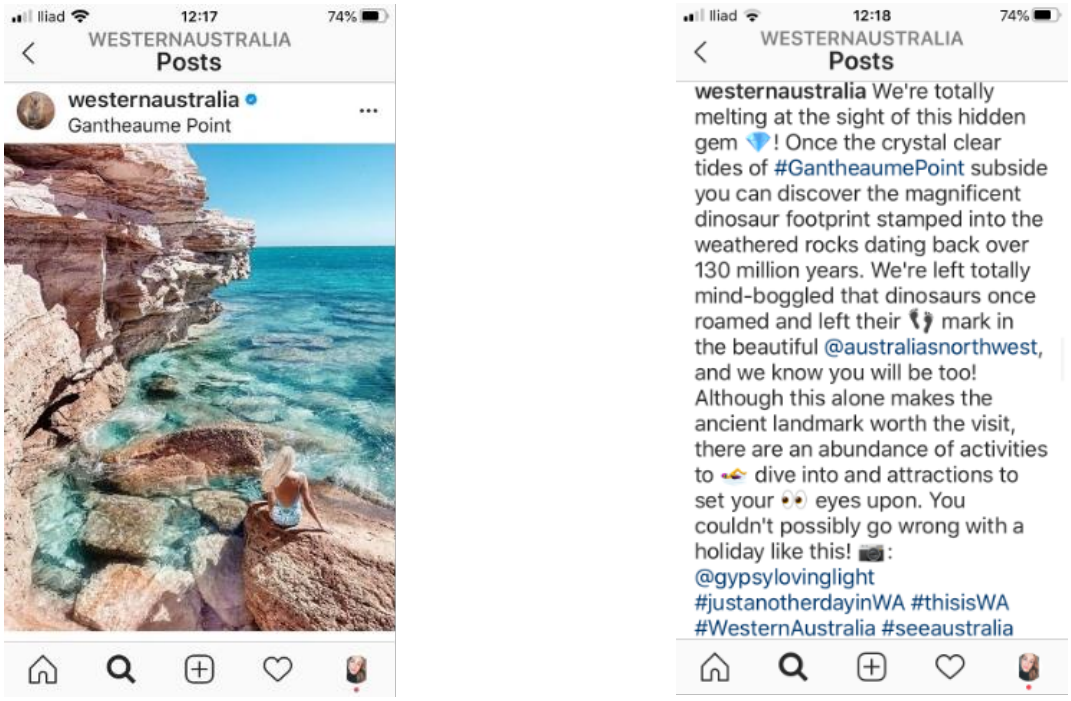
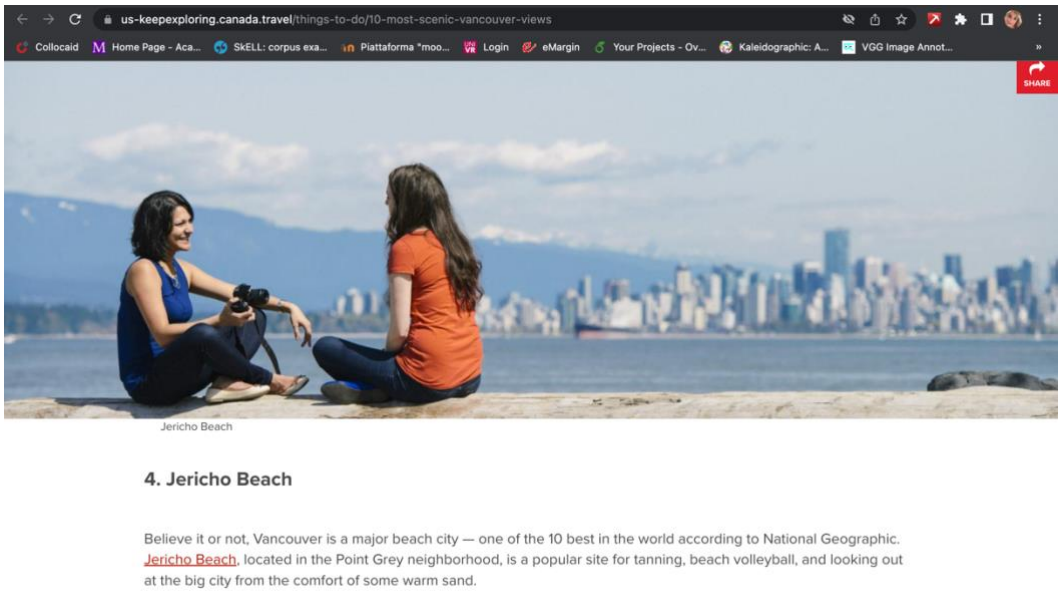


Image 5.1: Post shared by Western Australia on Instagram on 6th June 2019. Photo by @gypsylovinglight. www.instagram.com/p/ByWnWdon-FP/ (Last visit: 31/01/2023)

5.2.3.2 Official website: clusters of data

The multimodal information pertaining to the three travel agencies' websites was retrieved through a web crawling process, directly using the Sketch Engine function *WebBootCat*. The URL of the three websites' landing pages was used as a starting point for crawling the written text in the other pages of the websites. The total number of tokens collected resulted 1,185,095, of which: 745,251 from *Tourism Ireland*, 406,084 from *Destination Canada*, and 34,094 from *Tourism Western Australia*. These therefore formed the remaining three corpora of our study consisting of written language; the corresponding three corpora of still imagery were collected through a web scraping process as well, for a total of 518 images. This number was chosen for corpus balance reasons: since we were able to collect 160 images for Destination Canada and 158 for Tourism Western Australia, whereas we manage to retrieve around 400 images for Tourism Ireland, we decided to reduce the number of Tourism Ireland to 200 images. We extracted from the group of images, by employing a filter function, the first 180 elements with the highest quality and size and uploaded them, along with the others from the other agencies, on the software *SRI Tagging*. An example of Destination Canada's web pages is available in Figure 5.2.



Imge 5.2: A screenshot of a page on the Destination Canada website *Keep Exploring*, "10 of the Most Scenic Vancouver Views," showing Jericho Beach. us- keepexploring.canada.travel/things-to-do/10-most-scenic-vancouver-views

5.2.4 An interpretation of Canvas for Instagram posts of tourism discourse

As discussed in Chapter Three in the description of Bateman's school of thought, the design of a canvas before engaging with empirical analysis is fruitful for the mapping of a communicative event (Bateman et al. 2017). As Figure 5.3 shows, the current study detected and identified the features of tourism discourse on social media as new and trending social practice to be investigated and compared with established promotional genre of tourism communication. The form and tools of the particular artifact of digital tourism discourse consist mainly of an *image* and a *caption,* and the function of these *posts* is to increase visibility and raise awareness of the travel destination through organic, non-paid advertising. The developed modes of expression are specifically the static, visual and linguistic promotion of tourism destinations.

In terms of genre, an image-centric genre of tourism discourse was detected on Instagram, with the following features:

- Canvas constraints: 2D; permanent traces (apart from the captions, which may become potentially non-transient); different types of users' engagement, including liking, commenting, sharing, exploring content by clicking on tags, hashtags, geolocations, accounts;
- Production and consumption constraints: separate activities, and one-way dissemination in terms of content design (image and caption); passive consumption or different degrees of virtual engagement; less time and attention but more content available;
- Linguistic, layout, generic, design practices: centric and dominant, central role of imagery (relay) with symbolic, evoking and aesthetically appealing content representing natural spectacles; subordinate or equal role of language (relay or anchorage) to stimulate emotive and passive consumption of highly evaluative and aesthetic assessments of abstract, general, evoking sites and natural environments. The focus is on instant gratification and reactions.

The resulting visual artifact (*Instagram static multimodal post*) has the following characteristics:

- It is shaped by leveraging social media functions in the marketing funnel of persuasion (AIDA model, Manca 2016) and by renewing postmodern, social

media users' capitalist-driven needs and desires for extraordinariness and exclusivity, control, freedom, absence of time and work constraints, desire to escape to nonindustrialized and nonsocialized settings;

- The combination of specific aims, audience, and the main function of social media generates a redistribution of semiotic weight compared to established tourism genres and new uses of both modes of expression, which may be identified and quantified by means of annotation and statistical measurement.

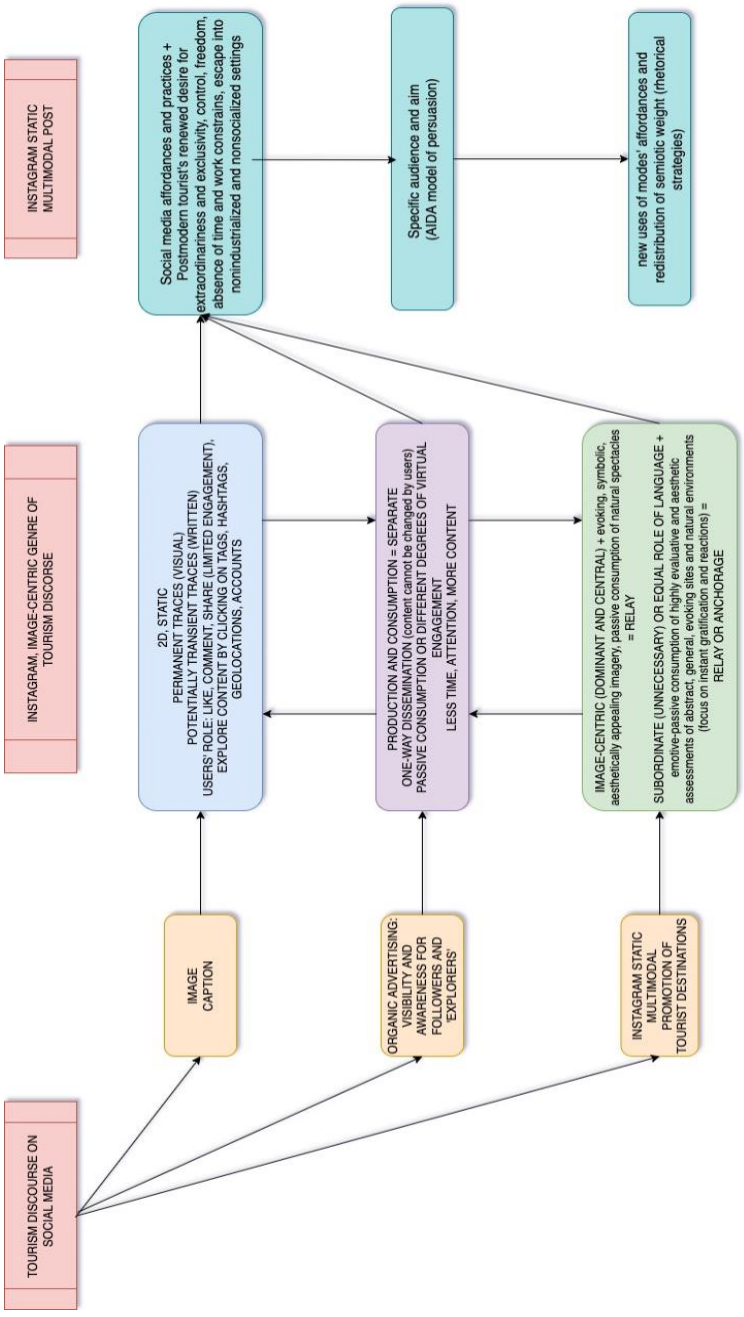


Figure 5.3: A canvas of Instagram static multimodal posts of tourism communication

5.3 Methodological apparatus: theoretical, statistical and software tools for quantitative and qualitative, intrasemiotic and intersemiotic analysis

This section outlines the theoretical tools that were designed to approach and compare the Instagram multimodal canvas and website communication (5.3.1); it also describes the analytical and software tools that were developed for the systematic manual tagging of the visual corpora (5.3.2, 5.3.3), together with the statistical measures adopted to quantify the occurrence and variance of specific variables across online corpora (5.3.4).

5.3.1 Theoretical tools

In order to identify and quantify the visual and written strategies in the corpora and connect the findings across metafunctions, modes, and channels, two tools were necessary. First, a detailed table that would describe the different layers of analysis and comparison between semiotic resources – text and images – (Kress and Leeuwen 2006) according to a multimodal communicative framework. Second, an analytical tool for the quantitative investigation of visual corpora and quantification of the features through statistical measurement, which will be defined in section 5.3.2.

Indeed, as text and discourse are inspected through the quantification and measurement of word occurrences by means of "wordlists," "keyword lists" (McEnery and Hardie 2014, 48–53), and choices, images too need to be investigated in terms of presence or absence of features – visual, semiotic ways of expression – to verify the existence and variance of visual strategies across images and, in this study, across channel corpora. The potential variance in the frequency and use of strategies across these corpora of text and images, which represent multimodal communication on different digital channels with particular communicative promotional aims, would then demonstrate the existence of a new Instagram genre of tourism discourse (Bateman 2014a; Bateman et al. 2023, to appear).

The main challenges faced while developing these two tools concerned two aspects. The first is the quantification of visual strategies – which are built on a qualitative and abstract, empirically untested theory of social semiotics (Kress and Leeuwen 2006) and derived from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)'s theory of language (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). In particular, Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen's approach explores how the three metafunctions of language are realized through specific strategies in other semiotic resources such as static imagery. In other words, it assists

in the investigation of (1) the representation of participants and events; (2) the choice of camera shots and angles that shape a particular relationship with the viewer; and (3) the distribution and salience of the elements in the picture.

The second aspect is the adaptation of this social semiotic theory to the visual tourism discourse and genres, which could lead to the effective, reliable identification and measurement of features in hundreds of images and the possible understanding of the underlying meaning and intended message. Indeed, as John Bateman argues, multimodal communication research needs mode- and context- specific empirical analysis or, in other words, "situated *discourse* interpretation of material patterns" (Bateman 2019a, 535).

In order to be able to investigate the corpora of tourism photography systematically, and to categorize and quantify the visual strategies that could then be connected to the linguistic findings of tourism written discourse, a multimodal comparative scheme was drafted (Table 5.5). This tool is an attempt to take into account not only the specific semiotic affordances, i.e., features, of each *mode* (or semiotic resource, i.e., text and image), but also the discourse specificities typical of tourism promotional and persuasive narratives (Dann 1996; Urry and Larsen 2011) and the generic characterization and development according to the aim of the communication and the semiotic partition of meaning (Bateman 2014a; Maci 2020, 4–10; Bhatia 1993, 22–34, 30). In other words, this tool allows for the detection of variation among the corpora of channels in terms of multimodal meaning construction using the three metafunctions as a means of comparison. Indeed, by using the table as a theoretical support, it was possible to understand whether the intrasemiotic and intersemiotic patterns of variable occurrences varied in terms of frequency and use according to medium and revealed the existence of a specific persuasive genre of tourism photography and communication on Instagram (Francesconi 2014, 15–25, 29–39; Manca 2016).

Metafunctions/contextual parameters of Systemic Functional Linguistics	**Linguistic strategies**	**Visual strategies (partly from Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006)**
Ideational - FIELD	**Transitivity Analysis (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014)** Processes, participants, circumstances ⌊_____⌋ Places, colors, feelings, activities, subjects. CONSTRUCTION OF AN IMAGINARY WORLD	-Processes and participants - Mood/Setting - Color - Shot/Perspective/Angle - Tourism tropes
Interpersonal - TENOR	**Appraisal Theory (Martin and White 2005)** Affect, Appreciation, Force sub-systems. PERSUASION through EVALUATION	- Shot/Angle - Participants - Color - Indexical reference - Tourism tropes
Textual - MODE (CHANNEL)	**Tourism Discourse Devices, Generic Considerations (Dann 1996; Bateman 2014a; Urry 1990; Maci 2020)** - Tourism Tropes - Nature, division of labour of semiotic systems	- Space distribution/composition - Color - Tourism tropes

Table 5.5: Table for the Semiotic Comparison between Visual and Textual Features across the Three Metafunctions or Contextual Parameters

The comparative scheme introduced in Table 5.5 builds on Halliday's three metafunctions of language and contextual parameters, which support the realization of meaning in context. The first metafunction, ideational, serves the purpose of representing linguistically inner or outer experiences through the system of Transitivity – i.e., processes (verbs) and participants (subjects and direct objects). The second metafunction, interpersonal, concerns the negotiation of meaning and the use of lexicogrammatical resources to convey attitudes and evaluations about the reality represented through the Appraisal theory of evaluation (Martin and White 2005; Thompson 2009). In addition, the third metafunction, textual, focuses on cohesive ties

between clauses in the creation of a text and was reinterpreted to include discursive and generic considerations according to channel and semiotic labour (Webster 2019, 35, 41; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 33–41; Manovich 2017). In essence, the textual metafunction is concerned specifically with the disposition of information within each semiotic resource (any entity and its salience) and the degree of interdependence of semiotic resources in the socio-communicative act.

A categorization of processes, participants and circumstances – both in terms of syntactic role and semantics – as well as types of evaluations and emotions attached proved crucial to the investigation of meaning construction and actual use of linguistic resources to promote the travel destinations. Language semantics and connotation, indeed, vary in terms of topics, types of activities, and attitudes depending on the communicative context, including the target audience's needs and behavior in specific channels (Francesconi 2014, 16-25, 29-39; Bhatia 2002, 22; Bakhtin 1986; Maci 2020; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014; Manca 2016). The SFL-based annotation procedure performed in this study, therefore, provided the basis for both the quantitative measurement of lexicogrammatical resources adopted in tourism discourse and a qualitative analysis of the most frequent or key patterns typical of tourism genres as specialized discourses. In particular, the understanding of the encoded, ideological mechanisms of persuasion (Said 1991, 21; Bhatia 1993) in the construction of a guided perception and semantic prosody (Sinclair 2004; Mocini 2015) of the travel experience was proved by Mocini (2015) to be fruitful, as an analysis of their types, frequencies and context provides a more comprehensive overview of how and why such persuasive mechanisms are effective. In other words, this study exploits the Appraisal framework to classify the ways in which tourism discourse conveys positive attitudes towards the destination to the prospective customer, thus going beyond the concept of positive or negative semantic connotation, or evaluation (Thompson 2008, 169-170). Additionally, an analysis of the interpersonal metafunction through the Appraisal system directly connects with the multimodal and Systemic Functional Linguistics framework of analysis which is considered the main theoretical grounding in this study. In particular, the current analysis provided insights into the types of resources used to shape positive attitudes and negotiate a similar value position between discourse specialists and prospective customers in the purchasing journey, making Instagram an effective means to establish an emotional attachment and boost both inner reactions

and positive evaluations of the travel destination. As Chapter Eight and Nine show, findings reveal that key terms on Instagram tourism discourse praise the natural environment together with associated values and postmodern needs such as pureness, untamedness, idyllic eternity in aesthetically pleasant settings. Conversely, website acts of appreciation are targeted at cultural and artistic aspects of the destination, such as traditional customs, music and local, culinary uniqueness. This, in turn, stimulates different *gazes*, or expectations (Urry 2011) and different conceptions of exclusivity, i.e. what is conceived as attractive, typical and expected as part of the tourist experience.

In line with this framework, the visual strategies build on the Grammar of Visual Design (Kress and Leeuwen 2006) of Systemic Functional Linguistics, and fulfill all three metafunctions through static tourism imagery. These strategies relate to the visual choices made by the discourse specialists in terms of (1) participants, events and settings selected; (2) the shots and angles adopted; and (3) their positioning as well as salience in the photograph.

In this study, the three metafunctions seemed to be realized through specific resources for promotional purposes. In particular, the contextual parameter *field* or ideational metafunction supports the construction, in tourism discourse, of a manipulated and filtered representation of reality, both visually and verbally. The *tenor* on the other hand, helps design a narrative of persuasion through which highly evaluative and evocative vocabulary boosts an emotive and visual pre-consumption of the experience and influences the perception of a destination. This conveys positive attitudes and eventually affects the purchasing behaviour. Finally, the analysis of *mode(s)* and channels ties together all the findings and provides an understanding of how promotional narratives are realized on both channels (Instagram and website) and in both semiotic modes (textual and visual). More specifically, it includes the investigation of contextual discursive strategies such as *tourism tropes* as well as the semiotic centricity and weight of images and text. While *tourism tropes* are recurring themes of persuasion based on socially driven needs, and dictated by capitalist ideology (Dann 1996), semiotic centricity and weight (or "dominance" and "centrality," respectively, Stöckl et al. 2019, 7) explore what kinds of strategies and modes are paramount to the definition of the overall meaning conveyed by a genre of communicative events in a particular socio-semiotic and discursive context. In other words, the textual

metafunction investigates the degree of pervasiveness, salience, and complexity in the design of practices according to semiotic mode, demonstrating either the centrality of a mode and the subordinate role of the others in the communicative event or their equal, complementary and bidirectional status in the elaboration of meaning.

The focus on imagery in tourism discourse derives from the fact that the *tourist gaze*, i.e., the sum of the expectations of the tourist concerning the travel experience, is often and naturally created by the visual consumption (and imagination) of a product which is intangible by nature (Urry 1990). Therefore, promotional communication about tourist destinations is inherently visual and is characterized by specific features which makes it appealing for a specific purpose. In particular, prospective tourists proved to be interested in experiencing and finding in the destination a shaped representation of reality, dictated mainly by a capitalist-driven need for representations of (1) what is different and unknown, uncontaminated and extraordinary compared to the chaotic, not industrialized and predictable (the *strangerhood* technique, described below); (2) where there are no work responsibilities and time constraints or schedules (*tense* and *play*); and (3) where there is *authenticity* and typicality of gastronomic products, traditional customs, and natural wildlife (Dann 1996; Urry 1990).

Therefore, the tourist driving forces just mentioned are recurring rhetorical devices adopted by specialists of the tourism industry to instill imagination and feelings such as a longing for the travelling experience, and they are designed through specific choices in language and imagery construction to achieve social control (Said 1978; Dann 1996, 2, 79–84) and manipulate the consumer's perspective and behaviour, thus generating profit (Dann 1996, 76–77). The *authenticity* and *strangerhood* tropes, for example, are realized through the representation of natural, off-the-beaten-track landscapes of typical environments or habits, thus fulfilling the tourist's desire for a different, striking reality in terms of temporal continuity or local specificity (Dann 1996, 62–68; Maci 2020, 137, 177).

5.3.2 Analytical tools

The variation of multimodal promotional strategies across channels in terms of metafunctions and semiotic systems was confirmed by quantitative tracking of patterns—thanks to the development and testing of a tree tagging tool. Indeed, a hierarchical tagging system with three main sets of macro-categories and sub-

categories related to the three metafunctions enabled the detection, quantification, and measurement of the occurrence of each visual strategy in each image of the visual sub-corpora under investigation, and the comparison with the metafunctional meanings at the linguistic level.

The tool for the annotation, categorization and quantification of visual features across visual corpora was developed and tested on a set of tourist images. As mentioned earlier, this tagging system and its main macro-categories build directly on the three SFL metafunctions and the Grammar of Visual Design. However, during the pilot annotation, the abstract and general nature of some features did not allow for the detection of particular features concerning the design of tourism professional photography. For this reason, a set of tags was excluded or adapted to the data under investigation; specifically, the *ideal* and *real* polarization of contents was deleted, together with *framing* and *salience*. The latter were replaced with techniques proper of the genre of tourism professional photography (Garrod 2009; Picazo and Moreno-Gil 2017; Manovich 2017; Mai 2011) and tourism discourse (Dann 1996, Francesconi 2014, Urry and Larson 2011).

The system includes two additional macro sets of categories which refer to the semiotic resource of colour—along with its harmonies and degree of saturation—and the list of the sociological approaches (i.e., tourist driving forces) from which tourism discourse draws its epistemological and ideological power and which are evoked by the interrelation of the strategies selected for each metafunction. Although Table 5.5 includes a few references to the macro-variable or *strategies* of colour (in the right column *visual strategies*), this macro-category of strategies was excluded from the analysis due to the presence of low inter-coder reliability scores of each tag belonging to that set. Additionally, in Table 5.5, macro-strategies or variables such as participant, angle, and shot which pertain to different macro-categories (or metafunctions) and are introduced as such in the tagging system below are listed repeatedly in most metafunctions because they convey more than one layer of meaning. The quantification and understanding of the role and nature of participants, for example, is fundamental at both the ideational and interpersonal level.

The *empirical* and *data-driven* macro-categories that relate to the three metafunctions may be visualized in a table form (Table 5.6 below) as well as the original, hierarchical model (Appendix, 1). Each one of them consists of a series of sub-categories (or macro-

variables) which define images and from which derive many choices of meaning construction (the main variables). They are (1) representation of reality, (2) relationship with the audience, and (3) composition. Each sub-category includes differing tagging possibilities which, in the first macro-category (1), explore the type of setting and both the presence and type of process enacted by humans. In the second macro-category (2), the type of shot and perspective technique are classified. In the last one, the distribution and weight of the elements in the photograph (3) are analyzed. The presence of both mutually exclusive and non-mutually exclusive tags is explored in section 5.3.4. An overview of the second layer of tagging, *tourism strategies*, is provided in Table 5.7.

The importance of this tool relies on its capacity to provide a measurement of the exact type of visual strategy adopted for the promotional design of tourism images and of its frequency across channels. The patterns of occurrence and the interrelation of these variables, in fact, provide insight into the underlying intentional meaning construction and the manipulative power of images in tourism discourse. For example, the distinction between action and reaction processes – the latter of which include static observation, on the part of the subject (also called Senser/Reacter, as it involves a mental or sensorial activity that causes thoughts or emotions), of an either animate or inanimate entity – and the focus on one of them in discourse constructs a specific representation of the imaginary world and experience promoted. On the one hand, individuals portrayed in activities processes communicate agency and convey concrete information on a tourist destination; on the other hand, reaction processes with dehumanized static subjects photographed from behind communicate a passive pre-consumption of the experience based on alleged individual targeting and filtered by perceptive and emotive expectations which are indirectly built by watching people in contemplation (Francesconi 2014; Debord 1977). As mentioned above, high shots depicting the vastness of an aesthetically appealing landscape unveils the intention to assign to viewers a "romantic gaze" position, i.e., power, superiority, and control over an exclusive experience and pretended ownership of the feelings evoked.

Macro-Category (grouping features that are always selected)	Sub-Category (Macro-Variables) (grouping features that are often selected)	Main Variables (choices)
Representation of Reality	Participants	• Humans • Animals
	Processes	• Action • Reaction • Transactional action/reaction • Non-transactional action/reaction
	Mood	• Sunrise/sunset • Type of weather
	Setting	• Natural • Artificial • Cultural • Historical • Gastronomic • Analytical
	Activities	• Sport • Recreational action • Entertainment • Transportation
Relationship with the Audience	Direction of Gaze	• Towards the represented participant • Towards the interactive participant
	Camera Shot	• Close • Medium • Long • Very long
	Camera Angle (Perspective)	Subjective Image • Vertical angle (low, eye-level, high, very high) • Horizontal angle (frontal, oblique) Objective Image • Direct frontal • Perpendicular top-down
	Depth (Technique)	• Converging lines (vanishing points) • Blurred background/selective focus • Element in the foreground • Overlap • Less detailed/coloured background
	Space Distribution	Rule of Thirds[9]

[9] The *rule of thirds* is a compositional strategy usually adopted in professional photography: the image is imaginatively divided into 9 equal squares and the subject of the picture (or other elements) usually fill the space represented by the intersection formed by the dividing lines. Through this technique, the subject of the picture appears decentralized. With the symmetry technique, instead, the top half and the

Composition		• One point, more points • Scenic rule of thirds (water, land, sky) • Lines (horizontal, vertical) Other techniques • Centric • Polarization • Symmetry
	Visual Flow	• Leading line(s) • Connecting dots • Framework
	Visual Weight	• Landscape element • Represented living participant • Object
	Other	• Reflection • Sharpness of focus

Table 5.6: Tree Tagging System for the Annotation of Tourism Images Building on Halliday's three Metafunctions[10]

Category	**Possible choices**
Tourism communication strategies	- *Indexical reference*[11] (exploration, relax, gastronomy, sports) - Visual Cliché (*gate*) - Sexual and/or moral inhibition - Topos (*tropes*): ➢ Authenticity (nature, traditional/typical, gastronomic) ➢ Extraordinariness (purification, pilgrimage) ➢ Strangerhood (unspoilt, untamed, primitive, exotic, enchanted, adventurous) ➢ Play (activities) ➢ Conflict (stereotype, oppositon) ➢ Time/magic (past, future, denial of time, timelessness) ➢ Social (single, couple, family, friends) ➢ Youth ➢ Beauty

Table 5.7: List of features and sub-features pertaining to visual imagery in the tourism genre

bottom half are made specular; with the polarization technique, the image is divided into two different halves.

[10] A detailed and comprehensive overview of the tagging model, its structure and the relationships between tags is provided in the Appendix (1).

[11] The *indexical reference* is a tourism promotional strategy realized through the visual depiction of objects which are not themselves subjects of promotion but which indirectly symbolize the condition pictured and 'sold' (the idea of adventure, leisure, extraordinariness, inhibition, authenticity) also through the presence of a human subject in the picture. Human beings, in fact, embody this condition and prompt viewers to identify with them in order to 'live' the experience, which has been made desirable through the triggering of positive emotions and imagination. The *tropes* are recurring, typical themes in tourism promotional communication.

For the analysis of linguistic corpora, a preliminary corpus analysis and semantic categorization of the most frequent verbs, adjectives as well as keywords on Sketch Engine allowed for the selection of the most *typical* word choices of the tourism website and Instagram corpora under investigation. This analysis was followed by a data-driven classification of the most frequent or key lexicogrammatical resources according to the Transitivity (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014) and Appraisal (Martin and White 2003; Thompson 2009) frameworks, which were delineated in the literature review. A detailed description of the procedure is provided in section 5.4 and at the beginning of each linguistic analysis (see Chapters 8 and 9).

5.3.3 Software tools

The tagging system developed for this study was created using a freely accessible software technology, Statistically Reliable Image Tagging (SRIT), which was designed for complex manual tagging procedures in large visual corpora. It may be considered to be an open access and web-based resource for identifying and quantifying occurrences of strategies in visual, static data by means of tailored annotation systems. The software, which was developed by G. E. Pibiri, former computer scientist at the National Research Council in Italy (ISTI-CNR) and currently Assistant Professor at Ca' Foscari University, builds on previous efficient tools such as UAM ImageTool Version 2.0 (O' Donnel 2010) and, through a user-friendly interface, offers the opportunity to create elaborate tree tagging systems and tag thousands of images[12]. It also enables analysts to perform on-site statistics and export graphs and results to Excel.

The main features are listed below, following the tagging procedure in chronological order:

- Models: this feature represents the preliminary stage in the manual annotation process which allows for the designing and editing of a hierarchical tagging system.

[12] The software code is available on GitHub; however, to protect intellectual property, it is going to be released to the public after the publication of a dedicated article, which is currently being written in collaboration with Dr. Pibiri and Tamara Drummond. The article includes references to the C++ and html codes, the structure and uses, and various example of applications as well as corpora collected by students and researchers for teaching and academic purposes at Bremen and Verona universities.

- Images: this option enables users to upload and name a .zip file with the images that need to be tagged.
- Projects: this icon connects the image dataset with the tagging model (a .json file) and creates a corpus.
- Tags: this feature gives access to the corpus annotation.
- Statistics: this option reports the absolute and relative percentages pertaining to each project, both in the tagging system and in an exportable chart. Correlation analysis (AND/OR) with embedded image visualization may also be conducted by selecting two or more tags to discover potential co-occurrences of strategies.
- Reliability: this feature allows for the performance of the inter-coder reliability analysis. For the time being, the only measure included is the inter-annotator agreement measure Scott's pi. Future implementations will include additional reliability tests and the possibility of distinguishing between mutually exclusive choices and non-mutually exclusive ones.
- Jaccard and Weighted Hamming Index: these are statistical measures that compare tag choices between corpora of the same user. An embedded visualization tool displays, for each query, the images with the same features in each corpus, to show concretely how similar visual techniques are realized in different images.

Figures 5.4 and 5.5 shows the interface of the program, while Figures 5.6 and 5.7 provide an example of how the tagging procedure and preliminary statistical analysis may be conducted.

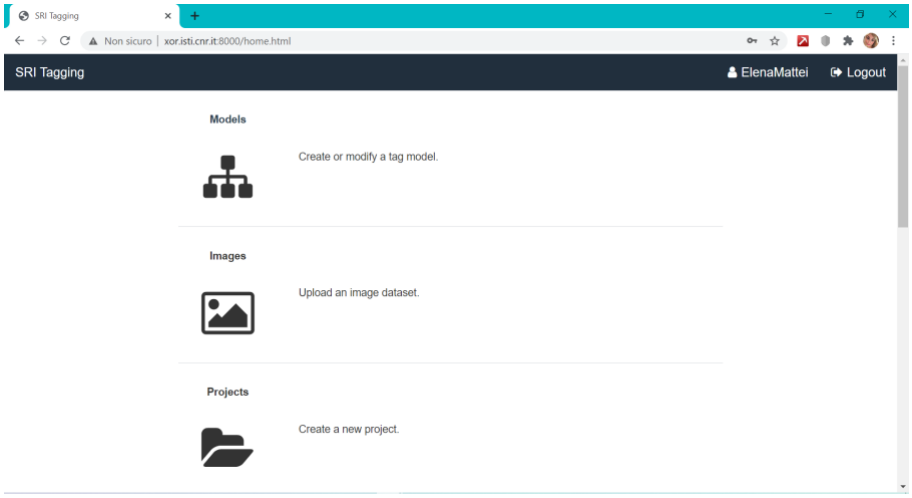


Figure 5.4: Screenshot of *SRI Tagging*'s homepage (part 1)

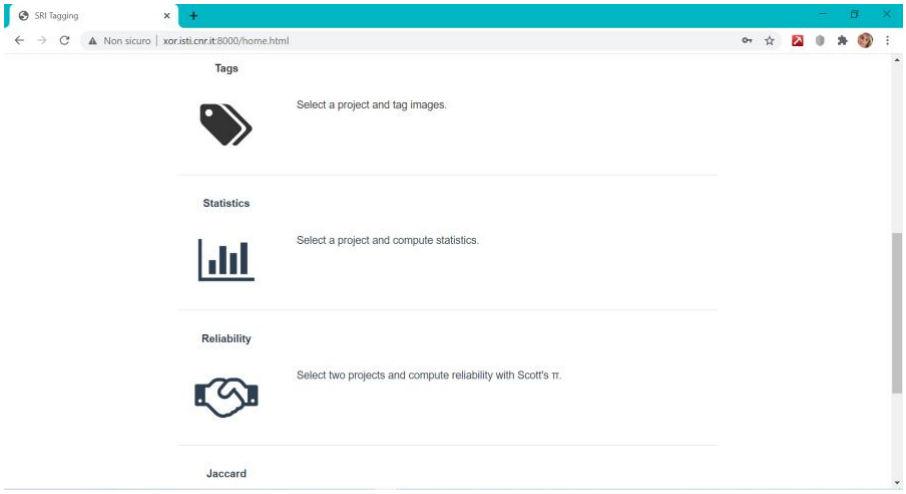


Figure 5.5: Screenshot of *SRI Tagging*'s homepage (part 2)

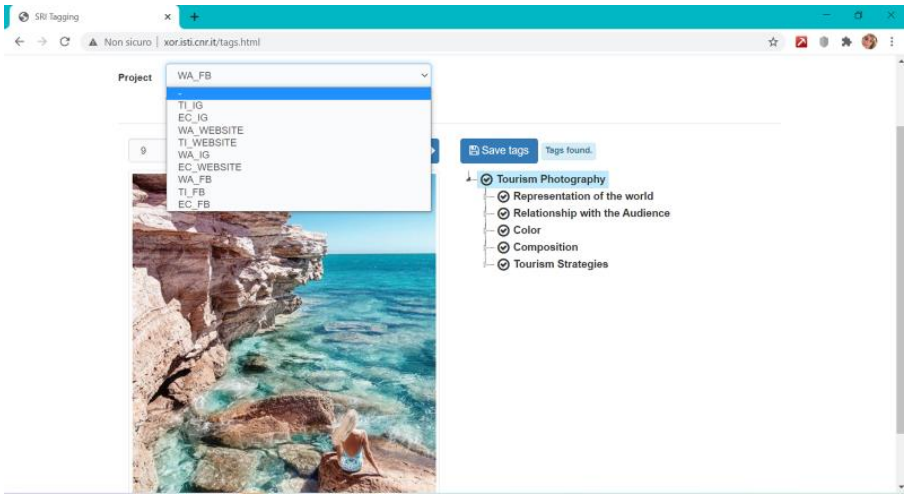


Figure 5.6: Screenshot of the tagging procedure on *SRI Tagging* software

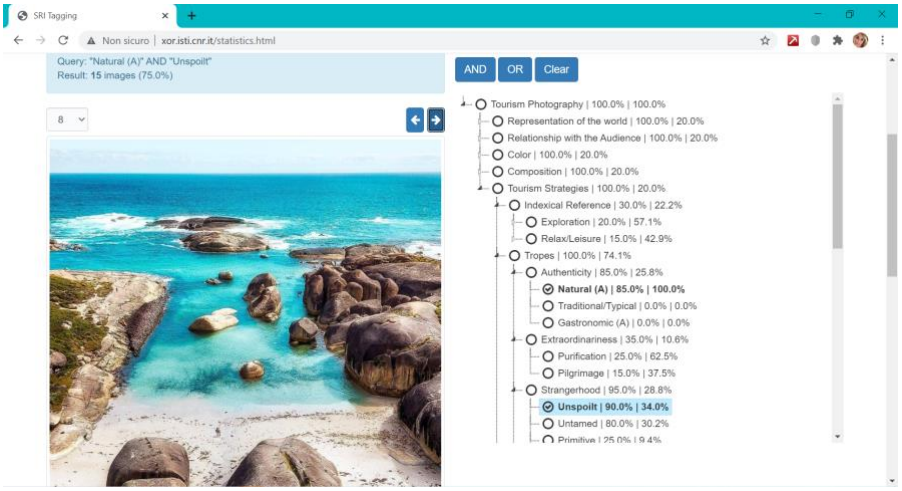


Figure 5.7: Screenshot of statistical analysis on *SRI Tagging* software

5.3.4 Statistical Measures

In order to reveal patterns of use of particular visual strategies across channel corpora, the frequency rate and statistical significance of each tag occurrence was calculated. The statistical quantification contributed to providing an answer to the main research questions outlined in section 5.2:

- Are there any similarities in the use of visual strategies in the tourist images on Instagram and the official website?
- Is there a significant variance in the use of the visual strategies across channel corpora?

The statistical analysis was carried out by adopting a series of statistical measures using different software technologies, in line with the empirical research steps outlined in Chapter Three:

- Descriptive statistics: frequency rates and means on Jamovi (Şahin and Aybek 2019)
- Preliminary inferential statistics: one-way ANOVA (Jamovi);
- Exploratory statistics through Principal Component Analysis in R (Field et al. 2012);
- Advanced inferential statistics: Chi-Square; Correspondence analysis; Factor Analysis (R);

- Inter-coder reliability with Scott's PI on SRI Tagging and *adapted* Cohen's kappa and Krippendorff's alpha in R (Cohen 1960; Krippendorff 2004).

In the first phase, the raw data – i.e., the occurrences of each tag for each image in each sub-corpus – were extracted from the tagging software and exported into Excel, where the occurrences of each variable were grouped according to the respective channel. This allowed for the performance of one-way ANOVA in Jamovi that calculated the mean of each tag's occurrences across agency sub-corpora and compared it across channel corpora. This procedure led to the identification of statistically significant variance in the use of specific tags on the different channels. For this study, only results with p-values < 0.05 were considered statistically significant, which should ensure the absence of variance by chance and indicate the presence of a pattern of use in a specific social practice (Şahin et al. 2019). Then, these results were compared with a Chi-Square analysis which was performed in R (Bateman and Hiippala 2021; Field et al. 2012). The script includes correlation plots and contingency tables that confirmed the existence of an association between the categorical variables under investigation, i.e., the website channels and a series of tags. It did not reveal any particular difference in the usage of the visual strategies across tourist boards. In particular, the Chi-Square provided a visualization of the residuals for each tag and their variance across channels. In other words, it calculated whether, where, and how much the expected value (by chance) differed from the observed value for each visual strategy across the channels.

Finally, a series of inter-annotator agreement calculations was performed in order to ensure the objectivity and consistency of the tagging procedure. To this purpose, the feature Scott's pi was added to the software program developed for the manual annotation that was described in section 5.3.3. This measure was selected from Bateman et. al.'s inter-coder consistency (2017, 198–204) as it is considered a suitable method for measuring the reliability of tagging procedures in multimodal analyses and the obtainability of reproducible results and qualitative interpretations, along with the replicability of empirical methods (Krippendorff 2004, 215). This statistical measure calculated the agreement rate between tagging choices pertaining to two different annotators who tagged the same set of images with the same tagging system but applied the same set of instructions independently from each other.

5.3.4.1 Inter-coder reliability: from Scott's PI to the measurement of mutually exclusive choices' inter-coder reliability with Cohen's kappa and Krippendorff's alpha

In this study, 18% of the images (30 images per sub-corpus) were tagged by another coder who was previously instructed on the meanings of the tags through a reading scheme[13]. According to Scott's pi, the reliability value of a coding system should be > 0.7 to eliminate the possibility of agreement by chance. The resulting average value provided by the software was 0.894, which confirmed the reliability of the tagging procedure.

Due to potential inadequacies of Scott's pi calculations on a hierarchical tagging system with different coding possibilities (including non-exclusive child nodes and choices) that depend on the role of each variable in the tagging procedure, more suitable measures were implemented, including Cohen's kappa (Cohen 1960) and Krippendorff's alpha[14]. Indeed, particular implementations of these measures account for (1) the necessary selection of parent nodes compared with actual choices of one of their sub-categories, and (2) the choice between mutually exclusive child nodes compared with selections of non-exclusive child nodes[15].

The reliability values of mutually exclusive choices which concern *their parent node* are provided in Table 5.8 below. The presence of values which are > 0.61 indicate a

[13] After a preliminary interview to test the degree of interest and field knowledge of the annotator, two sessions were dedicated to the explanation of the dissertation's research objectives, objects of study and both Grammar of Visual Design and tourism discourse theories. The fact that the coder did not have any previous knowledge about the fields of analysis contributed to the performance of an objective tagging procedure, as the independent annotation was generally completely data driven. Her main support was the reading scheme with the coding guidelines, which may be found in the Appendix (2). An initial pilot annotation of 5 images per sub-corpus (tagged images = 30) was conducted independently by the coder; this was followed by a Zoom meeting in which her results were presented and discussed, and all her questions regarding choices in the rich tagging model were answered. After that, the independent coder completed the tagging and Scott's PI was performed, leading to the discovery of high reliability scores (PI > 0.9). Some patterns of choices were reviewed together as she reported some confusion concerning two sub-categories related to space distribution and, after that, the final tagging procedure was performed. The data from this final procedure were stored and used for the statistical measurement of the Inter-coder reliability reported in this section.

[14] Further information on inter-coder reliability may be found in Bateman et al. 2017; Artstein and Poesio (2008); Cohen (1960); Krippendorff (1970; 1978).

[15] The literature does not report any standardized solutions for performing inter-coder reliability with multiple, non-mutually exclusive choices. For this reason, after coder training and annotation, a few weeks were devoted to the implementation of accurate inter-coder reliability measures in terms of data preparation, understanding, and code writing. All inter-coder reliability calculations and advanced statistics reported in this dissertation were performed thanks to the support and expertise of Prof. Bateman during a research period at Bremen University. More information on this issue may be found here: https://stats.stackexchange.com/questions/193839/calculating-interrater-agreement-for-multiple-choice-questions. (Last visit: 31/01/2023)

substantial agreement between the coders, whereas values > 0.81 indicate almost perfect or perfect agreement, as indicated by clinical research studies (McHugh). Values < 0.6 indicate weak agreement which is not by chance[16].

1	**Mutually exclusive child nodes (choices)**	**Kappa**	**Alpha**	**p-value**
2	Process of Action, Process of Reaction	0.865	0.866	0.000
3	Transactional Action, Non- transactional Action	0.562	0.565	0.000
4	Transactional Reaction, Non-transactional Reaction	0.840	0.842	0.000
5	Sunrise, Sunset, Day, Night	0.652	0.708	0.000
6	Sunny, Cloudy, Stormy, Foggy, Snowy	0.736	0.749	0.000
7	Map, Icon/Logo	1.000	1.000	0.003
8	Sport Activities, Transportation, Recreational Activities, Entertainment, Other Activates	0.746	0.731	0.000
9	Water Sports, Snow Sports, Hiking, Camping/Trekking, Other Sport Activities	0.868	0.970	0.000
10	Car Driving, Other Means of Transportation	1.000	1.000	0.025
11	Painting, Playing Music, Speaking, Walking, Other Recreational Activities	1.000	1.000	0.000
12	Festivals, Concerts, Movies, Other Entertainment Activities	1.000	1.000	0.157
13	Towards the Represented Participant(s), Towards the Interactive Participant	0.918	0.919	0.000
14	Close, Medium, Long, Very Long	0.692	0.666	0.000
15	Subjective Image, Objective Image	0.806	0.806	0.000
16	Low, Eye-level, High, Very High	0.662	0.697	0.000
17	Frontal, Oblique	0.279	0.270	0.000
18	Direct Frontal Angle, Perpendicular Top - Down Angle	1.000	1.000	0.003
19	Represented Living Participant, Landscape Element, Object	0 916	0.973	0.000

Table 5.8: Reliability values for mutually exclusive choices in all sub-corpora

5.3.4.2 Non-mutually exclusive choices: some considerations

The reliability values for non-mutually exclusive choices using Krippendorff's alpha that concern the *parent nodes* are provided in Table 5.9. Here, most father nodes were not included as they are grouping features that a) were always chosen, and thus did not present variation, and b) represent redundant information; for these reasons, they also provided inaccurate values of reliability. That is the case, for example, of father nodes that represent the three metafunctions, or the choice of *setting, camera shot, angle, space distribution*.

However, in some cases – as in the choice of the type of process (either action or reaction) – some father nodes were not always chosen, as the feature represented by

[16] The R code for the implementation of statistical measures was written by Prof. Bateman. The code is available on request.

them may or may not occur in the images annotated; for this reason, they represented an intentional a choice and, in that case, their selection was taken into consideration in the calculation of the agreement between coders by comparing the child node choices. In other words, the choice was deemed to be relevant and included in the calculation when it was made; otherwise, its undiscriminated inclusion might have skewed the results and inflated the agreement rate. This was the case for father nodes such as *Gaze, Action, Reaction, Activities,* and some *tourism strategies.*

Additionally, for non-exclusive coding sets of choices of parent nodes, the noncoding of a feature set led to the removal of that image in the calculation of the agreement, instead of counting as disagreement; this was the case for situations in which feature sets had very different frequencies and nature. For example, in the feature set of compositional strategies consisting of *One Point, More Points, Lines, Negative Space, Underwater Effect,* Underwater Effect was removed entirely, for it was considered to be a feature with different nature; also, it was selected in very few cases.

In conclusion, low values of agreement were detected for 1) grouping variables which were always selected, with no variation, as are not the product of a choice, for 2) variables which were never chosen, or 2) for values with low agreement. Variables belonging to situations 1) and 2) are not present, as they were not considered to be relevant to further discussion, nor were they implemented in advanced statistical calculations. The values with low agreement values are in red.

Non-mutually exclusive child nodes	**Alpha Reliability score**
[Direct Presence of Living Beings, Mood, Setting, Activities]	0.705
[Animal Life (A), Humans (A)]	0.909
[Marsupials (A), Marine Wildlife (A), Forest Wildlife (A), Livestock (A), Other (A)]	0.609
[Animal Life (R), Humans (R)]	0.953
[Marsupials (R), Marine Wildlife (R), Forest Wildlife (R), Livestock (R), Other (R)]	0.847
[Time of the Day, Weather]	0.176
[Natural , Artificial, Cultural, Historical, Gastronomic, Analytical, Inscription, Accommodation]	0.682
[Desert/Shrubs, Mountains, Plain, Forest, Marine Environment]	0.6
[City, Town/Village]	0.924
[Absence of Background, Blurred Background/Selective Focus, Less Detailed/Colored Background, Element in the Foreground, Overlap, Converging Lines - Vanishing Point(s)]	0.356

[Color Hue/Value(s), Color Harmony, Color Contrast, Color Saturation/Vibrance, Brightness, Tint, Vignette Effect][17]	0.194
[Red, Light Red, Orange, Light Brown, Brown, Violet, Yellow, Green, Blue, Light Blue (Cyan), White, Gray, Black][18]	0.156
[Space Distribution, Visual Flow, Visual Weight, Sharpness of Focus]	0.268
[Rule of Thirds, Centric, Symmetry, Polarization]	0.423*
[One Point, More Points, Lines, Negative Space, Underwater Effect]	0.348*
[Horizontal, Vertical]	0.762
[Horizontal High, Horizontal Low]	0.507
[Vertical Left, Vertical Right]	0.107
[Sky, Water, Land, Other]	0.719
[Leading line(s), Connecting Dots, Framework]	0.634
[One, More]	1
[Sizes (Relevance), Reflection, Juxtaposition]	0.423
[Indexical Reference, Tropes, Visual Clichés, Taboos Infractions]	0.583
[Exploration, Relax/Leisure]	0.765
[Camping Equipment, Backpack, Luggage, Camera, Cap]	0.718
[Hat, Sunglasses, Swimwear, Towel, Bag, Dress, Meals, Sportswear , Warm Clothes/Soft Cloths]	0.805
[Food, Beverage, Alcoholic Drink]	0.703
[Authenticity, Extraordinariness, Strangerhood, Play, Conflict, Tense/Magic, Social Tropes, Youth, Beauty]	0.350*
[Natural (A), Traditional/Typical, Gastronomic (A)]	0.632
[Unspoilt, Untamed, Primitive, Exotic, Enchanted, Adventurous]	0.136
[Past, Future, Denial of Time, Timelessness]	0.687
[Single, Couple, Family, Friends]	0.912

Table 5.9: Reliability Values for non-mutually exclusive choices in all sub-corpora

By looking at table 5.9, a few tagging choices report a low value of agreement and, by viewing the tables with the numbers of agreement and disagreement (i.e. yes/no tables), some of these were due to an over-selection of a node on the part of the second annotator. This might be related to the fact that a) the instructions were not clear enough, that b) the the annotator did not understood the particular distinctions, or that c) the categories were not clear. To gather evidence and understand which options is the most accurate, one would need to repeat the reliability check with a revised set of instructions and annotation procedure. Ideally, this procedure would lead to a reliable inter-annotator agreement also for these features. However, for reasons of time and scope, the detailed inspection of these cases and the revision of the tagging system were not conducted. The values reported were included in the statistical analysis, and in which the values in red are excluded. Only the values reported with an asterisk (*)

[17] These variables refer to a macro-category, *Color,* that was included in the tagging procedure but was excluded from the current dissertation for its overall nonreliable status. For this reason, it was also excluded from further calculations in R. An overview of this category is provided in the Appendix (1), in which an overview of Alpha's values for each variable of the tagging model is provided. Future studies might include an improvement of this category.
[18] *Ibidem.*

were included to offer a comprehensive view of the similarities and differences across channels in the realization of the third metafunction (or macro-category).

Some final remarks should be made on a potential distinction that should be encoded both in the software annotation process and in the JSON file. Particularly, some concerns were raised about the absence of a distinction between an *intentional* non-selection of a child node after the selection of a particular father node – which, as discussed earlier, makes the whole set of sub-choices 'relevant' and 'activates' their inclusion in the inter-coder agreement calculation – and a *missed* but *necessary* selection of a child node. Indeed, by not making this distinction clear in the tagging model, an *absent sub-choice* is always reported as *missing point* and not as a *relevant choice*. To mitigate this problem, both Cohen's Kappa and *strict* Cohen's Kappa were calculated. In the latter, agreement is usually checked only when there are actual uses of the feature set on part of both annotators, and images with a *missing* choice of a child node were removed. That was useful specifically to measure agreement for Rule of thirds or Negative Space and their child nodes – One Point, More Points, Lines, Negative Space, *and* Land, water, Sky, Other, accordingly. In other words, agreement was calculated only for the cases where both coders agreed that the set of features as a whole was somehow relevant for the item being coded. Once they made that decision, one calculated how reliable the result was. If only one of them decided that the set of feature was relevant, then that feature was picked up as a coding mismatch on the parent feature. The Kappa and strict Kappa scores for non-mutually exclusive child nodes are available in the Appendix (4).

Other solutions to this issue were contemplated but were not implemented to avoid gaps and mistakes in coding, and to stay consistent with previous decisions. The possibilities that were considered are the following:

a) if choices are made by one of the coders but not the other, both are included in the list of pairs of codings to be compared *only if* the parent feature was *not selected* by the coder who made no choices. If the parent feature was selected, but no choices were made, it becomes a mistake gap in the coding.
b) if choices are made by none of the coders, then both (empty) sets of choices are included in the list of pairs of codings to be compared again *only if* the the

parent feature was *not selected*. Otherwise, this becomes another mistake or gap in coding.

5.3.4.3 Future implementations

The inter-coder reliability proved to be a powerful and essential statistical test in empirical research and annotation procedures, and will be included in future research projects. In order to do so, attention will be devoted to the following issues, some of which have already been implemented in SRI Tagging software:

1) Testing pilot tagging systems on multimodal corpora with the support of more independent annotators, also after deciding
    a. if/which child nodes are mutually exclusive and which are not and
    b. which are the grouping features which do not have to be taken into consideration in the calculation of agreement for their necessary selection during annotation,
    c. the levels of classes – father nodes should be at the same level in terms of relevance and nature;
    d. which parent nodes need necessarily a child node choice or not, so that when the inter-coder reliability is calculated, the 'relevance' of the child node choice may be activated or not for its inclusion in the agreement rate. Indeed, not selecting a child node with a selected father node *intentionally* is difficult to distinguish from a *missed* selection of father node and consequent 'miscalculation' of an agreement rate in which a child node needs to be selected.
2) Use of software that allows for export of yes/no tables of agreement for each coder (already included);
3) Inclusion in the software of the possibility of distinguishing (both during the design and use of the tagging model) between grouping features and non-grouping features, between mutually exclusive and non-mutually exclusive choices, and between necessary selection of child node (and consequent *missed selection)* and non-necessary selection, which may result in

a. The impossibility of choosing more than one child node when annotating mutually exclusive features (and avoid agreement by chance or incorrect procedures)
b. The possibility of exporting a JSON file which includes the type of information presented in point 1). In particular, with regard to mutual exclusivity/non-mutual exclusivity status, this may be then read by R in the calculation of the inter-coder reliability, as in the following example:

{"id": "n1", "exclusive": TRUE, "children": [{"id": "n2"}, {"id: "n3"}, ...]}.

in which the coding scheme contains information about the node (n1) and the status of the terminal nodes (n2, n3, or leaves), i.e. that shows the tree dependencies in hierarchical tagging modes.

The calculation of the reliability values allowed for a selection of variables for subsequent statistical analysis. As mentioned earlier, 1) preliminary descriptive statistics together with 2) One-way Anova and independent t-tests were performed and discussed; this was followed by a series of tests – including exploratory statistics for the definition or confirmation of statistical hypotheses, or 3) Principal Component Analysis – which are more suitable for the investigation of significant associations between categorical categorical variables (Chi-Square, 4)) and which considered at some stage *only* the variables which reported an agreement rate > 0.8. The tests which enabled the discovery of patterns of co-occurrences of strategies across channels and metafunctions, and which helped define the degree of prediction between variables are: Correspondence Analysis (5), Factor Analysis (6) and Regression Analysis (7).

The absolute counts of each strategy (variable) according to channel and organization were considered to be relevant to the exploration of a) potential variance in terms of frequency, or use, of particular strategies across channels (independence testing, points 1, 2, 4).

To cluster data and discover potentially varying associations or correlations between strategies – either within the same macro-category (metafunction) across channels, or across metafunctions within the same channel –, metadata were included, either after

exploratory analysis (PCA, point 3), or during the calculations (points 3-7). Indeed, these would allow to explore how metafunctions or tourism discourse strategies are realized across channels and how the discourse semantics is organized and may vary across channels. In particular, the following tables were drafted:

1) one with the id of the images tagged, the travel organization, the channel on which they were promoted;
2) the use of previous yes/no tables for each strategy in each image;
3) the counts of each strategy per agency and channel;
4) one with a list of the tags, their counts across sub-corpora (e.g. TI_IG, Tourism Ireland Instagram), the metafunction of each tag and its reliability score. Few variables with low reliability (<0.6) were included in parallel tests to offer a comprehensive view of the similarities and differences across channels in terms of metafunctional realization. In particular, an exclusion list was prepared for the calculation in R of tests 3-7[19]. This was necessary to a) exclude children nodes with low reliability; b) avoid the inclusion of redundant information (parent nodes); c) to exclude variables with high reliability but low counts – and in that case, the parent nodes were kept, d) grouping variables. Only the values reported with an asterisk (*) in table 5.9 were included to offer a comprehensive view of the similarities and differences across channels in the realization of the third metafunction (or macro-category).

5.4 Analysis process: steps

This section introduces the steps involved in the analytical process, and which were considered to be key to answering the research questions. As can be seen from Figure 5.9, the research design combined the use of the tools developed or implemented and different layers of multimodal analysis to achieve the objectives of this study. In particular, this section describes the different types of analysis that were conducted, both at an intrasemiotic and intersemiotic level, and both from a quantitative and qualitative perspective.

[19] The exclusion list is available in the Appendix (3), together with an overview of the coding system and reliability values.

5.4.1 Analysis of image corpora

Chapters Six and Seven of this dissertation are devoted to the reporting and discussion of the quantitative results of the process of manual annotation and statistical measurement of variance across channel corpora. In particular, section 6.1 and 6.2 report the results of the statistical analyses that were conducted on Jamovi (6.1) and R (6.2). Both chapters present and discuss the findings in terms of metafunctional meaning realization. This chapter contributes to answering RQ 1 and 2 with regards to visual, intrasemiotic trends of occurrences, co-occurrences across digital channels. In particular, the results obtained showed a strong implementation of particular techniques that define Instagram tourism photography as a specific visual genre that fulfills all three metafunctions. This section partly answers RQ 2) by highlighting the differences of strategy pattern that were detected in Instagram's and official website's communication, thus confirming the existence of generic variation in tourism discourse according to channel of dissemination.

5.4.2 Analysis of linguistic corpora

Chapter Eight and Nine focus on the analysis of the linguistic resources at the quantitative and qualitative levels. The statistical, corpus analysis was conducted on Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff 2012, 2014), whereas the SFL-driven and sematic annotation of wordlists and keyword lists was carried out manually (McEnery and Hardie 2014; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). Due to the fact that the main theoretical and technological tools developed for this study concerned image analysis, a sub-field in empirical multimodality that has been flourishing only recently, this chapter focused mainly on the description of empirical, corpus-based analysis of tourism images. Additionally, since the next chapters are devoted to the analysis of visual corpora, a detailed explanation of the theoretical and methodological choices for the analysis of language corpora in this section might have distracted from the main focus of the following chapters (Chapters Six and Seven). For these reasons, the specific theoretical framework and methodology implemented for the linguistic analysis with corpus and SFL approaches were moved to the introductory sections of chapters Eight and Nine. These chapters also present and discuss the findings in terms of metafunctional meaning realization and contribute to answering RQ 1 and 2 with regards to linguistic, intrasemiotic trends of occurrences, co-occurrences, and variation across tourism

channel corpora. These chapters, in particular, feature a section that reports corpus findings in terms of wordlists and keyword lists; this is followed by a process of categorization and qualitative discussion of lexicogrammatical resources. While Chapter Eight discusses the linguistic instantiation of experiential meaning through the lens of Transitivity and a preliminary categorization of the most frequent verbs, Chapter Nine analyzes the most frequent adjectives and key Appraisal resources. This step was supported by a semantic categorization of keywords (Dann 1996). This procedure allowed for the identification of the main and key patterns of word use, and to identify new trends of tourism discourse on Instagram (EnTenTen 2020 corpus). Finally, the concluding section groups all findings and insights and sheds some light on the connections between intrasemiotic trends across channels at an intersemiotic and textual level. In this section, some general conclusions are drawn.

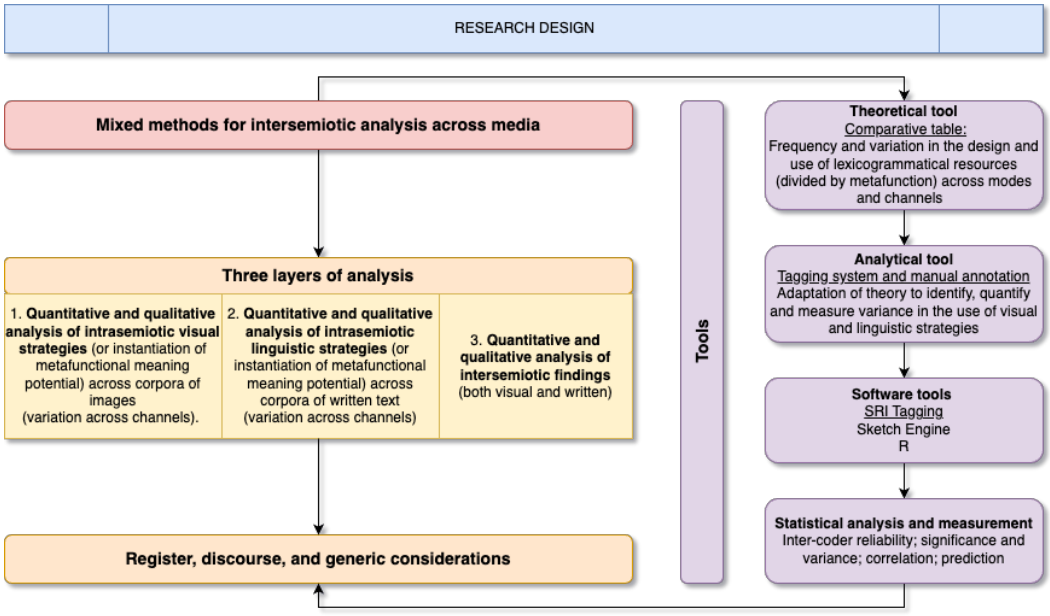


Figure 5.9: Steps in the analytical process as part of the research design

5.5 Possibilities and limitations: a preliminary overview

The statistical detection of varying degrees of occurrences of specific features in multimodal meaning design through the notion of metafunction allowed for a qualitative discussion of the patterns of differences in the usage of both semiotic resources and confirmed the existence of specific communicative goals across channels. In other words, the overall analysis has helped define new discursive and

multimodal generic trends that, through visual strategies and intentional word choice, underline specific aspects of the tourist destination in particular ways depending on audiences' social needs and behaviour on different media, including their degree of intentionality in the purchasing process. Therefore, this investigation unveiled the intentional design of socio-economic practices that overplay the role of travel as a solution to human needs and, through aesthetically appealing and evocative visual content, boosts emotionally charged reactions for profit-making purposes.

Despite the empirical nature and potentially wide applicability of the methodology to other research studies, this study presents some limitations, which may become the starting point for future research attempts in the field of data-driven, multimodal analysis. In particular, these concern the research objects, the modes under investigation, the process of genre identification, the empirical investigation of the effects of communication strategies on customers' behavior, and the processes of annotation and inter-annotation.

These limitations and further implications will be presented in the concluding section of this study.

Chapter Six

Quantitative and Empirical Analysis of Tourism Images across channel corpora

6.1. Metafunctional realization of meaning and groups of variables: descriptive and inferential statistics

This chapter presents the results derived from the manual tagging of 1,002 images uploaded by *Tourism Ireland, Destination Canada (Explore Canada* on Instagram) and *Tourism Western Australia* on Instagram and their official websites. The pictures were tagged with a model based on the *Grammar of Visual Design* (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006) and both tourism discourse (Dann 1996) and (tourism) photography strategies (Urry 1990; Manovich 2017; Garrod 2009). This enabled the definition of the degree to which visual techniques are used in promotional communication. The subdivision of the tagged images per agency and channel is provided in Table 9.1.

As explained in Chapter Five, three popular agencies based in English-speaking countries were elected as subjects of investigation into tourism promotional, persuasive narratives online. Two of their three main channels of communication were selected, i.e. Instagram and the official website, thus leaving the social network Facebook out of the picture. The reason behind this limitation lies in corpus balance and time constraints. Furthermore, empirical and qualitative multimodal analysis of Instagram tourism narratives could represent an interesting addition to the academic fields of multimodal communication and linguistics, as no studies have been so far conducted on tourism communication on Instagram in the field of multimodal research.

As regards the sub-corpora, the overall distribution of the images per agency and channel appears rather balanced; however, *Tourism Ireland*'s Instagram sub-corpus results are slightly fewer than the other two Instagram corpora. This is because *Tourism Ireland* shared less than one post per day. The other type of visual sub-corpora, which groups images from the three travel organizations' website channels, was retrieved through a process of web-crawling and includes a) the only images that could be retrieved or b) the first 200 images with the highest picture quality (as in the case of Tourism Ireland, which in fact appears as the larger website sub-corpus in order to

compensate the lower amount of images retrieved from Instagram). All these visual sub-corpora were then uploaded on a newly developed software technology *Statistically Reliable Image Tagging*, which was presented in the Methodology section as well.

Agency	**Instagram**	**Official Website**	**N. of Total Images per agency**	Total
Tourism Ireland	126	200	**326**	
Destination Canada	180	160	**340**	
Tourism Western Australia	178	158	**336**	
Total per channel	**484**	**518**		**1.002**

Table 6.1: Subdivision of tagged images per agency and channel

The tagging model that was elaborated to tag the images consists of four main categories of variables, which are directly related to the three metafunctions presented by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) but which are adapted to the generic and discourse context of tourism communication and professional photography. They are listed as follows: *Representation of Reality (a)*, *Relationship with the Audience (b)*, *Composition (c)*, and *Tourism Strategies (d,* an interpretative layer of annotation). Each main category includes differing tagging possibilities that explore the type of setting, the presence and type of process enacted by human beings, together with the mood or "atmosphere" shaped by the photographer and the time of the day (a); the type of shot, angle and perspective technique (b); the distribution and both visual weight and flow of the elements in the photograph, along with the degree of sharpness of the photograph (c) and, finally, the related tourism visual strategies and effects that are evoked by the interrelation of these variables (d). A table that lists the main categories and variables employed was provided in Chapter Five, and the hierarchical structure of the tagging system is available in the Appendix (1).

The first three clusters of sub-categories (or macro-variables) and main variables of the tree tagging system are the direct representation or adaptation of Kress and Van Leeuwen's Grammar of Visual Design (2006) and are informed by Halliday's three metafunctions (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). Therefore, to the first macro-category or cluster corresponds the ideational metafunction, i.e. the representation of the reality according to the discourse under investigation (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 30;

Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 48-50), whereas the second and the third macro-categories aim to investigate the means of realization of the second and third metafunctions, i.e. the kind of relationship shaped with the audience and the overall organization of the visual message. The fourth group, *Tourism Strategies*, is an elaboration of the typical rhetorical devices – called also "tourism tropes" (Dann 1996) – that tourism communication uses to convey positive attitudes about a destination to the prospective customer, with the objective of persuading him or her to acquire more information or purchase a travel experience. It should be however mentioned that, according to the theoretical and analytical framework developed in Chapter Five, this study does not consider the visual and linguistic semiotic systems and their affordances as related in a monodirectional, linguistically shaped way; instead, this dissertation seeks to prove that each semiotic mode realizes the three metafunctions – and therefore aims to achieve specific communicative purposes – with its own set of affordances, which in turn can simultaneously realize different metafunctions.

For the purpose of clarity, the statistical analysis of the three main macro-categories and variables will be presented and discussed in separate sections. The frequency tables of the variables pertaining to the four macro-categories, which result from the manual tagging of the image corpora presented in Table 6.1, are reported in the Appendix (9). presence and variance of all these strategies across the six sub-corpora allowed for both a demonstration of the application of common tourism strategies in all agencies – and therefore the confirmation of the first hypothesis – and, at the same time, a difference in the usage according to the channel of distribution of the multimodal message. These frequency tables – one table for each macro-category – also represent the data on which descriptive and inferential statistics were performed.

Each macro-category first underwent descriptive statistical analysis. In particular, the mean, the mode and the standard deviation were measured in order to explore the degree of variance and difference between the two main corpora (Instagram and website channel) in the usage of each variable. These results were then partly enhanced through an Independent t-test and a One-way ANOVA test, which enabled the demonstration of statistical variance between the means of specific variables according to channel (corpus). In order to explore all potential trends of use of visual strategies and metafunctional meaning realization, no variables were excluded from the descriptive and inferential statistics of section 6.1. Additionally, in this phase, only the

Scott's PI reliability measure was performed, which reported a high value of inter-annotator agreement on the whole tagging system[1]. Finally, empirical analysis by means of *Principal Component Analysis, Correspondence Analysis, Factor Analysis* and *chi-square* was performed both within each macro-category and between all macro-categories to investigate the existence of significant variables and correlations between variables – i.e. between visual strategies in the construction of the visual message – across digital channels (section 6.2 of this chapter). As also reported in Chapter Five, the empirical analysis was conducted by taking into account advanced measures of inter-coder reliability. In particular, the *chi-square test* was demonstrated to be more suitable for the comparison of the continuous values (number of occurrences) of a series of nominal variables (tags) among groups, and to confirm or reject the hypothesis of equal variance of these variables among digital channels (Field et al. 2012).

Overall, all these measures served the purpose of establishing patterns of occurrences and co-occurrences of tourism visual strategies and finding statistically significant variances in the frequency rate of these devices (or variables), which support the design of different visual products that carry different meaning.

The variables which occur with a similar frequency across channels will be then discussed at a qualitative level in Chapter Seven, along with some insights into the variables which report statistical significance, i.e. that vary across channels and reject the null hypothesis of equal variance. In particular, Chapter Seven discusses the frequency and statistical variance of these variables according to channel. In the discussion sections, highly significant examples of images that were extracted from *SRI Tagging* software will also be introduced, in order to show how the visual techniques are realized concretely to design a visual product and create a multimodal message for optimal impact on the recipients. Therefore, both Chapter Six and Seven helped answer the first and second research questions and statistical hypotheses of the current dissertation, and shed light on similar and varying social uses and roles of visual strategies in the overall construction of meaning on tourism digital channels.

In particular, sections 6.1.1-6.1.3 will focus on presenting the results of the descriptive and quantitative analysis for each of the three macro-categories. With a more empirical

[1] The results of this test are reported in Chapter Five.

approach, section 6.2. will confirm the findings and provide insights into correlations between variables across channels and metafuctions.

6.1.1 *Representation of reality*: descriptive and inferential statistics for the first macro-category of variables

6.1.1.1 Metafunctional realization of meaning and groups of variables

This section is concerned with the description and discussion of the findings deriving from the analysis of the frequencies of the variables which belong to the first macro-category, *Representation of Reality*. As was mentioned in the previous section, this set of tags relate directly to Halliday and Kress's ideational metafunction. As a matter of fact, it includes the categorization of both narrative and conceptual processes and related circumstances (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 48-62). The circumstances are here represented by the different types of settings, such as natural, artificial, historical and cultural. The variable *Activities* either further classifies the type of action in which the participants are involved, or defines the tools, the means through which an action is performed. Actions and reaction processes of narrative representations are classified together with the type of action or reaction, i.e. its transactional or non-transactional nature and therefore the presence or absence of the object of the action or reaction, and the specific subject of the process. Conceptual images, on the other hand, are classified into analytical (maps, inscriptions, icons, logos) or symbolic suggestive images, the latter of which denote a generalized essence, or condition, and the absence of human beings (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 106). For this reason, also the tag *mood* is included, which refers to any weather condition designed and enhanced by the photographer in order to shape a particular atmosphere and attract the viewer, mainly through lighting and colour strategies (Manovich 2017, 53).

The following sections report the results of the first category listed in the Appendix (9) through the means, modes and standard deviation of each micro-variable for each one of the two main corpora (Instagram and the website, Table 6.1), in order to find any similarities (section 6.1.1.2) or dissimilarities (section 6.1.1.3) among channels in the frequency of the occurrences of these variables, and therefore in the usage of visual strategies. Table 6.2, on the other hand, reports the results from the Independent t-test and One-Way ANOVA test performed on the two main corpora and the significant variances that occur among some variables. The reason for this subdivision

lies in the intent to provide an answer for both the first and the second hypothesis, and the potential definition of a sub-genre of tourism photography. The elimination of the internal corpus variance, i.e. between the sub-corpora related to the different agencies, represents a further area of research which is not the focus of this study.
It shall be also noted that the values reported in Table 9.1 will be here considered as percentages, as they are the mean of the absolute frequency (which is in %) of the occurrences of the abovementioned strategies among the sub-corpora according to channel. Such approach offers the opportunity to provide some information in terms of percentages about the use of particular strategies across channels.

6.1.1.2 Similarities among channels

Table 6.2 below reports the mean and the mode for each micro-variable of the first category according to channel. The values which are not highlighted in bold represent potential similarities between the two corpora.
The variable *direct presence of human beings* appears to be used in half of the images under investigation for both the Instagram (49.3%) and the website pictures (59.4%), together with the performance of actions on the part of animals (8.93% and 5.87%) and of human reactions (18.8% and 14.3%, in particular transactional reactions, 11.8% and 8.77%). Sunset mood conditions occur in a similar amount as well (15.8% and 12.9%) along with nice weather conditions (sunny, 26.7% and 29.6%) and cloudy weather (17.9% and 17.2%), all of which contribute to the shaping of a specific atmosphere. The values reported for natural settings (89.9% on Instagram and 63.7% on the website) and their various representations (in particular plains, 14.4% and 11%) are similar, along with other types of surroundings such as cultural (17.7% and 22.9%), historical (14.7% and 12.7%) and artificial (23.6% and 26.3%). Sport activities, finally, occur in 9.5% of all Instagram images and in 13.2% of website images, thus with a very small difference in the frequency rate.
The potential significance or not significance of these results in terms of variance among corpora (channels) was then assessed through statistical testing. The results from the Independent t-test and One-Way ANOVA are reported in Table 6.3 and confirm both the hypothesis of similarity and dissimilarity between channels, and therefore variance among corpora, with regards to some of the variables discussed. The ones which do not show a statistically significant variance (p.value > 0.05) and

confirm the existence of a similar use of visual strategies among channels are the ones whose values are not highlighted in bold. Accordingly, a non-significant variance was attested with regards to the following variables: *Direct Presence of Living Beings* (p.value > 0.3), *Animal Life (A)* (p.value > 0.15), *Humans (R)* (p.value > 0.4), *Process of Reaction* (p.value > 0.06), *Transactional Action* (p.value > 0.2) and *Transactional Reaction* (p.value > 0.46). In terms of mood and weather conditions, we find an equal variance of the variables *sunny* (p.value > 0.76), *cloudy* (p.value > 0.95). The means of *Natural setting* do not diverge significantly but lead to a considerably low p. value (0.057). Other types of natural settings that occur in a similar amount in both groups are plains (p.value > 0.7), forests (p.value > 0.15), marine environments (p.value > 0.2) and mountains (p.value > 0.15), together with artificial (p.value > 0.73; City, p.value > 0.48; Town/Village, p.value > 0.26), cultural (p.value > 0.53) and historical settings (p.value > 0.87). Finally, activities in general show a non-significant p.value (> 0.15, sport activities, p.value > 0.07; entertainment, p.value > 0.2; recreational activities, p.value > 0.26).

The results abovementioned seem to attest a certain degree of similarity in the usage of strategies among the corpora and therefore confirm the first hypothesis.

Variables	**Mean**		**Mode**		**Standard Deviation**	
Group	**1(IG)**	**2(WS)**	**1(IG)**	**2(WS)**	**1(IG)**	**2(WS)**
Direct Presence of Living Beings	49.3	59.4	33.3	56.3	14.35	4.834
Animal Life (A)	8.93	5.87	6.1	5	2.597	1.501
Animal Life (R)	**8.37**	**2.3**	**6.2**	**2.5**	1.877	0.346
Humans (A)	**17**	**39.7**	**8.7**	**32.3**	9.78	7.304
Humans (R)	18.8	14.3	9.5	12.5	8.281	1.662
Process of Action	**24.2**	**44.3**	**16.7**	**38.6**	7.766	6.449
Process of Reaction	**26.6**	**16.6**	**19**	**15.6**	6.612	1.054
Transactional Action	**13.1**	**22.3**	**7.3**	**13.9**	7.597	8.073
Transactional Reaction	11.8	8.77	4.8	6.3	6.101	2.194
Non-transactional Action	**11.2**	**21.8**	**6.3**	**20**	5.001	2.095
Non-transactional Reaction	**14.4**	**8.07**	**13.5**	**6.5**	1.501	1.358
Mood	**95.8**	**83.3**	**93.9**	**78.1**	1.62	4.554
Sunrise	**11.8**	**4.77**	**9.4**	**3.1**	2.303	1.447
Sunset	15.8	12.9	8.7	7.5	6.133	5.26
Weather	51.7	47.4	41.7	40	16.404	6.843
Sunny	26.7	29.6	14.4	21.3	10.937	11.715
Stormy	**5.63**	**1.63**	**0.6**	**0.6**	5.75	1.234

Foggy	3.1	0.9	0	0.6	4.859	0.52
Cloudy	17.9	17.2	6.2	5.1	14.5	11.953
Snowy	**4.53**	**0.433**	**0**	**0**	7.17	0.751
Natural	**89.9**	**63.7**	**79.4**	**48.8**	9.157	14.517
Plain	14.4	11	4.4	7.5	15.73	3.272
Forest	**21.5**	**8.2**	**7.3**	**4.5**	12.324	3.7
Marine Environment	**55.8**	**41.3**	**41.7**	**29.4**	12.854	10.473
Mountains	**41.8**	**23.5**	**33.1**	**14.6**	13.958	11.129
Artificial	23.6	26.3	15.1	20.9	11.9	4.782
City	6.33	8.97	0	7.6	5.508	2.031
Town/Village	**5.93**	**2.27**	**1.1**	**0**	4.341	2.003
Cultural	17.7	22.9	8.4	13.3	8.622	10.137
Gastronomic	**0.567**	**8.63**	**0**	**7**	0.551	1.557
Historical	14.7	12.7	2.2	1.9	15.83	11.935
Analytical	**0.367**	**9.93**	**0**	**3.8**	0.635	5.676
Inscription	1.2	5.7	0.6	3.2	0.872	3.345
Map	0	5.77	0	1	0	6.997
Icon/Logo	0.367	4.2	0	1.3	0.635	5.023
Accommodation	2.77	2.73	0	1.9	3.879	0.971
Activities	**27.9**	**43.6**	**15.1**	**34.8**	12.468	8.558
Sport Activities	9.5	13.2	7.9	10.8	1.6	2.108
Snow sports	1.3	0.433	0	0	2.252	0.751
Other Sport Activities	0.633	3.97	0	1.3	0.569	2.329
Transportation	**5.4**	**11.5**	**1.6**	**10.8**	3.345	0.874
Car Driving	**0.933**	**2.37**	**0**	**1.3**	1.617	1.848
Other Means of Transportation	**4.47**	**9.17**	**1.6**	**8**	2.608	1.041
Entertainment	**1.67**	**5.43**	**0**	**1.9**	2.011	3.769
Recreational Activities	**14.4**	**21.9**	**4.8**	**19**	9.067	3.894
Speaking	**0.567**	**5.43**	**0**	**2.5**	0.981	2.61

Table 6.2: Mean and mode values pertaining to the channel corpora (Instagram and Website channel) for the first macro-category of tags

One-Way Anova[2]/ Independent t-test	**F**	**df**	**t**	**p. values**		**Cohen's d**
				Anova	**t-test**	
Direct Presence of Living Beings	1.35179	2.45	-1.1627	0.346	0.310	-0.9493

[2] For the One-Way ANOVA test the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality of the distribution of the data was also performed, reporting non-significant values and therefore confirming the assumption of normality. The Leven test, on the other hand, reported a p.value <0.05 for two variables, which therefore violate the assumption of homogeneity of variance. They in fact correspond, in the One-Way ANOVA, to two variables with low p.values with very significant variance depending on the group: they are *Animal Life (R)* and *Process of Reaction*.

Animal Life (A)	3.13598	3.2	1.7709	0.169	0.151	1.4459
Animal Life (R)	30.30558	2.14	5.5051	**0.027**	**0.005**	4.4949
Humans (A)	10.37589	3.7	-3.2212	**0.036**	**0.032**	-2.6301
Humans (R)	0.87702	2.16	0.9365	0.441	0.402	0.7646
Process of Action	11.93457	3.87	-3.4546	**0.027**	**0.026**	-2.8207
Process of Reaction	6.73613	2.1	2.5954	0.116	**0.060**	2.1191
Transactional Action	2.06624	3.99	-1.4374	0.224	0.224	-1.1737
Transactional Reaction	0.67116	2.51	0.8192	0.483	0.459	0.6689
Non-transactional Action	11.39202	2.68	-3.3752	**0.051**	**0.028**	-2.7558
Non-transactional Reaction	29.06509	3.96	5.3912	**0.006**	**0.006**	4.4019
Mood	20.06063	2.5	4.4789	**0.030**	**0.011**	3.6570
Sunrise	19.87382	3.37	4.458	**0.016**	**0.011**	3.6399
Sunset	0.36894	3.91	0.6074	0.577	0.576	0.4959
Weather	0.17286	2.68	0.4158	0.709	0.699	0.3395
Sunny	0.10050	3.98	-0.317	0.767	0.767	-0.2588
Stormy	1.38782	2.18	1.1781	0.351	0.304	0.9619
Foggy	0.60804	2.05	0.7798	0.516	0.479	0.6367
Cloudy	0.00378	3.86	0.0614	0.954	0.954	0.0502
Snowy	0.97024	2.04	0.985	0.427	0.380	0.8043
Natural	7.00842	3.37	2.6473	0.068	**0.057**	2.1615
Plain	0.13435	2.17	0.3665	0.747	0.733	0.2993
Forest	3.20530	2.36	1.7903	0.196	0.148	1.4618
Marine Environment	2.27337	3.84	1.5078	0.209	0.206	1.2311
Mountains	3.14109	3.81	1.7723	0.155	0.151	1.4471
Artificial	0.13296	2.63	-0.3646	0.743	0.734	-0.2977
City	0.60375	2.53	-0.777	0.503	0.481	-0.6344
Town/Village	1.76462	2.81	1.3284	0.281	0.255	1.0846
Cultural	0.45221	3.9	-0.6725	0.539	0.538	-0.5491
Gastronomic	71.59413	2.49	-8.4613	**0.007**	**0.001**	-6.9086
Historical	0.03156	3.72	0.1776	0.868	0.868	0.1450
Analytical	8.41788	2.05	-2.9014	0.098	**0.044**	-2.3689
Inscription	5.08368	2.27	-2.2547	0.138	0.087	-1.8410
Icon/Logo	1.71977	2.06	-1.3114	0.317	0.260	-1.0708
Accommodation	2.09e-4	2.25	0.0144	0.990	0.989	0.0118
Activities	3.20615	3.54	-1.7906	0.157	0.148	-1.4620
Sport Activities	5.97049	3.73	-2.4435	0.076	0.071	-1.9951
Snow sports	0.40000	2.44	0.6325	0.581	0.561	0.5164
Other Sport Activities	5.80046	2.24	-2.4084	0.124	0.074	-1.9665
Transportation	9.44116	2.27	-3.0726	0.078	**0.037**	-2.5088
Car Driving	1.02268	3.93	-1.0113	0.370	0.369	-0.8257
Other Means of Transportation	8.40279	2.62	-2.8988	0.074	**0.044**	-2.3668
Entertainment	2.33266	3.05	-1.5273	0.223	0.201	-1.2470
Recreational Activities	1.70246	2.71	-1.3048	0.292	0.262	-1.0654
Speaking	9.13673	2.55	-3.0227	0.070	**0.039**	-2.4680

Tab. 6.3: One-Way Anova and Independent t-test results for each variable of the first category of tags

6.1.1.3 Dissimilarities among channels

Following the same procedure outlined in the previous sub-section, the dissimilarities among channel corpora (or groups) in terms of variance between variables will be here reported. The results deriving from both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (p.values) are already listed in the previous tables. The values highlighted in bold represent possibly significant differences between the two corpora and are reported in Figures 9.1 and 9.2 for greater readability. While the mean values will be presented and discussed in great detail, the mode values only serve the purpose of underlining the differences in the degree of occurrence of each value and supporting the variance in the mean values.

If one looks closely at Table 9.1, it can be observed that action and reaction processes vary among the two corpora. The presence of humans performing actions is 17% in Instagram corpora, as opposed to 39.7% in website corpora. 24.2% of Instagram images feature action processes, as compared to 44.3% with regards to the website channel, where reaction processes occur in 26.6% of Instagram images and 16.6% of the website images. Non-transactional actions and reactions also differ in terms of their mean: while the first ones appear in 11.2% of Instagram images and in 21.8% of website images, non-transactional reactions are present in 14.4% of Instagram visual narratives and in 8.07% of website pictures. The mood as well varies in particular in relation to sunrises, which occur in 11.8% of Instagram images and 4.77% of the website ones. The values reported for natural settings (89.9% on Instagram and 63.7% on the website) and some of their various representations (forest, 21.5% and 8.2% respectively, marine environment, 55.8% and 41.3%, and mountains, 41.8% and 23.5%) seem to differ to some degree, together with gastronomic (0.567% and 8.63%) and analytical (0.367% and 9.93%) settings. Activities, finally, occur in 27.9% of all Instagram images and in 43.6% of website images, with differences in particular in the occurrences of the means of transportation (5.4% and 11.5%) and in the recreational activity of speaking (0.567% and 5.43%).

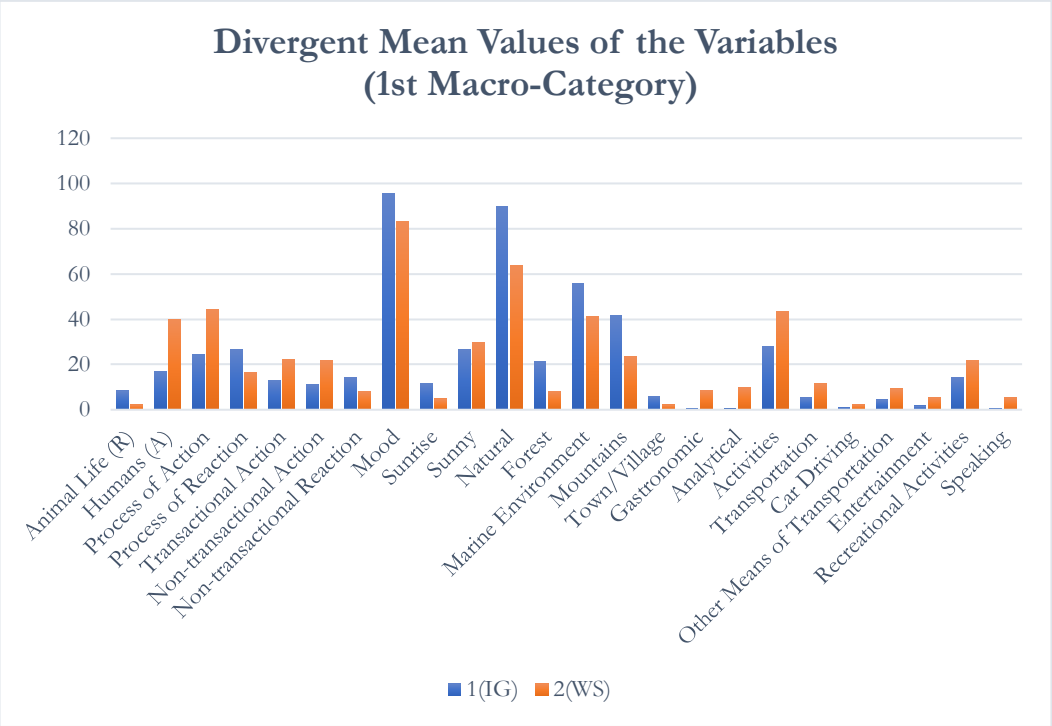


Figure 9.1: Variance in terms of mean among the variables of the first macro-category according to channel corpus

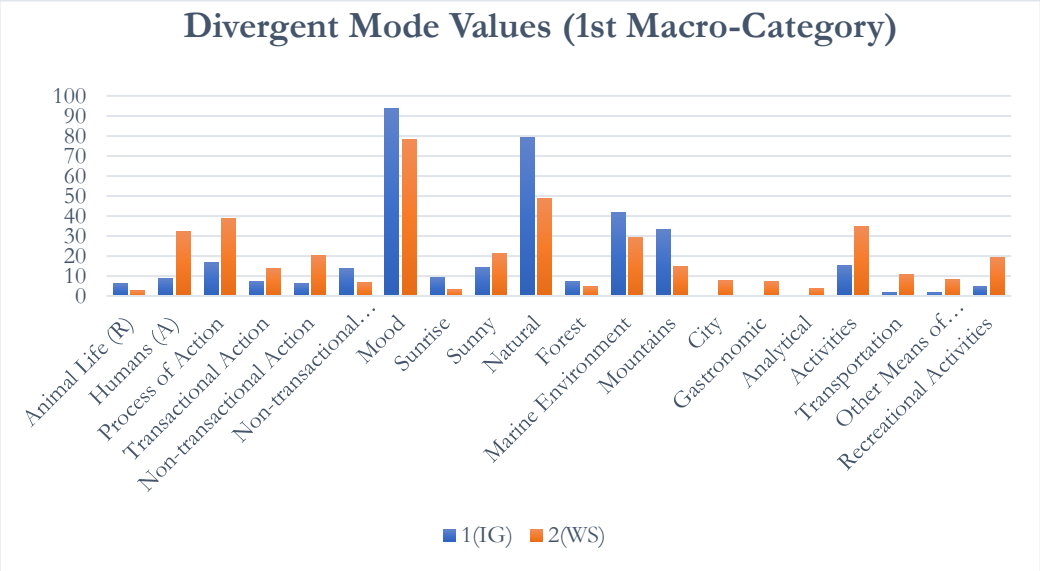


Figure 9.2: Variance in terms of mode among the variables of the first macro-category according to channel corpus

The potential significance of these results in terms of variance among corpora (channels) led to the identification of specific variables which significantly differ among channel groups, namely: *Animal Life (R)* (p.value < 0.03), *Humans (A)* (p.value

< 0.03), *Process of Action* (p.value < 0.02), *Non-Transactional Action* (p.value < 0.05) and *Non-Transactional Reaction* (0.006). A significant variance was attested with regards also to *mood* occurrences (p.value < 0.03), sunrises (p.value < 0.02), gastronomic (p.value < 0.07) and analytical settings (p.value < 0.04) and, finally, means of transportation (p.value < 0.04) and social exchange (speaking, p.value < 0.04).
The statistical analysis of the results related to the first macro-category of variables seems therefore to confirm, to some extent, the second hypothesis, as there are few variables that vary across channel corpora. The number of variables which do not vary enormously across corpora is higher than the variables that occur in a significantly different amount; however, the change in the degree of usage of the abovementioned strategies according to channel can lead to the construction of a different visual product for a specific audience and purpose. This assumption is further supported in the empirical analysis and qualitative analysis carried out in section 6.2 and Chapter Seven.

6.1.2 *Relationship with the Audience*: descriptive and inferential statistics for the second macro-category of variables

6.1.2.1 Metafunctional realization of meaning and groups of variables

This section aims to describe and analyze the results from the frequency analysis of the variables which belong to the second macro-category, *Relationship with the Audience*. This category relates to the Hallidayan and Kressian interpersonal metafunction (see Chapters One and Three). This type of focuses on the relationship between the interactive participants, i.e. the producer of the semiotic object and the interpreter who makes sense of the sign in the social context, i.e. the viewer, and on the relationship between the represented and the interactive subjects (Kress and Van Leeuwen 114; Jewitt and van Leeuwen 2001). The producer communicates with the viewer through three main tools, which are the inclusion of a gaze in the represented participants and the selection of both shot and angle of the picture, all of which correspond to specific tags in Table 8. The fourth main type of strategy included is the depth (or perspective), which draws upon the field of professional photography and intensifies the properties of depth perception or focus (Manovich 2017, 69; 106). This fourth category of

variables is part of the second macro-category but can be considered to realize all three metafunctions. On the one hand, it is strongly related with the concept of angle and perspective according to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), who argue that the subjective choice of a horizontal and/or vertical angle and its converging lines defines the point from which the photographer takes the picture and therefore his or her degree of involvement or detachment, superiority, equality or inferiority (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 133-144). On the other hand, it contributes to the shaping of the circumstances and participants in the pictures and to the overall composition and space distribution, realizing, therefore, also the ideational and textual metafunctions.

The tagging system is articulated into: a) the presence (or absence) of a gaze directed towards either the interactive participant, thus aiming to construct a direct relationship with the viewer of equality, identification, admiration or subjugation, or towards the represented participant, hereby inviting the reader to focus his or her attention on another portion of the picture (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 116-124; Francesconi 2014, 89-90).

The b) size of the size of frame of the picture – the shot – conveys an idea of social distance and can be intimate (variable *close shot*), social (variable *medium shot*), impersonal or very impersonal (variable *long* and *very long shot*), suggesting a lack of interest in shaping a close relationship with the viewer (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 124-129), and focusing rather on depicting the vastity of a landscape and objectifying it for contemplation and desire (126).

The c) third group of variables in this macro-category consists of the adoption of an either subjective or objective angle, which symbolizes a varying attitude of either involvement or detachment on the part of the photographer and consequently the viewer. While the subjective image includes the selection of an angle, a "point of view", called perspective (129), objective angles feature a *direct frontal angle* or a *perpendicular top-down angle* like diagrams, maps, charts, (Kress and Van Leeuwen 144) and neutralize the perspective distortions in order to offer the most detached and perfect image possible. Subjective images can feature both horizontal and vertical angles, the latter of which may express power and supremacy (variables *high* or very *high angle*), an equal relationship (variable *eye-level angle*) or a submissive one (*low angle*) (140-143). Eye-level angles, in particular, were selected here when a main living subject was present at an "eye-level" angle but also when the picture featured a main landscape element (such

as a mountain) and another subject in the lower part of the picture. In this case, the viewer of the photograph was also considered to have power and supremacy over the secondary subject.

The horizontal angle, on the other hand, is realized when the frontal plane of the photographer runs parallel (frontal angle) or oblique (oblique angle) to the one where the *main* represented participants are. In this latter case, the two planes form an angle and a vanishing point which can be included or excluded from the image frames, symbolizing, in any case, detachment (Kress and Van Leeuwen 133-140). In professional photography, however, oblique angles are preferred as they boost the perception of depth and therefore reality.

The perception of depth and authenticity is also enhanced through d) specific strategies, which correspond to the variables of the fourth category. They concern the *Converging Lines or Vanishing Point* technique, a *blurred background or selective focus*, an *element in the foreground,* less detailed or color background and an overlap of perceivable layers of landscapes. It should also be mentioned that the categories of this second macro-category of variables will acquire further meaning when considered together with the analysis of the fourth macro-category and, in particular, of *polarization* and *leading lines* techniques.

The following sections report the results of the second category listed in Appendix 4 through the means, modes and standard deviations of each micro-variable for each one of the two main corpora (Instagram and the website, (see Table 7), in order to find any similarities (section 3.1.1) or dissimilarities (section 3.1.2) between channels in the frequency of the occurrences of these variables, and therefore in the usage of visual strategies. Table 8 reports the results from the Independent t-test and One-Way ANOVA test performed on the two main corpora and the significant variances that occur among some variables (section 3.1.2), with the purpose of providing an answer to both the first and the second hypothesis (see Chapter X), and the potential definition of a sub-genre of tourism photography.

6.1.2.2 Similarities among channels

Table 7 reports the mean and the mode for each micro-variable of *Relationship with the Audience* according to channel. The values which are not highlighted in bold represent potential similarities between the two corpora.

With regard to the first category of variables, i.e. the presence and the direction of the gaze of the represented participants, similarly few instances of the variable *Gaze Towards the Interactive Participant* occur in both the Instagram (7.4%) and the website corpus (7.1%), therefore implying a low degree of direct involvement with the viewer. If one looks at the third category of variables, which quantifies the number of choices of attitude and angle, it can be noticed that subjective images occur with a high frequency in both corpora (96.6% and 90%), along with vertical angles (96.6% and 88.9%). In particular, low angles occur in a few instances in both groups (18% and 19%), whereas high angles are used more often, especially for Instagram images (23.9% against 18.8%). Horizontal angles (96% and 89.8%) are frequently selected for the design of pictures and, together with their intrinsic either frontal (11.1% and 10.4%) or oblique angle 84.9% and 79.8%), and they do not appear to differ in their frequency rate according to channel group. Direct frontal or perpendicular top-down angles, on the other hand, occur in few images (respectively, 0.8% and 2.8% and 2.6% and 6.7%). Finally, three out of the five of the depth strategies are featured to a similar extent in both corpora (overlap, 11.1% and 9.5), with a predominance of different variables according to channel. On the one hand, the *Element in the Foreground* variable occurs more frequently in the website corpus (28.3% compared to 22.7%), whereas the *Less Detailed/Colored Background* variable has a higher frequency rate in the Instagram group (29.3% against 20.8%). Thus, there seem to be a common tendency in both channels to represent subjective images with a prevalence for vertical high and horizontal oblique angles.

Variables	**Mean**		**Mode**		**Standard Deviation**	
Group	1(IG)	2(WS)	1(IG)	2(WS)	1(IG)	2(WS)
Gaze Towards the Interactive Participant	7.4	7.1	7.1	5	0.361	2.594
Gaze Towards the Represented Participant(s)	**21.9**	**28.8**	**14.3**	**25.3**	8.205	3.032
Close Shot	**10.1**	**22.3**	**0.8**	**14**	8.303	7.243
Medium Shot	**22.2**	**39.6**	**14.3**	**35**	9.88	4.038
Long Shot	**39.2**	**18.5**	**34.8**	**12**	5.994	8.789
Very Long Shot	**28.4**	**14.6**	**13.3**	**11.3**	13.423	2.996
Subjective Image	96.6	90	92.7	85.6	3.421	3.798
Vertical Angle	96.6	88.9	92.7	90.5	3.421	2.829
Low Angle	18	19	12.4	15.2	5.456	3.664

Eye-level Angle	**37.7**	**47.8**	**32**	**40.6**	5.962	7.93
High Angle	23.9	18.8	20.6	12	2.894	5.897
Very High Angle	**16.9**	**4.43**	**10**	**2.5**	6.361	2.316
Horizontal Angle	96	89.8	91.6	85	3.94	4.143
Frontal Angle	11.1	10.4	8.7	9.4	2.97	1.002
Oblique Angle	84.9	79.8	81.5	75.6	4.864	3.98
Objective Image	**3.63**	**9.5**	**0.8**	**6.5**	3.329	4.77
Direct Frontal Angle	0.833	2.8	0.6	0.6	0.252	1.908
Perpendicular Top - Down Angle	2.63	6.7	0	2.5	3.204	4.414
Depth - Converging Lines or Vanishing Point(s)	**63.4**	**47.4**	**53.9**	**45**	8.571	2.899
Depth - Blurred Background/Selective Focus	**12.5**	**19.4**	**5.6**	**16**	6.9	4.441
Depth - Element in the Foreground	22.7	28.3	18.3	25.3	3.874	3.415
Depth - Overlap	11.1	9.47	7.3	6.3	4.934	4.028
Depth - Less Detailed/Colored Background	29.3	20.8	21.3	16.3	9.992	7.564

Table 6.4: Mean and mode values pertaining to the channel corpora (Instagram and Website channel) for the tags of *Relationship with the Audience*

The assessment of variance or non-variance among corpora (channels) was tested through an Independent t-test and a One-Way ANOVA, the results of which are reported in table 8. These findings confirm both the hypothesis of similarity and dissimilarity between the channels, and consequently variance among corpora, with regard to some of the variables discussed. The results in the table have been highlighted in bold when they show a variance that is statistically significant (p.value > 0.05) or are left unmarked when they do not. The ones that confirm the existence of a similar use of visual strategies among channels belong to the following categories of variables:

- the gaze of the represented participants, both towards another represented participant (p.value > 0.24) and the interactive one (p.value > 0.85);
- some types of shots, including the close shot (p.value > 0.13), the very long shot (p.value > 0.16);
- subjective images in general (p.values, respectively, <0.09 and <0.16);

- the low (p.value > 0.8), eye-level (p.value > 0.15) and high angles (p.value > 0.25), together with horizontal angles (p.value > 0.13, frontal angle: p.value > 0.74; oblique angle: p.value > 0.23);
- objective images in general (p.value > 0.16), together with direct frontal (p.value > 0.15) and perpendicular top-down angles (p.value > 0.27);
- all depth techniques, except for the *Converging Lines* strategy: the *Selective Focus*, the *Element in the Foreground,* the *Overlap* and the *Less Detailed/Colored Background* variables all have a p.value > 0.14.

The results abovementioned seem to suggest a certain degree of similarity in the usage of strategies among the corpora and therefore confirm the first hypothesis.

One-Way Anova / Independent t-test	**F**	**df**	**t**	**p.values**		**Cohen's d**
				Anova	**T-test**	
Gaze Towards the Interactive Participant	0.0394	2.08	0.198	0.86	0.852	0.162
Gaze Towards the Represented Participant(s)	1.8666	2.54	-1.366	0.28	0.244	-1.116
Close Shot	3.6378	3.93	-1.907	0.13	0.129	-1.557
Medium Shot	7.9732	2.65	-2.824	0.077	**0.048**	-2.306
Long Shot	11.3219	3.53	3.365	**0.034**	**0.028**	2.747
Very Long Shot	3.0205	2.2	1.738	0.213	0.157	1.419
Subjective Image	5.0018	3.96	2.236	0.09	0.089	1.826
Vertical Angle	9.0259	3.86	3.004	**0.042**	**0.040**	2.453
Low Angle	0.0742	3.5	-0.272	0.801	0.799	-0.222
Eye-level Angle	3.0885	3.71	-1.757	0.159	0.154	-1.435
High Angle	1.8323	2.91	1.354	0.271	0.247	1.105
Very High Angle	10.2288	2.52	3.198	0.063	**0.033**	2.611
Horizontal Angle	3.5664	3.99	1.889	0.132	0.132	1.542
Frontal Angle	0.1225	2.45	0.35	0.754	0.744	0.286
Oblique Angle	1.9751	3.85	1.405	0.235	0.233	1.147
Objective Image	3.0518	3.57	-1.747	0.164	0.156	-1.426
Direct Frontal Angle	3.1332	2.07	-1.77	0.214	0.151	-1.445
Perpendicular Top - Down Angle	1.668	3.65	-1.292	0.272	0.266	-1.055
Depth - Converging Lines or Vanishing Point(s)	9.3811	2.45	3.063	0.071	**0.038**	2.501
Depth - Blurred Background/Selective Focus	2.1211	3.41	-1.456	0.231	0.219	-1.189
Depth - Element in the Foreground	3.4853	3.94	-1.867	0.136	0.135	-1.524
Depth - Overlap	0.2054	3.85	0.453	0.675	0.674	0.37

Depth - Less Detailed/Colored Background	1.3909	3.73	1.179	0.308	0.304	0.963

Table 6.5: One-Way Anova and Independent t-test results for each variable of *Relationship with the Audience*

6.1.2.3 Dissimilarities among channels

The results deriving from both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (p.values) which are listed in tables 7 and 8 also confirm a variance among the channel corpora. As in the analysis of the first macro-category *Representation of Reality*, the values highlighted in bold represent possibly significant differences between the two corpora and are reported in graphs 3 and 4. While graph 3 reports the mean values of the variables that change across the channel corpora, graph 4 includes the mode values of the variables that occur with a different frequency rate. These graphs serve therefore the purpose of highlighting the potentially significant variance that characterizes the two groups.

If one looks closely at graph 3 and 4, it can be noticed that there is greater variance among the variables pertaining to the first and second category. In fact, the mode values of the variable *Gaze Towards the Represented Participant(s)* vary considerably in the two main corpora (14.3% on Instagram and 25.3% on the website), showing a more frequent usage of "offer" gaze strategies in the website corpora. With reference to the category *shot*, and therefore social distance, a large variance between the variables representing all types of shots can be observed, which underline a more frequent usage of close and medium shots in website images (with mean values of 22.3% and 39.6%, compared to 10.1% and 22.2% on Instagram) and, parallelly, a higher number of long and very long shots on the Instagram platform (39.2% and 28.4% compared to 18.5% and 14.6%). When analyzing the mean values related to the subjective attitudes in both image corpora, a mild difference in terms of *eye-level angle* occurrences (37.7% on Instagram versus 47.8% on the websites) was assessed, whereas *very high angles* on Instagram are almost four times the ones on the website (16.9% versus 4.43%). A similar tendency appeared in objective images, which occur only in 3.63% of the cases on Instagram and in 9.5% of the website images of the three agencies under investigation. Finally, the *Converging Lines* technique is frequently selected in both corpora but can be said to occur in more than half images only on Instagram (63.4%

compared to 47.4%). The *Selective Focus* variable seems to differ to some extent in the two corpora as well (5.6% on Instagram versus 16% on the website, according to the mode values), implying that almost 1 out of five of the images, on the website, focuses primarily on a specific and close subject.

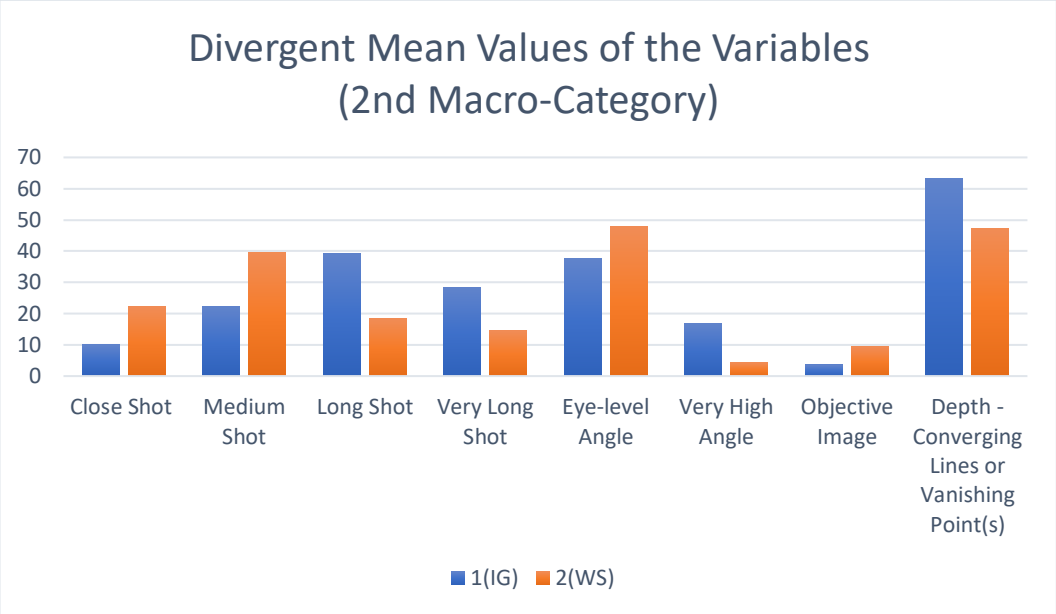


Figure 6.3: Variance in terms of mean among the variables of *Relationship with the Audience* according to channel corpus

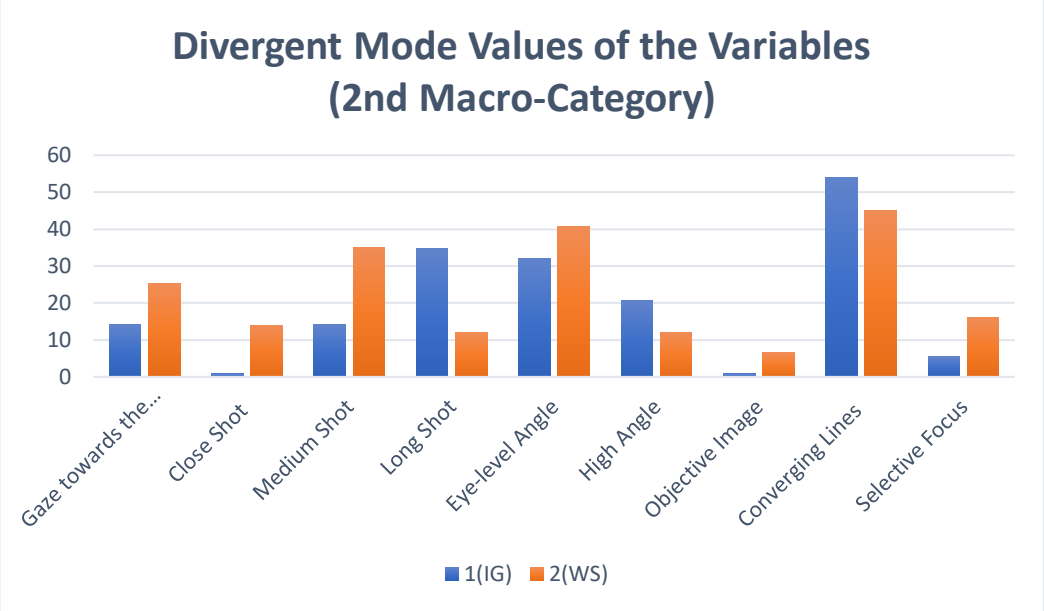


Figure 6.4: Variance in terms of mode among the variables of *Relationship with the Audience* according to channel corpus

The Independent t-test and One-Way Anova confirmed a significant variance across corpora of a series of variables. These mainly concern the type of shot (*Medium Shot*, with a p.value < 0.05, *and Long Shot,* p.value < 0.03), and the type of subjective angle (*Vertical Angle,* p.value < 0.04, *Very High Angle,* p.value < 0.03). A significant variance was demonstrated also with regard also to the occurrences of the strategy *Converging Lines* (p.value < 0.04).

The statistical analysis of the results related to the second macro-category of variables *Relationship with the Audience* seems therefore to confirm, to some extent, the hypothesis of variance of visual strategies across channel corpora. The discussion of the related findings will further corroborate this by showing that, in a similar way to the results of the analysis of the first macro-category *Representation of Reality*, the change in the degree of usage of the abovementioned strategies according to channel can lead to the construction of a different visual product.

6.1.3 *Composition*: descriptive and inferential statistics for the third macro-category of variables

6.1.3.1 Metafunctional realization of meaning and groups of variables

This section aims to present and discuss the results from the frequency analysis of the variables pertaining to the fourth macro-category, *Composition* (see Appendix 6). This macro-category builds on the third metafunction, which reflects the semiotic capacity of the visual mode to form messages that cohere internally and externally with the context (Kress 2010, 87; Kress and Van Leeuwen 176; Van Leeuwen 2003). One way in which such an internal coherence may be achieved is by means of analysis of the visual arrangement and salience of different visual semiotic features or pieces of "information".

According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), the textual metafunction relates the representational and interactive elements of an image in a meaningful way through the three main systems of features, which are the information value (that analyze either the centricity of polarization of elements in a picture), the salience and the framing[3]. These three systems of textual features were adapted to the data under investigation, i.e.

[3] See Chapter three for further insights into the Grammar of Visual Design (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006).

tourism photography, leading to the categorization of different sub-systems of variables (features) whose occurrence or non-occurrence supply specific meaning to the overall composition and refine the visual message. On the one hand, the information value system was kept, but the meaning and importance of their sub-categories were changed. As table 11 shows, images may be centric, or might feature other dispositions – such as the arrangement of elements in particular points or along specific lines of the picture (tags *Rule of Thirds* and *negative space*). Polarization techniques, on the other hand, do not only refer to the subdivision of the image into an ideal/real or given/new dimension or information (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 209), and their interpretation does not rely on *a priori* defined meaning, but on empirical testing and contextual, discourse-situated analysis (Bateman 2014b) (see the reading table in Appendix 1 for further explanation of the tags). Polarized pictures do not therefore have to feature two/four dimensions, i.e. the left and the right, the top and the bottom, which are based on Western societies' writing system that arranges letters' order from the left to the right (Kress and Van Leeuwen 180-181; Verstergaard and Schroder 21), and their meaning depends not only on the cultural and social context but especially on the mode and genre of the discourse. In this study, the variable *polarization* may also refer to the clear opposition between two elements, such as (natural) elements and humans.

Salience and framing strategies, which are devoted to attracting the viewer's interest through the position, size, contrast of the elements in a picture, and to connecting or separating them (Kress and Van Leeuwen 177) by means of lines, vectors, and continuities/discontinuities of color and shape, are realized in this tagging system through more objective features proper of professional photography such as *leading lines*, *visual weight* and sophisticated aesthetic features such as framework strategies (Dann 1996), symmetry, reflection and sharpness of focus.

The tagging system for this macro-category is articulated into four main categories of variables: a) the *Rule of Thirds*, together with the negative space (Mai et al.2011; Manovich 2017); b) the Kressian composition categorizations, i.e. centricity and polarization; c) the visual weight (which is similar to salience) and d) other composition strategies such as symmetry, leading lines, framework, reflection, and sharpness of focus (Manovich 2017; Dann 1996).

The first category of variables a) refers to the adherence in a photograph to the compositional *Rule of Thirds*. This rule is followed when elements are placed on purpose by the photographer along imaginary thirds lines – either horizontal, vertical or both – or at their intersections, in order to produce more aesthetically appealing photos than images where the element is placed in the centre (Mai et al. 2011; Amirshahi 2014). This rule may also be amplified and create a more distinct division or discontinuity (similar to Kress' concept of framing), where the horizontal line is put close to the top or bottom margin of the photograph (tag *Scenic Rule of Thirds*) and which coincides with the intentional creation of negative space (Manovich 2017; Zakia 1993). *Negative space*, in this context, refers to the predominance of specific landscapes in the photograph (tags *water, land, sky*). This procedure leads not only to the creation of aesthetically pleasing, eye-catching photographs, but also draws the eye of the viewer to the immensity of specific landscapes.

This rule is sometimes used in conjunction with b) centric and polarization strategies. Visual weight c) is instead similar to salience strategies and works with medium shots to capture the viewer's attention through an exaggerated size of the main subject (tags *landscape element, living participant,* or *object*).

Finally, the last category of variables groups together a series of aesthetic devices used by photographers to convey the importance and salience of a specific subject. This is realized by means of *leading lines* (similar to *converging lines*)*, frameworks, symmetry, reflection,* or *sharpness of focus*.

The following sections report the results of the fourth category listed in Appendix 6 through the means, modes and standard deviations of each micro-variable for each one of the two main corpora (Instagram and the website, (see Table 11), in order to find any similarities (section 4.1.2) or dissimilarities (4.1.3) between channels in the frequency of the occurrences of these variables, and therefore in the usage of visual strategies. Table 12 reports the results from the Independent t-test and One-Way ANOVA test performed on the two main corpora and the significant variances that occur among some variables (sections 4.1.4, 4.1.5), with the purpose of providing an answer to both the first and the second hypothesis (see Chapter Five), and the potential definition of a sub-genre of tourism photography.

6.1.3.2 Similarities among channels

Table 6.6 reports the mean and the mode for each micro-variable of *Composition* according to channel. The values which are not highlighted in bold represent potential similarities between the two corpora.

With reference to the first category of variables, i.e. the adoption of the *Rule of Thirds* strategy, the variables *one point* and *more points* occur without a significant amount of variance in frequency in both the Instagram (20.8% and 10.5%, accordingly) and website corpora (23.5% and 12.6%), suggesting a similar degree of usage of "de-centricity" in the disposition of the elements in the photograph. Vertical thirds lines do not occur often (6.07% on Instagram and 5.4% on the website). Instances of *negative space* where the main element is the sky are few (4.37% and 5.03%) and therefore do not represent the main compositional device to attract the viewer in either channel.

Within the second category of variables, the positioning of the main subject in the center of the tourist photograph occurs often in both corpora (37.6% on Instagram and 32.9% on the website); conversely, polarization strategies do not seem to share any variance in their frequency rates (23.4% on Instagram and 24% on the website).

Variables	**Mean**		**Mode**		**Standard Deviation**	
Group	1(IG)	2(WS)	1(IG)	2(WS)	1(IG)	2(WS)
Rule of Thirds	**81.7**	**69.9**	**80.3**	**60.6**	1.909	8.432
Scenic Rule of Thirds	**63.9**	**40.6**	**61.1**	**33.8**	2.483	5.937
One Point (RoT)	20.8	23.5	14.6	18.4	5.437	4.5
More Points (RoT)	10.5	12.6	8.7	8.1	2.084	3.873
Lines (RoT)	**18.9**	**9.3**	**17.4**	**3.1**	2.454	6.355
Horizontal (RoT)	**12.8**	**4.3**	**10.6**	**1.9**	2.303	2.563
Horizontal High (RoT)	**9.4**	**2.47**	**5**	**0.6**	4.026	1.665
Vertical (RoT)	6.07	5.4	1.7	1.3	5.119	3.835
Water (Neg. Space)	**28.2**	**19.5**	**21.1**	**10.6**	6.86	7.757
Land (Neg. Space)	**52**	**28.2**	**40.6**	**20.6**	10.722	6.626
Sky (Neg. Space)	4.37	5.03	2.4	3.2	1.721	1.85
Centric	37.6	32.9	33.7	27	3.722	5.9
Polarization	23.4	24	27	21.3	6.293	2.65
Symmetry	**8.57**	**3.43**	**7.9**	**3.1**	0.833	0.493
Leading line(s)	**30.5**	**15.1**	**26.7**	**14.4**	3.365	0.702
Framework	**7.2**	**1.93**	**5.1**	**0.6**	2.152	1.301
Landscape Element	**36.9**	**15.8**	**33.1**	**13.8**	6.467	1.758

Represented Living Participant	**15.4**	**27.9**	**4.8**	**23.4**	9.711	5.749
Object	**2.57**	**9.13**	**1.6**	**6**	1.193	2.779
Reflection	**6.17**	**2.07**	**5.1**	**1.3**	1.436	0.862
Sharpness of Focus	**92.9**	**27.3**	**89.4**	**23.8**	3.961	5.948

Table 6.6: Mean and mode values pertaining to the channel corpora (Instagram and Website channel) for the tags of *Composition*

The assessment of variance or non-variance among channel corpora (channels) was tested through inferential statistical methods by means of an Independent t-test and a One-Way ANOVA, the results of which are reported in table 12. These findings confirm both the hypothesis of similarity and dissimilarity between channels, and consequently variance among corpora, with regard to some of the variables discussed.

The results in the table have been highlighted in bold when they show a variance that is statistically significant (p.value > 0.05) or are left unmarked when they do not. The ones that confirm the existence of a similar use of visual strategies among channels belong to the following categories of variables:

- the general *Rule of Thirds* (p.value > 0.08), *one point* (p.value > 0.55) and *more points* (p.value > 0.47), *lines* (p.value > 0.07), *vertical lines* (p.value > 0.86), and *water/sky* as part of the negative space variable (p.value = 0.22 and p.value > 0.67) ;
- centricity (p.value > 0.3) and polarization (p.value > 0.87);
- the variable *represented living participant (visual weight)* (p.value > 1.3).

The results abovementioned seem to suggest a certain degree of similarity in the usage of strategies among the corpora and therefore confirm the first hypothesis.

One-Way Anova / Independent t-test	**F**	**df**	**t**	**Anova**	**T-test**	**Cohen's d**
Rule of Thirds	5.5892	2.2	2.364	0.13	0.077	1.93
Scenic Rule of Thirds	**39.3335**	**2.68**	**6.272**	**0.011**	**0.003**	**5.121**
One Point (RoT)	0.4176	3.87	-0.646	0.555	0.553	-0.528

More Points (RoT)	0.6411	3.07	-0.801	0.481	0.468	-0.654
Lines (RoT)	5.9156	2.58	2.432	0.107	0.072	1.986
Horizontal (RoT)	**18.3987**	**3.95**	**4.289**	**0.013**	**0.013**	**3.502**
Horizontal High (RoT)	**7.5968**	**2.66**	**2.756**	**0.08**	**0.051**	**2.25**
Vertical (RoT)	0.0326	3.71	0.181	0.866	0.866	0.147
Water (Neg. Space)	2.1175	3.94	1.455	0.22	0.219	1.188
Land (Neg. Space)	**10.6367**	**3.33**	**3.261**	**0.04**	**0.031**	**2.663**
Sky (Neg. Space)	0.2088	3.98	-0.457	0.672	0.671	-0.373
Other (Neg. Space)	0.5862	2.14	0.766	0.519	0.487	0.625
Centric	1.3812	3.37	1.175	0.316	0.305	0.96
Polarization	0.0232	2.69	-0.152	0.89	0.886	-0.124
Symmetry	**84.3986**	**3.25**	**9.187**	**0.002**	**< .001**	**7.501**
Leading line(s)	**60.4879**	**2.17**	**7.777**	**0.013**	**0.001**	**6.35**
Framework	**13.1597**	**3.29**	**3.628**	**0.031**	**0.022**	**2.962**
Landscape Element	**29.832**	**2.29**	**5.462**	**0.023**	**0.005**	**4.46**
Represented Living Participant	3.72	3.25	-1.929	0.142	0.126	-1.575
Object	**14.1432**	**2.71**	**-3.761**	**0.039**	**0.02**	**-3.071**
Reflection	**17.9679**	**3.28**	**4.239**	**0.02**	**0.013**	**3.461**
Sharpness of Focus	**252.568**	**3.48**	**15.892**	**< .001**	**< .001**	**12.976**

Table 6.7: One-Way Anova and Independent t-test results for each variable of *Composition*

6.1.3.3 Dissimilarities among channels

The results deriving from both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics which are listed in tables 11 and 12 also confirm a variance among the channel corpora. As in the analysis of *Representation of Reality* and *Relationship with the Audience*, the values highlighted in bold represent possibly significant differences between the two corpora and are reported in graphs 5 and 6. While graph 5 reports the mean values of the variables that change across the channel corpora, graph 6 includes the mode values of the variables that occur with a different frequency rate. These graphs serve therefore the purpose of highlighting the potentially significant variance that characterizes the two groups.
If one looks at graph 5 and 6, it can be noticed that there is great variance among the variables pertaining to all the category of variables, except for the Kressian category b). In fact, the mean values of the variables *rule of thirds* and *scenic rule of thirds* vary considerably in the two groups of channels (81.7% and 63.9% on Instagram; 69.9%

and 40.6%, respectively). This is related to the variance of the micro-variables such as (thirds) lines (18.9% on Instagram and 9.3% on the website), horizontal lines (12.8% and 4.3%), and in particular horizontal high (9.4% and 2.47%), which coincides often with the implementation of negative space realized by water (28.2% and 19.5%) and land (52% and 28.2%) landscapes. With reference to the third category c), visual weight variables occur with varying frequency rates according to corpus: while the landscape element occurs in a consistent number of Instagram photographs (36.9% compared to 15.8%), compared to website pictures, living participants and object occupy a good portion of tourist pictures mainly on the website (27.9% versus 15.4% and 9.13% versus 2.57%, respectively). Finally, a predominance of leading lines and sharpness of focus strategies is confirmed in the Instagram corpus (30.5% and 92.9%, compared to 15.1% and 27.3%). The remaining features pertaining to the category d) differ across corpora but do not concern a high number of photographs, either in the Instagram or the website corpus. They are symmetry (8.57% on Instagram versus 3.43% on the website), framework and reflection strategies (7.2% and 6.17% on Instagram and 1.93% and 2.07% on the website, respectively).

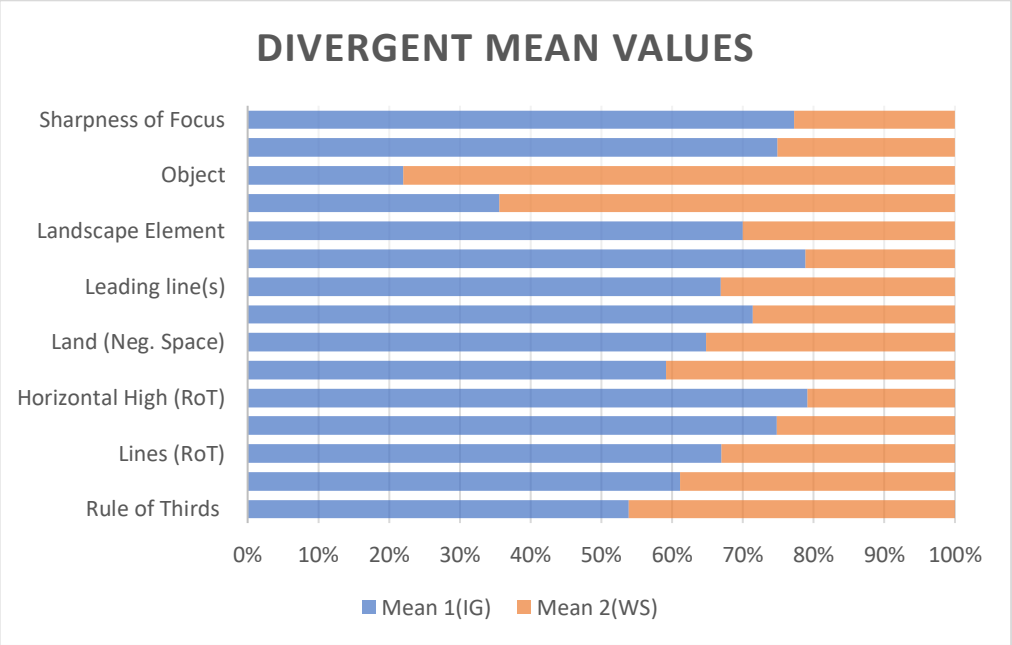


Figure 6.5: Variance in terms of mean among the variables of *Composition* according to channel corpus

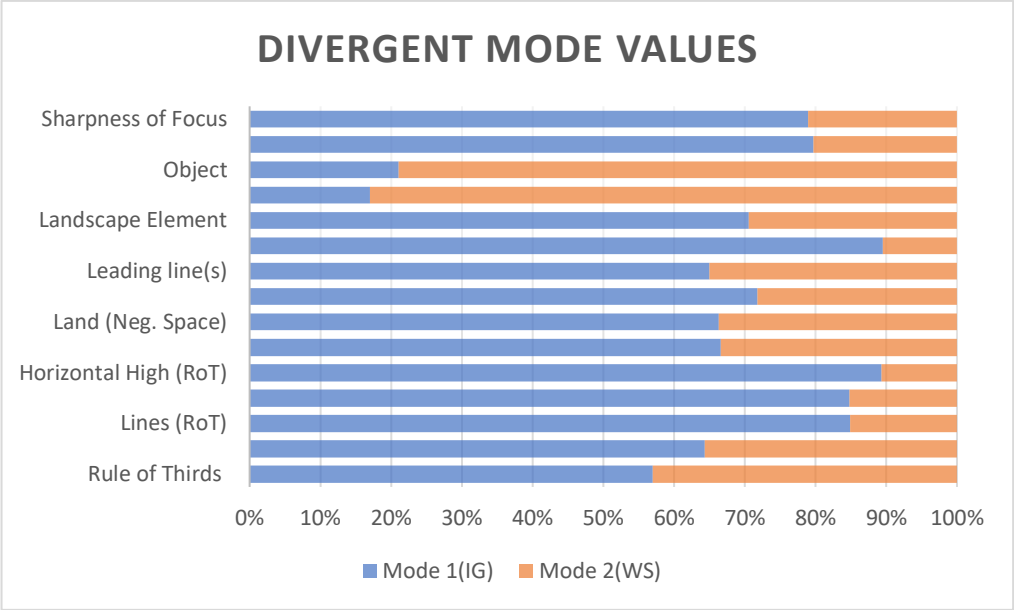


Figure 6.6: Variance in terms of mode among the variables of *Composition* according to channel corpus

The Independent t-test and One-Way Anova confirmed a significant variance across corpora of a series of variables. These are the *scenic rule of thirds* (p.value < 0.01), the Rule of thirds's *horizontal lines* (p.value = 0.01) and in particular *horizontal high* (p.value < 0.08) and the negative space land (p.value < 0.04). A significant variance was demonstrated also with regard also to the occurrences of the strategies concerning the third and fourth category of variables. They are the landscape element (p.value < 0.02) and object (p.value < 0.04) in terms of visual weight and all the variables related to the fourth category, i.e. symmetry (p.value < 0.002), leading lines (p.value < 0.01), framework (p.value < 0.03), reflection (p.value < 0.02) and sharpness of focus (p.value < 0.001) strategies.

The statistical analysis of the results related to the fourth macro-category of variables *Composition* seems therefore to confirm the hypothesis of variance of visual strategies across channel corpora. The discussion of the related findings will further corroborate this by showing that, in a similar way to the analysis of the first and second macro-category, the change in the degree of usage of the abovementioned strategies according to channel may lead to the construction of a different visual product.

6.2 Empirical analysis of visual strategies: Report on significant variables and correlations through bottom-up approaches and Chi-square

The statistical analysis and thorough description of data-driven variables that were reported in section 6.1 indicated the presence of differences in the frequency and use of visual features across channels. A few differences proved to be statistically significant; this suggests that the variation in terms of occurrences of particular strategies does not seem to be due to chance. Instead, it might be the product of intentional and strategic choices on the part of the discourse specialists that vary according to the aim and audience of the channel through which they disseminate their promotional messages.

As mentioned in the methodology section, and as remarked in Chapter Three, more exploratory and advanced statistics is required in order to confirm the existence of statistically significant variation across channels in terms of choices in the construction of tourism visual representations. In particular, this section explores the contribution of each variable to the statistical variation and the relationship between them (Bateman and Hiippala 2021, 70-75). In order to achieve these objectives, section 6.2.1 focuses on Principal Component Analysis and its dimensions of variation; section 6.2.2 analyzes the correlations between variables and their clustering along dimensions, also by means of factor analysis clustering; finally, section 6.2.3 reports the chi-square, which is compared with the previous section in order to provide a list of the variables with the largest statistically significant differences.

This section is followed by a qualitative discussion of a selection of variables and a visual representation of them within their socio-discursive context. This is specifically organized according to the notion of metafunction, i.e. how statistically significant variables 1) construct varying representations of the tourist experience across channels; 2) shape different relationships; and 3) design the overall visual message through salience and entity distribution strategies differently.

6.2.1 Principal Component Analysis

A preliminary overview of data patterns and clustering of variables was provided by computing Principal Component Analysis. In particular, this type of statistical test reduces the complexity of the data under investigation and explores "to what extent the annotations allow the data to be grouped into clusters" (Bateman and Hiippala 2021, 7) by means of fictitious dimensions of variance. As mentioned in Bateman et al. (2019, 9), this analysis may be considered to be similar to Biber's multidimensional investigation of registerial variation (1995). Due to its bottom-up nature, this test enables the generation of data-driven hypotheses of variance and correlation that may be mapped to derive patterns of variation in the data; this is possible by adding the metadata to the findings *after* completing the test. Successively, the hypotheses may be tested further through Correspondence Analysis, Chi-square and top-down procedures such as Factor Analysis. This exploratory analysis was divided into different steps to 1) explore all relationships of variance and the variables which contribute most to variation in the data, without any preconceptions, and 2) ensure the reliability of the findings. The analyses are presented as follows:

1) The percentage of explained variance is reported visually, in order to show the amount of variance this type of statistical analysis may account for in the current investigation (section 6.2.1.1);
2) A series of exploratory tests show data clustering along the largest PCA-calculated dimensions of variation (dimensions 1 and 2), both across channels and agencies. In particular:
    a. the first explorations map data without any filtering to provide an overview of potential clustering patterns (section 6.2.1.2); particularly, section 6.2.1.3 describes the exact contribution of each variable to the largest dimensions of variance that this test detected;
    b. the following explorations map dimensional variation by excluding those variables which are not of interest, due to either their low reliability values

or occurrences (6.2.1.4). The selection criteria were outlined in chapter Five and the list of values is available in Appendix (3);

c. a visualization of the strength and direction of the variables of the first two dimensions explores further the weight and nature of each variable (6.2.1.5);

d. a clustering of the data and their contributions according to the three metafunctions examines the potential role of metafunctions in exploring the causes of metafunctional aggregation according to channel (6.2.1.6);

e. a final layer of analysis of multidimensional data clustering with additional filtering that excludes variables which are not mutually exclusive and which have an alpha reliability value > 0.8 ensures a certain degree of reliability of potential interpretation of these tests (section 6.2.1.7).

6.2.1.1 Explained variance

The input data that was used for the calculation of the percentage of variation across dimensions was a table with a list of all tagged images and the presence or not of all features (tags) for each image. In this sense, all metadata pertaining to the type of sub-corpus – including the agency, channel and Metafunction – was excluded. An overview of the percentage of variation explained by the PCA is provided in Figure 6.2.1.

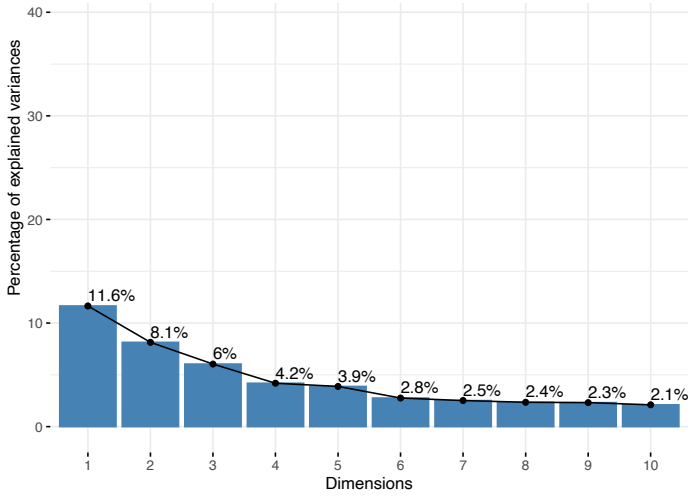


Figure 6.2.1: Percentages of variation explained by PCA-calculated dimensions with respect to the variables of the tagging system

As can be seen from the scree plot, the first ten dimensions account for 45,9% of the variance detected by the Principal Component Analysis. Each one of the remaining 191 dimensions detected accounts for too little variation of the data; however, the scattered nature of contributions to variation that was discovered through this analysis should make the sum of the remaining half of explained variance worthy of attention. The remaining half of variance might be explained by annotating a lager body of images in future studies, or by testing new annotation systems. For reasons of time and for the purpose of this thesis, the current section focuses only on the exploration of the *first two dimensions* of variance, which contribute the most to the explained variance. More detailed analysis of variance and correlations in the data was carried out by means of Correspondence Analysis and Chi-square.

6.2.1.2 Data clustering: PCA

The first round of explorations included the mapping of data along dimensions without any exclusion of variables that had a low reliability score or low counts. The PCA of data was performed by mapping each tagged image of the dataset onto a multidimensional space, without any notion of *channel*, *agency,* or *metafunction*. Successively, the metadata of channel (Figure 6.2.2) and agency (Figure 6.2.3) were added. All explorations were performed in R.

The PCA allowed for a preliminary observation of potential regularities across the dataset with respect to their use of visual elements according to channels and agencies. In particular, each image was plotted according to the presence or absence of the features (variables) of the tagging system, and images displaying a similar pattern of occurrences and cooccurrences of features clustered together. Therefore, the specific weight, or contribution, of each variable to the first two dimensions of variance calculated allowed for a particular placement of each image by taking into account its sum of features and related scores.

As can be noticed from Figures 6.2.2-6.2.3, two distinct clusters may be distinguished, occurring in opposing quadrants along the first and second dimension. The presence of two different clusters shows how particular, selected classes of data items group together. Clusters are represented graphically as ellipses referring to the mean of a set of values with

a 95% confidence level. For this reason, they are called confidence ellipses, and confirm with a 95% confidence that the actual mean values for the occurrences of particular features in the selected dataset "lie within the intervals indicated by the ellipses' axes" (Bateman et al. 2019, 16). In particular, the spread of the ellipses along the dimensions indicates the deviation of the data samples from the mean values. In the current graphs, the narrow ellipses suggest that there is not considerable variation within the samples, i.e. the website images and the Instagram images.

This finding is significant if accompanied by the interpretation of the position of the two distinguished clusters along dimensions 1 and 2. As a matter of fact, website images are grouped together in the top right quadrant, showing a positive contribution to both dimensions. Conversely, Instagram images cluster in the bottom left quadrant, which indicates a negative contribution to the same dimensions. This distinction suggests that digital, visual communication in tourism discourse is constructed differently depending on the channel of dissemination of the promotional message.

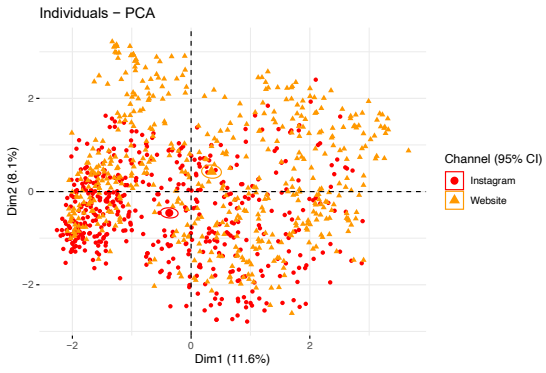


Figure 6.2.2: Data items from the corpus plotted against dimensions 1 and 2 of the PCA, which show clusters of data items according to *channel* with 95 percent confidence ellipses.

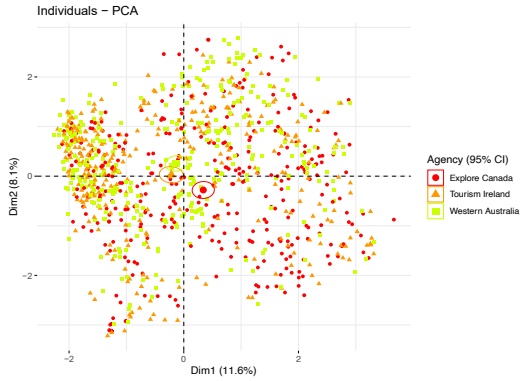


Figure 6.2.3: Data items from the corpus plotted against dimensions 1 and 2 of the PCA, which show clusters of data items according to *agency* with 95 percent confidence ellipses.

In terms of variation across tourism boards, graph 6.2.3 shows a less distinct and significant difference between the communicative, visual strategies of the three boards.

This is demonstrated by looking at how Tourism Ireland and Tourism Western Australia's ellipses overlap in the same quadrant, whereas only Destination Canada' s images cluster in the opposite quadrant, but within closer distance, compared to the previous graph (6.2.2). Additionally, all three agencies contribute *positively* to the largest dimensions of variance; Tourism Ireland and Tourism Western Australia contribute positively to dimension 2, whereas Destination Canada contributes positively to dimension 1 but negatively to dimension 2. This also suggests that the three agencies show some degree of variation when it comes to positive contributions, i.e. in the design of website images. Instagram images, conversely, seem to show 'shared' patterns of variation across all agencies.

6.2.1.3 Contributions of variables to the largest PCA-calculated dimensions of variation

The characterization of the dimensions of variance 1 and 2, which account for the largest contribution to variation in the visual corpora under investigation, allowed for the discussion of the potential nature of the variance in the corpus. Particularly, the calculation of the weightings of each variable helps sharpen an understanding of the variables behind such variance in the data items. These results allowed for a spatial multidimensional representation of the distribution of the data items, or images, along the largest dimensions of variance. In particular, this process allowed for the observation of potential regularities in the dataset with respect to their deployment of visual strategies.

Table 6.2.1 shows the values of the variables which contribute the most to the largest dimensions of variance that were calculated by the PCA. The features with values > 0.1 contribute positively to a placement along the corresponding dimension; conversely, features with values < -0.1 contribute negatively to the corresponding dimension. In other words, variables with positive weightings are representative of the variance that characterizes PCA-calculated dimensions; on the other hand, negative weightings indicate the presence of an inverse correlation between the dimension and the variables.

By linking the results of the previous analyses in relation to this table, we can formulate the following hypotheses, which will be confirmed or rejected by the PCA and the chi-square tests that follow (section 6.2.3):

- Dimension 1 correlates positively with the presence of living beings performing action processes from a social distance and represented by eye-level angles. It also correlates with the presence of gazes and indexical references, i.e. objects that, according to tourism discourse theories, embody particular desires;
- Dimension 1 is negatively correlated with long shots of natural environments;
- Dimension 2 correlates positively with traditional, cultural and typical aspects of tourist destinations;
- Dimension 2 correlates negatively with vast, natural representations of the destination that foster a sense of authenticity and extraordinariness, or strangerhood in the tourist; these also feature often rear views of single beings involved in reaction processes from long shots and subjective, vertical and oblique angles. The attention to the representation is enhanced through the use of advanced perspective techniques, including converging lines.

In short, dimension 1 is indicative of narrative representations that focus on shaping an active tourist experience in which human beings are the main characters and occupy a good portion of the photograph; additionally, the presence of gazes and eye-level angles shapes a close and equal relationship with the viewer. This type of representation seems to be prominent in website communication; conversely, the negative contributions to this dimension characterize Instagram promotional narratives.

Dimension 2 indicates a dimension of variance which is partially due to representations that highlight the cultural and traditional aspects of travel destinations; however, the variation in this dimension is mostly negative. In other words, variables with negative values in this dimension have a greater impact than the positive values and stay in direct contrast to them. These negative values shape a pattern of visual representations in which a dehumanizing and distant, commodifying view of the tourist destination is constructed; the representation is also designed carefully with the use of converging lines. Finally, the combination of long shots of vast, natural and spectacular and reaction process with vertical angles establishes an impersonal relationship with humans, who become

commodities together with the landscape that are there for visual consumption. The use of vertical angles highlights the presence of an asymmetrical, unequal relationship between the represented and interactive participants, or viewers, as the latter view the destination and tourist experience from a superior position that assigns control, ownership and power (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006; Urry 1990). This type of representation seems to be typical of Instagram promotional narratives.

Variable	Contribution to Dimension 1[1]	Variable	Contribution to Dimension 2
Direct Presence of Living Beings	0.4142980	**Traditional/Typical**	0.1526744
Subject of Action	0.3590770	**Artificial**	0.1030312
Process of Action	0.3590770	**Cultural**	0.1027947
Activities	0.3536642	**Denial of Time**	-0.1004657
Type of Action	0.3536531	**Authenticity**	-0.1005648
Denial of Time	0.3471559	**Horizontal Angle**	-0.1012964
Humans (A)	0.3447821	**Transactional Reaction**	-0.1015420
Indexical Reference	0.3184516	**Subjective Image**	-0.1024202
Social Tropes	0.3091544	**Vertical Angle**	-0.1057708
Direction of Gaze	0.2903271	**Oblique**	-0.1059388
Relax/Leisure	0.2761959	**Perspective Techniques**	-0.1091046
Towards the Represented Participant(s)	0.2671910	**Converging Lines – Vanishing Point(s)**	-0.1094236
Recreational Activities	0.2272119	**Single**	-0.1121890
Sizes (Relevance)	0.2231184	**Landscape Element**	-0.1129814
Visual Weight	0.2195084	**Direct Presence of Living Beings**	-0.1136955
Represented Living Participant	0.2136750	**Long**	-0.1281442
Youth	0.2096017	**Less Detailed/ Colored Background**	-0.1281482
Transactional Action	0.2094480	**Tense/Magic**	-0.1298284
Medium	0.1824133	**Sunny**	-0.1301127
Non-transactional Action	0.1480952	**Social Tropes**	-0.1497598
Adventurous	0.1462490	**Humans (R)**	-0.1510752
Eye-level	0.1368400	**Type of Reaction**	-0.1529681
Beauty	0.1302934	**Process of Reaction**	-0.1560180
Play	0.1233028	**Subject of Reaction**	-0.1560180
Other Recreational Activities	0.1198843	**Time of the Day**	-0.1659388
Sport Activities	0.1082395	**Mood**	-0.1670709
Element in the Foreground	0.1049749	**Sharpness of Focus**	-0.1693370
Day	0.1044184	**Untamed**	-0.1799818

[1] Exponential values were converted to decimal form at https://www.wolframalpha.com/. This tool was used to check whether the contribution of each variable to the dimension was a value larger than 0.1 or smaller than -0.1. In this table, only variables with an x value like the following were included: $x > 0.1$ or $x < -0.1$. For example, the contribution of *Direct Presence of Human Beings* in decimal form is 0.414298.

Couple	0.1031090	**Day**	-0.1828682
Connecting Dots	0.1008925	**Rule of Thirds**	-0.1921793
Strangerhood	-0.1033674	**Timelessness**	-0.1981708
Natural	-0.1095064	**Water**	-0.2078572
Marine Environment	-0.1138014	**Weather**	-0.2104670
Natural (A)	-0.1172310	**Strangerhood**	-0.2108689
Unspoilt	-0.1282537	**Marine Environment**	-0.2319587
Untamed	-0.1761863	**Mountains**	-0.2535981
Timelessness	-0.1778753	**Negative Space**	-0.2954747
Very Long	-0.1874336	**Land**	-0.3017383
		Natural	-0.3095157
		Natural (A)	-0.3135541
		Unspoilt	-0.3266927

Table 6.2.1: Contribution values of variables to dimensions 1 and 2

If we look closely at the contribution of each variable to dimension 1, particularly through Figures 6.2.4-6.2.6, the weight of each contribution becomes clearer. Indeed, the presence of living beings involved in action processes and in different types of activities or settings characterizes 47% of variance in the corresponding dimension. The desire to create a personal relationship with the viewer through a gaze is also present and contributes to explaining the variance (approximately 4%); very high angles occur as well, even though the direction of contribution is not provided (2.5%). Instances of analytical settings, i.e. maps that provide information on routes and destinations, play a role in the variance of the dimension (approximately 4%). One may argue that the positive contributions to this dimension characterize website visual communication, as already suggested by Figure 6.2.2 and Table 6.2.1.

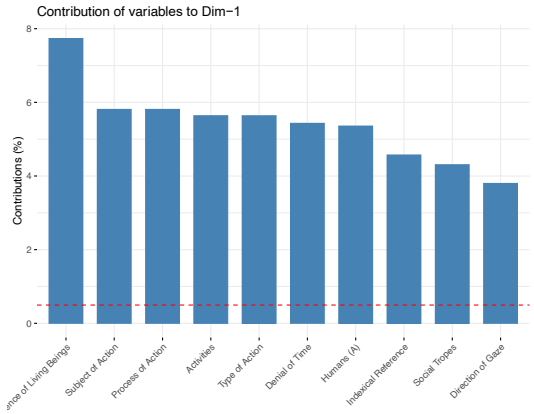


Figure 6.2.4: Contributions of each variable to dimension 1 of the PCA (%)

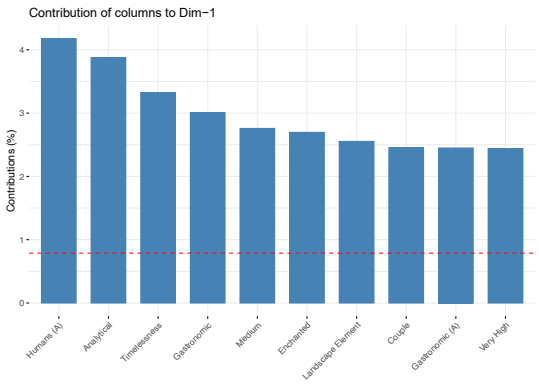


Figure 6.2.5: Contributions of each feature (variable) to dimension 1 of the PCA (%)

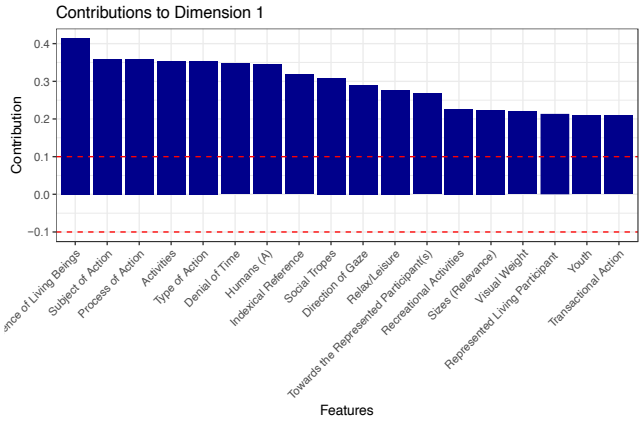


Figure 6.2.6: Contributions of each feature (variable) to dimension 1 of the PCA

The contribution of each variable to dimension 2 may be identified similarly by exploring their visual representation in Figures 6.2.7 and 6.2.8. Indeed, the adoption of aerial views of unspoilt, untamed environments with sunny weather conditions and occasionally living beings involved in reaction processes characterizes approximately 80% of variance in the corresponding dimension.

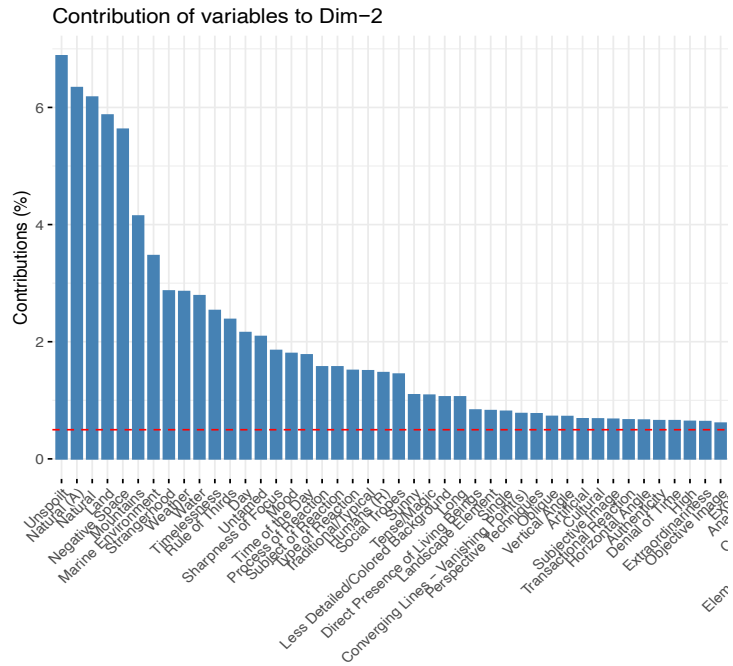


Figure 6.2.7: Contributions of each feature (variable) to dimension 2 of the PCA (%)

As can be seen from Figure 6.2.8, reaction processes involving humans contribute *negatively* to dimension 2 with 0.3 of explained variance. In conclusion, the data show that the negative contributions explain most of the variance of this dimension, and characterize Instagram narratives.

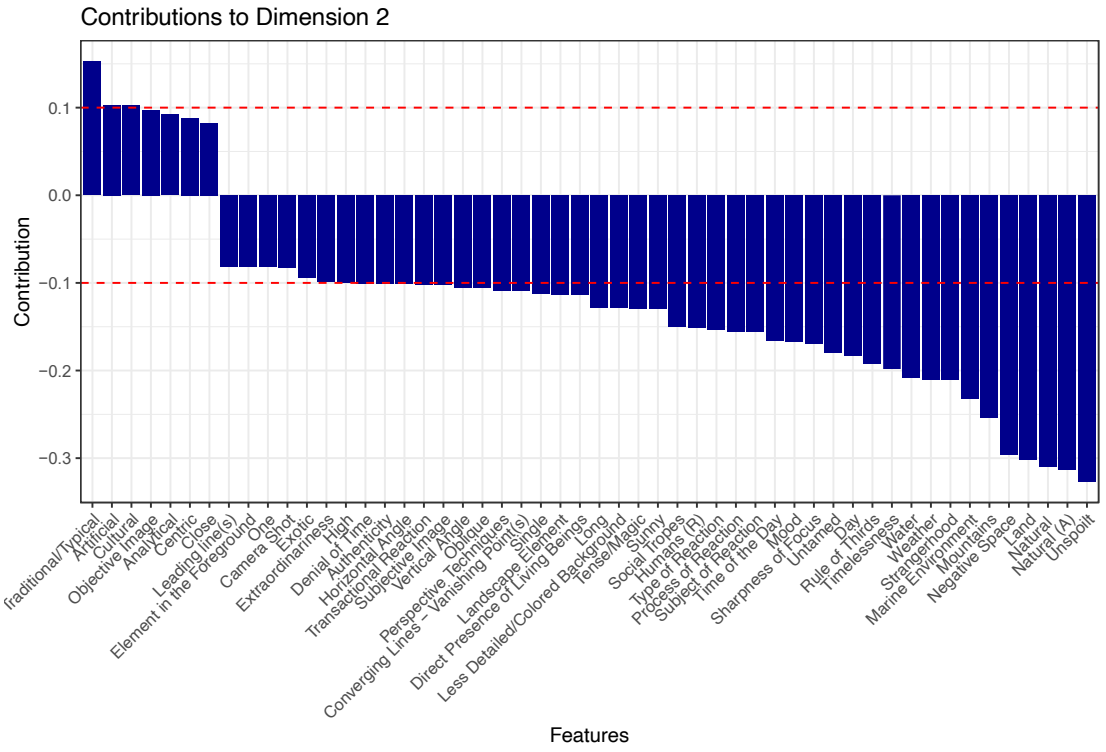


Figure 6.2.8: Contributions of each feature (variable) to dimension 2 of the PCA

In overview, the preliminary PCA confirmed the presence of significant variance in the construction of the visual, promotional representation across media. Indeed, Instagram narratives seem to focus on *reaction processes* involving spectacular aerial views of solitary, back posing individuals surrounded by aesthetically pleasant natural environments. This shapes an impersonal relationship with dehumanized subjects that fosters visual pre-consumption through a *romantic gaze* of capitalist privilege and illusion of control over an extra-ordinary experience (Debord 1977). The commodification of the intangible service also stimulates in-group identification. Website imagery, on the other hand, is

characterized by more intimate representations of varying tourists experiences with action processes and suggesting an equal relationship with the viewer (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006).

6.2.1.4 Mapping data clustering with non-excluded features only

Similar conclusions may be drawn by calculating a Principal Component Analysis with non-excluded features only. In essence, Figures 6.2.9 and 6.2.10 map dimensional variation by excluding those variables which are not of interest, due to either their low reliability values or occurrences. The patterns retrieved show differences with the previous analysis. Indeed, both clusters of images are close to zero in terms of contributions to dimension 2, thus belonging to this dimension only partially. Conversely, there seems to be positive contribution of Instagram to dimension 1, whereas website visual corpora contribute negatively to dimension 1. However, it is not possible to compare positive and negative attributes in terms of contributions to dimensions across different PCAs, as the 'direction' of the contributions changes with each new mathematical calculation performed by R. What remains crucial to the identification of varying patterns of clustering is the detection of a clear opposition between clusters of images, as in the current analysis. Additionally, differences among travel boards in terms of contribution seem to be less sharp, as suggested by Figure 6.2.10.

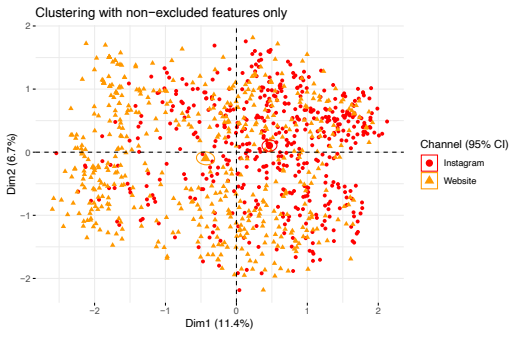


Figure 6.2.9: Data items from the corpus plotted against dimensions 1 and 2 of the PCA with *non-excluded features only*, showing clusters of data items according to *channel* with 95 percent confidence ellipsis.

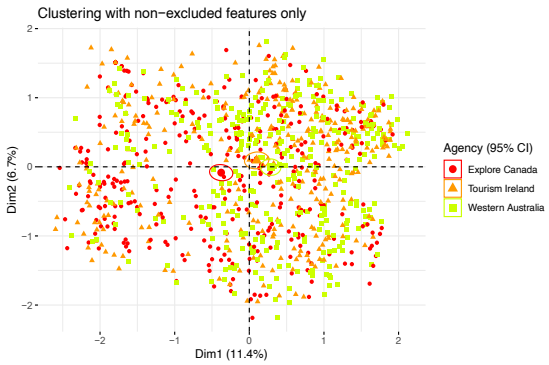


Figure 6.2.10: Data items from the corpus plotted against dimensions 1 and 2 of the PCA with *non-excluded features only*, showing clusters of data items according to *channel* with 95 percent confidence ellipsis.

The differences between Figure 6.2.2 and 6.2.9 may be investigated by looking at Figures 6.2.11 and 6.2.12, which explore the contributions of each variable to dimension 1 and 2. The combination of aerial views of natural, unspoilt representations and professional composition strategies in this analysis contributes positively to dimension 1, while variables such as *close, medium, represented living participants* and *traditional, cultural* settings contribute to a low extent to the variance in dimension 1. Indeed, each of these contributions is lower or slightly higher that -0.1. Therefore, it seems that the tendency to represent idyllic, representations of natural settings remains typical of Instagram, while more intimate representations of humans defines website communication. This is confirmed also by looking at the positive contributions to dimension 2, which contains variables related to professional representations of untamed environments and occasionally wildlife.

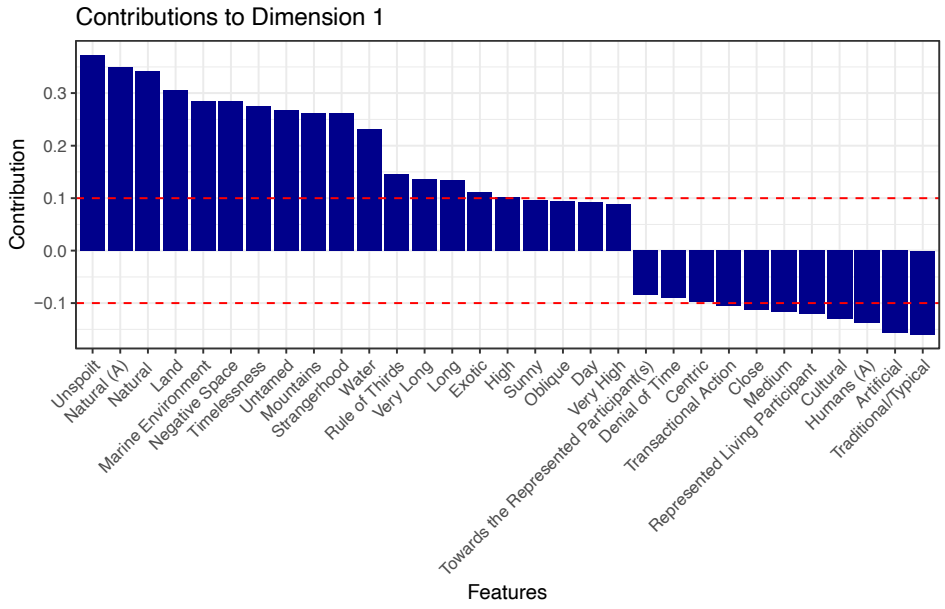


Figure 6.2.11: Contributions of each feature (variable) to dimension 1 of the PCA with *non-excluded features only*

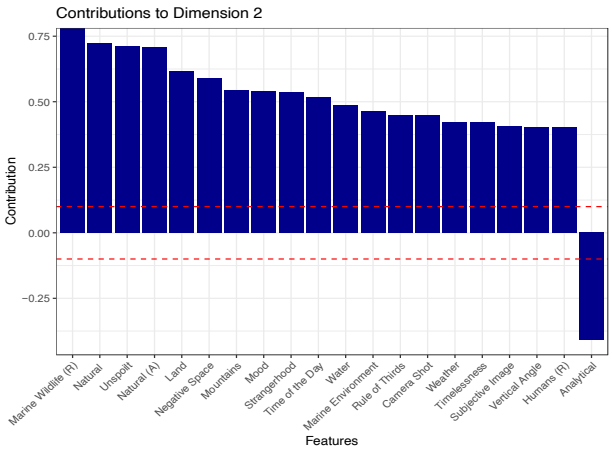


Figure 6.2.12: Contributions of each feature (variable) to dimension 2 of the PCA with *non-excluded features only*

6.2.1.5 Strength and direction of variables' contributions: a visualization

The characterization of the dimensions of variance 1 and 2, which account for the largest contribution to variation in the visual corpora under investigation, allowed for the discussion of the potential nature of the variance in the corpus. Particularly, the calculation of the weightings of each variables enabled an understanding of the variables that contribute to such variance in the data items, or images, of each channel corpus.

An additional perspective on the different contribution to the dimensions of variance that were calculated by PCA may be gained by examining the strengths and direction of each variable to the construction of the visual message along the two dimensions. These two features show the type of contribution of each one of the variables to the explained variance. This type of analysis allows us to detect also the potential correlations between variables across dimensions.

As can be seen from Figure 6.2.13, variables such as *traditional, typical, cultural, historical, gastronomic, artificial, close and centric* are clustered together and contribute positively to dimension 1 and 2, while *analytical, map, objective image, perpendicular top-down angle and past, historical* contribute negatively to dimension dimension 1 and positively to dimension 2. The variety of the settings represented by these variables were shown to characterize website communication, which contributes positively to both dimensions and partially negatively in the analysis carried out in section 6.2.1.4. Additionally, the closeness to and

centricity of the elements in the picture also seem to define website communication, to some extent.

Transactional actions or activities and represented living participants contribute both positively to dimensions 1 and 2 as well as negatively to dimension 2, thus characterizing both website and Instagram promotional imagery. Reaction processes cluster with rule of thirds strategies, sunny moods and the presence of single elements, and they all contribute positively to dimension 1 and negatively to dimension 2. These considerations seem in line with the results provided in the previous sections, and characterize mostly Instagram visual representations.

Finally, two groups of variables cluster together and are associated negatively to both dimensions; one clusters together features related to vast (*negative space)*, unspoilt (*unspoilt* and *strangerhood)* and untamed natural environments (*timelessness, land, water, mountains)*; the other groups variables concerning very high and very long views of enchanted and authentic representations. The negative contributions to this dimension were so far attributed to Instagram images; for this reason, it is safe to assume that these variables define mainly images that were disseminated on this type of medium.

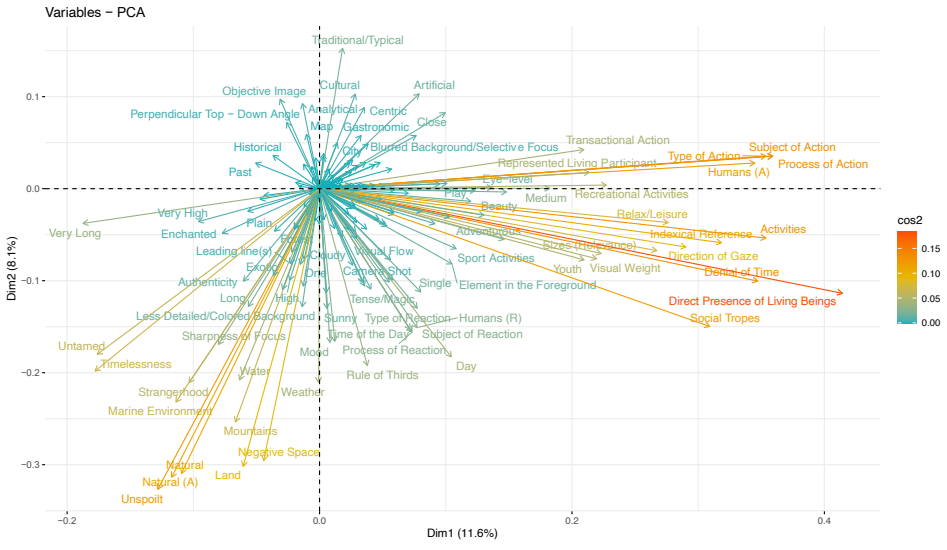


Figure 6.2.13: Strength and direction of visual annotation features along the calculated principal component representing dimensions 1 and 2.

6.2.1.6 Data clustering: adding *Metafunction* metadata

The previous sections described the contributions of the variables of the tagging system to the largest dimensions of variance. In particular, only the variables with a contribution > 0.1 or < -0.1 were taken into consideration, as they have a considerable impact on the overall dimensions. In summary, the positive contributions to dimensions 1 and 2 were proved to explain variance mostly for website images and partly for Instagram (dimension 1), whereas negative contributions explained variance especially for Instagram images but also to website one (dimension 1). Particularly, as shown in Figures 6.2.9-6.2.9.12, positive contributions to dimension 2 with non-excluded features only coincide to some extent with negative contributions to dimension 2 with all features considered; this is confirmed by looking at Figure 6.2.14, which plots the images only with the features of the ideational metafunction along both dimensions of variance. In other words, the ideational metafunction is realized on Instagram through variables that contribute positively to both dimensions, which design impersonal, distant representations of reaction processes and natural settings, whereas website communication is constructed through variables that focus mainly on shaping a human, 'active' and diversified dimension of the tourist experience in terms of processes, activities and settings presented.

The interpersonal metafunction is realized by the two media in opposite ways, as may be seen from Figure 6.2.15, and seem to follow the pattern presented in Figure 6.2.2. As demonstrated in the previous analyses, negative contributions to dimension 2 are 'explained' thoroughly only by variables occurring mostly on Instagram (Table 6.2.1 in relation to Figure 6.2.2). This suggests that Instagram representations shape an impersonal and distant relationship with the viewer that focuses mostly on fostering imagination through distant, aerial views of idyllic, natural environments; conversely, website images seem to prefer to construct a more intimate and equal relationship with the viewer.

Finally, Figure 6.2.16 shows that textual features contribute negatively to the explanation of variance for Instagram, while contributing positively for the construction of website images. Again, negative contributions to dimension 2 were only explained by Instagram imagery, thus staying consistent with previous analyses that demonstrate the presence of professional strategies in the disposition of entities and definition of salience in the overall

message (*Rule of Thirds, negative space,* and *Sharpness of Focus*). Conversely, website imagery focuses on assigning salience to a represented living participant (Table 6.2.1).

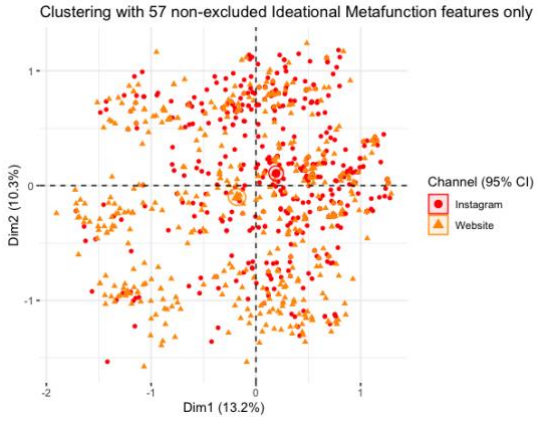


Figure 6.2.14: Data items from the corpus plotted against dimensions 1 and 2 of the PCA with *Ideational Metafunction features*, showing clusters of data items according to *channel* with 95 percent confidence ellipsis.

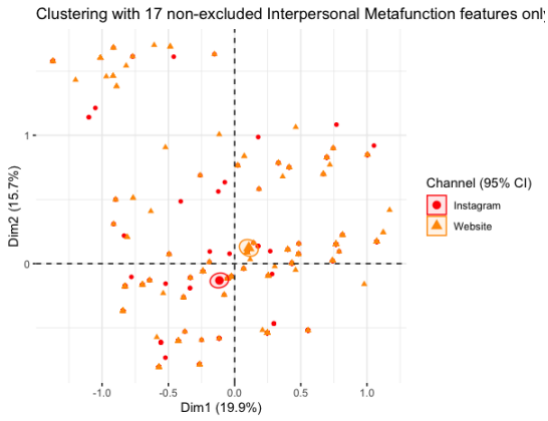


Figure 6.2.15: Data items from the corpus plotted against dimensions 1 and 2 of the PCA with *Interpersonal Metafunction features*, showing clusters of data items according to *channel* with 95 percent confidence ellipsis.

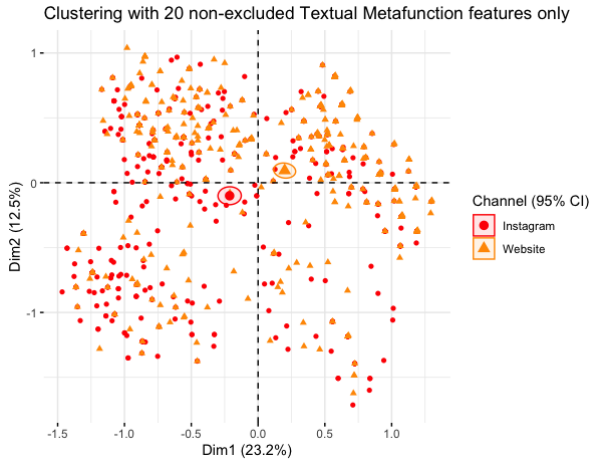


Figure 6.2.16: Data items from the corpus plotted against dimensions 1 and 2 of the PCA with *Textual Metafunction features*, showing clusters of data items according to *channel* with 95 percent confidence ellipsis.

6.2.1.7 Additional layer of filtering: only mutually exclusive variables with high reliability (alpha > 0.8)

The final step of the current exploratory Principal Component Analysis involved an investigation of potential patterns of clustering of mutually exclusive variables with a reliability score >.0.8 (Figure 6.2.17-6.2.18). As can be noticed, the ellipses concerning the three travel boards under investigation are detected in a similar position to the ones identified in the previous analyses; additionally, in Figure 6.2.2, they all overlap and are close to 0 in relation to all quadrants of each dimension. This suggests that the differences among travel boards are not significant.

Conversely, differences among the digital channels under investigation seem to persist, as confirmed by Figure 6.2.17. However, the positions of the two ellipses representing the channels have changed; indeed, Instagram imagery now contributes negatively to dimension 1 – as confirmed by the first, exploratory PCA – and slightly positively to dimension 2 – as suggested by the PCA with only excluded features. In a specular manner, website imagery contributes positively to dimension 1 and negatively to dimension 2. The repeated presence of opposing and sharply distinguished ellipses grouping different patterns of 'variance' confirms the existence of different uses of features, or visual strategies, that depend on the channel of dissemination. This result, in particular, will be further confirmed by performing a chi-square, or contingency table, of the frequencies of each feature across channels. The change of position of the ellipses compared to previous findings allows us to draw some preliminary conclusions:

1) Instagram visual narratives in terms of non-excluded features and mutually exclusive features contribute positively to dimension 2 of the non-excluded features dimensions (Figure 6.2.12); thus, they are characterized by professional, aerial views of reaction processes in unspoilt, natural environments;
2) Website visual narratives in terms of non-excluded features and mutually exclusive features contribute positively to dimension 1, which enables the close representation of different tourist experiences and activities (Figure 6.2.4-6.2.6) as well as, possibly, more distant views of natural environments (Figure 6.2.11).

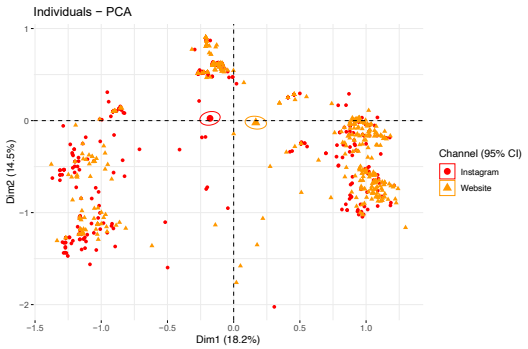


Figure 6.2.17: Data items from the corpus plotted against dimensions 1 and 2 of the PCA with *mutually exclusive variables with alpha value > 0.8*, showing clusters of data items according to *channel* with 95 percent confidence ellipsis.

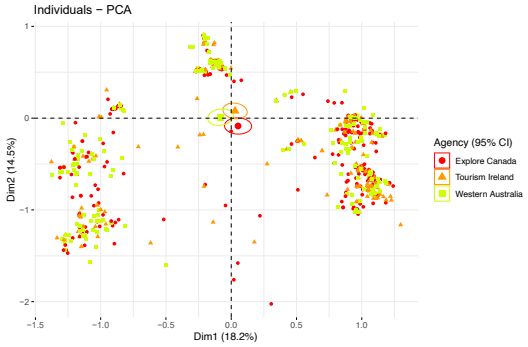


Figure 6.2.18: Data items from the corpus plotted against dimensions 1 and 2 of the PCA with *mutually exclusive variables with alpha value > 0.8*, showing clusters of data items according to *agency* with 95 percent confidence ellipsis.

The next section reports the results of Correspondence Analysis, which looks further into the nature of the relationships between variables in the current study. This section, together with Factor Analysis (6.2.2.2), defines the correlations between variables of the tagging system that was used to label features in the visual, channel corpora under investigation. Finally, section 6.2.3 explores the type of relationship between the channel metadata (or categorical variables in this test) and each variable, in order to assess the degree of statistically significant variance in terms of occurrences of particular variables, i.e. the extent to which some visual features occur in promotional tourist images unexpectedly more often or less often – and not by chance - according to channel.

6.2.2 Correspondence Analysis

The next step involved in the empirical process was the performance of a Correspondence Analysis (CA). This type of analysis attempts to define the nature of the relationship and degree of association between the variables of a system by means of dimensional reduction (Field et al. 2012). Compared to PCA, this test relies on *counts* and *metadata* to cluster variables that occur together. While the PCA confirmed the existence of distinct contributions to variance in the multichannel construction of the visual message by means of imagery clustering and the presence or absence of specific features, this test explored

further the use and distribution of these features and their potential interconnections. In other words, this analysis detects the correlations between the variables that contribute most to the variance of visual communication across channels. The results of this study will be compared with factor analysis and supported by the chi-square for an investigation into the degree of potential intentionality behind visual strategies' varying frequency according to channel.

The degree of patterning and co-occurrence in CA may be assessed by examining the distance between each variable in the tagging system. In essence, the closer variables are, the greater the chances are that they pattern together.

In this regard, the following preliminary hypotheses were formulated, as a general interpretation of visual patterns that were detected during the annotation process:

(1) **Instagram imagery**: Reaction processes correlate with natural settings, scarce presence of gaze (demand gaze with wildlife, offer gaze with humans), medium or long shots, eye-level or high angles, and Rule of Thirds;
(2) **Instagram imagery:** The absence of human beings correlates with natural settings, long or very long shots, high or very high angles, negative space;
(3) **Instagram imagery** Animal life correlates with close or medium shots, demand gaze, eye-level angles, possibly centric composition;
(4) **Website imagery:** Action processes occur with cultural or artificial settings, medium or long shots, eye-level angles, Living Participant Weight.

The *annotation-driven* hypotheses that were mentioned above were tested through a series of experiments that first explored correlations without any exclusion of variables (section 6.2.2.1); successively, a CA of a restricted list of variables followed with the same criteria of PCA. Finally, four different CA were performed by grouping the variables according to their corresponding metafunction, with the addition of *tourism strategies* as fourth grouping macro-category (section 6.2.2.2).

These hypotheses may be tested also by conducting inter-metafunctional analysis of correlations either by means of Correspondence Analysis or Factor Analysis. Both analyses will be presented and discussed.

6.2.2.1 Correspondence Analysis: reducing dimensions to explore correlations

A preliminary Correspondence Analysis was carried out by mapping each variable onto a multidimensional space and by exploring its positioning. As can be seen from Figure 6.2.19, the metadata of tourist boards was included to allow for a comparison of the behavior of each variable according to its frequency. The position of the majority of variables at the intersection of the quadrants suggests a pattern of similarities in terms of visual communication strategies across agencies. However, some variables seem to cluster together in three different quadrants. On the one hand, Destination Canada seems to prefer the representation of activities, including entertainment and sports, in snowy, natural environments, also with the presence of wildlife. Analytical and artificial settings seem to be typical of this agency and include informative representations such as maps or routes or evocative pictures of quiet villages at night. Destination Canada shares with Tourism Ireland an interest in representing traditional and typical settings, which may also involve human interaction. Similarly, Tourism Ireland prefers outdoor activities (hiking) in natural environments (*mountains, timelessness)* and analytical settings (*icon/logo)*; however, it focuses also on the construction of cultural experiences with cloudy and foggy weather conditions, which aim to underline also the historical uniqueness of its country. Additionally, it shows patterns of long shots with *one point* strategies (Rule of Thirds), which suggest a focus on professional representations of the destination and its aspects, including typical animal life such as livestock, which may be involved in either action or reaction processes. Finally, Tourism Western Australia seems to prefer the design of a visual message with typical exotic or marine settings and wildlife, including marsupials; however, this tourism board shares with Tourism Ireland an interest in representing vast landscapes (*very long)* from aerial views (*high shots)*, sunny moods, and often *perpendicular top-down angles*. Water sports, camping equipment and car driving are represented often in Tourism Western Australia's visual narratives, together with the use of cameras for photo shootings; close-up shots (*close)* and artificial settings (*city)* are shared with Destination Canada. Similar patterns were detected in the restricted Correspondence Analysis (6.2.20). The analysis confirms that all tourist boards adopt similar strategies to promote their travel destinations; indeed, they rely on visual representations that underline the unspoilt and untamed aspect of natural environments, which may be visited for exclusive and relaxing

outdoor activities as well as unexpected and unique encounters with wildlife. Cultural and historical uniqueness are underlined particularly by Destination Canada and Tourism Ireland, which design entertainment experiences or more informative representations for the organization of all sorts of activities.

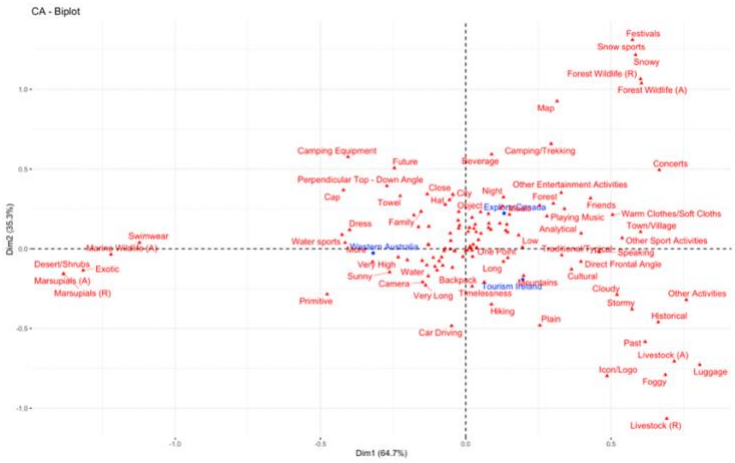


Figure 6.2.19: Variables of the tagging system plotted against dimensions 1 and 2 of the CA, showing clusters of variables according to *agency*

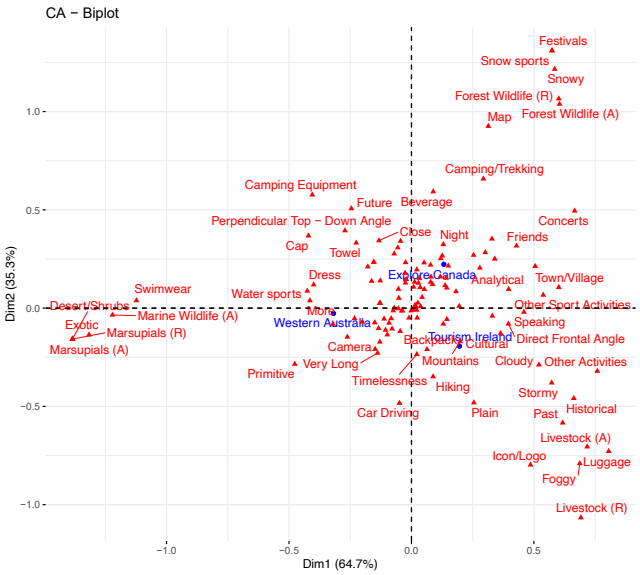


Figure 6.2.20: Variables of the tagging system plotted against dimensions 1 and 2 of the CA, with features that scored more than 0.8 (*Krippendorff's alpha*)

6.2.2.2 Correspondence Analysis of variables according to macro-categories or *metafunction*

The previous experiments provided some insights into the correlations between the features that were identified and quantified in the corpora of digital promotional imagery under investigation. Particularly, they showed how tourist narratives seem to rely intentionally on particular visual practices that include narrative representations of natural environments with often the presence of either humans or wildlife engaged in different processes and activities, and with the adoption of intimate and equal or aerial perspectives depending on particular variables. The analysis also revealed the presence of cultural, historical and typical aspects in a large number of visual representations, which are praised by discourse specialists.

This section explores which correlations may exist between the subjects, events and settings of photographs (*ideational Metafunction)*, the angles and the shots adopted (*interpersonal Metafunction*) and the distribution of information, also through salience (*textual Metafunction)*. It also wishes to explore correlations at the inter-metafunctional level, in order to shed light on how metafunctions are realized by tourism boards. In other words, it answers the hypotheses outlined in section 6.2.2. in relation to this, the last section of this chapter will test the hypothesis that the different frequencies and correlations between variables are significant and depend on the channel of dissemination.

Figures 6.2.21-6.2.24 show the relations between the variables of the first metafunction and the different grouping and positioning according to the metadata *channel*. As Figure 6.2.21 suggests, Instagram and website visual narratives differ in terms of use and combination of narratives features that include the type of action, the type of subject or object and the setting. Indeed, Instagram specialists design representations of tourist experiences which include static reactions of humans or both actions and reactions of animals in mostly natural and untouched environments; conversely, website narratives focus on representing visually mostly actions of humans engaged in diversified activities in social settings and enjoying different aspects of the destination. This analysis confirms the PCA findings that were obtained in section 6.2.1.

In terms of interpersonal metafunctional meaning, Instagram and website construct visual representations by adopting varying perspectives, including angles and shots;

consequently, they shape different relationships with the viewer. On the one hand, Instagram narratives combines very long shots with very high angles for the representation of natural environments that might include wildlife and humans; conversely, website specialists adopt eye-level angles and medium shots to represent humans involved in different activities. In this regard, the variable *towards the interactive participant* deserves particular attention, for it provides additional insights into how the relationship is shaped differently according to channel. indeed, by looking at Figure 6.2.22, this variable is close to zero and partly representative of website communication. This might suggest that website communication shapes an intimate relationship of *demand* (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006) with the recipients of their visual messages. However, the findings of Factor Analysis (Figure 6.2.25) prove the existence of a correlation between human processes of reaction and gazes of *offer* (variable *towards the represented participants)*, which design a relationship of identification and urging interest in the object of desire represented the picture (Francesconi 2014). Indeed, the graph shows visually how visual features of the tagging system belong together given how they pattern in the annotation process. Conversely, gazes of *demand* and direct interactions with the viewer (variable *towards the interactive participant*) correlate with reaction processes that are performed by animals, and which are typical of Instagram visual communication. This suggests that a sense of intimacy and closeness is established on Instagram exclusively by creating an exclusive relationship with the untamed and its local wildlife. This finding is confirmed by looking at Figure 6.2.24, which groups together tourism strategies or socially driven desires for the *untamed* and *unspoilt* on Instagram, compared to clusters of *traditional* and *gastronomic* tourist experiences on the website.

With regard to the textual Metafunction and the organization of the visual message, Instagram seems to prefer the representation of *negative spaces,* or vast landscapes, which are accompanied by other professional visual techniques such as *leading lines*. On the other hand, website communication assigns more centricity to the main participants of the photograph, which are often living beings and humans. Instances of polarized elements of *one point* strategies occur as well.

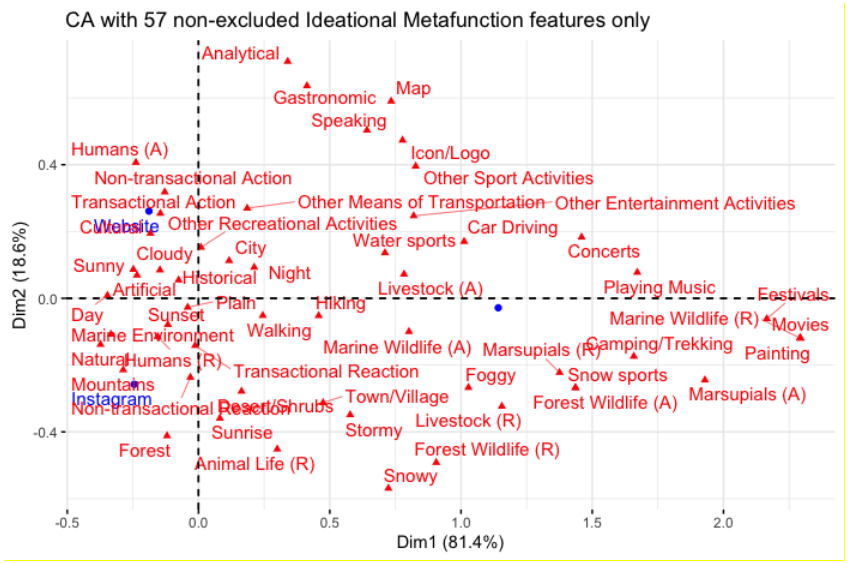


Figure 6.2.21: Variables of the tagging system plotted against dimensions 1 and 2 of the CA, with *non-excluded ideational features* only

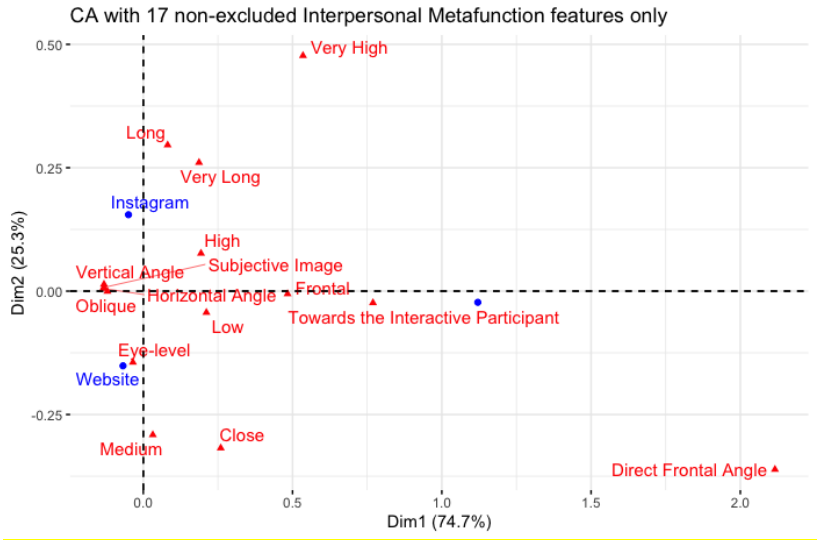


Figure 6.2.22: Variables of the tagging system plotted against dimensions 1 and 2 of the CA, with *non-excluded interpersonal features* only

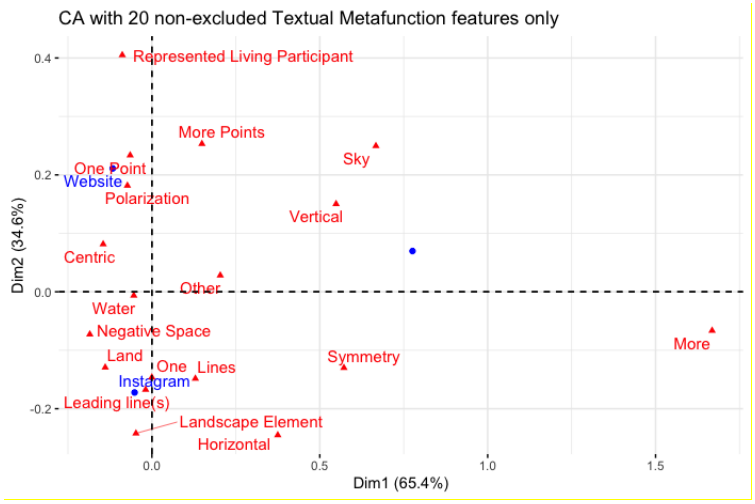


Figure 6.2.23: Variables of the tagging system plotted against dimensions 1 and 2 of the CA, with *non-excluded textual features* only

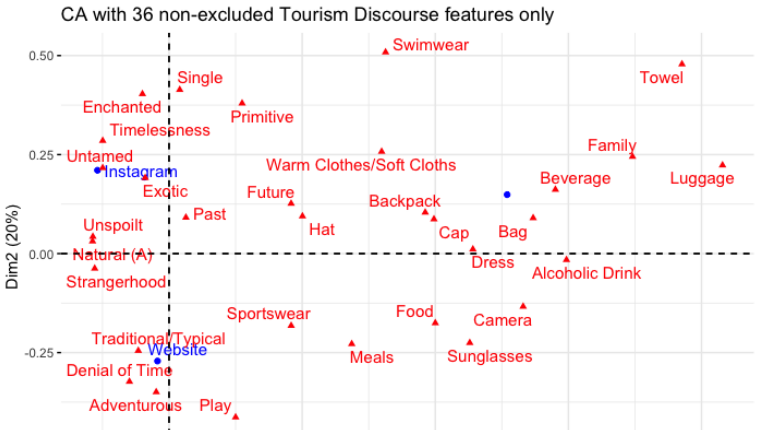


Figure 6.2.24: Variables of the tagging system plotted against dimensions 1 and 2 of the CA, with *non-excluded tourism features* only

In conclusion, the analysis of the correlations between variables by means of Correspondence Analysis and Factor Analysis contributed to answering the hypotheses that were formulated in section 6.2.13, and indicate the existence of patterns of clustering that vary according to channel, both at the intra- and inter-metafunctional level. The last section of the analysis will investigate the potentially significant correlation between the variables of the tagging system and the *metadata* of channel of dissemination.

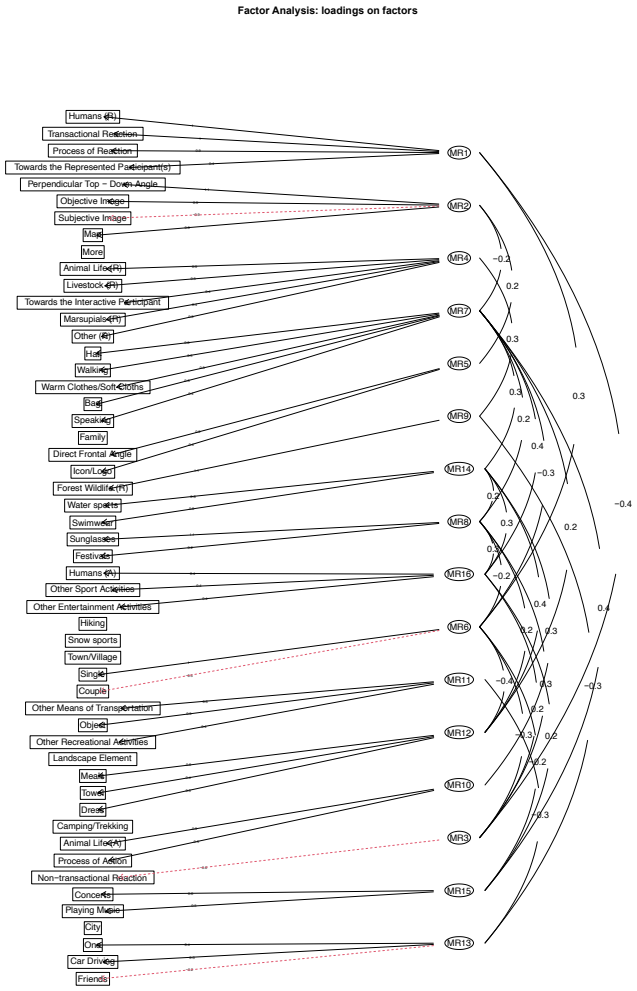


Figure 6.2.25: Factor Analysis of the correlations between variables of the tagging system

6.2.3 Statistical significance testing: chi-square

The last step of the empirical analysis involved the performance of a chi-square of the occurrences of each variable across the two channel corpora. The objective was to validate the hypothesis that the features identified in the visual corpora of promotional imagery vary in terms of frequencies, use and correlations for a specific purpose, which might be related to the channel of dissemination and its particular function, or role, in the marketing funnel of persuasion.

To this aim, the following analyses were conducted:

1. a statistical significance testing without the metadata of *channel*, which revealed the presence of tags, or variables, that show an unusually higher frequency deviating from the average value (*mean)*. The absolute counts of each tag may be found in the Appendix (5);
2. a contingency table with the occurrences of each feature of the tagging system grouped according to the channel categorical variables *Instagram* and *website*. The table allowed for the calculation of the *residuals* for each feature, which were obtained by subtracting the expected frequency of each variable, or cell, from the actual, or observed, cell frequency. The resulting value provided the amount of deviation or error for each variable. Successively, the square of the difference was computed, and the result was divided by the expected cell frequency.

The first analysis allowed to detect the variables that contribute to variance in the visual corpora. As can be seen from Figure 6.2.26 and 6.2.27 and the information on the left of the graph (log(10/'Pr(>Chi)')), the variables which have the lowest probability of occurrence and vary in terms of frequency are the ones which bring more information and define a pattern of variation. In particular, Figure 6.2.26 shows the contributions of the variables with a statistically significant value and an alpha score > 0.8, whereas Figure 6.2.27 reports the variables with an unexpectedly high frequency rate and an inter-coder reliability value > 0.6. Table 6.2.2 lists and compares these variables and reports the p-value for each one of them. The table reports specifically the results of the chi-square, which tells us how well response variables can be predicted by a model with a predictor variable. Low p.values confirm the fitness of the model for the prediction of the values of response variables. Here, the predictor variable is the channel, while the response variables are the tags of the tagging system.

The variables which show a pattern of unusually higher frequency contribute to the realization of all three metafunctional meanings in the construction of the tourist experience and of a relationship with the viewers. In particular:

- The presence of living beings, processes of actions and reactions, specific weather conditions and settings as well as activities seem to have a high frequency;

- The frequency of variables such as *gaze*, *shot* and *angle* vary;
- The frequency of use of *Rule of Thirds*, including *negative space*, as well as *leading lines* and other compositional strategies vary.

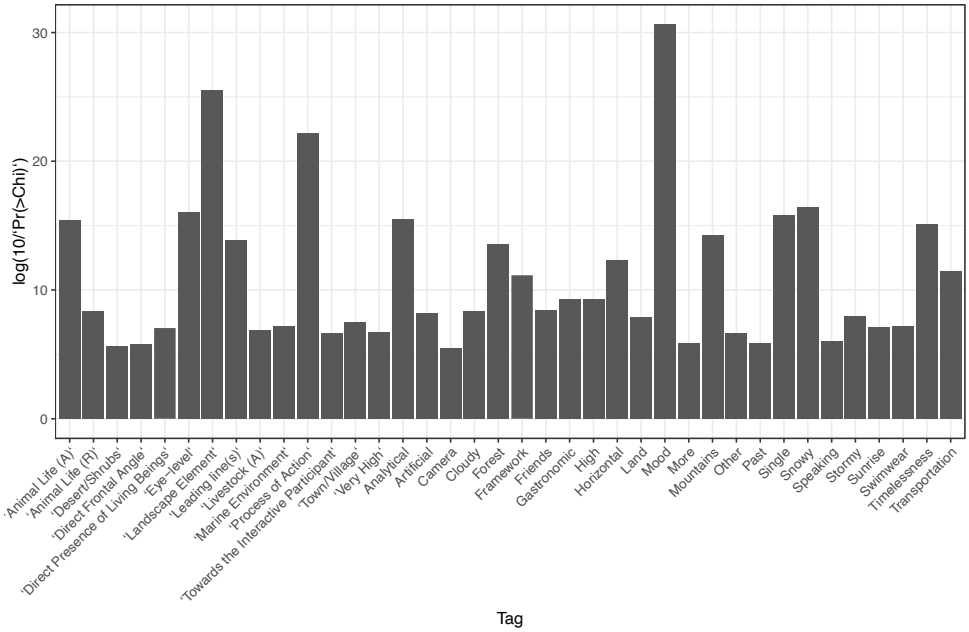


Figure 6.2.26: Bar chart with contributions of variables with an unexpectedly high frequency deviating from the mean and an alpha score > 0.8

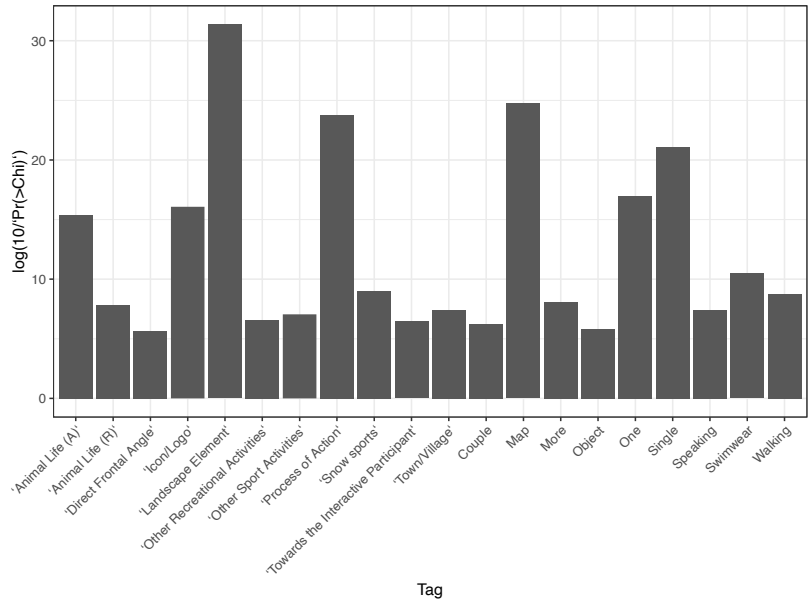


Figure 6.2.27: Bar chart with contributions of variables with an unexpectedly high frequency deviating from the mean and an alpha score > 0.6.

Macro-category (metafunction)	Variables (tags)	Statistical significant values (Chi-square with alpha reliability score > 0.6)	Statistical significant values (Chi-square with alpha reliability score > 0.8)
Ideational metafunction	Direct Presence of Living Beings	0.00878	–
	Process of Action	0.00000	0.00000
	Animal Life (A)	0.00202	0.00202
	Livestock (A)	0.01028	0.00384
	Animal Life (R)	0.00238	–
	Mood	0.00000	–
	Sunrise	0.00842	–
	Cloudy	0.00233	–
	Stormy	0.00358	–
	Snowy	0.00072	–
	Desert/Shrubs	0.00000	–
	Mountains	0.00627	–
	Forest	0.01327	–
	Marine Environment	0.00778	–
	Artificial	0.00271	–
	Town/Village	0.00557	0.00595
	Map	–	0.00000
	Icon/Logo	–	0.00104
	Gastronomic	0.00093	–
	Analytical	0.00181	–
	Snow Sports	–	0.00120
	Other Sport Activities	–	0.00868
	Other Recreational Activities	–	0.01352
	Transportation	0.00010	–
	Speaking	0.02371	0.00606
	Walking	–	0.00158
Interpersonal metafunction	Towards the Interactive Participant	0.01301	0.01575
	Eye-level	0.00105	–
	High	0.00092	–
	Very High	0.01213	–
	Direct Frontal Angle	0.03053	0.03417
Textual metafunction	Horizontal	0.04340	–
	Land	0.00389	–
	Other	0.01337	–
	Leading Line(s)	0.00989	–
	One	–	0.00041
	More	0.02882	0.00304
	Framework	0.00014	–
	Landscape Element	0.00000	0.00000
	Object	–	0.02922
	Camera	0.04341	–
	Swimwear	0.00756	0.00028
	Past	0.02746	–
	Timeless	0.00277	–
	Single	0.00132	0.00000
	Couple	–	0.01957

	Friends	0.00221	–

Table 6.2.2: P-value for each of the variables with a statistically significant variance across channel corpora

The calculation of a contingency table shed light on the relationship between the variables with unexpectedly higher frequency according to channel metadata. As can be seen from Figures 6.2.28-6.2.30, the Pearson residuals show which variables occur in an unexpected higher frequency (identified by the color *blue*) or lower frequency (color *red*). In particular, Figures 6.2.28 and 6.2.29 report the associations between the channels and the residuals of the values pertaining to the first and second metafunction, whereas an overview of the variables of the whole tagging system is provided in Figure 6.2.30.
In relation to these results, we may argue the following:

- Website images seem to include instances of 1) action processes; 2) artificial, analytical and gastronomic settings; 3) close and medium shots; 4) objective images; 5) representations of friends and couples with a higher probability;
- Instagram images seem to correlate with 1) reaction processes (in particular non-transactional processes); 2) natural settings; 3) long shots and very high angles; 4) landscape elements, leading lines and 5) single social tropes.

In conclusion, the existence of patterns of variance in the construction of the promotional, visual message that depend on the channel of dissemination is confirmed. Indeed, the Instagram channel seems to be the medium that is leveraged by discourse specialists to design untamed, naturalistic and idyllic representations of the tourist destination in which human beings, when present, are involved in dehumanized and static processes of *sensing, feeling* and *perceiving* of the wonders of the nature. The presence of long shots and high angles highlights the importance of stimulating imagination and the establishment of an impersonal relationship with the viewer, who identifies with the subjects and feels in a position of power, control and consumption of the commodified experience. Intimate relationships are shaped with wildlife through close shots and demand gazes, with the

objective of conveying an aura of exclusivity and extra-ordinariness to the potential customer.

Website images, conversely, seem to shape an experience in which different activities and aspects of the destination are portrayed, including merely informative content such as maps or diagrams (*objective images)*. Humans involved in collective action processes define the narrative and attempt to show concretely what can be actually *done* when visiting a new place. This might be related to the fact that websites are usually the channel which tourists rely on when looking for information and advice on how to travel to and visit a destination, including purchasing opportunities; indeed, individuals who land on a destination's website have already an *interest* in visiting a *specific* destination, which may have been generated by different factors, including social media's awareness-building and visibility activity. Instagram's role, on the other hand, seems to raise awareness of the existence of particular tourist experiences which may satisfy the needs of the postmodern tourist user and gratify him or her instantly. This includes the desire to enjoy passively and control effortlessly spectacular and extra-ordinary views of nonindustrialized and pure environments, as a reward and escape from the chaotic and capitalist-based, and to establish an emotional, human connection with the non-human, i.e. the wildlife.

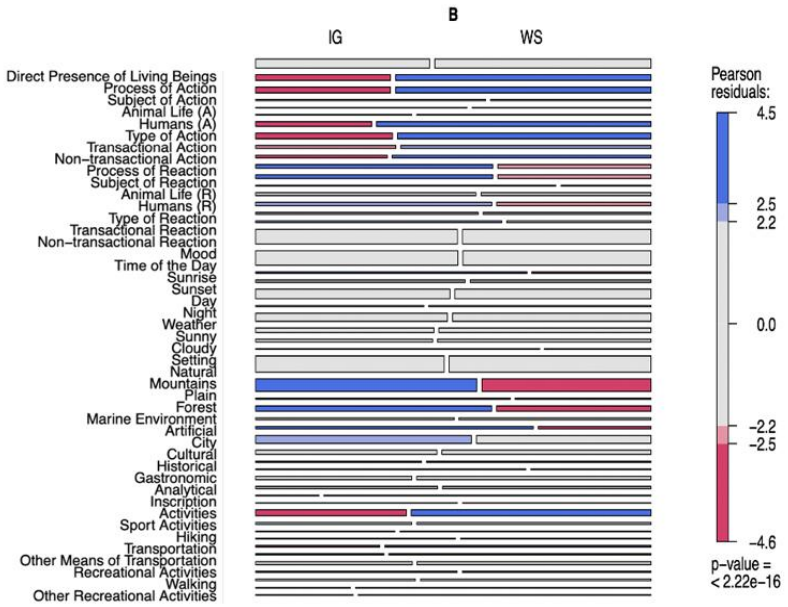


Figure 6.2.28: Chi-square reporting the associations between the channels and the residuals of the values pertaining to the first metafunction

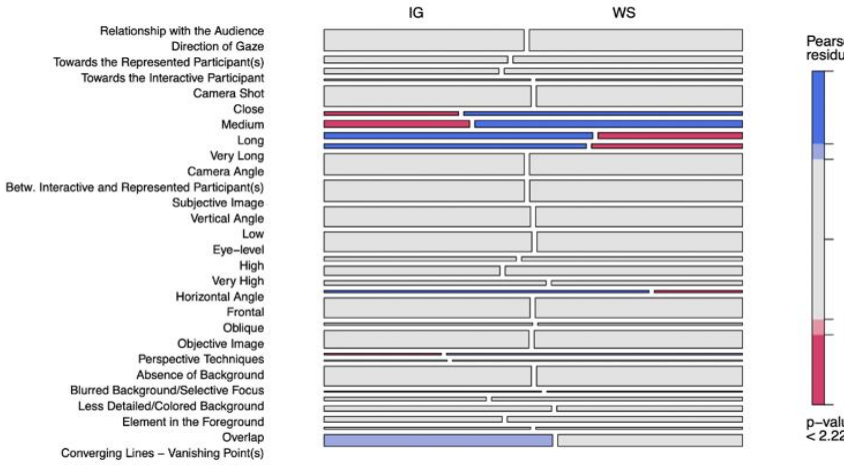


Figure 6.2.29: Chi-square reporting the associations between the channels and the residuals of the values pertaining to the second metafunction

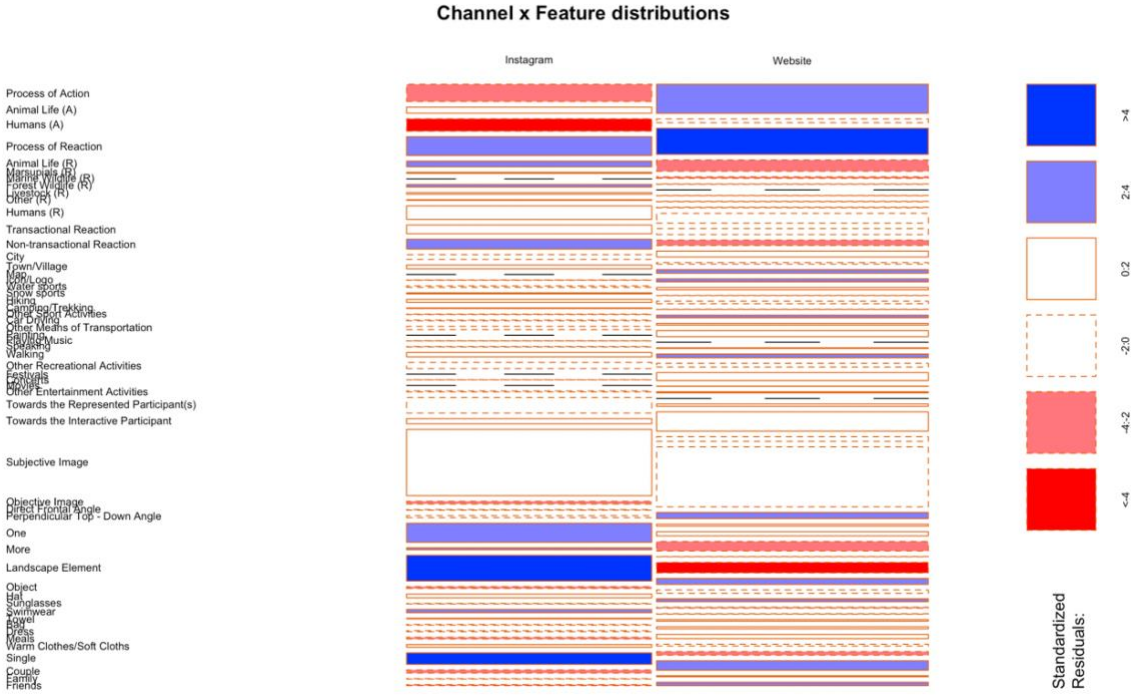


Figure 6.2.30: Chi-square reporting the associations between the channels and the residuals of the values pertaining to all three metafunctions and the fourth macro-category (tourism strategies)

6.2.5 Conclusions

This section attempted to show, by means of data-driven and empirical, bottom-up as well as top-down approaches, the existence of dimensions of variance that define different patterns of occurrences and co-occurrences of variables according to channel. in other words, it confirmed the presence of systematic, visual choices in the construction of ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning that vary depending on the channel of dissemination of the visual message. This suggests that images are designed intentionally to play a different function and achieve particular aims in the persuasive narratives of multimodal tourism discourse.

The next section will explore the actual realization of the most significant variables and shed light on the potential reasons behind such effective decisions.

The systematic annotation and both statistical and empirical detection of varying co-patternings of *materialities* across channels indicated the presence of similar and different social uses of semiotic resources at the metafunctional level, which create different social practices and *gazes* at the tourist experience. Indeed, this was proved to be statistically related to the medium of dissemination. It remains to explore whether such connection is due possibly to each digital channel's main communicative aim and its audience's sociological traits as well as postmodern needs and behavior.
An overview of the main visual differences across channels at the metafunctional level is provided in Table 7.1.

Mixed methods and empirical process	**Instagram (imagery)**	**Website (imagery)**
Experiential metafunction - FIELD * Transitivity: Processes, Participants, Settings, Activities	❖ Rare presence of humans ❖ Non-transactional Reactions (humans and animals); Reactions ❖ Humans and wildlife as Sensers ❖ Wildlife, nature as Phenomena ❖ Evocative, emotive, imaginative lexis, related to nature, history; cuisine, culture, trips, the visual	❖ Frequent presence of humans ❖ Transactional Actions; Reactions ❖ Humans as Actors; Wildlife as Actors ❖ Cultural, historical, gastronomic, artistic, artificial, natural entities as Phenomena ❖ Trip/guides; accommodation; food and beverage; history, nature, culture and art; food; family; music
Interpersonal metafunction - TENOR * Type of gaze, shot and angle	❖ Offer gaze with natural entities and destinations ❖ Demand gaze with wildlife ❖ Long and high shots of natural settings (dominance, control, power, exclusivity) ❖ Close shots of wildlife (exclusive contact with humanized, tamed and commodified wilderness) ❖ Rear views of humans ❖ Subjective (partial-view) angles; when objective: top-down to avoid distortions and portray aesthetic perfection (more symbolic)	❖ Offer gaze with cultural, artificial, historical, gastronomic, artistic and natural entities ❖ Demand gaze with humans ❖ Long and high shots of various settings (dominance, control, power, exclusivity) ❖ Close and medium shots of humans ❖ Subjective angles ❖ Objective angles: logos and maps (more conceptual images)
Textual metafunction - MODE * Space composition and distribution * Tourism tropes and gazes	❖ Rule of Thirds and natural Negative Space ❖ Human-nature polarization ❖ Visual flow ❖ Nature salience (visual weight) ❖ Indexical reference (e.g. backpack, dress, hat, camping equipment, swimwear, sunglasses, meals, towel)	❖ Centric, Polarization, Rule of thirds ❖ Human and Object salience (sometimes natural) ❖ Indexical reference (e.g. luggage, camera, backpack, cap, meals)
Visual artifact (sociological reasons, i.e. postmodern needs and semiotic shift)	**Inter-semiotic cohesion**	**Inter-semiotic cohesion**
	Inter-channel divergence	

Table 7.1: Key visual features or main lexicogrammatical resources of tourism, digital communication

After a preliminary introduction of the nature and relevance of empirical findings to their sociological interpretation in their context of use, sections 7.2-7-4 analyze the construction of different gazes both at the ideational, interpersonal and textual level. The findings presented in this chapter are followed by the quantitative and qualitative analysis of language corpora and compared at an intrasemiotic and intersemiotic level in the conclusions, in order to shed light on how discourse specialists systematically

combine linguistic resources with photography to design particular representations of the travel experience and manipulate their perception for profit purposes.

7.1 From empirical annotation and statistical measurement to sociosemiotic analysis: the sociological detection and relevance of the *gaze* in its context of use

While the data-driven process of annotation described in Chapter Five enabled the quantification and analysis of variables representing visual strategies across channels, the theory-driven development of a SFL-based comparative table and tagging system was crucial to the design of a methodological framework that could support an empirical confirmation or rejection of previously established theoretical assumptions and hypotheses, and which could lead to novel understandings of contemporary social and semiotic phenomena (Bateman et al. 2017). In particular, the testing, adaptation and interpretation of theoretical underpinnings in emerging contexts that affect individuals' perception, emotions, and thoughts on a daily basis may shed light on the specific function of particular communicative resources and their meanings in their actual context of use. This procedure, therefore, may become a powerful tool to understand, from a sociological perspective, semiotic trends that are increasingly included in the process of designing particular views of events, which become partial framings for the profit of others in the current post-Fordist era of hyper-consumption. In this regard, Chapter Two to Four supported us in the exploration of the interconnections between technological, ideological, economic and sociological shifts for the creation of new semiotic trends in the new media. Indeed, their detection may help provide reliable and novel insights into current expressions of persuasion that are being developed as a response to or activation of specific, social needs that characterize the postmodern individual in the era of social media. The analyses carried out in the next chapters, therefore, seek to demonstrate the existence of highly persuasive strategies that vary according to channel of dissemination of the multimodal, promotional message; this type of knowledge and *literacy* may give individuals the opportunity to shape actively counternarratives to resist and potentially reverse capitalist ideology in the 21st century.

Eventually, an informed and comprehensive understanding of contemporary legitimation strategies of tourism e-discourse through the systematic analysis of

corpora of images and qualitative investigation may also shed light on new patterns of ideological meaning that construct a particular view, or *gaze*, at the travel experience, and convey positive attitudes towards it for profit purposes.

The statistical investigation revealed specifically the promotion of different gazes across digital channels. While both digital channels seem to construct engaging communication by exploiting sociological approaches that play on prospective tourists' desire for exclusivity and expectations – such as the desire for the unspoilt, the exclusive and the authentic – Instagram favors the construction of a *romantic gaze of visual and emotive, passive consumption that* appeals to the extraordinary. Here, *extraordinary* experience is constructed by representing the solitary fruition of natural destinations, away from social and industrialized, everyday life which offers mass-targeted, collective experiences. Its focus, therefore, is on the construction of an alternative reality which legitimates both an escape into the charming existence of extra-ordinary tourist experiences and the capitalistic ordinary, its time constraints and schedules (Taverniers 2003; Plant 1992, 5-6; Debord 2014, 17; Urry and Larsen 2011; Dann 1996). In this regard, Urry and Larsen provide concrete examples of how visual representations may shape the romantic gaze of the postmodern traveler (2011, 108-113). According to them, images of countryside evoke a bucolic vision of a peaceful and comforting past, which secures the authenticity and non-ephemeral nature of heritage traditions as well as the extraordinariness of a peaceful, rustic, and remote paradise, as opposed to modern, industrialized societies, in which most actions are collective and planned (Urry and Larsen 2011, 108-109). Conversely, the presence of human subjects demystifies the apparent eternity of time, which is represented by a natural, unchanged natural environment (Garrod 2009, 355).

As was discussed in Chapter Four, the development of the Romantic movement in the early 19th century generated a shift in values that correlated with an increasing emphasis upon intensity of *emotions* and *sensations*, thus towards a state of feeling and *perceiving, seeing, being* rather than doing (Gotti et al. 2017; Urry and Larsen 2011, 36). The popularity of the romantic and solitary appraisal of nature in solitude, in particular, was due to the fact that resorts and places by the beach soon became overcrowded during holiday time; consequently, the *collective* gaze of 1) tourists who wished to participate in organized, collective and effortless activities in sumptuous environments, with the support and comfort of an array of amenities became the new standard. Indeed, the

accessibility of public transport, including air travel and cruise transfer as well as of affordable accommodation options made holiday experiences less exclusive, less solitary, and brought industrial and social aspects of the *ordinary,* capitalist life into holiday time (Urry and Larsen 2011, 40-46).

The next sections will show how website communication still relies on the construction of a *collective* gaze, compared to Instagram's *romantic* gaze, which is designed to attract the attention postmodern users of social media in a digital environment pervaded by aesthetically appealing and evaluative digital content on passive, yet gratifying visual pre-consumption of extra-ordinary travel experiences (Manovich 2017).

7.2 Discussion of the results related to the variables of the first macro-category

The findings presented in Chapter Six confirm a strong implementation of visual tourism strategies on the Instagram and official website channels of the three companies being studied. On the one hand, in fact, tourism companies seem to describe the physical world through the visual depiction of vast, natural lands with a low focus on activities and a greater focus on reaction processes; on the other hand, there is an attention to reproduce various types of sites with a focus on action processes. Both these sets of visual practices satisfy the human need for exploration of new places and for adventure, eventually pushing the viewer to purchase a travel experience.

7.2.1 Similarities among channels

What is common in both Instagram and website findings is the tendency to focus on the representation of *authenticity* and *strangerhood* tropes (recurrent tourism themes) to influence the viewer (Dann 1996; Francesconi 2014). The strong predilection, on all channels and on the part of all agencies, for natural, unspoilt and sunny landscapes confirms in fact the importance of attracting the audience by showing what is pure, unique and different from everyday reality, but which is at the same time accessible with a click (Gotti et al 2017; Cohen 1988). Tourism discourse has often focused on shaping the expectations and the imagination of the prospective clients through visual narratives, pushing them to desire a staged – but felt as authentic – natural representation of reality (Urry and Larsen 2011). This phenomenon is called the tourist gaze, which also describes people as more sensitive to *scapes* than to everyday moments

(Urry 1990). Overly personalized pictures, therefore, do not stimulate imagination, as human subjects demystify the apparent eternity of time represented by natural landscapes (Garrod 2009, 355). Indeed, representations of natural landscapes stimulate the creation of the expectations of the tourist concerning the travel experience, as they are created by the visual consumption of a product which is intangible by nature (Urry and Larsen 2011). In particular, isolated and untamed natural settings shape the *romantic gaze* of the traveler, which is shaped by the presence of a wanderer or untouched landscapes (Urry and Larsen 2011, 19;69;73, Maci 2020). Images 7.1 and 7.2 are examples of typical natural representations of destinations, both on Instagram and the official website.



Image 7.1: Example of unspoilt, untamed natural landscape on Instagram (*Tourism Ireland*'s IG post)



Image 7.2: Example of unspoilt, untamed natural landscape on *Tourism Ireland*'s official website

The results also show that almost half of the images (49.3% on Instagram and 59.4% on the official websites) shared by these travel agencies on both channels are narrative representations, whereas the other half can be considered to be either conceptual symbolic (or attributive, in specific cases that are related to the type of shot and subject and will therefore be dealt with in the following sub-section) or analytical. A very low percentage (0.367% on Instagram and 9.93% on the website channel) of the images studied were analytical. The tourism pictures in the study, therefore, were either narrative or symbolic. Both channels use action processes and symbolic suggestive representations of a variety of landscapes (but, in particular, of natural representations), showing an attention to include both the performance of activities related to the trip experience, which symbolize the absence of constraints or time schedules, and the visual consumption of unspoilt and isolated natural environments, the wilderness of which has not been yet reached by human beings (Dann 1996, 51). These multimodal rhetorical devices are called, respectively, *denial of time* and *timelessness* tourism strategies of persuasion. The timelessness strategy, in particular, further stimulates the imagination for exotic or adventurous places, as it provides an idyllic and untouched representation of natural destinations which is completely different from the tourist's monotonous or busy, everyday life. The latter is in fact often constrained by time and work schedules in an industrialized and polluted area. An example of image denoting *timelessness* is provided below (Image 7.3), whereas the strategy *denial of time* occurs in Image 7.4.

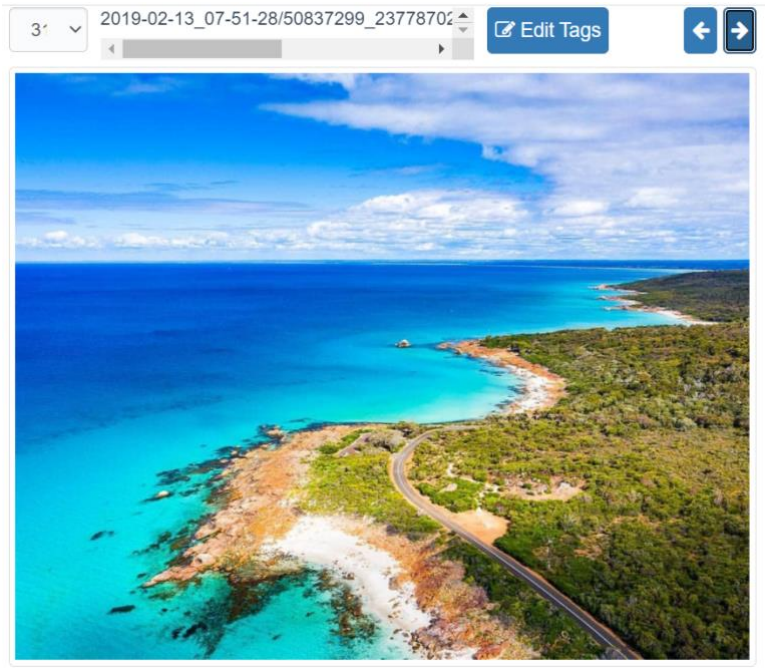


Image 7.3: Example of idyllic natural landscape on Instagram (*Tourism Western Australia*'s IG post)



Image 7.4: Example of activities without time constraints or schedules on *Tourism Western Australia*'s official website

Action and reaction processes are present in a large number of images, both on Instagram and the website (24.2% and 26.6% on Instagram, and 44.3%, 16.6% on the website, respectively). While the previous paragraph focused on the circumstances of actions/reactions (and also of the absence of a specific subject, e.g. in symbolic suggestive images), the focus here is on narrative representations in particular, and

therefore on processes and subjects, which are the main variables that allowed for the determination of how tourism discourse tends to realize the first metafunction (Francesconi 2014, 42). The ideational metafunction concerns the paradigmatic choice and the syntagmatic construction of the elements that build a certain representation of the world (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 30), and it can be realized, according to the "grammar" of visual design introduced by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), through either narrative or conceptual representations (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 48-62). Here, reaction processes do not vary to a statistically significant extent in either channel, even though they seem to play a bigger role in the Instagram images (26.6%, as opposed to 16.6%). Transactional actions on the website, i.e. actions that feature the object of the action process (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 63-64), even if they do not differ statistically in a significant way from the ones on Instagram, occur more frequently. This may simply be the result of the fact that website images feature more action processes. Generally speaking, participant representation in such processes can be deployed as a strategy of inclusion and identification in tourism marketing (Francesconi 2014, 82). In transactional actions, both the *Actor* and the *Goal* are present; in this study, however, the Goal is often represented by the depiction of a destination, which may not only be natural and therefore related to an exotic marine environment, inhospitable mountains or idyllic plains, but also a cultural or historical site (respectively 17.7% and 14.7% on Instagram; 22.9% and 12.7% on the website). The combination of natural settings with the presence of human beings, in particular, has been proved to have an emotional and behavioral impact on viewer destination perception (Salim et al. 2014). The numerous instances on both channels of settings related to cultural and in particular historical dimensions, on the other hand, are related to the tourism narrative of praising the traditional, typical aspects of a destination, underlining the destination's historical and gastronomic uniqueness and, consequently, enhancing the positive image and the viewer's curiosity towards these elements and satisfaction in visualizing them (Nekic 2015). For example, Image 7.6 depicts a group of people attending a concert hosted in the surroundings of a famous landmark (Parliament Hill, Ottawa, Ontario). Transactional reactions, similarly, feature the "goal" of the reaction process, which is called *Phenomenon* (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 63-67), and serve the purpose of directing the eye of the viewer towards the object of observation and evoke a similar reaction, thus inviting the viewer to join the

act of contemplation (Francesconi 2014). Image 7.5, for example, portrays a young woman enjoying an untamed, unspoilt natural landscape from a privileged point of view. She is in fact sitting on a boat, in the middle of a lake, and is staring with contemplation at the surrounding forest and mountainous environment.

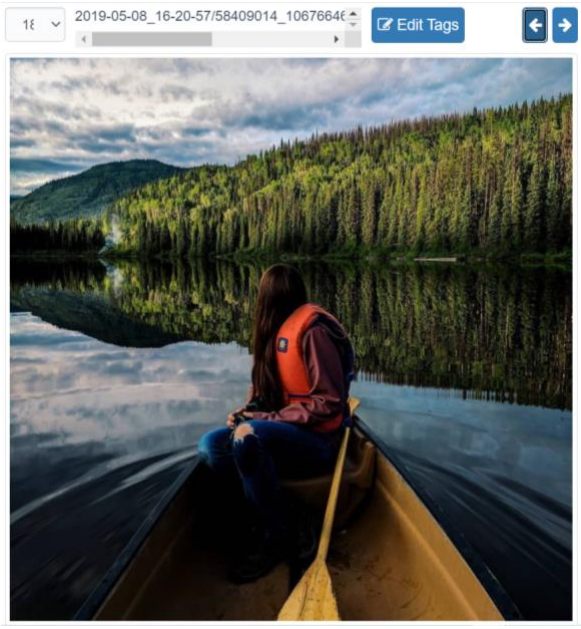


Image 7.5: Example of a transactional reaction process on Instagram (*Destination Canada*'s IG post[1])



Image 7.6: Example of a transactional action on *Destination Canada*'s official website

[1] For the purpose of clarity and due to copyright policies, the Instagram account *Explore Canada* (@explorecanada) is referred to as *Destination Canada*, the owner of the account and the official name of the travel board as well as website domain. The same applies to *Tourism Western Australia* (@westernaustralia) and *Tourism Ireland* (@tourismireland). More information on the travel boards, alongside links to the copyright policies, is provided in Chapter Five.

It could be said at this point that tourism discourse has an intrinsic rhetorical nature. Like every discourse, tourism discourse is a social practice developed by a discourse community that shapes and proposes a constructed representation of reality for a specific purpose (Maci 2020, 7). Within a social constructivist or relativist view, tourism discourse has provided its own "version" of reality which exploits rhetorical devices such as *authenticity, strangerhood, denial of time, timelessness* strategies to visually represent an ideal of naturalness, wilderness, adventurous or antique, culturally typical (Burr 2015, 26; 93; Berger 1972, 139). These representations in persuasive narratives are not only held to be true and realistic, but they are also promoted as the solution to one's problems in his or her everyday life, thus assuming that people do not feel fulfilled and realized in a capitalist and profit-oriented society and that they can escape their reality to become happy. This rhetoric turns out to be effective as customers are inherently convinced that they are unable to change the "reality" and the society they live in (Burr 2015 137, 222). Indeed, prospective customers are told – through discourse realizations such as images, in this case, but also texts – that they are entitled to and need to evade the everyday reality as a reward, as if they were enabled to justify the "Foucauldian" subject position of choosing to take a holiday and leave their everyday life, along with its duties and constraints (Burr 2015, 126). This apparent freedom of choice is made evident also through the decision, in particular on Instagram, to prefer reaction processes rather than action processes. The reactions processes enacted by the subjects of the photograph, in fact, might symbolize the passivity of the viewers who identify with them (Berger 1972, 45-54; 59-62); it seems then that viewers are included in a reality where the nature and "the other" prevail and there is no other choice than to submit and fall into contemplation. All publicity is regarded as "eventless" (Berger 1972, 153). People could therefore be unconsciously led to believe that their only choice is to take a holiday. This discourse is typical of postmodern societies and a post-structuralist thinking, which rejects all the norms and denies the "separation of the aesthetic from the social", making also pleasure and leisure an accessible activity and right (Urry and Larsen 2011, 98-99; 116; Berger 1972, 132).

This available subject position in tourism discourse, therefore, come with its own representation of the world and its own set of expectations, possibilities and justifications (Berger 1972, 129). It shapes the "gaze" of the tourist and creates the need and right to experience a vacation; at the same time, however, it suggests this

view as the only solution, without making people aware of the fact that this rhetoric is created by and for the advertising discourse community, which wants to generate profit and perpetuate a capitalist society (Berger 1972, 154), and which does not really care about solving other people's problems. Instead, customers are made even more unhappy because they then find themselves in the same situation (Verstegaard and Schroder 1990).

7.2.2 Dissimilarities among channels

The visual strategies adopted by the agencies according to channel, however, vary with regard to certain variables. Through the statistical testing and both the visual representation and discussion of the findings which will be provided in this sub-section, it will be possible to see how the two media work in a different way when choosing the representation strategies of destinations. In particular, it will be demonstrated how photographs on official websites often appear less aesthetically evocative when compared to Instagram. This will then lead to the confirmation of the second hypothesis and the identification of a visual narrative that seems to accompany and support the written text.

In the first macro-category we can assess a difference between the frequency of usage of action and reaction processes (even if the latter was not statistically significant in this study) and in the consequent representation of a variety of activities and other circumstances or representations as well. In fact, website images feature more human subjects involved in action processes (39.7% compared to 17% on Instagram), more activities (43.6%, compared to 27.9% on Instagram), more recreational activities such as social interchange (5.43% compared to 0.567% on Instagram) and more instances where means of transportation Image, such as car driving (11.5% compared to 5.4%). On Instagram, instead, photographs focus on the representation of reaction processes (26.6% compared to 16.6% on websites) and non-transactional reactions in particular (14.4% compared to 8.07%), and natural, symbolic suggestive landscapes with particular mood conditions (95.8% compared to 83.3%, 27.4% of sunrises, sunsets compared to 17.7% on websites). This tendency might symbolize an attention to the social and tourist tropes of collective, family and tourist gazes as opposed to the romantic, off-the-beaten track "wanderer" gaze of contemplation towards an undefined entity (Urry and Larsen 2011 19,69, 73; Maci 2020), and a focus on maps,

activities, gastronomic specialties. This was in fact attested by higher occurrences of analytical and gastronomic settings (9.93% and 8.63%). Tourist and collective gazes, in particular, symbolize a condition of comfort and social exchange during a journey which is often mass-tailored. (Urry and Larsen 2011 108, 202). Where the tourist gaze as a *general concept* is the sum of the expectations regarding the travel experienced shaped by the tourism organizations, and is usually realized both through the visual depiction of the travel destination or particular sites, aspects or activities which are considered "out of the ordinary" (Urry and Larsen 2011, 4) and therefore attractive, the collective tourist gaze denotes a typically "tourist" situation. The latter is in fact usually characterized – both visually and linguistically – by the depiction or description of package holidays and guided tours, which suggest a shared and predefined fruition of travel experiences. As a matter of fact, these experiences are usually constrained by time and repeated each time by a different group of tourists. Additionally, the collective gaze is symbolized by a staged representation of social intimacy or "group bonding" (Urry and Larsen 2011, 211), which is typical not only of family or group photographs, but also of tourist visits to famous cultural sites. The concrete realization of a collective tourist gaze is provided in Image 7.7. Here, in fact, a group of tourists is taking photographs of a cultural site during a boat trip. The tourist organizations on websites, therefore, seem to still consider a "staged intimacy", which is shared by the "mass" of tourists, as a persuasive strategy to induce the viewer to purchase a similar experience.

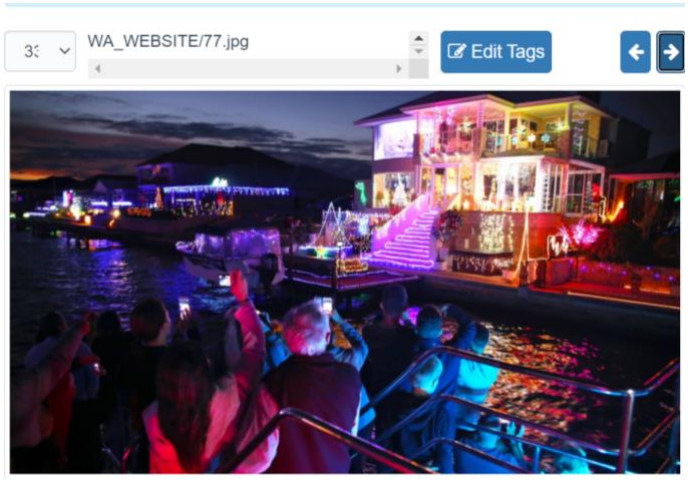


Image 7.7: Example of the collective (tourist) gaze on *Tourism Western Australia*'s official website

Website images seem, therefore, to be more indexical and less evocative, as they focus on *what to do* and on the typical mass tourist and comfortable fruition of the travel experience, rather than on *how to imagine and be inspired*, communicated by the natural wilderness in which one is immersed in solitude. This is confirmed also by the statistically higher presence of mood conditions – that create the atmosphere – on Instagram images rather than on the website ones. Photographs on official websites, therefore, seem to support the written text, with no need to be *always* aesthetically evocative. Instead, they might need to iconically support the pieces of information provided. Many website pictures are in fact more "reachable", reproducible and representative of everyday moments and therefore are not produced to prompt, evoke imagination in the same way social media pictures do, and this will be clearer after the analysis of the variables pertaining to the other four macro-categories. A preliminary and significative example of an everyday, apparently spontaneous activity, however, is offered in Image 7.8. The subjects of the picture, in fact, are simply enjoying a meal together in the city centre.



Image 7.8: Example of everyday activities on *Tourism Ireland*'s official website

Additionally, reactions and in particular non-transactional reactions play a major role on Instagram. The importance of passive contemplation and, sometimes, of the absence of the phenomenon in natural settings is a marketing strategy that "can become a source of representational manipulation" (68). The recipient of the visual message, in fact, can experience an increasing desire to feel like the *Reacter* in the picture, and see what is hidden from the viewer of the photograph. Images 7.9 and 7.10 are both taken from the Instagram channel and heavily rely on the marketing

strategy abovementioned; the subjects of the pictures, which are two young women, are standing still in an act of contemplation directed towards a portion of the natural environment which is not caught by the camera, thus inviting the viewer to wonder – and desire – what these subjects are experiencing and looking at.





Image 7.9 and 10: Examples of a non-transactional reaction process on Instagram (*Tourism Ireland* and *Tourism Western Australia*'s posts)

The attention paid to the visual with its staged aesthetics, to marketing strategies and to the *being*, *feeling, seeing* rather than *doing* have all been demonstrated to be specific of Instagram, and this (unconsciously) passive experience perfectly aligns with the representation of an aesthetically pleasant and staged reality which is promoted as a "good", perfect and real vacation, and which is said to be the solution to every problem (Berger 1972, 153). Manovich in particular, attests that Instagram is the "most pure visual and medium" (Manovich 2017, 12), in which aesthetic workers propose aesthetic representations of the products that will determine its success, visibility and purchase. Aesthetic is therefore considered the "key property of commercial goods and services" (Manovich 2017, 118). Instagrammers, both in the representation of personal experience and in the commodification of experiences for others, aim to present a lifestyle of happiness, perfection, experience, and being, rather than doing (Manovich

2017, 117, 125-128), in order to attract the attention of their users and increase the visibility of their content. Hence, the image and its aesthetics on Instagram are the perfect tool to attract an increasing number of viewers and convey positive associations with the destination by prompting imagination, feelings, desire, and therefore the pre-consumption of the travel experience. Viewers are also unconsciously drawn to desire to be part of this community and its aesthetically perfect representation of reality, which apparently makes everyone happy and satisfied, realized in their life (Berger 1972, 83-90, 106, 139, 143). By this mechanism alone thousands of users, then, might potentially be attracted to the company products on offer precisely because they will be tempted to look for further information, accessible through the Instagram link to the website.

This form of social control of tourists' behavior represents a strategy adopted by the tourism industry in order to channel and master customers' desires in every part of the decision-making process, starting from the initial request for information, and therefore to generate more profit (Dann 1996, 76-77). The advent of social media has led to the design of new rhetorical strategies to maximize the effort of generating profit in a social community which is characterized by a need to share aesthetically staged and feelings-evoking representations of experiences for personal or commercial gain (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014; Manovich 2017) and to increase the visibility of contents and brands. This new social environment has consequently allowed for the shaping of new, hybrid genres or sub-genres (Bhatia 1993 in Maci 2020, 8).

Additionally, on the Instagram platform, reactions of animals are prominent, as suggested by the Chi-square. As will also be shown in section 7.2, animals are often represented with close shots and a gaze towards the interactive participant (Image 7.11), in order to stimulate sympathy and a feeling of confrontation or equality, admiration, but not of identification or subjugation. Instagram posts, therefore, seem to focus on shaping and fostering attractiveness towards the wild and untamed fauna which one might encounter during the *travel* (rather than *tourist*) experience in an unspoilt, natural setting (Francesconi 2014; Maci 2020).

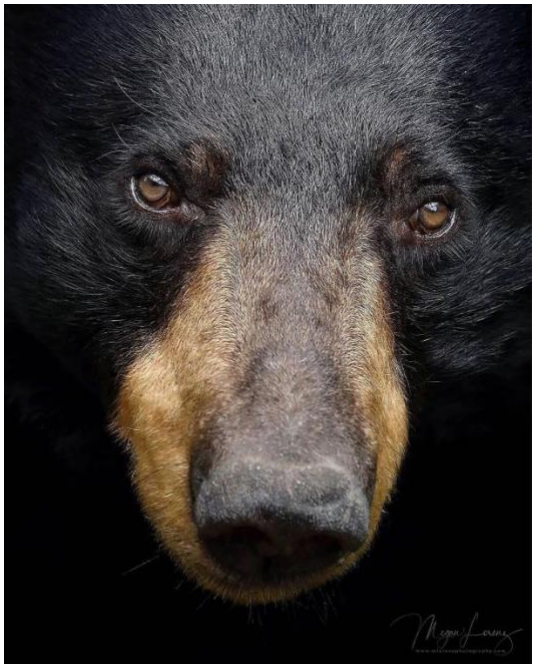


Image 7.11: Example of reaction on Destination Canada

The difference in the trends of usage of these strategies, across distribution media, then, revealed something about the different function, weight and nature of the visual mode from a promotional and communicative perspective. Tourism imagery in multimodal messages, in order to be persuasive and achieve their objective, needs to take into account the usage and the scope of the medium where the multimodal artefact is distributed. Social media such as Instagram differ from other online platforms such as the official websites. They operate in different ways and at different stages by hosting an extensive variety of content and interactions which are directed at users who have not yet "developed" any purchase intention (Shuqair and Cragg 2017). As a consequence, companies need to attract the attention of their users and increase the visibility of their content for the audience through eye-catching and evoking visual representations, which also create an intimate relationship with wild animals, before proposing actual information about the products offered. Tourist imagery on the website, on the other hand, is produced for an audience which is already interested in the products offered by the organization and which is looking for concrete information, not only inspiration. Website images tend to play a different role and have a different nature because of the different *rhetorical strategies* selected (Bateman 2014a, 250-256).

The quantitative analysis of tourism images from different channels led therefore to results which revealed variances in the patterns of strategy use and consequently the design of a different multimodal/visual genre *tourism photography* (or *multimodal artefact*) *on Instagram*, when compared to visual messages on tourist websites. The current data-driven findings suggest the existence of different types of promotional visual messages that are shaped according to the aim and the audience, i.e. through specific rhetorical strategies.

7.3 Discussion of the results related to the variables of the second macro-category

This section aims to discuss the findings from the statistical analysis of the second macro-category of variables (*Relationship with the Audience)*. The objective is to find both similarities and differences in the degree of usage of specific strategies and to corroborate both the hypothesis of similarity and dissimilarity across channels. In order to shed light and better represent the similarities and differences according to channel, the discussion section will compare the channel corpora with exemplary images taken from all the agencies indistinctly, therefore without taking into consideration each time the internal sub-division per tourism agency.

This section will also link the results from section three to the results of section two, in order to provide a more detailed and faithful representation of the meaning of tourist images. This will be achieved by connecting the first metafunction, i.e. the ideational and the *Representation of Reality* macro-category to the second one, the interpersonal, which contributes to the shaping of a particular relationship with the recipient of the visual and multimodal message. Finally, this section will try to demonstrate how similar correlations between variables, which are included in both macro-categories, can design a different visual product, as the frequency rate of occurrences of these variable – and therefore of their co-occurrences – varies.

7.3.1 Similarities among channels

7.3.1.1 Introduction

There is a considerable number of variables which do not vary significantly, and which consequently do not show any meaningful dissimilarities of frequency rate among the two main corpora. They occur across each one of the underlying categories of the interpersonal metafunction *Relationship with the Audience*. However, most of these variables are present in a low number of images (except for the variables *subjective image*, *horizontal (oblique) angle and eye-level angle)* and hence do not represent the main strategies of visual design in the tourism photographs under investigation. *Moreover,* the analysis will show how *eye-level angles* can embody different meanings according to channel.

7.3.1.2 Category of variables *gaze*

Within the category of variables *gaze*, both channels represent living beings enacting gaze strategies to a similar degree, apart from the variable *Gaze Towards the Interactive Participant*, which occurs, however, only in approximately 7 pictures out of 100 (7.4% on Instagram and 7.1% on the website), whereas *Gaze Towards the Represented Participant(s)* features in 21.9% of the cases on Instagram and 28.8% on the website. This means that approximately 70% of the images on Instagram, and 65% on the websites, do not feature either living beings engaged either in a transactional reaction directed at something inside the picture or in a non-transactional reaction towards the viewer of the photograph. What can be inferred from these numbers is that promotional discourse in these images does not seem to desire to engage the viewer in a direct relationship, which may "demand" a position of equality, admiration or identification but also subjugation (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 116-124). Promotional photographs on Instagram, as demonstrated in section two, do not focus on the presence of human beings and the consequent stimulation of identification. The producers of the visual message on Instagram do not seem to be interested in the construction of a personal, intimate relationship either, as their main aim is to boost imagination through the representation of idealistic, idyllic natural representations as a well-deserved reward and solution to the mass-society of tourists who want to "passively" escape their reality effortlessly. The presence of passive, non-transactional reactions further enhances this interpretation offered by the tourism industry which

wishes to further push the viewer into feeling like the posing, passive *object* of the picture (Kress and Van Leeuwen 119-124), who strategically and inartificially stares at a distant point outside the picture, inviting the customer to join him in an act of contemplation. Images 7.12 and 7.13, however, are an example of the very rare realization of the "demand" strategy and direct contact with the viewer. On the one hand, Instagram decided to stimulate sympathy and admiration in the viewer through the representation of a squirrel, which embodies the ideal of untamedness and naturalness. By choosing the squirrel, the tourist board is also attempting to anthropomorphize nature, thereby suggesting indirectly that nature wants to relate to the tourist. On the other hand, the website picture of a smiling young woman on a boat is the symbol of equality and gives the viewer the possibility to identify with the subject and her feelings, which are the results of the tourist experience.



Image 7.12: Example of image with the variable *Gaze Towards the Interactive Participant* on Instagram (Destination Canada)



Image 7.13: Example of image with the variable *Gaze Towards the Interactive Participant* on the official website (Tourism Ireland)

However, particularly in the website photographs, and maybe due to the higher presence of humans in their channel, there are many occurrences of subjects looking at other represented participants. This strategy in fact invites the viewer to focus on the "offer" of the tourism product (Francesconi 2014, 89-90). This tendency to *objectify* the represented participants in the picture might be said to align with the predilection, on the part of persuasive tourism discourse, to avoid the de-idealization of pictures with a greater focus on human subjects (which is however more prevalent on Instagram). The objective behind this practice might be the production of a visual

product which boosts a supposedly "tailored" imagination of possible events and feelings through *scapes* (Urry 1990), and which instills and idea of passive contemplation and admiration of the "perfect product". On the website, for example, people are often represented as *gazers* with a medium shot (see Image 7.14) in order to convey an idea of social but close distance, which is almost intimate, as the viewer can imagine himself as being part of the photograph. Or again, they are represented in action, moving towards a destination and engaging in some recreational or sport activities (Image 7.15). Both these pictures symbolize a rather comfortable view of the tourist experience, which may however be active.



Image 7.14: Example of image with the variable *Gaze Towards the Represented Participant(s)* on Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.15: Example of image with the variable *Gaze Towards the Represented Participant(s)* on Tourism Ireland's official website

On Instagram, on the other hand, subjects either merge with the wild nature, enacting therefore a *romantic* gaze and the identification with the "wanderer", or are part of a carefully constructed and enchanted reality. The tourist subject in Image 7.17 is captured by the beauty of the sunset and, despite the rainy weather conditions, seems to enjoy the experience and feel comfortable. The young woman is in fact wearing a nice gown and classic high heels. Picture 7.16, compared to the previous one (Image 7.15), seems to represent a forged merging with nature, while Image 7.17 represents a disguised one with the city, as the subject in the former case is not really experiencing the nearby "nature". Picture 7.17 may therefore promote a "romanticized" view of the city and might be an attempt, on the part of the Instagram channel, to provide a renewed version of the tourist gaze.



Image 7.16: Example of image with the variable *Gaze Towards the Represented Participant(s)* on Instagram (Tourism Ireland)



Image 7.17: Example of image with the variable *Gaze Towards the Represented Participant(s)* on Instagram (Destination Canada)

7.3.1.3 Category of variables *shot*

The category *Gaze* is closely connected to the variables *close* and *medium shots,* as these types of frames are usually chosen to design an intimate and personal, or *close* relationship with their audience.

This study partly follows Kress and van Leeuwen's definition of close shots as including only the head and the shoulder of the subject (2006, 124) but occurrences of this kind were, in fact, almost absent in the six corpora under investigation. The dimension of social distance was found to be more "stretched" towards the impersonal (see very long shots in the next paragraphs). A new definition of close shots was provided and can be found in the reading scheme in the Appendix (2). Close shots and their interconnected degree of close intimacy are mostly provided when there is a main subject, either animate or inanimate, that occupies more than a half or the whole picture or that, through strategies such as *selective focus* or *element in the foreground*, is chosen as the photographer's focus leading the viewer to focus on this subject as well. The strategy of using close shots usually serves the purpose of triggering sympathetic reactions or even feelings of devotion (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 125). In

promotional contexts, in particular, close and medium shots serve the purpose of providing a closer representation of the "product", which are within the viewer's reach, and therefore prompt the audience to "use" the product (128). On tourism official websites, for example, this strategy is realized through the representation of objects or subjects in gastronomic environments and from a close distance (see the glasses of whiskey in picture 7.18 or the smiling young cook in picture 7.19). The intimacy and attention attached to the gastronomic, cultural uniqueness of a destination is here enhanced by the use of a selective focus with a blurred background. Image 7.20, on the other hand, can be considered a close shot as the main participants are a human hand and a mobile phone, which seems to be a photograph of the surroundings. The degree of intimacy and identification is very high here and induces the longing and prospective "tourist" to desire to have a similar experience and know more about the historical events, architecture related to a foreign destination. This is achieved also by means of the tourist gaze and the denial of time strategy, both of which are symbolized by the presence of the camera (Dann 1996). The travel agency, in this case (Image 7.19), is also adopting an additional persuasive strategy, such as the view of the mobile phone reproducing an alternative view of the represented reality and the reconstruction of the ancient church: this gives an idea of the experience of "augmented reality" that can be lived only through the purchase of a travel package or tour that offers the opportunity to freely download that mobile phone application.



Image 7.18: Example of close shot on Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.19: Example of close shot on Destination Canada's official website

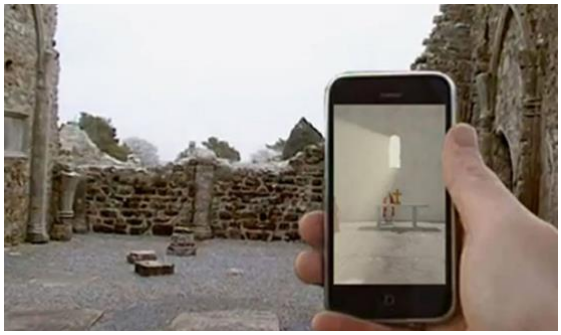


Image 7.20: Example of close shot on Tourism Ireland's official website

On the Instagram platform, as was shown in section 7.1, close shots are used to represent animals (Image 7.11), in order to stimulate sympathy and equality through close contact. Instagram posts, therefore, seem to favor the representation of an intimate relationship with the wild and untamed fauna which one might encounter during the *travel* (rather than *tourist*) experience in an unspoilt, natural setting (Francesconi 2014; Maci 2020). This relationship is shaped as attractive for its extra-ordinary nature, compared to website images that often represent socio-gastronomic settings with humans that are part of everyday life.

It should also be mentioned that close shots with no activity can be regarded as symbolic, attributive pictures in the Kressian grammar of visual design, where the "attribute" or "carrier" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 105) of the main underlying meaning, message of the picture is the object, person or animal which is made salient "by being placed in the foreground, through exaggerated size, through being represented in especially fine details or sharp focus, […] conspicuous colour or tone" (105) or posing. This is why close/medium shots in general, also to some extent of narrative reactional processes, could be considered symbolic, attributive processes with a symbolic value.

If one moves on to analyze further the similarities in the statistical variance across channel corpora of specific variables, it can be noticed that very long shots occur in 28.4% of the images on Instagram and in 14.6% of the ones on the website, suggesting, to some extent, a certain degree of variance (one value is in fact approximately the double of the other). The variable *Very Long Shot* was introduced in this study to define shots that are taken from a very distant perspective – usually aerial, therefore high or very high – and that do not include a dimension of intimacy. *Very long shots* are so

distant that human or animal life is not present or cannot be distinguished. Including this dimension is fundamental as it seems to be a particular feature characteristic of tourism discourse. *Very long shots* in fact enable an "objectification" of the land*scape* by providing a "complete" and privileged view of the destination, which is usually natural and aims to stimulate imagination and desire (Urry and Larsen 2011). The correspondence analysis presented in Chapter Six confirmed this. Indeed, long shots suggests a very impersonal relationship with the depicted participants and aim to convey a detached view of the individuals (or circumstances) which are represented as "other" and objects, and which are there for contemplation and desire (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 124-129). This rhetorical strategy works particularly well because it seems to provide a faithful and authentic representation both of reality and infinity, the perfect, eternal, vivid, beauty of a landscape – that in fact corresponds to the use of authenticity and timelessness strategies, together with color saturations, sharpness of focus and specific mood conditions. Authenticity and timelessness strategies, as mentioned in the analysis of the ideational metafunction, are adopted when the photographer provides an idyllic representation of a traditional natural, historical or gastronomic setting, with the objective of prompting imagination and desire to travel (Dann 1996). *Long shots* also enable the viewer to actually see a portrait of the vastness of a landscape and both the abundancy and juxtaposition of different landscapes and opposite color harmonies that co-occur as confirmed by the high number of occurrences of different settings presented in Chapter Six. At the same time, however, very long shots unconsciously provide a different view of the experience that the tourist or traveler is probably going to have. Some examples are provided in images 7.21-25.



Image 7.21: Example of long shot from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile



Image 7.22: Example of very long shot from Destination Canada's website

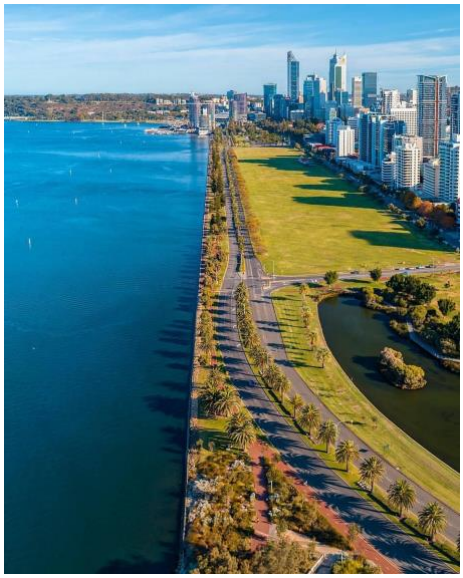


Image 7.23: Example of long shot from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.24: Example of long shot from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.25: Example of shot from Tourism Ireland's website

All of these images (except for Image 7.25) also feature a *high* or *very high shot* variables (which characterize more than 40% of the images on Instagram and 23% of the ones on website). There is also, however, a similar frequency rate of the variable *high shot* across the Instagram and website corpora. This suggests, therefore, the presence of a subjective attitude called "perspective" on the part of the photographer in the production of the picture and a certain degree of involvement in the "reproduction" of the physical world (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 129). The subjective choice of a horizontal and/or vertical angle with its converging lines defines the point from which the photographer takes the picture and influences the way the subjects and settings are perceived and interpreted by the viewer of the photograph.

7.3.1.4 Category of variables *angle* on Instagram

As mentioned in the analysis of the first macro-category *Representation of Reality*, tourism discourse heavily relies on a very subjective and *designed* representation of reality which suits its promotional interests. Another reason behind the high frequencies of subjective angles lies in the fact that it seems very difficult to produce a photograph of naturalistic settings (which have the highest frequency in the images of this study) with an objective attitude, by employing a direct frontal or frontal angle or a perpendicular top-down (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, 144). Nature, even more than human subjects, has more dimensions and only a close shot is able to reproduce one of them clearly and neutralize the perspective's distortions.

The subjective choice of a horizontal angle may define, on the one hand, the photographer's degree of involvement or detachment with the subject and the viewer of the photograph; the choice of a vertical angle might shape, on the other hand, a relationship of superiority, equality or inferiority with them (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006, 133-144). In particular, high angles convey an idea of superiority and supremacy over the represented subjects, which are often mainly natural settings, and which strategically confer the viewer with an *extra-ordinary* position of power over the destination and an illusionary idea or expectation of control, dominance and grasp of the vastness of the untamed nature or, as in Images 7.22-23, of a complex industrialized context (Urry 1990). The apparent reversal of the subject positions in the discourse – in which the human is in control and is enjoying a safe but extraordinary experience and nature is tamed and less dangerous, with the travel agencies' services which are

available to assist eager tourists - is strategically devised by promotional organizations to give the prospective customer a feeling of power and possibility to imagine a journey in an imaginary world, through the *tourist gaze*. This discourse positioning as the oppressor who exploits, subjugates something or someone else is also in line with Dann's *conflict* perspective, which is based on *S*aid's Orientialism (1978) (Dann 1996, 24). This rhetorical device focuses on the binary cultural opposition of the oppressor and the oppressed, the latter of which is usually domesticated and made less threatening. It is a type of strategy, which will be analyzed in more detail in the analysis of the fifth macro-category *Tourism Strategies*, which deals with specific cultural and social implications of tourism discourse. Image 7.26 provides an example of the conflict strategy. The subjects of the picture, in fact, are posing for the photographer with their typical Native American garments, and the photographer is taking advantage from their naivety to provide an ethnocentric, stereotypical view of a non-western culture.



Image 7.26: Example of an eye-level representation of the conflict perspective on Destination Canada's official website

The presence of eye-level angles, however, can add specific meanings to this type of image that may erase the negative implications deriving from a stereotypical, cultural representation. The eye-level angle in Image 7.26, for example, might unveil a willingness to construct an equal relationship between the viewer and the represented participants, with the objective of instilling cultural awareness and overcoming the

biased view. This strategy, therefore, may neutralize the *perspective* of superiority that many western cultures feel entitled to own when compared to other cultures.

Many images from these travel agencies feature an eye-level angle. Almost half of the images on the website corpora feature this variable (47.8%), as they represent more often human subjects, whereas the Instagram corpora include fewer instances (37.7%). This is confirmed by the fact that Instagram pictures focus more on natural, holistic representations of a physical, inhabited world. Images 7.27-29 are from Instagram and have been taken from an eye-level perspective in relation to the main subject, which is human. Many eye-level angles on Instagram, in particular, catch the represented participant from the back, as if they were designed to both reproduce a feeling of equal relationship, social distance and shift the attention to the surroundings or the Goal, the Phenomenon under observation (Image 7.28 and 7.29). Additionally, pictures with moving subjects provide an idea of spontaneous, authentic photographs (Image 7.27 and 7.29).



Image 7.27: Example of an eye-level angle from Destination Canada's Instagram profile



Image 7.28: Example of an eye-level angle from Destination Canada's Instagram profile



Image 7.29: Example of an eye-level angle from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile

7.3.1.5 Category of variables *angle* on the website

Other types of eye-level images can be found on the website of the three travel agencies (Images 7.30-32). Similarly, these images convey an idea of equal relationship and participation in the activity but portray a different tourist experience and set of expectations (or *gaze*). In particular, Images 7.30 and 7.31 show two different types of action processes and visual design, which construct a completely different reality of the tourist experience. In fact, Image 7.30 shows a couple enjoying a bike ride which is "off-the-beaten-track". The picture features a mixture of tourist and romantic gaze, providing, however, at the same time, an image of a high-quality and customized, adventurous experience. Image 7.31, on the other hand, offers a more realistic but unattractive representation of a typical mass-tourist experience with guided tours, thus embodying the collective gaze, which is in fact prevalent as a persuasive strategy on the website channel. The unattractiveness of the picture is enhanced by the absence of mood conditions or color saturations and harmonies. Finally, Image 7.32 is an example of the solitary, melancholic romantic gaze which is typical of Instagram, but which occurs in *Tourism Ireland*'s official website. In this picture, a young woman is represented from a very close and intimate distance that invites the viewer to join her and give him or her the impression of being there, contemplating the majesty of a

typical Irish landscape and mood from a position of power. It can, therefore, be argued that eye-level images convey different meanings according to the subjects and their type of processes, the surroundings and mood conditions, the shot from which they are taken and the position of the main subjects with which a position of equality is created. Given the fact that eye-level angles and human subjects occur more frequently on the website, it might be safe to say that the interest in shaping an equal, intimate relationship with the viewer and prospective customer is stronger on this type of medium than on Instagram. On the website, therefore, strategies of identification and shared human experience are still regarded as persuasive rhetorical devices; this might however derive from the fact that Image 7does not play a prominent and superior role there, but accompanies and iconically supports the written content, which might be considered to be the primary semiotic system due to the different communicative purpose and audience of this medium.



Image 7.30: Example of an eye-level angle from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.31: Example of an eye-level angle from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.32: Example of an eye-level angle from Tourism Ireland's official website

The feeling of intimacy and involvement of Images 7.27-29 can be conveyed also by their frontal angles. Frontal angles are types of horizontal angles where the plane in which the main subject is situated runs parallel to the plane in which the photographer stands, which means that the subject is in front of the photographer. When the two planes do not run parallel to each other and converge into a point inside or outside the image, the angle is considered to be oblique and symbolizes detachment (Kress and Van Leeuwen 133-140). However, the major presence of oblique angles in all the six sub-corpora (except for Images 7.12, 7.17, 7.20, 7.22, 7.26, 7.27, 7.29) might simply be due to the fact that human subjects and close shots of either humans, animals or objects do not often occur and that natural landscapes, by their nature, cannot be frontal. Oblique angles, on the other hand, are designed to boost the perception of depth and therefore reality. Specific depth strategies that occur similarly in all corpora are the *selective focus* (like in image 7.11, 7.12, 7.26), *the element in the foreground* (Image 7.20) and the less colored background (Image 7.13, 7.15, 7.29 and 7.30), which all aim to foster an authentic representation of a tridimensional reality – sometimes even augmented – or to guide the focus of the viewer towards a specific entity. However, all these perspective strategies do not occur very often and therefore do not faithfully represent the main trends of online tourism discourse. The most occurring strategy is the *Converging Lines*, which is dealt with in the next section for its statistically significant variance across channel corpora.

7.3.1.6 Conclusion

This section discussed the meaning of the visual strategies, or materialities (Bateman et al. 2017), which occur with similar frequency across the channel corpora. In particular, the variables *gaze towards the represented participant*, *close* and *long shots*, *eye-level* and *high angles* were shown to have not only frequency rates, but also meanings in common. The close shots, in particular, were designed to stimulate sympathy and an intimate relation with the subjects represented, whereas the *gaze towards the represented participant* indicated a tendency to objectify the subjects or surroundings that are part of the travel experience. This pattern was confirmed also by the presence of high and long shots of idyllic natural representations, which aim to stimulate the imagination of the viewer. Picture 7.30, for example, enhances the viewer's identification and imagination not only through the medium shot, but also through the mood strategy

and the presence of a gaze and gesture directed at something *outside* the picture (Francesconi 2014).

However, the close analysis and interpretation of the photographs demonstrated the existence of differences in terms of visual product and final message as well. These differences are related to how the *Representation of Reality* (the ideational metafunction) was realized through the interpersonal metafunction, *Relationship with the Audience*. In fact, the meaning of gazes, shots and angles varied according to which subjects were represented, which processes were enacted and how all these dimensions related to each other. In particular, the Instagram channel focused on the representation of animals and the creation of a close relationship with them, compared to the close shots of gastronomic peculiarities on the website. Humans, when present and represented in an equal relationship with the viewer (eye-level angles), were often depicted from the back, and gazes were often directed at inanimate participants or surroundings, thereby boosting a romantic gaze. Picture 7.31, finally, invites the viewer to join a typical mass-tourist activity such as a guided tour.

Pictures 7.13, 7.14, 7.15, 7.30 and 7.31 (from the website) and 7.17, 7.27, 7.28, 7.29 (from Instagram), for example, all feature a main subject who is consciously placed by the photographer as the protagonist of the photograph and therefore as fundamental subject of observation, with varying degrees of intimacy and of the subject's awareness of this. Image 7.12 establishes a direct and friendly relationship with the viewer, as he or she could be on the boat as well and be enjoying the same experience, all of which is boosted by the smiling face and the *demand* gaze from the woman in the picture. Most of the remaining pictures are instead taken from behind, and therefore the invitation to join the picture and identify with the subject is more subtle and entirely designed by the photographer, who aims to show the picture as more authentic as possible due to its spontaneousness. Therefore, an intentional spontaneousness and aesthetic design of de-personalization strategies was detected only on Instagram. The reason might lie in the different rhetorical function and role, weight of imagery on the two channels.

The patterns detected from the interrelation of all these features (or variables) led to the shaping of different discourse semantics that seems to vary according to channel.

7.3.2 Dissimilarities among channels

7.3.2.1 Introduction

The rate of variance across the corpora shows that there are fewer differences than similarities. However, the significant variance of specific variables – especially if they have a high frequency – together with the slight variance of others can contribute to the unveiling of particular rhetorical patterns (or generic *discourse semantics*, Bateman et al. 2017) and the design of a very different visual products, which can therefore have different rhetorical functions that depend on the intended audience and the role imagery plays in a specific medium.
The variables which showed a statistically significant variance across the two channel corpora are the following:

- The *gaze towards the interactive participant;* [2]
- the *medium and long shot*;
- the *very high angle*;
- the depth strategy *converging lines*.

This section will also provide some insights on a) the eye-level angle and b) the (objective) perpendicular top-down angle, as both of them can have different meanings according to channel.

7.3.2.2 Category of variables ***shots***

While the variables *close* and *very long shots* were shown to occur in similar frequency rates and therefore were discussed in the *similarity among channels* section, medium and long shots occur with a consistently varying degree of usage. In fact, medium shots are chosen in 22.2% of the images on Instagram, whereas they occur in 39.6% of the images on the website channel of the three travel agencies. Medium shots aim to shape a *social* relationship with their viewer, which is neither too close or intimate but which anyways establishes a connection between the represented participants and the

[2] The visual representation of this variable was discussed briefly in the previous sections in relation to reaction processes and close shots; for this reason, it will not be analyzed here.

interactive one (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). In this study, medium shots have been considered as featuring in pictures with a main subject (or object) which is not too close to the camera but which can be seen almost or fully in its entirety, thus enabling the viewer to understand its role as the main subject but also to see the surrounding setting which the participant interacts with. In medium shots, therefore, there is a main participant who (or which) interacts not only with a surrounding landscape (such as in long shots, and differently from very long shots) but also engages directly with the viewer, leading him to feel sympathy or identification. Again, this tendency is higher in website images, as confirmed by the higher frequency rate of close shots and lower number of long shots. This may well be attributed to the fact that website images feature more living beings and therefore consider the strategy of identification as persuasive enough and as their main aim might not be to capture the attention and stimulate imagination with the representation of a perfectly designed, idyllic landscape. In fact, close/medium shots of human subjects or objects do not either boost the imagination or create an ideal of perfection and passive acceptance of the viewer's subject positioning as an individual with the right to be rewarded and escape a busy and demystified, personal reality in order to enter a magical and apparently perfect one (Garrod 2009, 355).

This difference in the frequency rate and design of persuasive strategies in the medium shots becomes clearer by looking at the medium shots in the website Images 7.33-36. These all focus on strategies of identification with subjects that are performing typical tourist activities, and which symbolize both tourist and collective gazes. Most of these images, similarly to Image 7.29, all seem very natural and real, and this might indicate the importance, on the part of travel agencies on their official website, of spontaneousness as a persuasive strategy. The presence of unfiltered photographs or undesigned poses could be also related to a strategic role positioning of images as indexical, supportive rather than imagination enhancers.



Image 7.33: Example of medium shot from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.34: Example of medium shot from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.35: Example of medium shot from Destination Canada's official website



Image 7.36: Example of medium shot from Destination Canada's official website

Images 7.37-38 are instead taken from the Instagram channels and embody completely different meanings. In fact, both images focus the attention and create a social, inclusive relationship with the viewer through the introduction of a natural framework (be it the rock of a cave or the flowers in the city) of a landscape. These pictures allow the viewer both to imagine the beauty of the landscape and also to merge with it, by also including different color harmonies (cold and warm colors) and apparently contrasting scapes, such as the flowers and the city. This type of realization of *Representation of Reality* and *Relationship with the Audience* might symbolize a desire to oppose, juxtapose and merge together two distant realities, showing the post-modern, aesthetic individual that it is possible to find untamed and colorful beauty in an industrialized, grey metropolis. Image 7.39, on the other hand, shapes an involved

relationship with the viewer by introducing an object like a bench – and the implied but centric *absence* of a subject, which is regarded as disturbing the importance and attractiveness of the landscape – thereby inviting the viewer to imagine to be part of that multilayered sunset landscape, simply enjoying the view (Francesconi 2014). A similar contraposition is often present in Tourism Ireland which focuses on providing often historical sites within natural landscapes. This tendency might also underpin an idea of the complete travel experience, which includes both comforts and amenities (the city) and untouched, magical areas.



Image 7.37: Example of medium shot from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.38: Example of medium shot from Destination Canada's Instagram profile

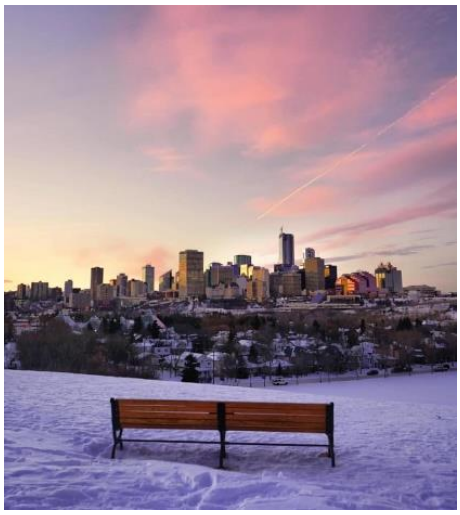


Image 7.39: Example of medium shots from Destination Canada's Instagram profile

Long shots (Images 7.40-41), on the other hand, do not focus on a specific subject but aim to shape a relationship of *focused* imagination on a specific element of the scape, usually from an aerial perspective and very rarely on living subjects. It is no coincidence that this strategy is more frequently used by the Instagram channel. These images usually feature also a leading line that "joins" different layers of landscapes or that allows the viewer to access the reality of the photography, both figuratively and physically. In Image 7.41, for example, a deck enables the represented participants to enjoy the view of a magical sunset while immersed in a marine environment. Image 7.40 is the same as the one provided in section 7.2 but was reported also here as it represents a balanced blend of multilayered landscapes and *focused imagination* strategies in a typical Irish landscape.



Image 7.40: Example of long shot from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile

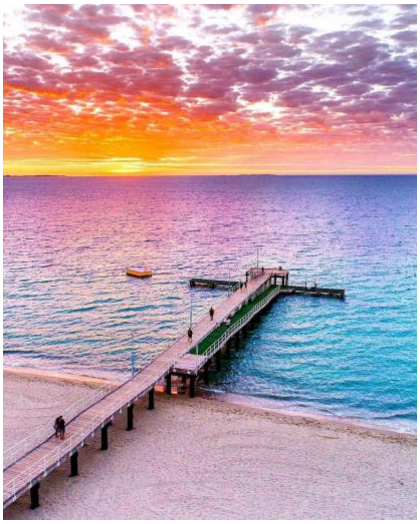


Image 7.41: Example of long shot from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile

7.3.2.3 Category of variables *subjective angle*

It is no coincidence that few images on Instagram employ a very high angle, compared to the website ones (16.9% compared to 4.43%). As mentioned in the previous section, in fact, aerial views aim to provide a privileged perspective from which one can imagine the fruition of an extra-ordinary and unique experience. Image 7.42 is an example.



Image 7.42: Example of aerial view and very high/very long angle (Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile)

Leading lines also ensure visual depth and can in fact coincide with the strategy *Converging Lines*, which occurs frequently in both channels, even if more on Instagram (63.4% versus 47.4%). Converging lines in professional photography are a series of lines "that converge towards a vanishing point to make perspective easier to recognize" (Manovich 2017, 97). The converging lines in Images 7.43 and 7.44, for example, enhance their tridimensionality and guide the eye of the viewer towards a specific point, directly involving him or her and inducing them to join the picture and "walk right into it". Converging lines are also designed to foster an ideal of perfection through strategies of symmetry and balance; therefore, they both symbolize a focus on careful composition and contribute to an aesthetically pleasant design.

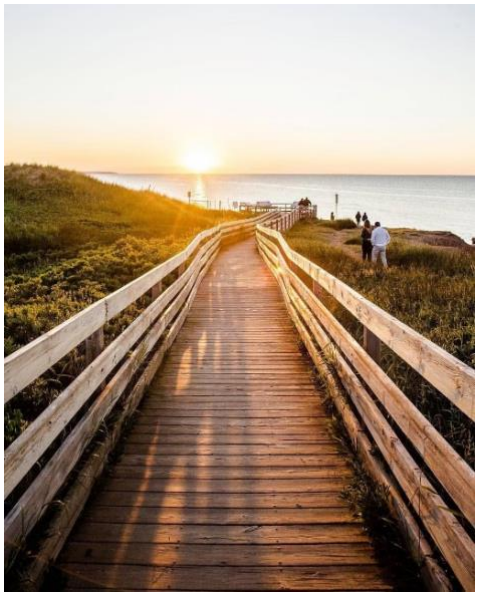


Image 7.43: Example of converging lines from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.44: Example of converging lines from Destination Canada's Instagram profile

Another aspect that deserves critical discussion is the eye-level angle, even its rate of occurrence does not seem to vary according to channel. Eye-level angles on Instagram in fact do not always focus on people or objects, but are used also as a strategy of immersion in a landscape or of superior and privileged position compared to the human subject (see Image 7.45 and 46). Here, not only is the living subject given a low position but also a marginal one or a non-existent one (Image 7.46), as the main participant is the landscape. This tendency to depersonalize and downgrade human subjects, on the one hand, and to create an equal connection with the landscape, on the other hand, can be related to the rhetorical function of tourism discourse, when aiming to objectify or to foster passive contemplation, which gives prominence to an imaginary, idyllic and inhabited world where the human is standing still in the passive contemplation of the aesthetically beautiful and perfect.



Image 7.45: Example of eye-level angle with a natural site that is a Phenomenon and the main subject (Tourism Ireland on Instagram)



Image 7.46: Example of eye-level angle with a natural site that is the main subject (Tourism Ireland on Instagram)

On the website, on the other hand, the tendency to shape interpersonal and friendly relationships and strategies of identification is confirmed by the implementation of *promontory* eye-level angles, which still focus on the human subject as the main participant, who is in a complete position of dominance over a representation of tamed nature (Image 7.47). The Correspondence Analysis confirms the positive correlation between human reaction processes, natural settings and medium/eye-level shots. This is in particular contrast to Images such as 7.45 and 7.46, where the main subject is in any case a natural setting and which foster a defying view of naturalness. Humans, if present, are seen as inferior, compared to the viewer, and objectified, as if they had been put there simply for the embellishment of the picture.



Image 7.47: Example of eye-level angle which designs a social relationship between the human subjects and the viewer

7.3.2.4 Category of variables *objective angle*

Finally, the predilection of the travel agencies on Instagram for objectified and primarily natural landscapes – which induce a passive consumption and both boost and create the idea of the existence and need for perfection – are evident if one looks at the *objective* angles and how these vary according to channel. While the frequency rates of both direct frontal angles and perpendicular top-down ones do not show a significant variance across channels (even if perpendicular top-down angles occur in 2.63% of Instagram images and 6.7% of the website ones), these realize completely different visual products and further confirm the design of rhetorical strategies for different purposes which are not related to the channel constraints. By looking at Images 7.48-54 it is possible to notice how objective angles completely differ in terms of represented participants, surroundings and therefore interpersonal meaning.



Image 7.48: Example of objective angle (perpendicular top-down from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile

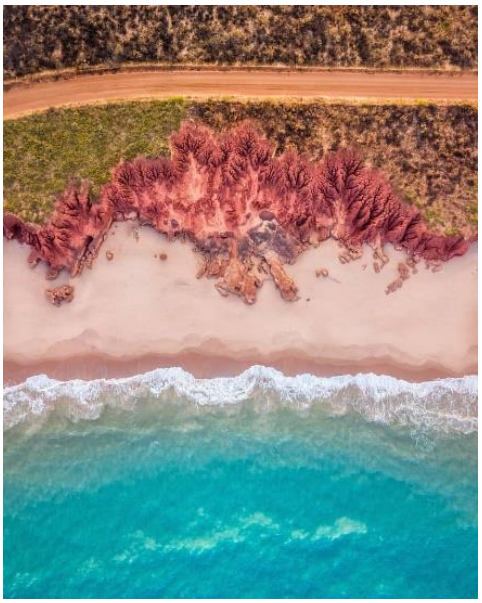


Image 7.49: Example of objective angle (perpendicular top-down from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.50: Example of objective angle (perpendicular top-down from Tourism Western Australia's official website



Image 7.51: Example of objective angle (perpendicular top-down from Tourism Ireland's official website

Wilderness Ireland

Image 7.52: Example of objective angle (direct frontal angle) from Tourism Ireland's official website

FINEST ★★★★★ JOURNEYS
FROM IN QUEST OF THE CLASSICS

Image 7.53: Example of objective angle (direct frontal angle) from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.54: Example of objective angle (perpendicular top-down) from Tourism Western Australia's official website

While pictures 7.48 and 7.49 were taken from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram channel, the remaining images (Images 7.50-54) were found on the website channel of Tourism Western Australia (7.50; 7.54) and Tourism Ireland (7.51-53). The objective images on the website channel do not focus on the aesthetic representation of natural settings. They either provide supportive *analytical* information (such the maps) or trigger emotional participation (through logos or the image a shared dinner). While Image 7.54 still reiterates the focus of website tourism discourse on action, participants

and gastronomic/cultural uniqueness, the logos and the maps are part of an entirely different dimension, which was not even detected on Instagram. The "wilderness" of a destination, therefore, can be represented in different ways, and seems to vary according to rhetorical functions and choices: while on Instagram that "view" of nature is always reproduced through the aesthetic idealization and immutability of shapes, colors, layers and careful design of a pure, untamed and idyllic natural landscape to enhance imagination, (the authenticity, strangerhood and timelessness techniques), on the website this trope is realized through more informative (maps) and typical marketing communication. An example is the logo which includes the word "wilderness" (Image 7.52). "Finest Journeys" (Image 7.53) is instead in line with an ideal of a tourist and comfortable gaze. Again, the visual product created seem to change according to channel.

7.3.2.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of the second macro-category *Relationship with the Audience* and of the interpersonal metafunction has confirmed the existence of differences in the degree of usage (and way of usage) of persuasive promotional multimodal tourism strategies according to channel and which lead to the shaping of an overall different visual product. This change in the frequencies of the variables (or tags, strategies) may be due to the implementation of different rhetorical functions that vary according to audience, purpose and role in the medium of dissemination and which sometimes leads to the definition of a sub-genre of visual (and multimodal) tourism communication. On the website channel, in fact, travel agencies provide more realistic, spontaneous and sometimes indexical representations of humans, activities, or cultural and gastronomic aspects, thereby generating a closer relationship – which is also confirmed by the high degree of usage of close and medium shots and eye-level angles with humans as main participants – between the interactive participants and focusing on strategies of identification, mass-tourist gazes and cultural, gastronomic uniqueness. The interest in aesthetics and the perfect composition of inhabited, vivid and endless natural landscapes – which is demonstrated by the prevalence of aerial views with long shots, converging lines and idyllic objective images – characterizes Instagram, whose main aim is to objectify a perfect image of nature and present a less human-related,

depersonalized product which can attract attention and boost the imagination, "passive" interaction and desire: the right to live in a world which is so different from the one the prospective customer is living in.

The different role, nature and weight of images on the two channels derive from a different communicative purpose and a different audience: while Instagrammers' (Manovich 2017) attention, need and desire still have to be shaped, the people who visit the website are already interested in the company's offer and want to either obtain more information about the destination or purchase a travel package. As mentioned in section 7.1, Instagram seems to be more dedicated to aesthetics and feelings, situations of "being", whereas the official website focuses more on providing actual information and activities.

7.4 Discussion of the results related to the variables of the third macro-category

This section discusses the findings from the statistical analysis of the macro-category of variables *Composition*. The objective is to find both similarities and differences in the usage of specific strategies and to corroborate both the hypothesis of similarity and dissimilarity. In order to shed light and better represent the similarities and differences according to channel, the discussion section will compare the channel corpora with exemplary images taken from all the agencies indistinctly, therefore without taking into consideration each time the internal sub-division per tourism agency.

This section will also link the results from section four to the results of section two and three, in order to provide a more detailed and faithful account of the overall meaning of tourist images. This will be achieved by connecting the ideational metafunction, i.e. the *Representation of Reality*, and the interpersonal (*Relationship with the Audience*) to the textual one, which gives a coherent structure to the overall meaning of the visual message. Finally, this section will attempt to demonstrate, also through a correlation analysis, how similar correlations between the variables from all metafunctions can design a different visual product, depending on the frequency rate of each variable.

7.4.1 Similarities among channels

7.4.1.1 Introduction

The number of variables which do not differ statistically in a significant way across the channel corpora mainly concern two categories of variables:

- the *Rule of Thirds*
- the Kressian compositional techniques.

It should be also mentioned that the Rule of Thirds as a specifically designed technique for aesthetic appeal occurs very frequently only in one corpus. Additionally, it should be remembered that the second category of variables does not reflect the typical Kressian categorization and definition, and their meanings sometimes change according to the correlated strategies that were adapted.

7.4.1.2 Category of variables *Rule of Thirds*: *One Point*

With regard to the category of features *Rule of Thirds*, both Instagram and website channels use consistently the main variable Rule of Thirds (81.7% on Instagram and 69.9% on the website). This seems to indicate that tourism promotional communication constructs carefully its visual message, by placing the subjects and the surroundings of most pictures in certain positions and at a certain distance and perspective. As a matter of fact, in the Rule of Thirds elements are placed on purpose by the photographer along imaginary thirds lines – which are either horizontal, vertical or both – or in correspondence of their intersections, in order to produce more aesthetically appealing photos (Mai et al. 2011; Amirshahi 2014). The *one point* strategy is widely adopted in the design of many promotional pictures, both on Instagram 20.8%) and the official websites (23.5%). A couple of examples of this strategy are provided in images 55 and 56. In the *symbolic,* suggestive Image 7.55, an old residence is placed on the bottom right corner, which coincides with one of the imaginary intersections between the third lines of this picture. The inclusion of another strategy belonging to the *Rule of Thirds*, i.e. the upper horizontal line, supplies the picture with a pleasant color harmony and the perception of depth. The line, in fact, gives an idea of what can be found behind the hill and invites the viewer to imagine it. The presence

of long shots and the combination of natural with cultural and historical sites has been proved to be typical of tourism Instagram pictures, and confers an aura of mysticism and timelessness, where the vast and untamed, pure nature merges with the cultural uniqueness of the destination.

In Image 7.56, a moving car is placed in the same spot, in order to show an equal balance of different landscapes – the land, the road, the sea – and conveying the idea of the beginning of a journey and the approaching of a destination which is ahead of the represented subject and the viewer. However, this picture, compared to the other, symbolizes a closer and social condition of action and presence of human beings, along with a situation of comfort during the adventure. This has been shown to be typical of website pictures, whose aim does not seem to only boost imagination and desire but to actually show what can be done by purchasing a travel service online.



Image 7.55: Example of Rule of Thirds with one point on Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile



Image 7.56: Example of Rule of Thirds with one point on Tourism Ireland's official website

While the main role of the Rule of Thirds might be to give balance and appeal to the picture, the sub-strategy and variable *point(s)* (mainly one point per picture, as the variable points occurs only in 10.5% of the Instagram pictures and 12.6% of the website ones) is to capture the attention of the viewer and focus it on the main subject of the picture, concentrating there the main meaning of the photograph. On Instagram, this point usually coincides with living subjects such as animals or humans while performing *reaction processes* or objects. Image 7.57 and 7.58, for example, show two subjects performing a reaction process towards the landscape that is in front of them and the viewer. By placing the subjects in that position from their back and by providing much detail and salience to that portion of the photograph (in particular in Image 7.57), the photographer aims to shape a rather social relationship – not impersonal, even if Image 7.57 might be considered by Kressian scholars a long shot – and feeling of identification with the viewer. The viewer can in fact imagine himself either in the picture, behind the subject and enjoying the experience of conquer, adventure (Image 7.57) or relax, quiet (Image 7.58) in the nature or identify with the subject. The tendency to show reaction processes instead of action processes on Instagram seems therefore to be carefully constructed also through compositional strategies, with the objective of manipulating the attention and the feelings of the viewer and subtly shaping a desire for a *designed* perfect and effortless experience in the wild.

Images 7.59-60 confirm another visual discourse semantics, or trend, which is typical of Instagram tourism images: the representation of animals performing non-transactional reaction processes. By placing these subjects on the left part of Image

7.60 and by blurring the background, the author of the picture is attempting to shifting the focus to the animal, who has been "captured" in the spontaneous moment of watching in another direction, inaccessible to the viewer. The rather close shot enables the recipient of the visual message to enjoy a detailed and sharp view of a typical wild animal such as the wolf, for Destination Canada, and the kangaroo, for Tourism Western Australia, which activates unconsciously positive associations with the uniqueness of the destination and its untamed but at the same time admirable wild fauna (Gotti et al. 2017; Dann 1996).

Images 7.61-63 are instead taken from the website channel and, on the one hand, feature the variable one point as well and are similar to the Instagram ones in terms of composition and strategy. On the other hand, the compositional strategy combined with the subjects, their actions and the perspective confer a different meaning to the picture. While Image 7.61 may be considered similar to images 59-60, images 7.62 and 7.63 depict quite different subjects and processes from the Instagram ones. Image 7.62 shows a young woman playing the violin from a very close perspective, which aims to foster positive associations with the *cultural* uniqueness and types of activity that a tourist can enjoy on a holiday, thus perpetrating a rather *tourist gaze* of the experience, like in the previous images with means transportation (Urry and Larsen 2011). Image 7.63, on the other hand, shows an act of affection between a little boy and his dog, which seems rather spontaneous and unconstructed. As a matter of fact, there is not a blurred background and there is less balance in the picture, as the whole picture is about these two subjects. The final message conveyed is one of tenderness, rather than travel adventure or pleasure. Of course, the feeling and the smile portrayed are probably caused by the pleasing experience the boy is living, but the attention is focused on a humanized and simple moment which almost seems decontextualized from the travel destination and its promotion. Then, one might notice once again that promotional tourist images on the website are constructed differently and convey different meanings, values and feelings to the viewer. This is due to the correlation between varying frequency rates of strategies belonging to all three metafunctions across the two channel corpora.



Image 7.57: Example of Rule of Thirds with one point on Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile



Image 7.58: Example of Rule of Thirds with one point on Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.59: Example of Rule of Thirds with one point on Destination Canada's Instagram profile



Image 7.60: Example of Rule of Thirds with one point on Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.61: Example of Rule of Thirds with one point on Tourism Western Australia's official website



Image 7.62: Example of Rule of Thirds with one point on Tourism



Image 7.63: Example of Rule of Thirds with one point on Tourism Ireland's official website

The Rule of Thirds with one point may also include the depiction of an object and construct a more depersonalized view of the travel experience. Image 7.64-66 all present "eventless" pictures symbolizing the travel experience, through a tent, a car, and a bench. As it might be inferred after the previous qualitative discussion of symbols and types of meanings conveyed according of channel, Image 7.65 is the one which belongs to the website channel (Tourism Western Australia) as it represents a more active and comfortable way of enjoying exploration in the wild. Moreover, the presence of a car implies the presence of humans, therefore defining the picture as narrative and excluding the possibility of conveying an aura of depersonalized mysticism and quietness, calm merged in the pure nature. Image 7.64 and 7.66 instead, which both

belong to the Instagram channel of Tourism Ireland, are clearly conceptual images and confer a more romanticist view of the experience: the presence of the tent which fits well and undisturbed in the nature might imply the presence or absence of someone inside. On the other hand, the empty bench in Image 7.66 represents a subtle invitation from the photographer to sit and enjoy a quiet and resting view of a typical and unchanged Irish village. The presence of objects as the main subject in a picture, together with the absence of living beings, allows for the categorization of images 7.64 and 7.66 in particular (together with 7.55) as symbolic pictures. In particular, medium or close shots suggest the design of a symbolic attributive picture, where the subject of the visual message entails/encodes the whole message of the picture and symbolizes a condition, such as in this case adventure and relax. Here, one can see how the same patterns of variables and affordances, materialities are perpetrated and enhanced through composition, which coherently and aesthetically encloses the main meaning of the picture and shifts the attention of the viewer to it (Manovich 2017; Mai 2014).



Image 7.64: Example of Rule of Thirds with one point on Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile



Image 7.65: Example of Rule of Thirds with one point on Tourism Western Australia's official website



Image 7.66: Example of Rule of Thirds with one point on Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile

Finally, the strategy *one point* is used in narrative images encoding action processes and conceptual images, which are both more frequent in website pictures. Images 7.67-70 were all taken from the website channel and show how images may be carefully constructed to a varying degree – but always intentionally – to convey a coherent meaning and show an aesthetically pleasant and balanced image. Images 7.67-69 are narrative images that show different types of activities that can be performed during a travelling experience: the action processes are realized by either a walk (Image 7.67), the tasting and exploring of the cultural gastronomic specialties immersed in the nature (Image 7.68) or a swim in the ocean with the typical fauna (Image 7.69). All these images (especially Images 7.68 and 7.69) show a perfect and pleasant reality that is made approachable and reachable, enjoyable to the viewer through the implementation of medium shots and the most typical exciting or relaxing experiences a travel package may offer. The viewer is pushed to identify with the main subjects, that are made salient through the positioning in one point, but he or she can also enjoy concretely the experience, as the center of the mage is occupied by another salient characteristic of the experience, such as the road, the apples, or the sea turtle. Therefore, differently from what Kress conceived, there can be something else other than centric, triptic or polarized pictures, and their meanings vary according to the context. As it will be clearer towards the end of this section, polarized pictures are rare and either entail a simple subdivision of land/sky or feature two main subjects in clear opposition. Image 7.70, instead, is a conceptual image as it includes an inscription in one of the intersections between the image's third lines, which encodes the main message of the picture: the extraordinariness of a spectacular traditional Canadian landscape. In particular, the modifier northwest is a clear indexical and multimodal reference to the northwestern lights, a famous natural event that occurs only in certain parts of the worlds, thereby underlining its exclusivity and the opportunity to join it and be "(ful)filled" with awe only by purchasing the experience through the travel agency. Finally, Image 7.71 might be framed as a conceptual image, as it is a map with very few "decorative" and aesthetically pleasant information. The only rhetorical function of this image is clearly the display of information on the position of different locations.



Image 7.67: Example of Rule of Thirds with one point from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.68: Example of Rule of Thirds with one point from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.69: Example of Rule of Thirds with one point from Tourism Western Australia's official website



Image 7.70: Example of Rule of Thirds with one point from Destination Canada's official website

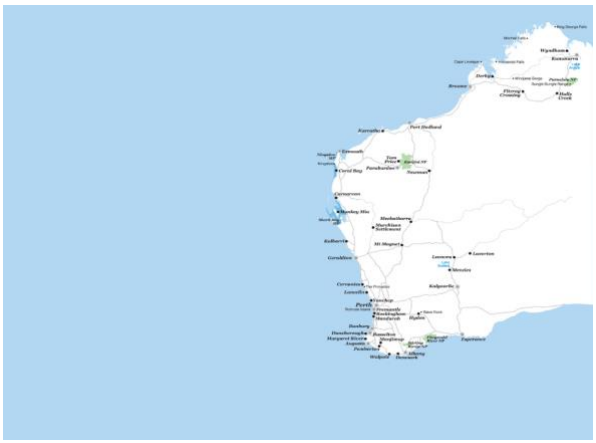


Image 7.71: Example of Rule of Thirds with one point from Tourism Western Australia's official website

7.4.1.3 Category of variables *Rule of Thirds*: *More Points*

The *one point* strategy may be sometimes enriched with the inclusion of a second main subject at another one of the imaginary third lines intersections. The adoption of this strategy might underlie the intention to give prominence to more than one subject and the relationship shaped between the two subjects. The equal balance in the distribution of the information value Images in Images 7.72 and 7.73, where both the content, the perspective and the overall composition of these images convey very specific messages. Image 7.72 depicts a quokka (a very rare marsupial only typical of Australia) in the foreground, enjoying some salad leaves with satisfaction. In the background, a young beautiful woman is observing him smiling from a very short distance. What might be unveiled as strategic in this picture is the very close glimpse of a wild, rare and sweet, harmless small animal and the wonder in watching him enjoy a meal, as if no cameras and no humans were present. It could be said that the photographer was attempting, on the one hand, to polarize the picture by putting the two main subjects in contraposition but, at the same time, they wanted to make the pre-consumption of the whole experience possible and boost the imagination of the viewer.

Image 7.73, instead, shows a typical promotional image that contraposes a tourist gaze – realized by the presence of a camera – and an inscription, "Community", which focuses the attention on the importance of social interaction and sharing in the fruition of a travelling experience. This image might not work in an Instagram setting as,

according to the sociologist Urry and Larsen (2011) and the computational analyst Manovich (2017), the interest of prospective customers on Instagram is nowadays captured by images that boost imagination and exclusivity, singularity and solitude of a romantic gaze experience. Therefore, producers of multimodal messages on Instagram tend to convey de-personalized and spectacular, vivid and feelings of the untamedness, pureness and beauty of the nature. On official websites, on the other hand, the target audience is usually already interested in the travel agency's offer and are looking for more concrete, usually written and reliable information.



Image 7.72: Example of Rule of Thirds with two points on Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.73: Example of Rule of Thirds with two points on Tourism Ireland's official website

In many website images, additionally, the act of putting the main subjects right at the intersection of the third lines seems involuntary. Pictures 7.74-76, for example, look less carefully designed in terms of appearance, aesthetics. In particular, Images 7.75-76 appear very casual and do not seem to play *strongly* on any specific unconscious, "romantic" desire that might be activated in the viewer. Both these pictures surely represent moments of relaxation, social interaction and sport activities which can be longed for by the recipient of the visual message; however, they represent experiences which may be had without purchasing a travel package. Then, these images might play more of a supportive role to a textual content that is provided nearby. Image 7.74, on the other hand, even if it is not aesthetically pleasant – the sunset light affects the sight of the viewer – gives clearer prominence to one specific object, i.e. a truck personalized with the name of a tour agency. The employment of a means of transportation and logo/inscription, together with the poor compositional strategy, are all indicators not only of different promotional strategies and values such as a typical tourist and collective gaze, which weakens the perception, in the viewer, of the exclusivity of the experience, but of the marginal, indexical and less evocative role of images on these travel agencies' websites.

This variation in the rhetorical strategies and functions of the visual message might derive from the intent to relate to the customer via more informative and textual

content and give the "already convinced" customer the concrete opportunity to choose whether to buy or not a travel package.



Image 7.74: Example of Rule of Thirds with two points on Tourism Western Australia's official website



Image 7.75: Example of Rule of Thirds with two points on Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.76: Example of Rule of Thirds with two points on Tourism Western Australia's official website

7.4.1.4 Category of variables *Rule of Thirds*: the *Scenic Rule of Thirds* and the negative spaces *Sky* and *Water*

Another feature that defines most tourism professional photographs is the scenic rule of thirds and the implementation of a negative space (Mai 2014; Manovich 2017). The scenic rule of thirds is an exaggeration of the horizontal high thirds line and aims to provide the viewer with a full view of the landscape of the destination, by leaving a very small section to the sky or the land (usually 1/5 or less of the picture). The Rule of Thirds is, therefore, amplified through the implementation of a more distinct division or discontinuity (similar to Kress' concept of framing), where the horizontal

line is put close to the top or bottom margin of the photograph (tag Scenic Rule of Thirds). The adoption of this strategy coincides with the intentional creation of negative space (Manovich 2017; Zakia 1993), which in this context refers to the predominance of specific landscapes divided up by clear lines (tags water, land, sky). According to this strategy, an "empty" portion, or space, is placed around the main subject of the picture (Manovich 2017). Since in this study most pictures – especially on Instagram, where the scenic rule of thirds variable most occurs – are long shots or do not feature clear (human) subjects, negative space has been considered synonym for (scenic) rule of thirds and includes each picture that has at least 2/3 of the picture occupied by a landscape, i.e. either land, water (or both) or sky.

In the analysis of the three travel agencies, the variables water and sky do not vary to a statistically significant extent in either channel (these occur in 28.2% and 4.37% of the Instagram images and in 19.5%, 5.03% of the website ones), whereas the variable land was significant on Instagram (occurring in 52% of the images). The predilection for this type of landscape representation aligns with the interest in reproducing a romantic gaze and eventless, aesthetically pleasant vision of the world, as all the attention is focused on the beauty, pureness, wilderness and immensity of a destination that only awaits its exploration and boosts a need for evasion and imagination**.** Pictures 7.77-82 are examples of negative space with the sky as the main "space" occupying the photograph and therefore the view of the recipient of the multimodal message. Of these, only picture 7.81 was taken from the website. The main aim of negative space is to give predominance to one main subject, if present, by surrounding it with a landscape. In the Instagram pictures the design of this intent is clear: through images 7.77, 78 and 79 the author of the visual message wants to draw the attention of the viewer to the uniqueness of a particular tourism ideal, be it the appropriation of Indian cultural roots of Canada (Image 7.77), together with the spectacularism of the Northern Lights, or the wilderness, purity of the fauna (Image 7.78) or again, the ancient, unchanged rocks from an Australian desert (Image 7.79). The choice of the sky as a negative space gives an aura of mystery and magic to the pictures and therefore the experience that can be lived by the tourist himself. The presence of a subject with its detail through the election of a medium shot allows the viewer to focus on the specific experience and attitudes that are directly transferred by these narratives (reactional) or symbolic attributive images.

In Image 7.80, instead, the first two metafunctions are realized in a completely different way, conveying a thus a different final message. Even if the staged composition is clear, this picture features a particular mood, subject, activity and shot. The long shot with its warm tones indicates the presence of humans, who are however not visible. According to Urry, in fact, the detailed representation of humans does not boost imagination and de-personalization, customization of the experience; therefore, to the eye of an Instagram user, a medium shot of this hot air balloon could have been less attractive. Instead, this long shot enables the mystification of the ideal of freedom, liberty, denial of time (Dann 1996) by surrounding the apparently inanimate object with an "empty" sky, without obstacles and ready to fulfill each desire and dream that a tourist may have. The same interpretation could be applied to Images 7.82-85 (all taken from Instagram except for Image 7.85), where a negative space of either sky or water is created that hosts a main subject and an ideal (of authenticity of the past, Image 7.83, of the nature, Image 7.82, of the possibility to tame a wild nature, Image 7.84). Again, the Image where a human subject feature includes a long shot, that aims to de-personalize the identity of the subject, as what it represents and boosts is more important and attractive.

Image 7.81 represents a different realization of the negative space that changes the overall composition of the photograph and its meaning. In this case, the negative space of the sky makes salient more subjects, which are put at different thirds lines intersections. This website picture from Tourism Ireland is a staged representation of a reality where a tourist (who, always for reasons of de-personalization, is seen from the back) is confronted with the authentic majesty of a very old, famous and elitist building, the Trinity College, but also with the beauty and pureness of the nature, which is realized through the attribution of a large portion of the picture to a beautiful tree nearby. In this picture, therefore, the negative space allows for the representation of different tropes and values which result attractive to a prospective customer: the reference to history, education and its exclusivity but also the importance of visiting a city that features green spaces and nature. The reaction process from the back and without eye-contact with the viewer invites him or her to join the group of young people in an act of silent, passive contemplation and appreciation. The activities that can be performed are left to the imagination of the viewer.

Finally, Images 7.86-87 differ in the sense that they do not feature a main subject and consequently are symbolic suggestive pictures that aim to create an atmosphere of pure contemplation and imagination (Urry 1990). This is in fact what characterizes many tourist pictures in this study. Hence, they symbolize more of a idyllic condition and sense of admiration rather than value or directed interpretation. These pictures without subjects are pregnant with tourism tropes of authenticity (untamed and pure nature) and timelessness tropes. Therefore, one can see how the election of a scenic rule of thirds and negative space strategy can devise a promotional visual message that conveys a strong and attractive message through the intersection of all three metafunctions.



Image 7.77: Example of Scenic Rule of Thirds with negative space from Destination Canada' s Instagram profile



Image 7.78: Example of Scenic Rule of Thirds with negative space from Destination Canada' s Instagram profile



Image 7.79: Example of Scenic Rule of Thirds with negative space from Tourism Western Australia' s Instagram profile



Image 7.80: Example of Scenic Rule of Thirds with negative space from Destination Canada' s Instagram profile



Image 7.81: Example of Rule of Thirds with negative space from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.82: Example of Scenic Rule of Thirds with negative space from Destination Canada's Instagram profile



Image 7.83: Example of Scenic Rule of Thirds with negative space from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile



Image 7.84: Example of Scenic Rule of Thirds with negative space from Destination Canada's Instagram profile



Image 7.85: Example of Scenic Rule of Thirds with negative space from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.86: Example of Scenic Rule of Thirds with negative space from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.87: Example of Scenic Rule of Thirds with negative space from Tourism Ireland's official website

7.4.1.5 Category of variables *Kressian compositional features*

Other compositional variables that display a similar frequency rate in the channel corpora and which occur in many promotional photographs are the centricity of the subject (37.6% of the pictures on Instagram and 32.9% on the website) and the polarization technique (23.4% and 24%). As it will be demonstrated, these variables do not always exclude each other and can occur with other compositional variables, such as rule of Thirds and the negative space /scenic rule of thirds. What seems to be refuted is the Kressian dichotomic and exclusive categorization of visual compositional features (2006). Images can not only be centric, polarized or both, but may also have subjects placed in one or more points according to the rule of thirds. Additionally, this study argues that the meaning of polarized pictures cannot be decided previously and must be situated in the discourse. The interrelation of the three metafunctions must be studied from many angles, and the meaning of each choice might contribute to the construction of a complete different overall message.

Pictures 7.88-96 are all centric pictures taken from both channels and all agencies. The choice of centricity as compositional feature in these pictures is functional to the purpose of making the main subject very salient: the same in fact usually occupies the whole image. The kressian subdivision into dimensions around the center, therefore, does not apply in every case, especially when close shots are made. And even with the existence of specific subdivisions (such as the lines in the rule of thirds or in polarization instances) the meaning or information value either is intrinsic to the picture or only relies to compositional aesthetic reasons. For example, Image 7.89-90 both represent a typical tourist trope of the authentic and ancient past which is realized by the mood variable and symbol of a castle by the sea. However, the subdivision into an upper and bottom part of the picture only is based on compositional choices, in order to put the horizon right where the main subject lies. There seems, therefore, to be no other interpretation of the dimensions around the center of the image.

Alongside symbolic suggestive images, narrative images may acquire specific meanings due to the centricity of their subjects. The Instagram images 7.90-91, for example, show wild animals from a close distance and, also through their centricity, manage to shape an intimate relationship between the fauna and the viewer. The gaze direction, additionally, further stimulates a response and the involvement of the recipient of the multimodal message. This demonstrates that the overall meaning of a visual message

changes according to the choices that are made at the ideational and interpersonal level. Centricity conveys different meanings according to the subject, the aesthetics, staged authenticity or embellished ideal of perfection.

To further confirm this theory, one can take a look at images 7.88 and 7.93. These photographs were both taken from the website and are close/medium shots of human subjects: they provide a representation of reality that stays in direct contrast with the one more carefully constructed in Image 7.94, for example. These in fact seem focused less on the composition of the picture, and more on the subject identity. Through the close shot of picture 7.88 the photographer intentionally captures the subject's expression and manages to create a direct engagement with him and what he is doing or feeling. The objective is clearly to involve the viewer and confront him with another culture. The slight low angle, additionally, gives authority and dignity to the foreign culture, overcoming hence the conflict stereotype perspective typical of tourism imagery. Image 7.93, on the other hand, is a medium shot of a young man performing a high-risk activity: by employing a medium shot and a centric composition, the author wants to focus the attention on the humanization of the experience and on the identification with the feeling of excitement.

It seems, therefore, that centricity achieves the same purpose on both channels: to give salience and allow for an instant connection with the subject. However, the subjects which are highlighted change according to channel. Instagram, on the one hand, seems to give salience, both through size and position, to the nature and its inhabitants, fostering the romantic gaze that the Instagram user is so attracted to. In Image 7.94, for example, the composition places on purpose the human subject from a long shot, in order to allow the viewer to both de-humanize the picture and compare the sizes of the two subjects, enhancing the ideal of untamedness and perfect, pure adventure. Website pictures, on the other hand, mainly focus on the representation of a particular subject or activity.

Centricity is also adopted to provide salience to conceptual images on the website and convey a particular message. While Image 7.95 is purely conceptual and informational by being a map, Image 7.96 can be evocative and less informational even if it carries an inscription. In this case, the aim is not to convey any kind of information about the destination, but to promote the destination. The main advertising message is overtly given by the text and the secondary one by the Image 7.in the background. As it

happens in tourism discourse, text is used to transfer positive attitudes and values to the reader and support the message with an Image hat boosts imagination. Of course, on a purely visual and informal channel such as Instagram, the text could not occupy a salient position, as it would not boost the imagination such as a sharp and perfectly staged picture like 7.94. While Image 7.96 could be seen as advertising, 7.94 could not, and that is what subtly and unconsciously attracts more the attention and desire from the consumers of the promotional message.



Image 7.88: Example of centricity from Tourism Western Australia's official website



Image 7.89: Example of centricity from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.90: Example of centricity from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile



Image 7.91: Example of centricity from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.92: Example of centricity from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.93: Example of centricity from Destination Canada's official website



Image 7.94: Example of centricity from Destination Canada's Instagram profile



Image 7.95: Example of centricity from Destination Canada's official website



Image 7.96: Example of centricity from Destination Canada's official website

7.4.1.6 Category of variables *Polarization*

Polarization techniques may vary according to the context. In this study, three types of polarization were detected: the division into due homogeneous dimensions; the presence of two main subjects placed on the two halves of the picture or on the intersections of thirds lines; the combination of horizontal lines and centricity to create balance and drive the attention to the main subject of the picture. These options combine, adapt and re-interpret Kress' tagging model of visual grammar according to the situated discourse (Bateman 2014b). Images 7.97 and 7.98 are two examples of the 1st type polarization, which is mainly based on Kress' Grammar: the image is divided into two homogenous or similar halves by a line. What changes is the interpretation of this compositional choice (or materiality, Bateman et al. 2017): the meaning is not pre-coded and avaliable without further analyzing the role of the first two metafunctions in the compositional design of the picture. For example, in picture 7.97 the polarization of the picture into two dimensions (or halves) is realized through a close shot of the walls of the castle that conveys a sense of intimacy and presence of the viewer in the picture. The viewer is given the illusion that he is part of the picture, possibly hiding behind the wall and waiting to cross the gate and enter a magic reality (Dann 1996). This instance of polarization seems therefore a framing technique to capture the attention of the viewer and give a sense of depth. It is impossible to assess then that the left part of the picture represents the "given" information, whereas the left the "new". The same applies to Image 7.98: its upper part, i.e. the foliage of the tree, does

not correspond to the "ideal" information, and the bottom part to the "real one". Polarization in this case only aims to refine the overall message conveyed through the first two metafunctions. In fact, by dividing the Image 7.in two halves and by putting a participant on the dividing line, the photographer manages to both create a sense of depth and frame the picture simmetrically. He or she aesthetically shapes, through lines and colors, a sense of symmetric continuity/discontinuity that captures the attention for its beauty and perfection.

In Images 7.99-103 instead the photographer provides a sense of polarization by placing on purpose two subjects in the two halves of the images. This compositional technique is effective as it manages to give salience (either through size, or through negative space) to the main subjects and message of the picture and their interrelation, changing therefore the overall message of the image which would have been different with only one centric subject. The introduction of two subjects, one of which animate, also serves the purpose of stimulating identification not at the expense of the imagination, in particular on Instagram images, which are aesthetically crafted. In Image 7.102, for example, the human subject is very small compared to the imponent mountain on the top dimension. In this case, Kress' categorization might apply, as the mountain might correspond to the "idealistic" reward after the journey. However, this is only a coincidence, and might be due to the fact that the photographer wanted to take the mountain from a low angle and make the mountain more salient. Similarly, picture 7.103 features a couple enjoying the landscape, thereby catching the mountain at the top and the couple below. Of course, there could have been other ways to represent this condition of comfort and enjoyment of the "view"; however, the choice of the photographer to put the mountain at the top in the photographer was also constrained by the fact that a mountaineous landscape, in order to be appreciated in its entirety, can be watched from either below or above. Including a view from above might have provided different view of the landscape, or less salience to one of the main subjects of the picture – the nature. Furthermore, this polarization allows the viewer to establish a social relationship with the subject and identify in him through a typical tourist gaze.

The other pictures with this type of polarization (7.99-103) feature two subjects in the "given" and new" position but do not correspond to any of these meanings. The are used instead to give salience to inanimate objects, symbols or animals that support the

main meaning provided by the human subject. In Image 7.99, for example, the donkey adds naturalness and tradition to the picture, and therefore credibility and nostalgia towards the past; Image 7.100 instead concentrates two main tourist tropes that work together in the breaking of social and moral taboos. In fact, the subject is a young woman dressed with a candid white gown that leaves the legs and the arms naked, while the photographer is placing a glass of wine next to her. Through this strategy the eye of the veiwer is catched by both elements and the overall final message of sexuality and moral evasion is reinforced. Finally, the sculpture in Image 7.101 enhances the idea of unknown and mystery that awaits the romantic and intrepidous traveller who adventures into an Australian desert.



Image 7.97: Example of polarization technique from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.98: Example of polarization technique Destination Canada's Instagram profile



Image 7.99: Example of polarization technique from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile



Image 7.100: Example of polarization technique from Tourism Western Australia's official website



Image 7.101: Example of polarization technique from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.102: Example of polarization technique from Destination Canada's Instagram profile



Image 7.103: Example of polarization technique from Destination Canada's Instagram profile

7.4.1.7 Variables *Polarization* and *Centricity*: Conclusion

The last series of images of this similarity section aims to demonstrate how different compositional techniques occur together and shape a final unique and situated message according to the subject and the shot, angle of the picture. The real discourse semantics behind patterns of materialities (or affordances, Kress 2010), sometimes varies too much and some interpretations might result too vague or situational or even too "interpreted".

As it was mentioned earlier, the combination of some variables of the fourth macro-category sometimes only serves the purpose of providing more balance or salience, aesthetic beauty to the picture. The ones proposed here function as examples of how the cases of polarization work strategically with the other variables. Pictures 7.104-108 all show an implementation of both centricity and polarization techniques, either with landscapes and the horizon line as a framing device or with the polarization of two main subjects which are united by a third element in the center. The house (7.104, 7.108), the boat (7.105), the kangaroos (7.106) and the glass of wine between two people (7.107) all place emphasis on the main element of the picture which symbolizes a condition or desire, both in conceptual attributive ones (all except for images 7.107-108) or narrative ones. The tourist tropes of love or solitude (images with the house, 7.104/108), adventure (7.105), wilderness (7.106), socialization and taboos infraction (7.107) are all recalled through the centricity used together with some kind of harmonious, staged polarized composition, whose meaning cannot be decoded without taking into consideration its situational context and admitting, in some cases, the absence of interpretation beyond some purely aesthetic compositional reasons for the creation of a perfect and appealing, magic view of reality.



Image 7.104: Example of polarization/centricity technique from Destination Canada's Instagram profile



Image 7.105: Example of polarization/centricity technique from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile

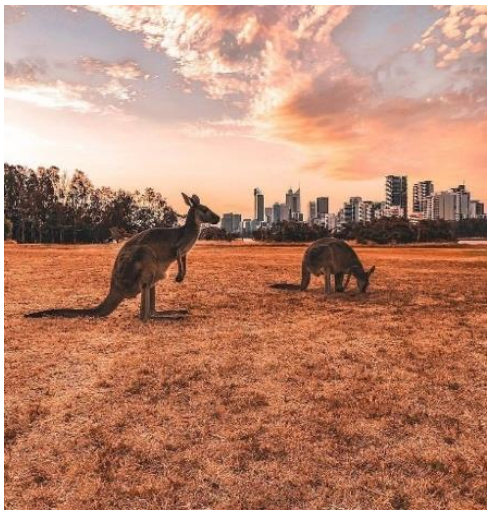


Image 7.106: Example of polarization/centricity technique from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.107: Example of polarization/centricity technique from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.108: Example of polarization/centricity technique from Tourism Western Australia's official website

7.4.2 Dissimilarities among channels

7.4.2.1 Introduction

This section attempts to shed light on the differences in terms of frequency rate between specific variables in the two channel corpora. The previous discussion confirmed a certain degree of similarity of strategies between the two corpora. In particular, the analysis showed how the general Rule of Thirds strategy and the one-point or two-point devices occur in a lot of photographs of both corpora, together with the scenic negative space and the centric/polarization variables. It was also discussed how the occurrence of materialities in a non-statistically significant amount does not mean that the visual realization or the final product is similar. Of course, the categorization and counting of the features and their occurrences was pivotal to the realization of an evidence-based study, but the qualitative discussion gave vital insights into the real meaning of an image, which is designed and constructed as part of a multimodal promotional message.

It was demonstrated how the textual metafunction enhances or refines the final message of a visual product that builds on the first two metafunctions, and for different purposes: it might be more for aesthetics and staged authenticity or might be just random. Similarly, this section aims to further corroborate the hypothesis of dissimilarity, thereby attempting to answer the second research question.

Three of the four categories belonging to the Composition (or textual metafunction) include variables that are statistically significant:

- the Rule of thirds' variables lines and horizontal lines with the negative space *land*;
- the visual weight with the *landscape element* variable;
- various aesthetics and balance-related compositional features such as symmetry/reflection, leading lines, framework and sharpness of focus.

All these variables either occur with a certain consistency (especially the first category a)) and therefore represent the main patterns of realization of the third metafunction or occur less but shape a completely different visual product based on the frequencies of the first and second macro-category.

7.4.2.2 Category of variables Rule of Thirds: horizontal lines

Some of the promotional pictures under investigation include a horizontal line in the upper or lower part. This strategy is called horizontal line and runs on the thirds line of a picture. While the variable *lines* occurs in a good numbers of Instagram pictures (18.9%, compared to 9.3% of the website ones), horizontal high lines occur in fewer images (9.4% on Instagram and 2.47% on the website) but are particularly relevant as they appear more often than the vertical thirds ones and are specific of professional photography on Instagram (Manovich 2017).

Pictures 109-119 are all examples of the Rule of Thirds strategy with a horizontal line that runs along the thirds line in the upper part of the image. While Images 7.109-110 belong to the Instagram channel, pictures 7.111-113 belong to the website channel. What is clear at a first impression is the different role and contribution this feature brings to the overall structure and meaning of the image. As a matter of fact, in images 7.109 and 7.110 the design and aesthetics is carefully predisposed and the framing device shapes an area towards which the eye of the viewer is directed, whereas on the website the line plays sometimes a minor role in the overall orchestration of the message. For example, in the two Instagram images the staged representation of a romantic and solitary gaze experience enhances the attractiveness of the destination, whereas in Images 7.111 and 7.113 they do not add any specific meaning or appeal to

the picture. In Image 7.111, the main subject and message is concentrated on the representation of a foreign culture, which stimulates, through a medium shot and eye-level angle, an equal and respectful confrontation with a different culture; in Image 7.113 it serves as a departure point for a series of converging lines that provides perspective to the image. It does not, however, contribute to shaping an imaginary and desirable condition or atmosphere as it the other images. Again, visual aesthetics seems to play a bigger role on Instagram, conferring to the visual semiotic system a bigger role and more complex nature than the visual support on the travel agencies' website channel.

Image 7.112, instead, demonstrates how also the website channel uses the horizontal line strategically to shape an idyllic, eventless reality that boosts the imagination of its viewer. The sunrise mood and the tourist trope of gastronomic uniqueness confer a magic aura of eternality and pureness that seems completely different from the everyday reality. The countryside has been proved in fact to be of extreme impact on the imagination of the prospective tourist (Urry and Larsen 2011). This case however shows how the rule of thirds and the overall composition of a visual message shape a different meaning according to the subjects and tropes represented. In Image 7.112, the Rule of Thirds could be said to be often intentionally constructed but, depending on other elements proper of the other metafunctions, it creates a different kind of message and attractivity to the viewer.



Image 7.109: Example of horizontal line technique from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile

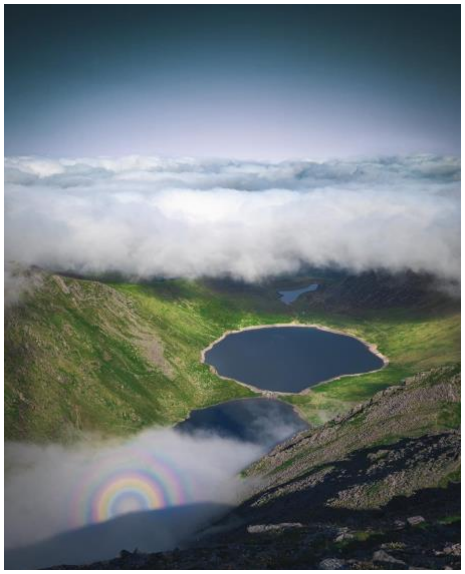


Image 7.110: Example of horizontal line technique from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile



Image 7.111: Example of horizontal line technique from Tourism Western Australia's official website



Image 7.112: Example of horizontal line technique from Tourism Western Australia's official website



Image 7.113: Example of horizontal line technique from Tourism Ireland's official website

Also the recurring theme of the countryside may be represented differently according to channel. Images 7.114-116 are a clear example: while the horizontal line is used strategically in all three pictures as a line where to position the iconic element representing the value of the ancient, both the shot, the mood and the use of the color confer a different meaning and sense of reality authenticity. It looks like that the more a picture is staged, the more authentic it feels. Pictures 7.114 and 7.116 (both Instagram pictures) seem to realistically represent a typical Irish countryside landscape, enriched by the details of the circumstantial nature and the foggy or magic aura that pervades it. Image 7.115 (taken from the website), by being closer and centric, with an overuse of the color saturation, confers an aura of timelessness and idyllic nature but of less authenticity, showing that visual design is not considered a priority by the producer of the visual message.

Images 117-119, on the other hand, are carefully constructed, staged and aesthetically pleasant representations typical of Instagram: vast natural scenarios, where nature reign unchallenged and is sometimes accompanied by historical sites that enhance the idea of pureness and ancient, exclusivity. If the human is present, he is passively reacting at it in a minor position and salience, reproducing a romantic gaze of de-personalization and imagination, so that the viewer can enjoy the landscape but at the same time identify with the subject and his or her experience.



Image 7.114: Example of horizontal line technique from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile



Image 7.115: Example of horizontal line technique from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.116: Example of horizontal line technique from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile

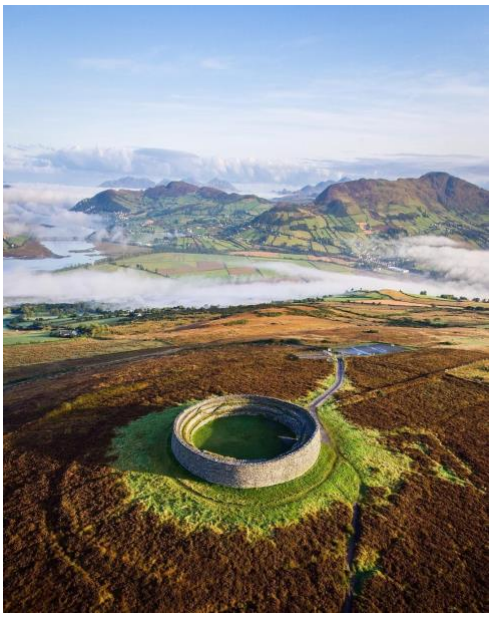


Image 7.117: Example of horizontal line technique from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile



Image 7.118: Example of horizontal line technique from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile



Image 7.119: Example of horizontal line technique from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile

7.4.2.3 Category of variables Rule of Thirds: the *Scenic Rule of Thirds* and the negative space *Land*

The difference in the realization of the ideational and interpersonal metafunction also by means of a compositional feature may be found in pictures featuring the variable scenic rule of thirds. At this point of the analysis, it is clear that the interconnection of the realization of all metafunctions creates a different product according to channel. It is logical to say, in fact, that the variables which are more frequent in one corpus are more likely to occur together in the images pertaining to that corpus, rather than the other. The scenic rule of thirds enhances the message shaped by the ideational and interpersonal metafunction in the two visual corpora. Its common role but different effect is evident in pictures 7.120-121: while the subjects and the circumstances appear to be the same – the skiing activity in a mountaneous snowing setting – the process and the shot give salience to different elements and therefore shape a different message. On the one hand, the overall orchestration of the visual message through a long shot of a snowy and rich in detail setting with the ocean on the horizon conveys a sense of tranquility and perfection, ease and enchanted experience. On the other hand, the action process and the experience of adventure, social exchange are made the salient elements through a medium shot of a couple. This example confirms once again the inclusion of a more active and social gaze of the tourist experience on the

website; on Instagram, a more lonely and passive, effortless timeless experience seems to result more attractive.

Images 7.122-125 seem instead more similar to each other in terms of calculated (fake) authenticity: they all represent an idyllic view of the australian typical marine environment. The perpendicular top-down angle of the Instagram Image 7.122, in particular, provides an additional aura of perfection and eternality, untouched wilderness, with a staged use of different, contrasting colors that represent different layers of the landscape. The discontinuities embodied by different layers of landscapes in Image 7.124, similarly, seem to be constructed to give a taste to the undecided viewer of the richness and variety of constrasting "scapes" – by nature and color -a traveller will encounter if he decides to go on a trip in Australia. The webiste Image 7.123, on the other hand, appears less constructed and more focused on attracting the viewer by presenting a luxurious, less on-the-road, off-the-beaten-track experience on typical crystal clear water. The representation of means of transportation was in fact demostrated typical of the tourist gaze promoted by website pictures.

The compostional feature of the horizontal thirds line, therefore, helps apply and represent the different gaze – either romantic or more collective, tourist, mass – that attracts different audiences on different channels. This might be due to renewed attention, on the part of a contemporary social medium like Instagram, to the postmodern obsession with what is different, pure and unknown compared to the chaotic, dull and industrialized, full of constraints and activities reality. The romantic gaze manages in fact to give an idea of effortless extraordinary experience (Urry and Larsen 2011), along with a too perfect represntation of the reality which boosts the imagination and desire for an experience which might never be lived through that perspective. The aerial shots in Images 7.126-128 confirm that.



Image 7.120: Example of negative space *land* from Destination Canada's Instagram profile



Image 7.121: Example of negative space *land* from Destination Canada's official website

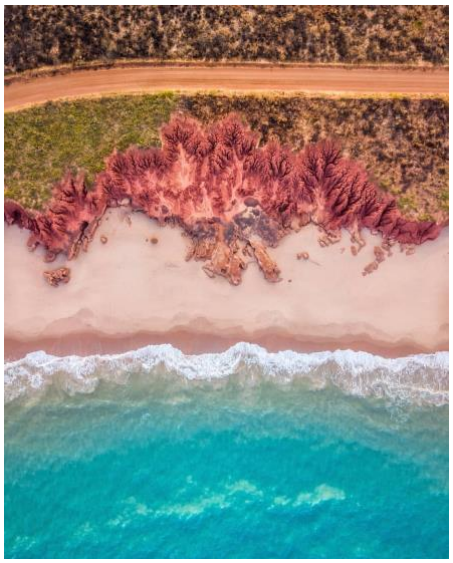


Image 7.122: Example of negative space *land* from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.123: Example of scenic rule of thirds from Tourism Western Australia's official website



Image 7.124: Example of negative space *land* from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.125: Example of scenic rule of thirds from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile

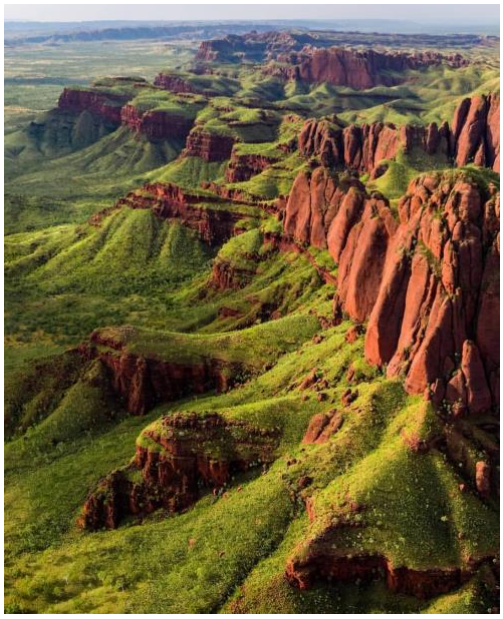


Image 7.126: Example of negative space *land* from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.127: Example of negative space *land* from Destination Canada's Instagram profile



Image 7.128: Example of scenic rule of thirds from Destination Canada's Instagram profile

The aesthetic sensitivity to the carefully constructed vastity of the landscape and the scarce prominence intentionally given to the humans for imagination purposes on Instagram is confirmed not only by the frequency rates of the variables concerning the first two metafunctions (i.e. presence of humans, frequency of processes, type of process, setting, shot and angle) but also by the very high frequency of scenic rule of thirds with the land as negative space (52% for Instagram and 28.2% for the website). Half of the promotional images that are produced for Instagram include a detailed representation of the "land" of a landscape, which can occur together with a marine environment. This might happen for a variety of reasons: in the Instagram Images 7.129 and 130, the inclusion of a portion dedicated to a marine element can enhance the focus on a specific section of the image and guide the eye through discontinuity of color and size. Both these images represent the romantic gaze of a tourist who is either absent from an untouched, hidden destination or is awed, inspired by its beauty and majesty. The size dedicated to the human subjects in picture 7.130, in fact, is minimal, and their non-transactional reaction further stimulates the imagination and desire of the viewer, who needs to be in their position in order to see what they are seeing, feel what they are feeling. Image 7.133, similarly, is designed to direct the eye of the viewer to the lake as part of the natural landscape that symbolizes a certain condition and atmosphere created by the photographer. The presence of the humans performing an

activity is so unperceivable and its attention to the atmosphere and setting is so apparent that that this image might be classified as symbolic suggestive, rather than narrative.

Images 7.131 represents a similar intention, as the human subject is intentionally shot from a long distance but in the center in order to enable the viewer to focus on him, on the one hand, through position and discontinuity of color, but also to compare its size with the majestic surroundings, which are made even more salient. De-personalization and romantic gaze strategies conveyed by this type of long shot is useful, as demonstrated, to both boost the imagination and stimulate identification, therefore not only attracting the attention of the viewer but creating the desire to live that kind of pure, extra-ordinary experience in order to feel fulfilled and amazed. The Instagram picture 7.132, on the other hand, focuses more on other types of representation strategies, more common to the website, as they employ a medium shot of a young woman enjoying a meal. However, the romantic gaze is still prevalent and de-personalized as the woman is seen from the back and the meal is consumed alone, on an off-the-beaten track trip.



Image 7.129: Example of negative space *land* from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile

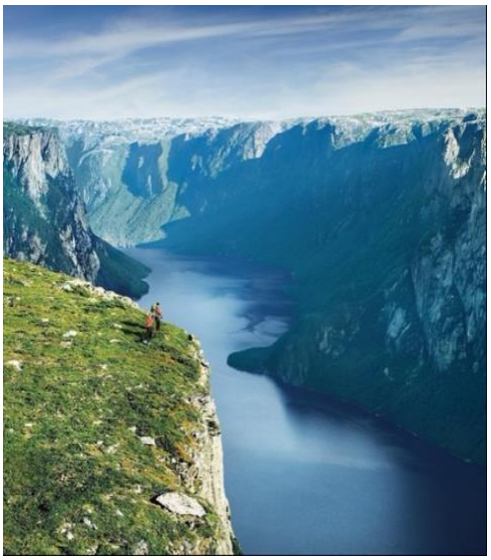


Image 7.130: Example of negative space *land* from Destination Canada's Instagram profile



Image 7.131: Example of negative space *land* from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile



Image 7.132: Example of negative space *land* from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.133: Example of negative space *land* from Destination Canada's Instagram profile

7.4.2.4 Lack of staged authenticity and aesthetic appeal: the variable *land* on the website

This staged aesthetics and authenticity, spontaneity which captures the attention of the Instagram user is rarely present on website pictures and, when present, it makes direct

reference to other types of values and tropes. The vastity and large presence of land negative spaces is not the "main" subject in pictures 7.134-143, but it merely serves as framework to give salience to the main human subjects. All of these are medium shots that are not designed to boost imagination: by providing the details of the living subjects and not of the nature, they are highly "personalized". The authenticity is, in all of these pictures, "unstaged", more spontaneous and representative of everyday life and activities. In fact, all the people depicted are performing some kind of activity. The aesthetic appeal and attractiveness seem therefore to either be abandoned for its unnecessity or devoted to frame different tropes. The sport car in Image 7.134, for example, represents the selective and exclusive, comfortable tourist experience which coincides with the tourist gaze. This is at odds with the romantic gaze symbolized by the young man in Image 7.135 (and his backpack). However, the few instances of reaction processes on website images (such as in Image 7.135) appear more spontaneous and less professional, staged photographs.

The appeal to tranquility and passive observance of the majestic beauty of untouched nature as opposed to the dull, every day and chaotic, difficult ordinary life is absent in most pictures on the website. Images 7.136-138 show a couple experiencing a real trip by hiking. Or again, many website images (such as pictures 7.139-142) stage a collective gaze of shared experience, as they consider it attractive and representative of the tourist experience. This value is absent on Instagram photographs.

One may notice therefore that there is less focus on the aesthetics and careful construction of an idyllic reality: the attention is shifted to real experiences and efforts that can be lived through a typical tourist holiday. On the one hand, the website provides a more realistic but strongly mass-tourist representation that allows for the pre-consumption of a specific experience. This is realized through the depiction of means of transportation and collective experiences. On the other hand, Instagram seems to be a reliance on the orchestration of the romantic, solitary experience in a perfect place in an atmosphere of enchantment and peacefulness. This view does not underline, on purpose, the real effort that has to be made in order to enjoy that kind of experience (Urry and Larsen 2011). Instagram therefore considers attractive the construction of an alternative, inauthentic reality that can be achieved effortlessly and that seems to be tailored to the unconscious desire of each prospective customer. The message is so subtly designed – especially because this type of advertisement is free

and supposedly unrelated to publicity – that the distracted and bored social user does not notice the fake authenticity and covert publicity behind a simple Instagram post. If he notices it, he is driven - because of the power of the visual – to unconsciously welcome positive attitudes and start imagining an alternative, free-of-constraints reality where he apparently chooses to live and which, because of the feelings it evokes, will satisfy each need and fulfill every desire.

The website channel does not need to hold on to the imagination to the viewer in order to convince him by providing idyllic and perfect representations of destinations. As a matter of fact, the customer who visits the website has already been convinced, either through Instagram or for other reasons, by the offer of the company and wants to gain more information before making a decision. This stage of the decision-making process is different: the customer needs actual and concrete information, and this is why the visual message is shaped differently, both in the composition (with less attention to the aesthetics and colors, sharpness of focus) and in the subjects, processes, shot and angles. The role of the image might therefore be considered secondary or of a different semiotic nature because of the communicative aim (or rhetorical function) of the website channel that depends on the target audience. The supremacy of text as medium of communication and information is confirmed by the presence of conceptual images with inscription such as Image 7.143. Here, the tropes of exploration, unknown and adventure are realized primarily by the text – in the foreground – and accompanied by the visual.



Image 7.134: Example of negative space *land* from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.135: Example of negative space *land* from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.136 Example of negative space *land* from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.137: Example of negative space *land* from Tourism Western Australia's official website



Image 7.138: Example of negative space *land* from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.139: Example of negative space *land* from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.140: Example of negative space *land* from Tourism Western Australia's official website



Image 7.141: Example of negative space *land* from Tourism Western Australia's official website



Image 7.142: Example of negative space *land* from Destination Canada's official website



Image 7.143: Example of negative space *land* from Destination Canada's official website

7.4.2.5 Category of variables *Visual Weight*

The different materiality and discourse semantics across channels seems to explain why the c) and d) category of the fourth macro-category *Composition* are statistically significant and abundant only in the Instagram channel. The aesthetic sensitivity to salience and framing features as means of attracting the attention and conveying a specific message are proper of Instagram. With regard to the third compositional category, "visual weight", the variable landscape element occurs in 36.9% of the Instagram pictures (compared to 15.8% of the website). The intentional positioning of a landscape element in the foreground of the photograph together with its exaggerated size – usually in correspondence of a Rule of Thirds point - makes the viewer's eye attracted instantly to the picture. The medium shot and eye-level angle reproducing a close natural detail (such as in Images 7.144 and 7.145) makes it possible for the recipient of the multimodal message to create a direct, involved contact with the destination. The viewer is, in fact, put in a close position that allows him or her to notice the details of the setting. Additionally, the inclusion of a rock or some remains reminds the viewer of the ancient, apparently irretrievable past that can, through this experience, be reached and explored again (Dann 1996). The correlation between this tourist trope and the mood strategy – the sunset disclosing behind the horizon – both confers an atmosphere of magic to the symbolic suggestive/attributive pictures and plays the strategic role of providing compositional salience through a discontinuity of color and shape. The presence of the sunset further suggests the idea that this type of

pictures is taken at strategic times during the day, in order to enhance its attractiveness and activate the imagination and desire of the viewer to enjoy peacefully a natural, ancient eternity of time and space.



Image 7.144: Example of *landscape element (visual weight)* from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile



Image 7.145: Example of *landscape element (visual weight)* from Tourism Ireland's official website

7.4.2.6 Category of variables *Compositional Features: Framework, Symmetry and Reflection*

The last category of compositional variables mainly focuses on making both the main subject salient and the picture aesthetically pleasant and balanced. Four variables were all reported with a statistically significant variance across corpora and with a higher frequency rate on Instagram: the strategy of framework, the strategy of reflection, of symmetry and leading lines. The fifth strategy of this category, the *sharpness of focus*, characterizes all the Instagram pictures introduced in the visual analysis (92.9% versus 27.3% on the website) but, by being purely aesthetic, will not be discussed further.

The strategy of framework is something in between Dann's tourist trope of the *gate* (1996) and one of the purely professional photography framing strategies described by Manovich in the design of Instagram pictures. It is a compositional feature that aims to provide a particular entry point, perspective to the viewer of a destination and

underline specific details of the landscape. Even if this strategy is adopted in few pictures (7.2% on Instagram and 1.93%) and does not represent a strong pattern of discourse semantics, it manages to construct a positive evaluation of the destination and convey positive attitudes to the viewer. For example, Images 7.146-147 both employ flourishing trees to embellish the picture but also to emphasize the background behind them. In one case, the flowers in the city symbolize the undeniable presence of the nature (characterized by warm tones) that grows in the industrialized, "cold" city. This way, the producer of the multimodal message persuades the prospective tourist to think that he can enjoy multiple authentic experiences, both exciting and relaxing, if he decides to visit that destination in Canada. In the other case, the flowers serve as a continuity framing strategy that encompasses the whole picture and provides salience to the old bridge in the center of the picture, symbolizing a symbiotic relationship between the historical and natural uniqueness of the destination. Images 7.148 and 7.149, on the other hand, represent two strong discontinuity techniques and encode the gate into the unknown and the privileged perspective that allows the viewer to take a look at what he can see and discover at the end of the passage. The presence of humans performing reaction processes not only stimulates the identification with the subject – the smaller the subject, the more effective the imagination and de-personalization strategies – but it also confirms the culture of the effortless and privileged "seeing, feeling" rather than doing and earning something, which characterizes the everyday life of individuals and which is not longed for when imagining a travel experience.



Image 7.146: Example of framework strategy from Destination Canada's Instagram profile



Image 7.147: Example of framework strategy from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile



Image 7.148: Example of framework strategy from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile



Image 7.149: Example of framework strategy from Tourism Western Australia's official website

Image 7.148 also includes a particular polarizing technique that serves the purpose of providing both balance and salience to the goal, "exit", after the passage: the reflection of the main subject through the water. This aesthetically salient strategy – detectable also in images 7.150-155 – that occurs in only 6.17% of the pictures on Instagram and 2.07% of the website manages to capture the interest of a prospective tourist by playfully providing a symmetric, alternative version of the reality that doubles the size (and the aesthetically pleasant effect)of the subject. The subjects of these pictures are usually perfectly staged shots of historical, cultural landmarks or spectacular natural landscapes that promptly activate the imagination and romantic gaze of the viewer. Moreover, in Image 7.154, the technique also recreates the contrasting color harmonies of the picture – blue and yellow – produced by the sunset mood, thereby framing the union of specific tourist tropes: the authentic natural, the exotic, the pilgrimage (Dann 1996). There are many ways of realizing these tropes through the textual metafunction, and the Instagram channel seems to focus on the aesthetics and staged composition to highlight them in an attractive and fictitious way.



Image 7.150: Example of reflection strategy from Destination Canada's Instagram profile



Image 7.151: Example of reflection strategy from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile



Image 7.152: Example of reflection strategy from Destination Canada's Instagram profile



Image 7.153: Example of reflection strategy from Destination Canada's Instagram profile



Image 7.154: Example of reflection strategy from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.155 Example of reflection strategy from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile

The symmetry strategy is a compositional feature that realizes a similar effect in few images (8.57% on Instagram and 3.43% on the website). However, this feature, particularly on the website, is used to realize promotional tropes and aspects of the destination which are more related to the cultural, gastronomic uniqueness or the collective tourist gaze rather than the romantic gaze at the nature. Images 156 is one of the very few direct frontal angle that invites the viewer to confront themselves with and appreciate the exotic entrance of a Chinese neighborhood in Canada. The low frontal perspective directly involve the tourist and shape an asymmetric relationship with a symbol of a foreign culture, which is, not by chance, an entrance. The low angle puts the cultural symbol in a powerful position which seems, therefore, less stereotyped and appropriated. Picture 157, on the other hand, offers a staged view of a composition of old traditional Irish baskets that remind of ancient Ireland and its simplicity, connection with the nature, as opposed to the virtual, industrialized reality viewers are living in on a daily basis. The variable symmetry is therefore employed to frame and give salience to an important tourist trope. In images 7.158 and 7.159, symmetry is adopted to create a balanced frontal perspective which involves the viewer in a reality where a destination and its peculiarities are explored with comfort, thereby enhancing a collective and tourist gaze. These last two images, in fact, belong to the website channel).



Image 7.156: Example of symmetry strategy from Destination Canada's Instagram profile



Image 7.157: Example of symmetry strategy from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.158: Example of symmetry strategy from Tourism Ireland's official website



Image 7.159: Example of symmetry strategy from Destination Canada's official website

7.4.2.7 Category of variables *Compositional Features: Leading Line(s)* and conclusion

The last variable that deserves some attention for its compositional value and frequency of occurrence is the *leading line*. This feature characterizes in fact approximately one picture out of three on Instagram (30.5%) but only 15.1% of website images. The importance of this material regularity is due to the fact that it constructs a discourse semantics of strong involvement and salience: the photographed "line" is usually shot from a (direct) frontal angle that unconsciously invites the viewer to join the experience pictured. This technique also manages to easily draw the viewer's attention, as it promptly gives them both a direction to follow and the possibility to imagine the experience of reaching its end and enjoy the view. This is the case of pictures 7.160 and 7.162, where the pier stretches along the horizon and the distance, the limits of photography do not allow the viewer to see what can be viewed, enjoyed, and therefore felt. Picture 7.161 instead positions right at the center of a polarized picture and at the end of the leading line a small house, right in the middle of the ocean. This view of solitary experience immersed in the nature is what identifies most the romantic gaze, where the nature is the main subject of the narrative. Leading lines also serve the purpose of enhancing the depth of the scape, the view and indirectly highlight the idea of natural vastness and boost the imagination, desire to really experience such a view. Leading lines, therefore, allow for the pre-consumption of a perfectly staged and appealing reality that can be reached, "walked" imaginarily by means of the picture. However, as the most unconscious desire of the Instagram community is to see, feel a view of a constructed perfect reality and to live it effortlessly, benefitting from the positive attitudes and feelings it evokes, the real act of walking is not portrayed. When it is (Images 7.164-165), the human subject is given a small portion of the picture and the goal is viewable, reachable, so that the tourist knows what kind of view and feelings he may expect to have. This idea is further stimulated by the combination of a romantic gaze and social trope of a loving couple in Image 7.164.

The higher presence of leading lines and other aesthetic features that provide balance and salience on Instagram, together with a higher frequency of natural landscapes, absence of humans, reaction processes and very long, high shots demonstrate how on this channel the three metafunctions work together to shape and convey a completely

different visual message that occurs only occasionally or with a weak combination on the website. All these variables and material regularities manage to create an alternative reality which is perfect, magic and boosts the imagination of a suggestive dimension of quiet, visual and emotional reward without effort. This strategy reaches popularity and consensus because it embodies everything that the postmodern individual longs for during his or her everyday life. The natural affordances of the visual therefore are exploited in a different and more designed way on the Instagram channel, and give imagery a primary role in the multimodal communicative event. This implies that the rhetorical function and aim of the multimodal artefact is focused on the visual meaning and its attractiveness. On the website channel, on the other hand, evocative imagery does not play the primary role in the communication – and, in some cases, it does not even exist – as the purpose and target recipient searches with intentionality for a different kind of message: concrete information. For this reason, the orchestration of the multimodal message here might prioritize and give salience to the textual semiotic system that is imbued with practical and useful information and give less importance to inspiring, persuading content that creates needs. The affordances of imagery, therefore, are not fully exploited and designed, and the three metafunctions work less intentionally to convey a different message: the more concrete collective and tourist gaze, and not the sophisticated postmodern longing for easiness and perfection. By changing the role and nature due to the different audience and communicative aim, the rhetorical strategies of visual semiotic system change deeply, and this creates a new genre of tourism photography and possibly communication.

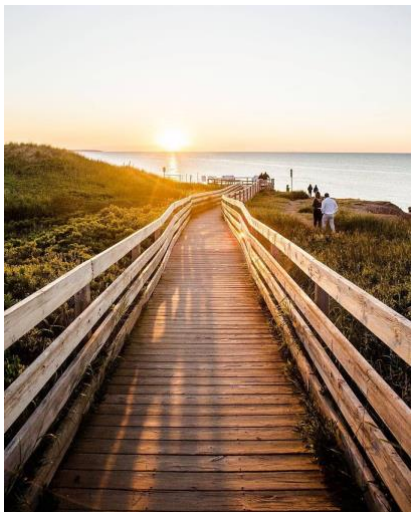


Image 7.160: Example of leading line strategy from Destination Canada's Instagram profile



Image 7.161: Example of leading line strategy from Tourism Western Australia' s official website

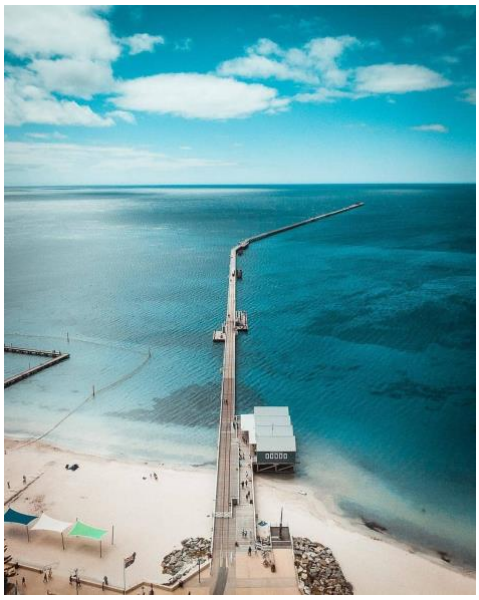


Image 7.162: Example of leading line strategy from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.163: Example of leading line strategy from Tourism Western Australia's Instagram profile



Image 7.164: Example of leading line strategy from Tourism Ireland's Instagram profile



Image 7.165: Example of leading line strategy from Tourism Ireland's official website

Chapter Eight

Linguistic analysis: The Transitivity system and the creation of an imaginary world

This chapter aims to report the methods implemented and the results obtained from the quantitative and qualitative analysis of language in the six written sub-corpora of tourism discourse introduced in the methodology section and research design. The six Instagram and website sub-corpora have been kept separate to avoid a skewing of the statistical analyses as a result of the different sizes of the website sub-corpora. The website sub-corpora in fact, compared to the Instagram sub-corpora, were crawled, without the possibility of estimating or handling the size of the data. Therefore, if the three sub-corpora had been grouped without a separate analysis of their wordlists and keyword lists, some relevant raw frequencies pertaining to smaller sub-corpora (such as Tourism Western Australia's sub-corpus) might not have been included in the results.

This section aims to shed light particularly on the linguistic choices of tourism discourse produced by the three travel agencies under investigation with a *Transitivity System* (Systemic Functional Linguistics, Halliday and Matthiessen 2014) approach. This chapter therefore attempts to provide answers to the first and second research objectives, i.e. 1) the discovery of patterns of tourism narratives across these popular travel agencies and their channels and 2) the detection of relevant differences in the linguistic choices across channels.

Section 8.1 reports the corpus tools and methodology adopted for the quantitative analysis through the lens of Transitivity, while section 8.2.1 reports firstly the first 20 most frequent verbs generated by Sketch Engine in all six sub-corpora. This section describes both the similarities and differences in terms of presence and frequency of processes across all sub-corpora. Verbs were selected as they represent the main source of insight into the representation of events according to the Transitivity Analysis (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 216, 222).

Section 8.2.2 continues the analysis of wordlists by taking into consideration the next 20 most frequent verbs. These underwent the same analysis that was conducted in section 8.2.1, to further examine the usage of specific verbs and its variation across

channels. The objective was to detect differences that might be related to the channel and its rhetorical strategies, including the different audience and needs, and the different communicative aim in the marketing funnel of persuasion (Manca 2016; Bateman 2014a).

Successively, section 8.2.3 reports a preliminary categorization of the verbs as a result of the analysis. This was carried out in order to provide a roadmap for the qualitative analysis of verb choice and usage that was conducted in section 8.3.

Therefore, section 8.3 discusses the quantitative data from sections 8.2.1-8.2.3 and the usage and meaning of some verbs in their context, including the participants and circumstances. This procedure shed light on the similarities and differences across channels and the potential definition of a genre of tourism communication, i.e. Instagram tourism discourse.

Finally, section 8.4 reports and presents a semantic categorization of the first 30 single-unit keywords and 30 multi-unit keywords from all six sub-corpora that were generated through the comparison with EnTenTen2018 as a reference corpus of general English. This procedure allowed for the exploration and definition of tourism language as a specialized discourse (Bianchi 2017; Gotti et al. 2017), and will be connected to the analysis of keywords according to the Appraisal analysis in Chapter 9.

The finding of this chapter can be associated with the discovery of a new visual and multimodal genre that was explored in Chapter Six and Seven.

8.1 Corpus tools and methodology

This section reports on and describes the results from the wordlists generated by Sketch Engine from the six sub-corpora which pertain to the three travel agencies under investigation and two of their main channels of communication, i.e. Instagram and the official website. A preliminary analysis of the processes wordlists attempts to provide an overview of the linguistic choice of verbs in all six sub-corpora, thereby describing the trends of verb usage in tourism discourse. In order to compare findings across corpora with different sizes, the frequencies of each result were normalized per 1.000.000, as suggested by Sketch Engine. Of course, these results cannot be generalized to all instances of tourism discourse as a genre; however, the worldwide popularity of the travel agencies under investigation signals the effectiveness of their

persuasive narratives and consequently indicates a measure of reliability concerning the findings with regard to the main patterns of rhetorical strategies.

8.2 Findings: Similarities and Differences

8.2.1 Analysis of frequency: 20 most frequent verbs

Tables 8.1-8.6 report the first 20 most frequent verbs across all six sub-corpora. From the data in these tables, it is apparent that the lemma *to be* is the most frequent verb in all sub-corpora. Its normalized frequency rate varies from 2.1% (Destination Canada Instagram and Tourism Western Australia website) to 2.5% (Tourism Ireland Instagram and Destination Canada website) and 2.8% (Tourism Ireland website), up to 3.5% (Tourism Western Australia Instagram)[1]. With values ranging from 0.9% to 0.1%, a series of verbs occurs in all sub-corpora and with a similar frequency rate or position in the wordlist. First of all, *have* occupies the second position in Tourism Ireland (with a relative frequency of 0.7% and 0.6% on its Instagram and website channel, respectively) and Destination Canada (0.4% in both channels), and a second or third position in Tourism Western Australia, with a frequency rate of 0.4% (Instagram) or 0.2% (website). Other generic verbs such as *make, take* or *get* are frequent in all sub-corpora, as they occur with between 0.1% and 0.2% in most sub-corpora (Tourism Ireland and Destination Canada channels) and with a primary position in Tourism Western Australia (on the Instagram channel, *take* and *make* occur in 0.3% of all tokens).

More specific verbs related to the activities of the travelling experience that occur with a high frequency are *explore* (with a relative frequency rate of 0.3%-0.1%, except for the website channel of Tourism Western Australia, where it does not occur among the first 20 verbs), *find, do* and *visit*. With reference to these verbs, all sub-corpora include high frequency rates (always between 0.3% and 0.1%), except for Tourism Ireland Instagram, where *visit* does not appear. Similarly, at least one of the verbs of movement such as *come, go, walk* or *hike* is highly frequent (with a 0.1% or lower frequency) in all

[1] For the current analysis, no distinction was made between *be* and *have* as verbs or as either auxiliary or passive constructions. At the end of section 8.2.3, however, a table summarizing all findings of the quantitative analysis excludes all instances of these constructions from the token count by means of SQL. This procedure was performed on Sketch Engine.

sub-corpora; however, in no corpora all of these occur together and with a high frequency.

Wordlist	Tourism Ireland – Instagram Corpus		
Item	Frequency (number of hits)	Relative frequency [(item/7,670) x 1,000,000]	%
be	188	24511.08214	2.5%
have	52	6779.66102	0.7%
know	27	3520.20860	0.4%
see	18	2346.80574	0.2%
take	17	2216.42764	0.2%
want	16	2086.04954	0.2%
call	12	1564.53716	0.2%
find	12	1564.53716	0.2%
go	11	1434.15906	0.1%
explore	11	1434.15906	0.1%
build	10	1303.78096	0.1%
make	10	1303.78096	0.1%
get	10	1303.78096	0.1%
do	10	1303.78096	0.1%
sit	9	1173.40287	0.1%
live	9	1173.40287	0.1%
look	8	1043.02477	0.1%
stay	7	912.64668	0.09%
come	7	912.64668	0.09%
walk	7	912.64668	0.09%

Table 8.1: A list of the first 20 verbs in the sub-corpus Tourism Ireland - Instagram

Wordlist	Tourism Ireland – Website Corpus		
Item	Frequency (number of hits)	Relative frequency [(item/745,251) x 1,000,000]	%
be	20553	27578.62787	2,8%
have	4615	6192.54453	0,6%
take	1705	2287.81981	0,2%
do	1284	1722.90946	0,2%
make	1284	1722.90946	0,2%
get	1074	1441.12520	0,1%
include	986	1323.04418	0,1%
find	946	1269.37099	0,1%
see	827	1109.69324	0,1%
know	809	1085.54031	0,1%
offer	798	1070.78018	0,1%
explore	793	1064.07103	0,1%
come	748	1003.68869	0,1%
enjoy	728	976.85209	0,1%
go	642	861.45473	0,09%
walk	608	815.83252	0,08%
visit	573	768.86848	0,08%
locate	568	762.15933	0,08%
say	552	740.69005	0,07%
look	500	670.91490	0,07%

Table 8.2: A list of the first 20 verbs in the sub-corpus Tourism Ireland - Website

Wordlist	Destination Canada – Instagram Corpus		
Item	Frequency (number of hits)	Relative frequency [(item/14,984) x 1,000,000]	%
be	316	21089.16177	2,1%
have	52	3470.36839	0.4%
see	47	3136.67912	0.3%
find	36	2402.56273	0.3%
do	32	2135.61132	0.2%
take	30	2002.13561	0.2%
make	29	1935.39776	0.2%
locate	29	1935.39776	0.2%
explore	28	1868.65990	0.2%
get	28	1868.65990	0.2%
know	27	1801.92205	0.2%
look	25	1668.44634	0.2%
enjoy	22	1468.23278	0.2%
walk	21	1401.49493	0.1%
visit	21	1401.49493	0.1%
want	18	1201.28137	0.1%
come	18	1201.28137	0.1%
watch	16	1067.80566	0.1%
plan	15	1001.06781	0.1%
answer	14	934.32995	0.09%

Table 8.3: A list of the first 20 verbs in the sub-corpus Destination Canada – Instagram

Wordlist	Destination Canada – Website Corpus		
Item	Frequency (number of hits)	Relative frequency [(item/406,084) x 1,000,000]	%
be	10211	25145.04388	2,5%
have	1614	3974.54714	0,4%
take	974	2398.51853	0,2%
do	818	2014.36156	0,2%
make	749	1844.44598	0,2%
get	722	1777.95727	0,2%
see	651	1603.11660	0,2%
explore	649	1598.19151	0,2%
find	630	1551.40316	0,2%
enjoy	530	1305.14869	0,1%
include	494	1216.49708	0.1%
go	471	1159.85855	0.1%
know	432	1063.81931	0.1%
visit	397	977.63024	0.1%
want	389	957.92989	0.1%
look	360	886.51609	0,09%
offer	350	861.89064	0,09%
try	309	760.92631	0.08%
come	308	758.46377	0.08%
hike	301	741.22595	0.07%

Table 8.4: A list of the first 20 verbs in the sub-corpus Destination Canada – Website

Wordlist	Tourism Western Australia – Instagram Corpus		
Item	Frequency (number of hits)	Relative frequency [(item/19,444) x 1,000,000]	%
be	684	35177.94692	3.5%
have	93	4782.96647	0.4%
see	77	3960.09052	0.4%
take	55	2828.63608	0.3%
look	54	2777.20634	0.3%
make	52	2674.34684	0.3%
explore	47	2417.19811	0.2%
think	45	2314.33861	0.2%
do	44	2262.90887	0.2%
know	42	2160.04937	0.2%
get	37	1902.90064	0.2%
find	37	1902.90064	0.2%
enjoy	35	1800.04114	0.2%
visit	33	1697.18165	0.2%
say	29	1491.46266	0.2%
want	26	1337.17342	0.1%
leave	26	1337.17342	0.1%
relax	22	1131.45443	0.1%
come	21	1080.02469	0.1%
discover	20	1028.59494	0.1%

Table 8.5: A list of the first 20 verbs in the sub-corpus Tourism Western Australia – Instagram

Wordlist	Tourism Western Australia – Website Corpus		
Item	Frequency (number of hits)	Relative frequency [(item/34,094) x 1,000,000]	%
be	723	21206.07732	2.1%
take	113	3314.36616	0.3%
have	83	2434.44594	0.2%
make	80	2346.45392	0.2%
include	76	2229.13123	0.2%
find	65	1906.49381	0.2%
use	63	1847.83246	0.2%
do	49	1437.20303	0.1%
see	43	1261.21898	0.1%
get	40	1173.22696	0.1%
visit	39	1143.89629	0.1%
provide	36	1055.90426	0.1%
collect	33	967.91224	0.1%
offer	33	967.91224	0.1%
know	28	821.25887	0.08%
enjoy	26	762.59752	0.08%
follow	25	733.26685	0.07%
join	24	703.93618	0.07%
disclose	24	703.93618	0.07%

Table 8.6: A list of the first 20 verbs in the sub-corpus Tourism Western Australia – Website

Finally, another group of verbs that deserves attention because of its high frequency rate in almost all corpora consists of *know* and *want*. While want occurs in all Instagram sub-corpora and one website corpora (with 0.1% apart from Tourism Ireland, 0.2%), know appears in all lists of the 20 most frequent verbs, even though at varying degrees. It is apparent from the table that this verb occurs with a higher frequency on Instagram corpora (with a relative frequency rate ranging from 0.2% to 0.4%) and occupies a less prominent position in the website corpora (0.08%-0.1%).

Overall, these results indicate that the travel agencies and their two main channels have a series of verbs in common, which suggests that they choose similar strategies to represent the tourist experience. This hypothesis, however, needs to be further explored and confirmed by analyzing the usage of these verbs in their context.

Turning now to the differences between the 20 most frequent verbs according to channel, a few results stand out in the tables 8.1-8.6. From the first results in each table, it is apparent that the verb *see* occupies one of the top positions only in the Instagram corpora. In fact, this verb is the third most frequent verb in the corpora Tourism Western Australia Instagram and Destination Canada Instagram, and fourth in Tourism Ireland Instagram, after *be, have or know* (with a frequency rate that varies

between 0.2% and 0.4%) on Instagram, whereas it occupies the 7th (Tourism Ireland; Tourism Western Australia) or 9th position (Destination Canada) in the website corpora, with a frequency rate between the 0.1% and the 0.2%.

What is striking about the data in these tables is not only the frequency rate of other verbs; the extent to which the language differs, in fact, concerns the usage of specific verbs that occur only in one channel. If, on the one hand, verbs such as *look* and *know* are more frequent in the Instagram corpora (occupying positions with a frequency rate between 0.1% and 0.4%, compared to 0.07%-0.1% in the website corpora or being absent), verbs such as *offer* and *include* occur only in the website corpora. As Tables 8.2, 8.4, and 8.6 show, offer occurs with a 0.1% frequency rate in the Tourism Ireland and Tourism Western Australia corpora and 0.09% in the Destination Canada corpus, whereas include is used in 0.2% of the cases in the Tourism Western Australia corpus and 0.1% in the other agencies' corpora.

What emerges from the data comparison is that the similarities between the six sub-corpora and the two channels are greater than the differences; this may be due to the fact that tourism discourse is a genre that is shared by every instance of tourism discourse online (Bianchi 2017). However, in this first quantitative analysis there seem to be few important differences that are related to the main purpose of communication in each channel. The qualitative analysis through the Transitivity will facilitate the discovery of differences in the usage of the most frequent verbs that occur at varying degrees according to channel. As significant variation was found in the qualitative analysis according to channel and its main aim, it could be possible to define Instagram tourism communication as a genre of tourism discourse (Maci 2020; Bhatia 1993, 22-34; Halliday 2014) or hybrid genre (Francesconi 2014). Another aspect that is striking is that, from this preliminary analysis, no significant differences were found between the agencies.

8.2.2 Analysis of frequency: 20 next most frequent verbs

Before moving to the Transitivity categorization and qualitative analysis, it may be interesting to investigate whether there are any stylistic differences between channels by looking at the next 20 most frequent verbs. The results are reported in Tables 8.7-8.12.

These tables provide great insight into the usage of tourism discourse in each channel, which will be further discussed in the Transitivity and qualitative analysis. What stands out in the tables is the presence of verbs related to sight or imagination across all the corpora except for the website channel of Tourism Ireland. In particular, the verb *gaze* occurs in Tourism Ireland's Instagram channel (with a frequency rate of 0.04%), the verb *picture* in the Destination Canada, Instagram corpus (0.07%), and the verb *watch* in the Tourism Western Australia, Instagram (0.06%) and website corpora (0.05%) and in Destination Canada Instagram (0.1%) and website corpora (0.05%). Three other verbs seem instead to define more a channel rather than the other: in fact, the verb *meet* occurs more often in the website channel (0.04% Tourism Ireland and 0.05% Tourism Western Australia) rather than Instagram (only Tourism Western Australia, 0.06%), along with *serve* (0.04% in Tourism Ireland, 0.05% in Destination Canada, compared to 0.05% only in the Instagram channel). Finally, it can be noticed that *feel* occurs only in two website corpora (Tourism Ireland and Destination Canada, 0.04%) and one Instagram corpus (Tourism Western Australia, 0.08%), as opposed to *keep*, which figures in two Instagram corpora (Destination Canada and Tourism Western Australia, 0.05%) and one website corpus (Tourism Ireland, 0.04%). Interestingly, *discover* occurs only in one Instagram corpus (Tourism Western Australia, 0.1%) and two website corpora (with a frequency rate ranging from 0.05% and 0.06%).

Wordlist	**Tourism Ireland – Instagram Corpus**		
Item (21-40)	**Frequency (number of hits)**	**Relative frequency [(item/7,670) x 1,000,000]**	**%**
offer	7	912.64668	0.09%
say	7	912.64668	0.09%
leave	6	782.26858	0.08%
spend	5	651.89048	0.07%
think	5	651.89048	0.07%
visit	5	651.89048	0.07%
step	5	651.89048	0.07%
need	5	651.89048	0.07%
match	4	521.51239	0.05%
gaze	3	391.13429	0.04%
stand	3	391.13429	0.04%
stretch	3	391.13429	0.04%
thank	3	391.13429	0.04%
impress	3	391.13429	0.04%
join	3	391.13429	0.04%
tag	3	391.13429	0.04%
put	3	391.13429	0.04%
continue	3	391.13429	0.04%
hold	3	391.13429	0.04%
cross	3	391.13429	0.04%

Table 8.7: A list of the next 20 verbs in the sub-corpus Tourism Ireland – Instagram

Wordlist	**Tourism Ireland – Website Corpus**		
Item (21-40)	**Frequency (number of hits)**	**Relative frequency [(item/745,251) x 1,000,000]**	**%**
provide	491	658.83843	0,07%
build	483	648.10379	0.07%
bring	427	572.96132	0.06%
discover	423	567.59401	0.06%
set	415	556.85937	0.06%
use	406	544.78290	0,05%
drive	348	466.95677	0,05%
want	346	464.27311	0,05%
situate	325	436.09468	0,04%
give	311	417.30907	0,04%
serve	310	415.96724	0,04%
leave	297	398.52345	0,04%
run	295	395.83979	0,04%
meet	290	389.13064	0,04%
follow	289	387.78881	0,04%
feel	282	378.39600	0,04%
become	273	366.31954	0,04%
create	272	364.97771	0,04%
tell	271	363.63588	0,04%
keep	269	360.95222	0,04%

Table 8.8: A list of the next 20 verbs in the sub-corpus Tourism Ireland – Website

Wordlist	Destination Canada – Instagram Corpus		
Item (21-40)	Frequency (number of hits)	Relative frequency [(item/14,984) x 1,000,000]	%
spend	14	934.32995	0.09%
spot	13	867.59210	0.09%
try	13	867.59210	0.09%
include	12	800.85424	0.08%
hike	12	800.85424	0.08%
join	12	800.85424	0.08%
check	12	800.85424	0.08%
stay	11	734.11639	0.07%
picture	11	734.11639	0.07%
ask	11	734.11639	0.07%
learn	11	734.11639	0.07%
grab	10	667.37854	0.07%
recommend	10	667.37854	0.07%
offer	9	600.64068	0.06%
guide	9	600.64068	0.06%
think	9	600.64068	0.06%
serve	8	533.90283	0.05%
start	8	533.90283	0.05%
keep	8	533.90283	0.05%
love	7	467.16498	0.05%

Table 8.9: A list of the next 20 verbs in the sub-corpus Destination Canada – Instagram

Wordlist	Destination Canada – Website Corpus		
Item (21-40)	Frequency (number of hits)	Relative frequency [(item/406,084) x 1,000,000]	%
walk	240	591.01073	0.06%
start	228	561.46019	0.06%
locate	227	558.99765	0.06%
experience	225	554.07256	0.06%
learn	224	551.61001	0.06%
spend	224	551.61001	0.06%
discover	220	541.75983	0.05%
bring	214	526.98456	0.05%
stop	212	522.05948	0.05%
serve	212	522.05948	0.05%
watch	209	514.67184	0.05%
set	197	485.12130	0.05%
head	195	480.19622	0.05%
feature	191	470.34604	0.05%
use	182	448.18313	0.05%
stay	178	438.33296	0.04%
call	175	430.94532	0.04%
mean	175	430.94532	0.04%
feel	173	426.02023	0.04%
eat	172	423.55769	0.04%

Table 8.10: A list of the next 20 verbs in the sub-corpus Destination Canada - Website

Wordlist	Tourism Western Australia - Instagram		
Item (21-40)	Frequency (number of hits)	Relative frequency [(item/19,444) x 1,000,000]	%
soak	19	977.16519	0.1%
experience	18	925.73545	0.09%
capture	18	925.73545	0.09%
love	16	822.87595	0.08%
need	16	822.87595	0.08%
go	15	771.44620	0.08%
feel	15	771.44620	0.08%
stay	14	720.01646	0.07%
spend	14	720.01646	0.07%
surround	14	720.01646	0.07%
fall	14	720.01646	0.07%
snap	13	668.58671	0.07%
start	12	617.15696	0.06%
head	12	617.15696	0.06%
watch	12	617.15696	0.06%
stop	12	617.15696	0.06%
offer	11	565.72722	0.06%
meet	11	565.72722	0.06%
keep	9	462.86772	0.05%
guarantee	9	462.86772	0.05%

Table 8.11: A list of the next 20 verbs in the sub-corpus Tourism Western Australia – Instagram

Wordlist	Tourism Western Australia - Website		
Item (21-40)	Frequency (number of hits)	Relative frequency [(item/34,094) x 1,000,000]	%
explore	22	645.27483	0.07%
locate	21	615.94415	0.06%
hold	21	615.94415	0.06%
walk	20	586.61348	0.06%
discover	20	586.61348	0.06%
sit	19	557.28281	0.06%
create	19	557.28281	0.06%
give	18	527.95213	0.05%
reach	18	527.95213	0.05%
hit	18	527.95213	0.05%
meet	17	498.62146	0.05%
require	17	498.62146	0.05%
watch	17	498.62146	0.05%
guide	17	498.62146	0.05%
contact	16	469.29078	0.05%
access	15	439.96011	0.04%
lie	14	410.62944	0.04%
stay	14	410.62944	0.04%
drive	14	410.62944	0.04%
need	14	410.62944	0.04%

Table 8.12: A list of the next 20 verbs in the sub-corpus Tourism Western Australia - Website

A closer inspection of the tables reveals significant differences between channels in terms of the presence or absence of specific verbs. In particular, few verbs appear only in one channel and are absent from the previous tables. On the one hand, the verb *use*

occurs only in website corpora (0.05% in Tourism Ireland and Destination Canada, and 0.2% in Tourism Western Australia), along with *provide* (0.07% Tourism Ireland and 0.1% Tourism Western Australia). Similarly, verbs related to the journey to a place or its location appear only in website corpora: these are *drive* (Tourism Ireland 0.05%, Tourism Western Australia 0.04%), and either *situate* or *locate* (with a frequency rate ranging from 0.04% to 0.06%).

On the other hand, there are three verbs which are more related to mental or emotional experiences in informal language that occur only in Instagram corpora. These are *love* (0.05% Destination Canada and 0.08% Tourism Western Australia), *spend* (0.07% Tourism Ireland and Tourism Western Australia, 0.09% Destination Canada) and think (0.07% Tourism Ireland, 0.06% Destination Canada, 0.2% Tourism Western Australia). *Spend*, specifically, as was detected in Sketch Engine during the qualitative analysis, often correlates with abstract notions such as *time* or different times of the day.

Finally, by comparing the tables from the previous and the current analyses, a few other considerations can be made. Some verbs, in fact, appear in very different positions in the wordlists according to the channel. *Offer*, for example, appears among the first 20 verbs on the website (showing a frequency rate of 0.09%-0.1%) but occurs in the next 20 most frequent verbs on Instagram (with a frequency rate of 0.06%-0-09%). *Include*, instead, never appears in Instagram corpora, except for Destination Canada (0.08% in the current analysis). *Need*, on the other hand, appears in two Instagram corpora (0.07% Tourism Ireland and 0.08% Tourism Western Australia) and only one website corpus (Tourism Western Australia, 0.05%, where the verb *require* also appears, with a frequency rate of 0.04%).

Some conclusions may be drawn from the analysis of the occurrence rate of verbs across these agencies and their channels. There seem to be both similarities and differences, in fact, in their choice of verbs: while, on the one hand, both website and Instagram communication seem to choose verbs concerning the tourist experience, the performance of activities (or verbs of *doing*, Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 224) and the experience of being and describing (through the verbs *to be and have*, in particular), travel agencies on Instagram tend to choose verbs semantically related to the experience of reacting, sensing, feeling and imagining (by means of *see, know, want, picture, gaze, love, spend, think*) (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 214). On the website,

verbs related to the provision of services and the location of the destination and/or services are preferred (through *offer, include, situate, locate, provide*). Together, these results provide important insights into the construction of the tourist experience and reality, which will be discussed in greater detail in the next sections.

8.2.3 Categorization according to Transitivity: A preliminary analysis

The next section of the quantitative analysis by means of wordlists comparison concerns the categorization of the verbs generated according to Halliday and Matthiessen's Transitivity approach (2014). Tables 8.13-8.18 classify the 20 most frequent verbs included by the three travel agencies under investigation on their Instagram profile and website, whereas Tables 8.19-8.24 report the categorization of the next 20 verbs introduced in the previous section. The verbs were classified according to the Transitivity framework provided by Halliday (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 213-219) and this analysis attempts to investigate the design of the communication and the specific verb choice adopted to present the tourist experience and imaginary world, which was designed by travel agencies to promote a destination (Francesconi 2014; Manca 2016). It is therefore within the scope of this study to understand how the flow of events is designed through processes of "happening, doing, sensing, saying, being or having" (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 213).

In order to do that, each process was classified as either a) material, b) mental, c) behavioral, d) verbal, e) relational identifying/attributive or existential and f) possibly belonging to different categories. It is important to mention that the boundaries between processes such as behavioral material can be indistinct at times and depend on the context of use. The process *walk*, for example, could be both material and behavioral. For this reason, the Transitivity analysis in this section is only considered to be preliminary, as to allow for a quantification of the linguistic choices across channels that may become the starting point for the qualitative analysis in section 8.3. Relational identifying, attributive and existential processes, which all include the verb *to be*, were considered together in this preliminary analysis and its usage will be investigated in the qualitative analysis. Other verbs such as make, get, take, find are too general and can be regarded as both material, mental or even relational without a context (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 217-218); for this reason, they were temporarily grouped together under the category "multiple uses".

Category – Transitivity processes TI IG (1)	**Verb**	**Normalized Frequency Rate (total)**
Material	*go; build; do; sit; stay; come; walk; explore; live*	0.9%
Behavioral	*look*	0.1%
Mental	*know; see; want*	0.8%
Relational identifying/ attributive/ existential process	*have; be* (counted also as auxiliary verb or for passive forms)	3.2%
Verbal	*call*	0.2%
Multiple uses*	*get; make; take; find*	0.6%

Table 8.13: Categorization of the first 20 verbs according to the Transitivity framework – Tourism Ireland Instagram sub-corpus

Category – Transitivity processes TI WS (1)	**Verb**	**Normalized Frequency Rate (total)**
Material	*do; offer; explore; come; go; walk; visit*	0.8%
Behavioral	*look*	0.07%
Mental	*See; know; enjoy*	0.3%
Relational identifying/ attributive/ existential	*have; be* (counted also as auxiliary verb or for passive forms*); include; locate*	3.6%
Verbal	*say*	0.07%
Multiple uses*	*take; make; get; find*	0.6%

Table 8.14: Categorization of the first 20 verbs according to the Transitivity framework – Tourism Ireland Website sub-corpus

Category – Transitivity processes EC IG (1)	**Verb**	**Normalized Frequency Rate (total)**
Material	*go; do; come; walk; explore; plan; visit*	0.8%
Behavioral	*look*	0.2%
Mental	*know; see; want; watch*	0.7%
Relational identifying/ attributive/ existential	*have; be* (counted also as auxiliary verb or for passive forms); locate	2.7%
Verbal	*answer*	0.09%
Multiple uses*	*get; make; take; find*	0.9%

Table 8.15: Categorization of the first 20 verbs according to the Transitivity framework – Destination Canada Instagram sub-corpus

Category – Transitivity processes EC WS (1)	**Verb**	**Normalized Frequency Rate (total)**
Material	*go; do; come; explore; visit; offer; bike*	0.8%
Behavioral	*look*	0.09%
Mental	*know; see; want; enjoy*	0.5%
Relational identifying/ attributive/ existential	*have; be* (counted also as auxiliary verb or for passive forms); include	4%
Verbal		0%
Multiple uses*	*get; make; take; find*; try	1%

Table 8.16: Categorization of the first 20 verbs according to the Transitivity framework – Destination Canada Website sub-corpus

Category – Transitivity processes WA IG (1)	**Verb**	**Normalized Frequency Rate (total)**
Material	*do; come; explore; visit; discover*	0.8%
Behavioral	*look; relax*	0.4%
Mental	*know; see; want; enjoy; think*	1.1%
Relational identifying/ attributive/ existential	*have; be* (counted also as auxiliary verb or for passive forms);	3.9%
Verbal	*say*	0.2%
Multiple uses*	*get; make; take; find*; leave	1.1%

Table 8.17: Categorization of the first 20 verbs according to the Transitivity framework – Tourism Western Australia Instagram sub-corpus

Category – Transitivity processes WA WS (1)	**Verb**	**Normalized Frequency Rate (total)**
Material verb	*do; use visit; provide; follow; join; offer; collect; choose; disclose*	1%
Behavioral verb		0%
Mental verb	*know; see; enjoy;*	0.3%
Relational identifying/ attributive/ existential	*have; be* (counted also as auxiliary verb or for passive forms); include	2.5%
Verbal		0%
Multiple uses*	*get; make; take; find*;	0.8%

Table 8.18: Categorization of the first 20 verbs according to the Transitivity framework – Tourism Western Australia Website sub-corpus

As can be seen from Tables 8.13-8.18, the processes describing or identifying a subject or object are the most frequent in all sub-corpora, with a frequency rate ranging from 2.5% to 4.0%. This is not surprising, as the verbs *to be* and *to have* were already classified as the most frequent verbs in the analysis of the wordlists. This result does not provide a novel understanding of tourism discourse; in fact, there is a growing body of literature that shows how tourism discourse relies heavily on this type of process to describe the travel destinations and the type of experience travellers have (Maci 2020; Francesconi 2014; Manca 2016a; Manca 2016b). However, this counting might be biased, and the main trends of usage will be investigated in greater depth in the qualitative analysis.

What can be observed from the analysis of each table is the high frequency rate of material and mental processes, which occur, accordingly, between 0.8% and 1.0% of the cases and between 0.3% – 1.1%. Material and mental processes have been already identified as the most frequently occurring processes in tourism discourse (Francesconi 2014); however, what stands out is the higher frequency rate of mental processes in Instagram sub-corpora, compared to the website corpora, and the consequent greater variance between mental processes and material processes in website corpora. In fact, by comparing the results according to agency it can be noticed that mental verbs such as *know, see, want, enjoy, think* are more frequent in the Tourism Ireland Instagram (0.8%,

compared to 0.3% on the website), the Destination Canada Instagram (0.7%, compared to 0.5%) and the Tourism Western Australia Instagram (1.1%, compared to 0.3%). In the Tourism Western Australia Instagram, additionally, mental processes (1.1%) are more frequent than material processes (0.8%). These lower frequencies of mental verbs in website corpora are accompanied by a greater number of occurrences of either relational identifying, attributive or existential processes or "multiple use" processes. In particular, in Destination Canada, the instances of processes of the first type are 4% of all tokens whereas the multiple uses processes are 1% of the total tokens.

All these trends may reflect the importance of material and mental processes in tourism discourse, which was investigated by Francesconi in a qualitative analysis of online website discourse (2014). Material and mental processes are fundamental in this type of narrative as they circumscribe the experience of the tourist, by providing a description of the activities that can be performed or by creating the expectations about the beauty, authenticity of a destination through the stimulation of inner emotions and perceptions (Maci 2020, 197, 203).

Turning now to the analysis of the next 20 most frequent processes summarized in tables 8.19-8.24, similar trends can be observed, except for the relational and existential processes, which are either absent (in the Tourism Ireland Instagram) or have a lower frequency rate (from 0.06% to 0.1%). In particular, mental processes are prominent in the Instagram corpora here as well, with a frequency rate ranging from 0.2% to 0.3% on Instagram, compared to 0.1%- 0.2% in website corpora. Material processes, on the other hand, occur with a varying frequency across the two channels that does not show any specific trend. Multiple-use processes occur with a considerable frequency in these tables as well (0.1%-0.3%); however, in this case some of them are less general and are more related to the traveling experience, such as *experience* (Destination Canada website, Tourism Western Australia Instagram), *serve* (Tourism Ireland and Destination Canada website, Destination Canada Instagram) or *leave* (Tourism Ireland Instagram). Others remain general but seem more associated to the idea of process, activity (*start, stop, continue*).

Closer inspection of the tables shows that Instagram communication seems to choose mental processes that are related to sight and imagination, by using *picture, gaze, watch,*

think, whereas website discourse uses more typical or formal mental processes (*such as want, feel, learn, require*).

Another interesting aspect is the inclusion in Instagram of more evocative and informal material processes, such as *offer, spend, visit,* compared to the website employment of processes that either promote activity (*drive, walk, guide*) or are related to the provision of services (*use, give, provide, contact*).

Category – Transitivity Processes TI IG (2)	**Verb**	**Normalized Frequency Rate (total)**
Material	*Offer; spend; visit; match; join; tag*	0.4%
Behavioral	*stretch; step*	0.1%
Mental	*Think; need; gaze impress*	0.2%
Relational identifying/ attributive/ existential		0%
Verbal	*Say; thank*	0.1%
Multiple uses*	*Leave; stand; put; hold; continue; cross*	0.3%

Table 8.19: Categorization of the first 20 verbs according to the Transitivity framework – Tourism Ireland Instagram sub-corpus

Category – Transitivity processes TI WS (2)	**Verb**	**Normalized Frequency Rate (total)**
Material	*Provide; build; bring; discover; use; drive; give; run; meet; follow; create*	0.6%
Behavioral		0%
Mental	*Want; feel*	0.1%
Relational identifying/ attributive/ existential	*Situate; become;*	0.1%
Verbal	*tell*	0.04%
Multiple uses*	*Set; serve; leave*	1.6%

Table 8.20: Categorization of the first 20 verbs according to the Transitivity framework – Tourism Ireland Website sub-corpus

Category – Transitivity processes EC IG (2)	**Verb**	**Normalized Frequency Rate (total)**
Material	*Spend; spot; hike; Join; stay; check; grab; offer; guide*	0.7%
Behavioral		0%
Mental	*Learn; picture; think; love*	0.3%
Relational identifying/ attributive/ existential	include; keep	0.1%
Verbal	*Ask; recommend*	0.1%
Multiple uses*	*Try, serve; start*	0.2%

Table 8.21: Categorization of the first 20 verbs according to the Transitivity framework – Destination Canada Instagram sub-corpus

Category – Transitivity processes EC WS (2)	**Verb**	**Normalized Frequency Rate (total)**
Material	*Walk; spend; discover; bring; head; use; stay; eat*	0.4%
Behavioral		0%
Mental	*Learn; watch; feel; mean*	0.2%
Relational identifying/ attributive/ existential	Locate; feature	0.1%
Verbal	*call*	0.04%
Multiple uses*	*Start; experience; stop; serve; set*	0.3%

Table 8.22: Categorization of the first 20 verbs according to the Transitivity framework – Destination Canada Website sub-corpus

Category – Transitivity processes WA IG (2)	**Verb**	**Normalized Frequency Rate (total)**
Material	*Soak; capture; go; stay; spend; fall; snap; head; offer; meet*	0.7%
Behavioral		0%
Mental	*Love; need; feel; watch*	0.3%
Relational identifying/ attributive/ existential	Keep; surround	0.1%
Verbal	*guarantee*	0.05%
Multiple uses*	*Experience; start; stop*	0.2%

Table 8.23: Categorization of the first 20 verbs according to the Transitivity framework – Tourism Western Australia Instagram sub-corpus

Category – Transitivity WA WS (2)	**Verb**	**Normalized Frequency Rate (total)**
Material verb	*Explore; walk; discover; sit; create; give; reach; hit; meet; guide; contact; access; stay; drive*	0.7%
Behavioral verb		0%
Mental verb	*Require; watch; need*	0.1%
Relational identifying/attributive/existential	locate	0.06%
Verbal		0%
Multiple uses*	*Hold; lie*	0.1%

Table 8.24: Categorization of the first 20 verbs according to the Transitivity framework – Tourism Western Australia Website sub-corpus

Taken together, the results from the analysis of the wordlists and the transitivity processes suggest that there is an association between the channel and the type of discourse designed by these travel agencies. There seems to be, in fact, a different degree of occurrence of mental and material verbs that varies according to channel. While website communication seems to focus on the performance of activities and the provision of services, Instagram discourse adopts rhetorical strategies that give importance to imagination, feelings and the process of seeing. Moreover, verbs such as *drive* or *serve*, which are used by two of the three travel agencies on the website, suggest interest in the promotion of the gastronomic uniqueness of the destination (Gotti et al. 2017) and an ideal of comfortable tourist experience, compared to the off-the-beaten track traveler (Maci 2020; Urry and Larsen 2011). Tables 8.25-8.26 and Figure 8.1 summarize the quantitative findings of this chapter and confirm the existence of a difference between channel corpora in terms of linguistic choices for the realization of ideational meaning. To avoid the generation of skewed frequency results and an inaccurate categorization and quantification of the relational processes *to be* and *to have*, a Standard Query Language (SQL) code was implemented in Sketch Engine. Indeed, this procedure enabled the exclusion of the auxiliary and passive forms of the processes *have* and *be* from the token count.

The SQL code is reported below:

[lemma="be" & tag="V.*"] [tag="V.*"]	[lemma="have" & tag="V.*"] [tag="V.*"]

40 most frequent verbs	**Type of verb**	**Examples**	**Relative frequency**
Instagram	Mental experiences related to perception, emotion, thought	*see* *know* *gaze/picture/watch* *love, spend, think* *need*	0.2%-0.4% 0.1%-0.4% 0.04%-0.1% 0.05%-0.2% 0.07%-0.08%
Official website	Provision of services/ trip organization	*offer/include* *serve* *use, provide, drive, situate and locate* *require*	0.09%-0.2% 0.04%-0.05% 0.05%-0.2% 0.04%

Table 8.25: Summary of frequency rates of the 40 most frequent verbs across channel corpora

Transitivity - 40 most frequent verbs (mean)	**Instagram Corpus**	**Website Corpus**
Material	1,4%	1,5%
Behavioral	0,2%	0,1%
Mental	1,2%	0,6%
Relational	2,3%	2,5%
Verbal	0,3%	0,4%
Existential	0,1%	0,1%
Multiple uses	1,1%	1,1%

Table 8.26: Summary of frequency rates of Transitivity processes across channel corpora

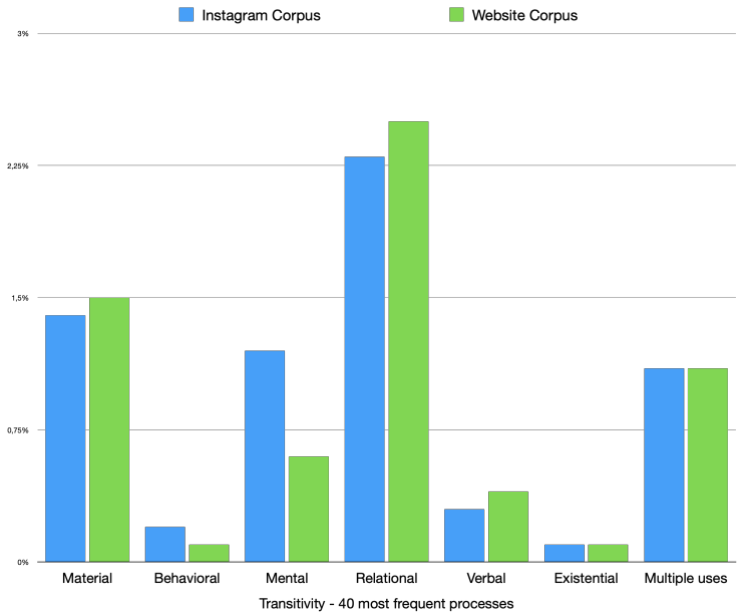


Figure 8.1: Summary of frequency rates of Transitivity processes across channel corpora

This analysis, however, does not provide insights into the usage of the verb to be. It offers a starting point for the exploration of the use of language at a qualitative level (Egbert et al. 2020). The qualitative analysis that will be carried out in the next section attempts to explore, through the Transitivity analysis of the subjects, objects and occasionally the circumstances, if and which elements are associated with this process and how it is used to describe or define an agent, a place, an object, an activity or the tourist experience. In particular, it will serve the purpose of identifying the ways in which the travel agencies promote the destination according to channel, and if they focus on specific aspects of the tourist/travel experience, such as the gastronomic, historical, cultural or natural uniqueness of the place.

8.3 Qualitative analysis: Choices of *processes* and *participants* in tourism discourse to design the travel experience

8.3.1 Introduction and methods

As reported in section 8.2, the most common processes in the communication designed by the three travel agencies under investigation seem to be relational, material and mental, with varying degrees according to channel. These results partly reflect those obtained by Francesconi (2014, 60, 66), Manca (2016, 43-44), Pratiwi et al. (2017, 17) and Trčková (2016, 80-81), who analyzed online travel videos, website tourism narratives, eco-narratives and tourism advertisements videos, respectively. Despite differences in terms of genres under investigation, all scholars focusing on Transitivity in tourism discourse discovered that the most frequent processes are relational, material and mental, thus confirming Halliday's findings (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 215). The predominance of this kind of choice in communication design might be related to the fact that tourism discourse focuses on the construction of an alternative and imaginary reality mostly through definitions, descriptions of the destinations and both the representation of inner mental processes and the concrete performance, provision of activities that enrich the holiday and add excitement to the travel experience (Mocini 2015, 154).

However, in order to gain an understanding of the actual use and meaning of these processes in the corpora of the current study, a qualitative analysis of the most frequent processes belonging to the main Transitivity classes (relational, material, mental) and their context, i.e. the participants involved and their position, might provide more accurate insights into the ways in which travel agencies promote, speak about the destination and the subjects involved across channels. With this objective in mind, it will be possible to provide clearer and more reliable answers to the first and the second hypothesis of this study, i.e. whether there are enough similarities and differences to establish online tourism discourse as a *macro-genre* belonging to the genre family of commercial communication (Francesconi 2014, 15; Calvi 2010, 16) and Instagram tourism narratives as a *genre* with specific communicative functions, rhetorical moves and language features based on a specific audience and purpose and with different topics and attitudes (Francesconi 2014 16-25, 29-39; Bhatia 2002, 22; Bakhtin 1986; Maci 2020; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014).

Prior studies such as Eka et al. (2017) and Trčková (2016), in particular, provide insights into the presence and position of the main tourism discourse participants , i.e. the tourists/travelers, the advertisers and the destination (including references to the nature). For this reason, the study analyzed a series of processes (the most frequent or ambiguous and a small sample of characteristic verbs) to study its usage and the relationships of power that are created between the participants. These will be evident by looking at the verb and the presence (or absence) and position of subjects.

In order to explore the similiarities and differences in terms of experiental meaning realization across channels, the functions Word Sketch and Keyword in Context (KWiC) were used (Kilgarriff 2012). Indeed, these tools allowed for the computation and investigation of the main collocates of the most frequent processes in their co-text of use, including concordance lines. In particular, section 8.3.2 explores the use of the relational processes *be* across channels, while section 8.3.3 investigates the co-text of the material processes *explore* and *visit*. Finally, section 8.3.4 analyzes the mental processes *enjoy* and *see*. The mixed methodological framework adopted for the Transitivity analysis enabled the discovery of linguistic patterns of word choices and combinations that vary depending on the promotional channel of the dissemination, and which contribute to a different realization of the experiental metafunction. From a sociological and discursive perspective, these varying trends of linguistic choices are argued to shape a different tourist gaze that may result effective for the audience and aim of the two digital channels under investigation.

8.3.2 Relational processes: the verb *to be*

Given that the most frequent and ambiguous process detected in the results section of this study is "to be", the analysis of the usage of this verb in its context was considered to be an important starting point for the analysis. In order to achieve this goal, the tool Word Sketch was used to detect patterns across the six sub-corpora. This preliminary analysis guided successively the qualitative analysis of concordance lines. To avoid skewing the results due to the different sizes of the website sub-corpora, the internal divisions of the Instagram and website corpora were kept separate.

Figures 8.2 and 8.3 provide an overview of the main participants which co-occur with these relational identifying, attributive (or existential, in some cases) processes as part of intensive relational clauses (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 263-265) in Tourism

Ireland's Instagram and website sub-corpora. This word sketch was useful to detect trends of linguistic choices in the shaping of states of "being" in relationship with other entities (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 216), which were then analyzed in detail through graphs and concordance lines. The results from this analysis were organized to highlight the subjects, objects and adjectives that collocate with the verb. Additionally, the column "-ing objects of 'be'" was included to explore the usage of this verb as auxiliary to other verbs and their meanings. In the current study, comparing Figure 8.2 with Figure 8.3 showed that the main subjects in both channels are proper and common nouns referring to definite places related to the main destination, i.e. Ireland. In particular, the Instagram channel refers to natural, historical, cultural or even abstract sites (such as *mountains, castle, harbour, lighthouse, ownership*), whereas the website channel chooses as subjects more general nouns that define a typical tourist experience and the provision of services to tourists as guests (through *park, city, center, guest, area, tour*). The pronouns selected as subjects are the same in the top choice (with the pronoun *it*) but differ in the following choices. In fact, while Instagram uses *we*, followed by *you* and *they*, the website relies on *you* first, then *they* and finally *we*. While the similar frequency of the pronoun *it* might be due to the fact that both channels devote a lot of space to the destination and the description, definition of its qualities (Manca 2016, 43-44; Francesconi 2014, 60), thereby providing it with attractive Attributes or Values, the difference in the usage of the other pronouns is likely to be related to a different purpose of the communication according to channel. As a matter of fact, while social media channels seek to establish a friendly, direct relationship between the advertisers and the audience, considering them both tokens, or symbols (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 284), representative of a Value and Carrier of positive attributes and conferring on both of them and their actions, feelings a prominent role, official channels rely more on a concrete description of the opportunities and services available to the customer, who is the main protagonist (Manca 2017; Manca 2016).

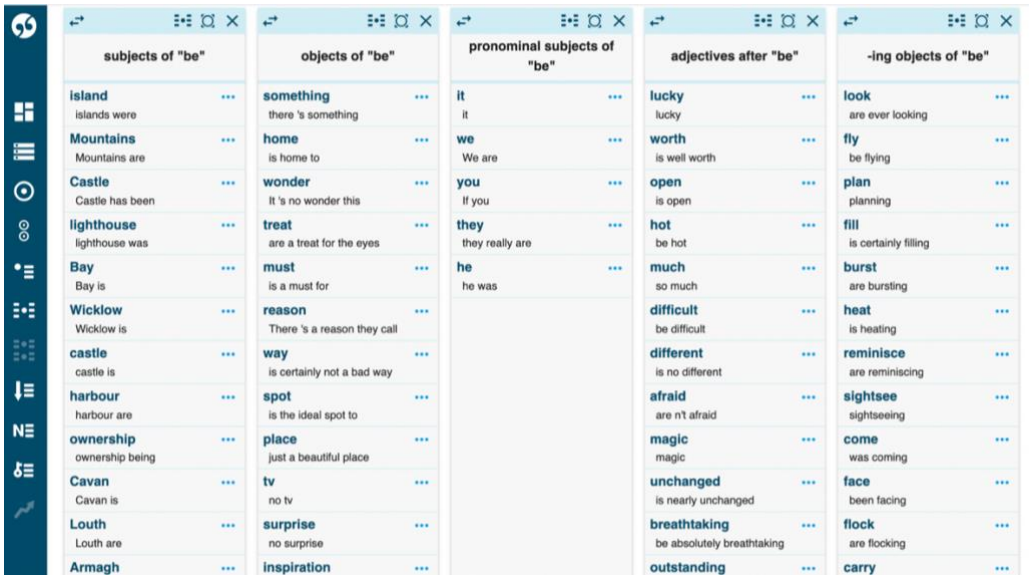


Figure 8.2: Word Sketch of the most frequent participants and processes around the relational process "to be" on Tourism Ireland's Instagram account



Figure 8.3: Word Sketch of the most frequent participants and processes around the relational process "to be" on Tourism Ireland's official website

By looking at the concordances of *it* + *be* across channels (Figure 8.4), different patterns of usage may be observed. For instance, on Instagram, *it* + *be* is used impersonally very often and typically refers to relational identifying clauses. The Token *it* is chosen to support a projected clause (or a specific type of relational circumstantial identifying clause, Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 292) and create expectations: the

collocation of *it's* + *no wonder* occurs often in this sample. There are only few instances of relational attributive clauses such as in "it is easy to see" (line 7) or "it is outstanding" (line 10); "it is peaceful and calm" (line 15), which promote some qualities of the destination. Passive forms, on the other hand, seem to only occur when related to historical sites (lines 14, 17). This strategy is also used to promote the ancient destination through storytelling (by means of verbal processes such as *it's said*, *it's believed*), which has proved to be an effective strategy in attracting the attention and involving the reader in tourism discourse (Francesconi 2014). In instances in which *it* as a Token actually refers to a characteristic of the destination, the Values elected are often very positive ("it's just a *beautiful* place", line 4; "it's a hiker's paradise", line 9; "it's *golden* hour", line 8), which is also due to the presence of pre-modifiers that reinforce the stimulation of positive attitudes towards the destination. These are emphasized in italics in the previous quotes, and contribute to both shaping the expectations and feelings regarding the tourist experience and allowing for its pre-consumption (Maci 2020, 177, 183, 197).

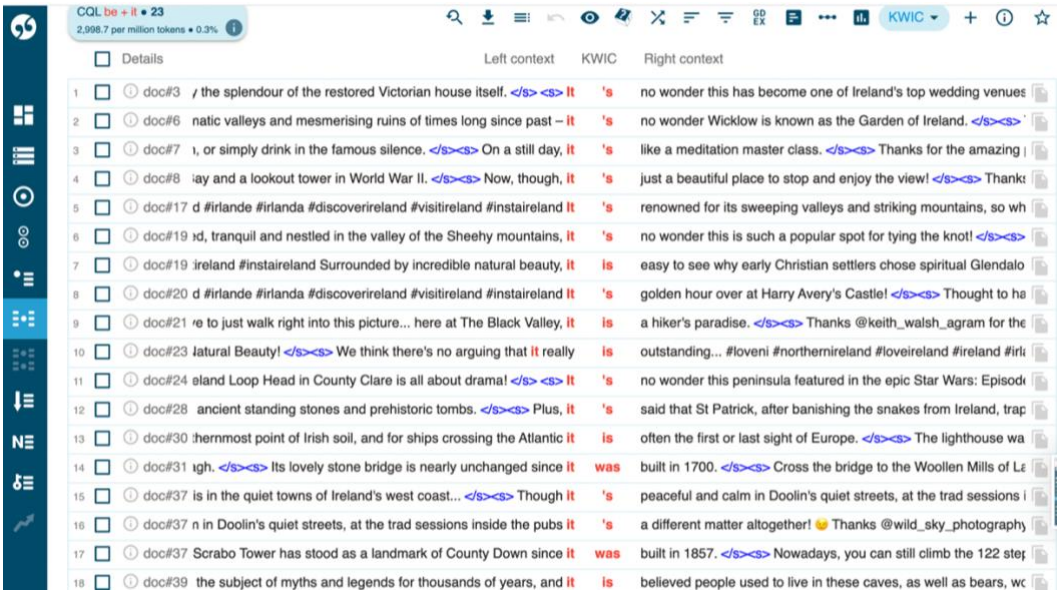


Figure 8.4: Concordance lines of *it* + *be* on Tourism Ireland's Instagram account

Therefore, it could be argued that the language is highly evaluative and informal, and the relational processes are used to establish a positive relationship between the reader and the destination, also by instilling desire and conveying a positive image about its natural and historical uniqueness. The construction of the destination as an

"aesthetically pleasant artwork" and spectacle with incredible qualities is confirmed by previous studies including Trčková (2016), and is a direct realization, or 'fulfillment' of the tourist gaze at the destination (Urry and Larsen 2011). This rhetorical strategy serves the purpose of establishing a direct connection with the recipient of the promotional message by commodifying, and objectifying – by attaching positive qualities – a service such as tourism, which is, by nature, intangible (Francesconi 2014). On the website, conversely, fewer instances of *it* + *be* are used impersonally to set expectations. In fact, the Token/Carrier *it* in Figure 8.5 clearly refers to natural, historical but especially gastronomic entities that are defined or characterized in greater detail or highly positive language (see in particular lines 4, 5, 7, 12). Also, activities and golf services are portrayed (lines 8, 14, 15, 16).

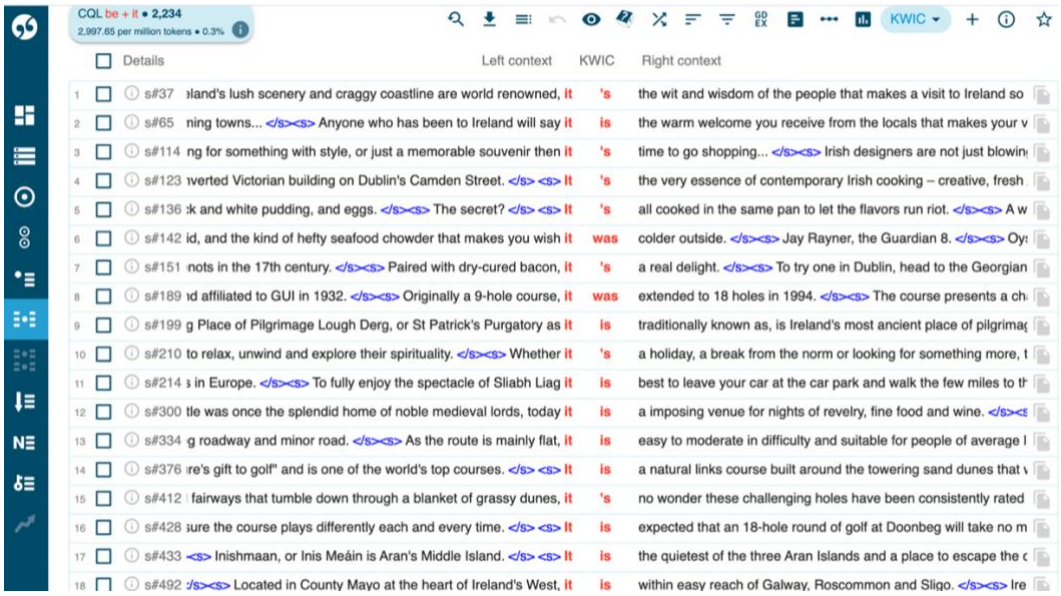


Figure 8.5: Concordance lines of *it* + *be* on Tourism Ireland's official website

Therefore, varying attributes or symbols seem to be considered effective and attractive by the designers of promotional communication according to the online platform through which they are shared. In fact, while Instagram communication by Tourism Ireland focuses more on shaping states and relationships of "being" between the destination and its static, eternal natural features (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 261), which is a strategy considered typical of the *romantic gaze* of the solitary, off-the-beaten track traveler (Maci 2020; Urry 2011), website communication also provides insights into gastronomic and tourist activities, thus focusing more on providing services or describing activities that may be performed. Website communication was found to include many references to the provision of services in the literature (Manca 2017,

223), and this usage pattern might reflect the interest, on the part of the designers of the promotional message, to shape a *collective*, *tourist gaze* on the travel experience. These types of views of the tourist experience consider a more comfortable and mass-targeted construction of the experience to be profitable, thereby conveying a different idea of exclusivity to the recipient of the tourist message, who might consider different types of discourse to be attractive according to the channel where the travel experience is represented. This idea of *being, admiring* in solitude rather than being fascinated by the number of services available might be due to the fact that postmodern individuals are attracted, in the increasing infoxication of the contemporary online society, by what is different, new, and privileged compared to previous tourist holidays or the daily, chaotic and urbanized reality (Urry and Larsen 2011; Manovich 2017; Dann 1996).

The most striking differences in terms of language use according to channels may be detected in the columns with the most frequent objects, or Values and adjectives, or Attributes (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 279-280, 267-268). If one looks closely, it may be noticed that the main Values associated with the destination, the Token, are both similar and different across channels: on the one hand, the designers of the promotional message associate with the destination abstract Values or symbols such as *something, way, reason*, locative words such *as spot, place* or convey positive attitudes through Values such as *home, treat, wonder*. On Instagram, *something, home, wonder and treat* occupy the most eminent positions (in Figure 8.2, also words such as *surprise* and *inspiration* appear), underlining therefore the informality of the register and importance given to emotions and appeal of the destination. On the other hand, website communication seems more formal and informative: here, in fact, Values such as *place, time, city* and *winter* occur, together, however, with more evocative words such as *home, spot* (*the perfect spot*), *experience, something, plenty*. This discrepancy could be attributed to a different rhetorical strategy designed by travel agencies on Instagram and social media in general: it seems, in fact, that persuasive communication on Instagram tends to appeal directly to the emotions and feelings of the audience by making reference not only to a strong relationship between the audience and the destination through the advertisers, but also by attracting the attention and interest of the prospective customer through the evocation of imagination and creation of an immediate desire to visit the destination. On the website, instead, the recipient of the promotional message seems to look for both evocative and informative, concrete pieces of information on places

and services that may help the tourists "make" the holiday. Figures 8.6 and 8.7 show the relationship between Tokens and Values across channels in a more focused way.



Figure 8.6: Tokens and Values of *be* in Tourism Ireland's Instagram communication



Figure 8.7: Tokens and Values of *be* in Tourism Ireland's website communication

Differences may be found also in the choice of the Attributes attached to similar Carriers. Figures 8.8 and 8.9 show how the description of the grammatical subject or Carrier varies: on Instagram, the main Attributes are *lucky* and *worth*, followed by *open, hot* and a constellation of positive attributions such as *magic, breathtaking, outstanding*. On the website, on the other hand, the most frequent Attribute is *available*, followed by *sure, easy, open, famous* or *able*. The type of evaluation and attitudes attached, together with their meaning and linguistic register, vary greatly. The appeal to emotions and the beauty of the destination stand against the importance of availability of services, activities or the capability to do something. A possible explanation for this might be that, as mentioned earlier, the type of audience and aim of communication are different on social media, compared to official websites, signaling therefore a different rhetoric with a different persuasiveness and idea of attractiveness.



Figure 8.8: Attributes of *be* in Tourism Ireland's Instagram communication



Figure 8.9: Attributes of *be* in Tourism Ireland's website communication

If one looks at this phenomenon in greater detail by means of concordance lines (Figures 8.10 and 8.11 below), the usage patterns of the top two most frequent Attributes on the website can be observed. These findings are not accompanied by the same in-depth qualitative analysis of the Instagram channels because the raw frequencies are too low to show any type of consistent linguistic pattern. On the website, *available* and *sure* are the most used Attributes of relational attributive processes: as in any relational process, the presence of Attributes indicates the construction of a relationship between two entities by means of identification or characterization (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 259, 262-265). In this case, *available* is used to characterize mostly Carriers such as services, information, activities, accommodations, facilities and tours, which figure in fact also among the top subjects (or Token/Carriers) in the tables in Figures 8.2 and 8.3. This pattern of usage, therefore, seems to give importance to the intentional representation of a tourist and active experience that is *available* to the tourist: the comfortable and organizational aspect of the travel is considered fundamental in the process of persuasion of the prospective website client. The high frequency of *sure* reinforces this rhetoric and the *tourist gaze*, as it is always connected with an idea of certainty, comfortable experience (in the concordance lines mostly gastronomic) that is *surely available* to the eager tourist (often the Carrier *you*), who needs to be convinced of the easiness and light-heartedness in the organization of a holiday in Ireland. It is no coincidence that this type of

Attribute is completely absent in the Instagram rhetoric: indeed, the travelling experience shaped is different, as it refers to an idea – the *romantic gaze* – of a lonely, extraordinary experience that one has *without* the comfort of pre-packaged holidays and organized activities.

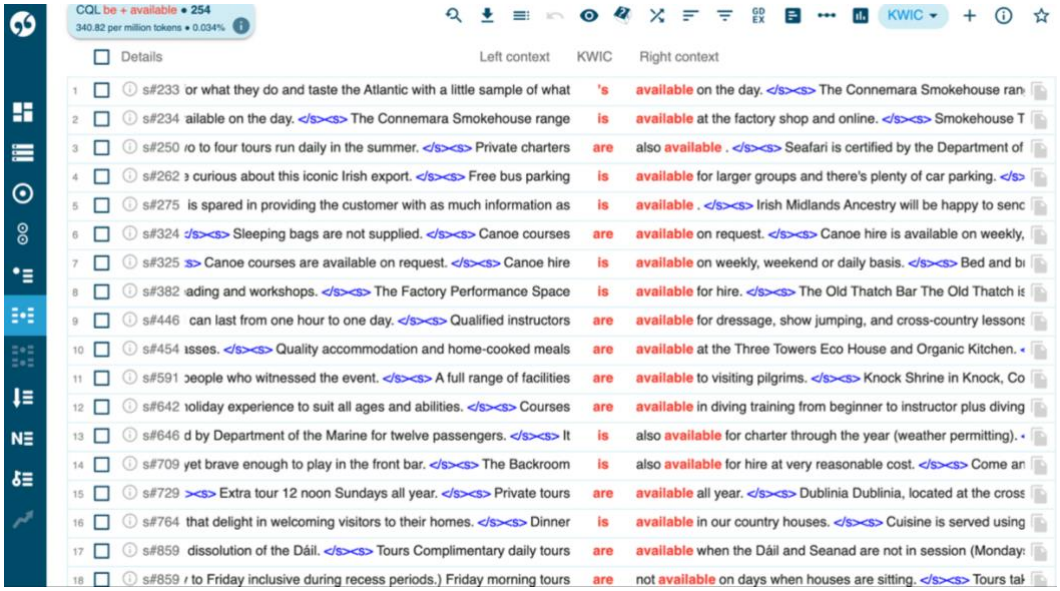


Figure 8.10: Concordance lines of *be* + *available* on Tourism Ireland's official website

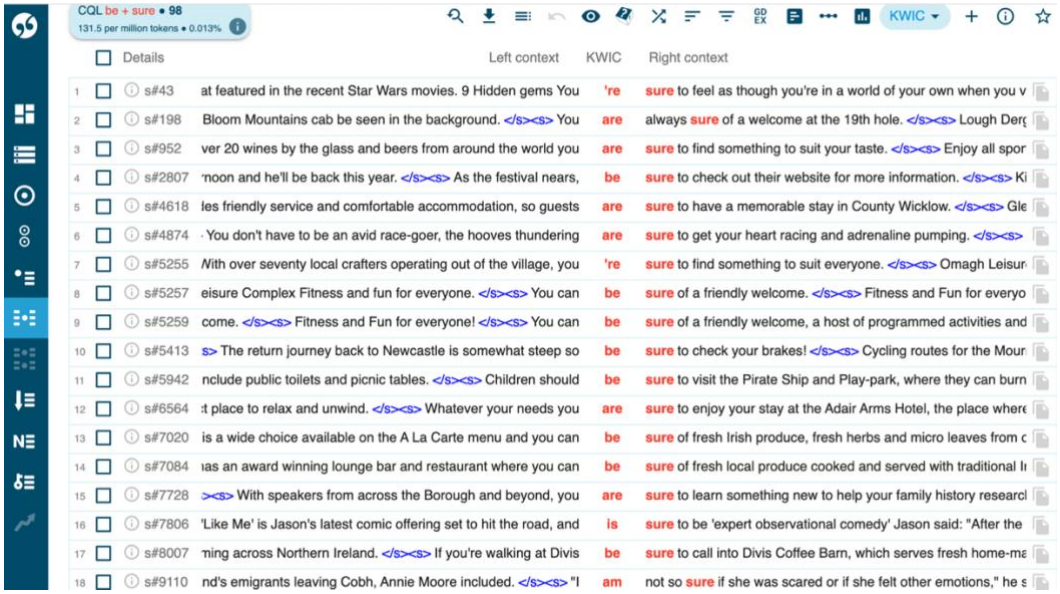


Figure 8.11: Concordance lines of *be* + *sure* on Tourism Ireland's official website

Along with relational identifying and attributive processes, also circumstantial ones should be mentioned for their pervasiveness in the English language (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 262, 289). Relational circumstantial processes are used to highlight and encode the relationship between participants that might be circumstances, and therefore locations, or a feature of time (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 292-293): they might connect a participant, which is usually inanimate, with a concrete or abstract place. In Tourism Ireland Instagram, as Figure 8.12 shows, the main prepositional phrases used are "be to" and "be on", followed by four other trends of usage. On the website, on the other hand, alongside "be on", "be in" is used, together with a series of prepositions which include location, accompaniment, extent and matter. The similarities and the differences in the choice and variety of prepositions accompanying the relational process "to be" may lead to the intentional representation of a different tourist experience.

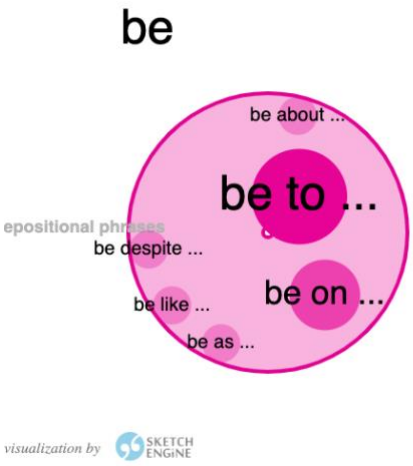


Figure 8.12: Prepositions accompanying *to be* in Tourism Ireland's Instagram communication



Figure 8.13: Prepositions accompanying *to be* in Tourism Ireland's website communication

Concordance lines of *be* + *on* across channels (Figures 8.14 and 8.15) provide insight into the usage of relational circumstantial processes in the design of the holiday. Although the relative frequency is similar on Instagram and the official website (0.02%-0.03%), the reduced size of Tourism Ireland's Instagram sub-corpus cannot show any relevant vpattern of usage. The reduced size is due to the choice of multimodal corpus analysis that analyzes a proportioned (and connected) amount of text of images across

a definite time span. The Instagram corpus altogether, which will be used in the keyword analysis, might instead be more helpful in the detection of trends, but was not used here due to the different sizes of the crawled website corpora. In the website sub-corpus of Tourism Ireland, *be* + *in* defines the concrete presence and availability of services, exhibitions and accommodations which are *on offer, display, menu* or *on view*. The relevance of the availability without efforts on the part of the tourist is exemplified through the collocation *to be on hand* in line 17.

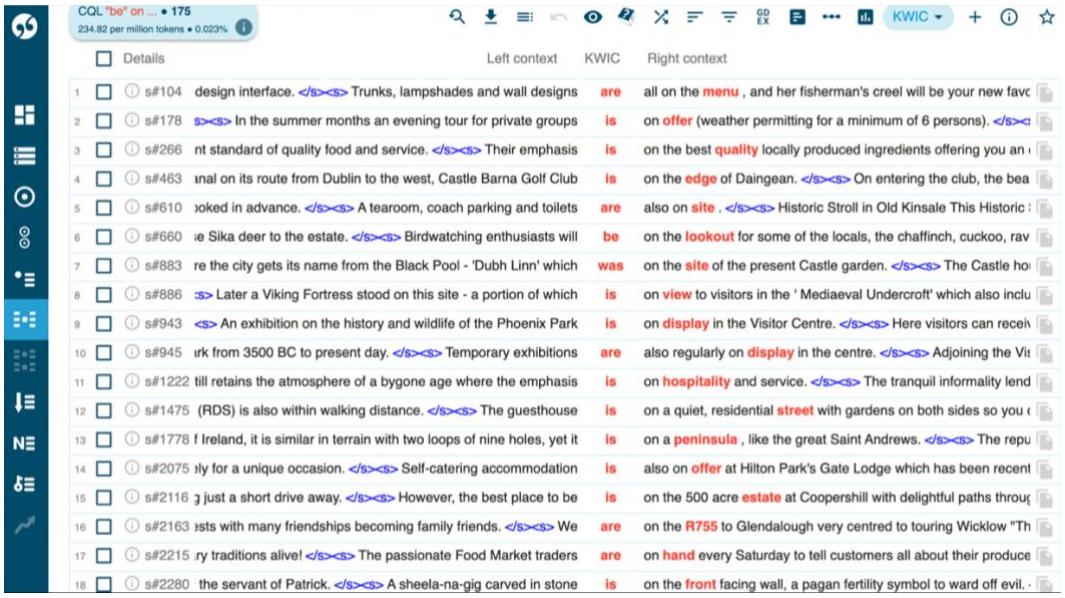


Figure 8.14: Concordance lines of be + on on Tourism Ireland's official website

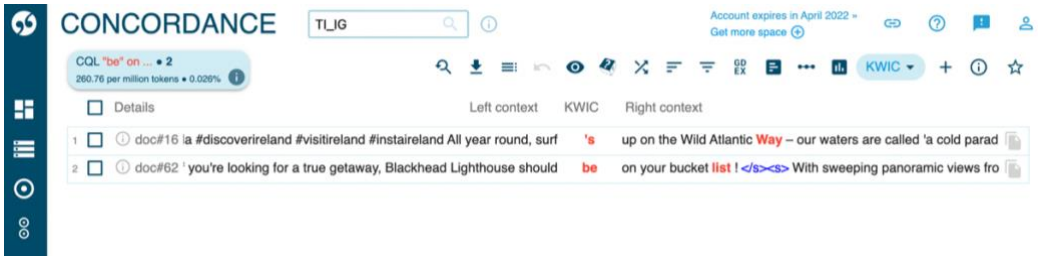


Figure 8.15: Concordance lines of *be* + *on* on Tourism Ireland's Instagram account

The abundance of instances of *be* + *in* (Figure 8.16), which is totally absent in the Instagram corpus, confirms the tendency of the travel agency on the website to persuade the potential customer of the existence and proximity of attractions and services which may be *in the unique position* or *in a convenient location* (lines 4, 16), *in close proximity* (lines 9, 17), *in the heart of* + a place (lines 10, 14).

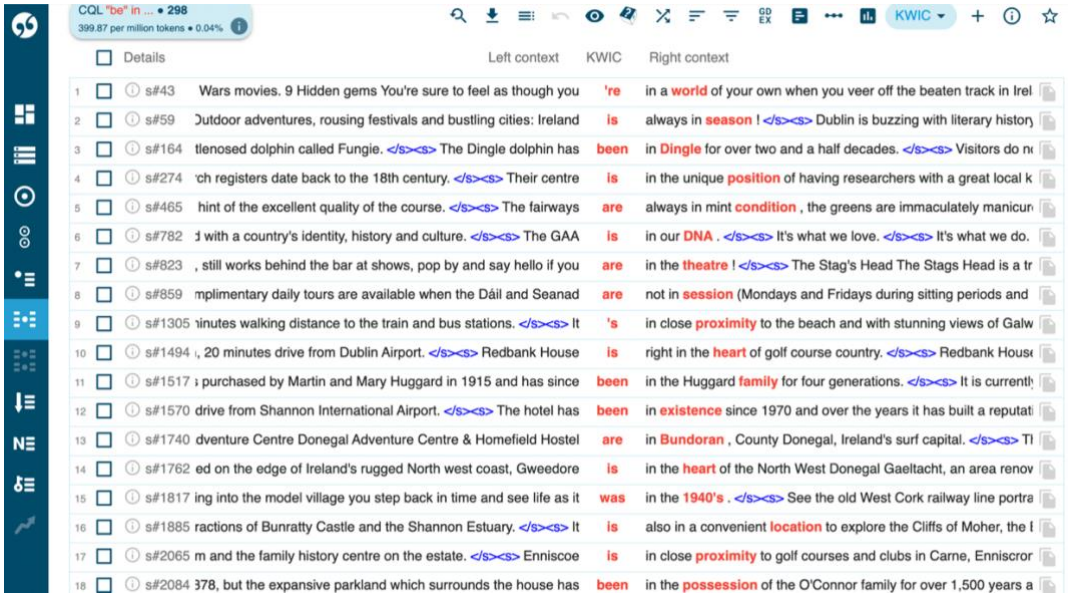


Figure 8.16: Concordance lines of *be* + *in* on Tourism Ireland's official website

Before moving on to the conclusion, the results from the other travel organizations under investigation should be briefly discussed. Figures 8.17-8.20 represent the main patterns of Tokens, Carriers and Values (Figure 8.17 for Instagram, 8.19 for the website) and Attributes (Figure 8.18 for Instagram, 8.20 for the website) detected via Word Sketch in Tourism Western Australia's sub-corpus. These visualization tools provided by Sketch Engine enable for a quick view of the narrative designed on each channel through the lens of Transitivity. It can be easily observed, in fact, how the linguistic choices on Instagram differ from the website ones, allowing for the definition of particular discourses that are similar to the ones detected in Tourism Ireland.

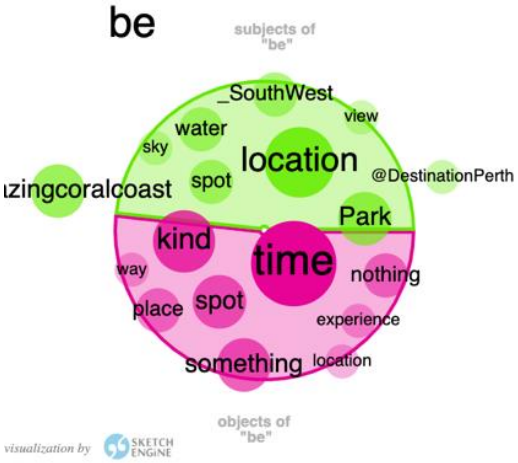


Figure 8.17: Tokens, Carriers and Values of *to be* in Tourism Western Australia's Instagram communication



Figure 8.18: Attributes of *to be* in Tourism Western Australia's Instagram communication

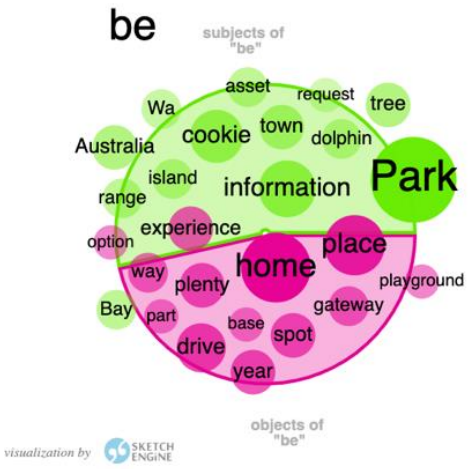


Figure 8.19: Tokens, Carriers and Values of *to be* in Tourism Western Australia's website communication



Figure 8.20: Attributes of *to be* in Tourism Western Australia's website communication

The focus on the availability of services and the richness of the tourist experience that define, characterize varying aspects of the destination is clear in Figure 8.20, through Attributes such as available, *suitable, responsible, accessible*. The Attribute *sure* occurs frequently in this website sub-corpus as well, signaling therefore the importance, on the part of the advertisers, to *ensure* an easy, simple, lighthearted, and organized vacation. The producer of the message therefore gives advice on what to visit, what to focus and conduct the tourist in a mass-targeted experience, which enhances the *collective* and *tourist gaze* of tourism discourse. This rhetoric is confirmed by the Tokens and Carriers provided by Figure 8.19: the main Carriers of meaning or symbols (Tokens) that establish a relationship with the adjectives mentioned above or Values such as *home, experience, option, drive* are *park, information, range, request, asset*. On the other hand, on Instagram, other Attributes are chosen to characterize and give meaning to Tokens such as *park, location, sky, water, and view* (which are more Tokens more related to a *romantic gaze* at the travel experience, based on the admiration of natural elements): namely *sure, safe, easy,* which are similar to the website' s discourse, but also *lucky, breathtaking, spectacular, good, incredible, worth*. These Attributes define the destination and its nature with adjectives pertaining to the semantic field of emotion and perception (vision), compared to the website's focus on *information* and the *accessibility* to services.

Similar interpretations can be drawn from the analysis of Destination Canada, even if the communication designed by this travel agency on both channels only slightly differs, compared to the other agencies. Figures 8.21 and 8.22 show how the Attributes refer to the *accessibility* of services and places both on Instagram and the website, which is in contrast with the previous findings. However, a focus on visual perception is evident only on Instagram (through *visible)*. On the other hand, the Tokens and Carriers occurring on both channels only differ in terms of which aspects of the destination are given more prominence: in line with the previous analysis, more emphasis is placed on natural elements on Instagram (see *lake, northern lights, bear*, compared to *park, city, area,* and proper nouns belonging to cities). This, therefore, confirms the existence of a preference for the construction of a *romantic gaze* on the untamed nature, compared to the business, chaoticity of the city and its *tourist*, *collective gaze* and experience among the comforts, shared by everyone there. In any case, a more detailed and in-depth qualitative analysis of Tourism Western Australia and Destination Canada's relational process *to be* should be carried out, which would enable an understanding of the context of the patterns of Attributes and the other participants of this relational process.

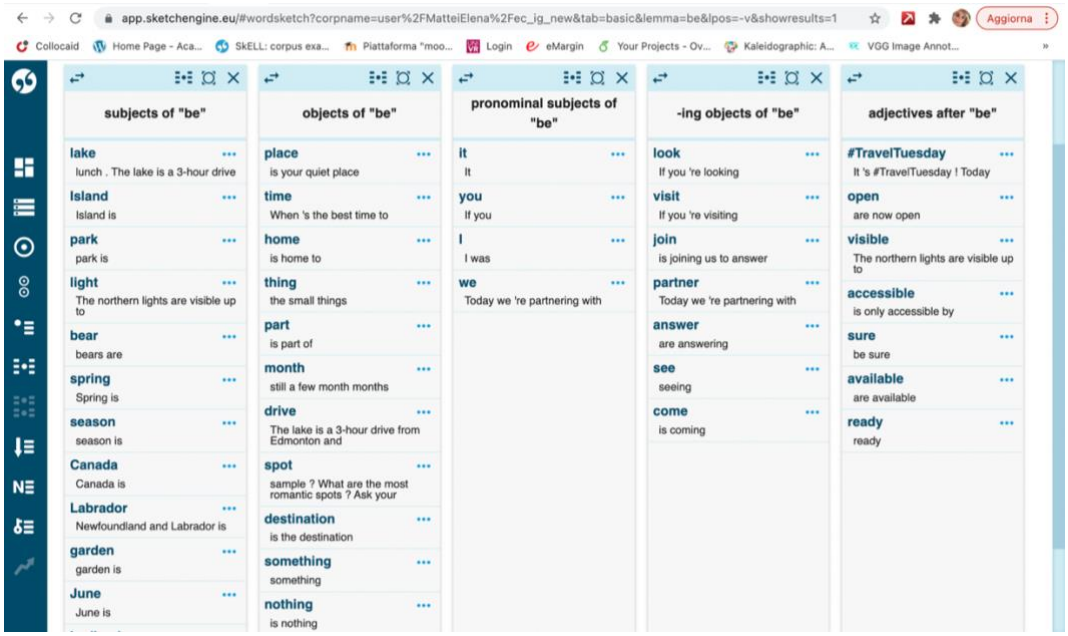


Figure 8.21: Word Sketch of the most frequent participants and processes around the relational process "to be" on Destination Canada's Instagram account

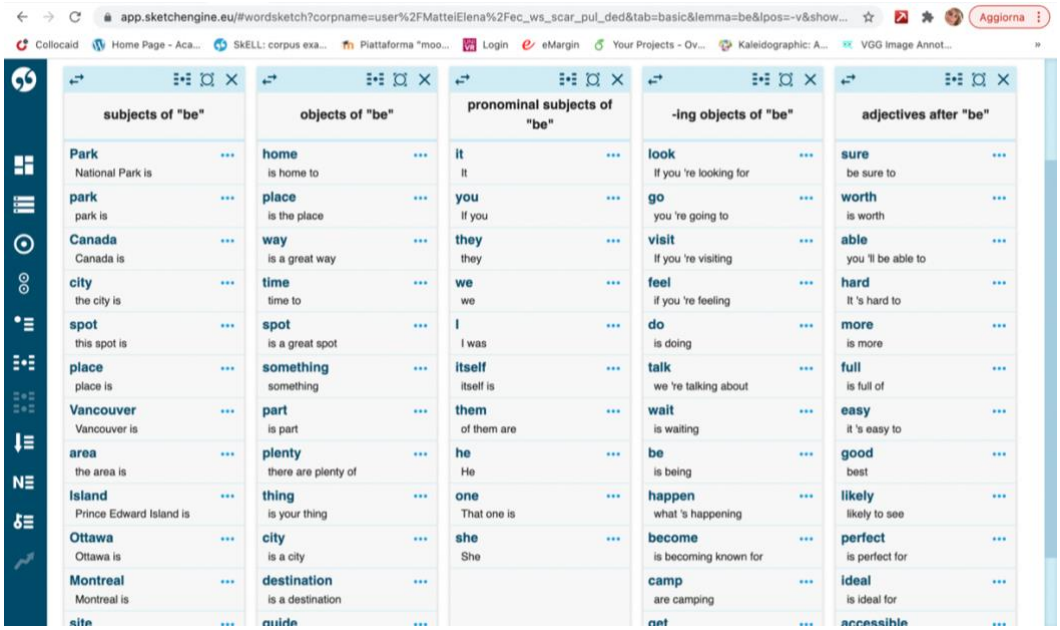


Figure 8.22: Word Sketch of the most frequent participants and processes around the relational process "to be" on Destination Canada's official website

In conclusion, it might be argued that both the first and the second hypotheses of this study are preliminarily confirmed by the analysis of the relational process *to be*, one of the most (if not the most) frequent verbs in all sub-corpora. There seem to be, in fact, both similarities and enough differences in the tourism discourse shaped by popular travel agencies on different online channels, which concern the design of a particular communication and its varying meaning through specific linguistic choices. While, on the one hand, the usage on the website of Tokens, Carriers, Values and Attributes referring to either activities or the provision of information and accessibility to services confirms a tendency to represent a *tourist* and *collective gaze* at the holiday experience, the presence on Instagram of lexis evoking emotions, boosting imagination and focusing on the aesthetic appeal of the nature of the destination confirms the existence of a narrative aimed at fostering a *romantic gaze* at the travel experience. These different designs of communication might be due to the fact that the communicative aim and the recipient of the promotional message vary according to the online channel. If this were true, the Instagram tourism discourse might represent a whole new genre of promotional communication. This idea will be expanded in the next sections.

Overall, for now, it is safe to establish online tourism discourse as a *macro-genre* belonging to the genre family of commercial communication, as confirmed also by a

great deal of previous work (Francesconi 2014, 15; Calvi 2010, 16) and also Gotti et al. (2017), Bianchi (2017), Manca (2016), Maci (2020). However, it might be too soon to define Instagram tourism narratives as a *genre* and including different sub-genres such as *nature* (compared to sub-genres or "themes" such as *food*, *drinks*, *services*) with specific communicative functions and language features, even if the differences detected so far suggest that there are different linguistic choices in terms of Transitivity that might be based on a specific audience and purpose (Francesconi 2014 16-25, 29-39; Bhatia 2002, 22; Bakhtin 1986; Maci 2020; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014). The analysis of the material and mental processes will investigate and eventually confirm this hypothesis.

8.3.3 Material processes: *to explore* and *to visit*

The results reported so far suggest that there are both significant similarities and differences in terms of frequency or usage of the processes and linguistic choices describing the travel experience across channels. In particular, it was shown how the relational process *to be*, even if it occurs with a similar relative frequency rate across channels (0.3%), describes a different "imaginary" reality and defines particular participants that change according to online channel.

Mental and material processes, on the other hand, were already shown to vary according to channel in the quantitative analysis. For this reason, the most frequent verb choices for each one of the processes were analyzed in greater detail to provide insight into the overall design of the promotional message. The qualitative analysis in this section, in fact, investigates the usage and the designed meaning of the communication based on these processes, and therefore on the main participants involved in it. By doing this for both material and mental processes across channels, it will be possible to define the extent to which tourism discourse varies across channels and shapes the Instagram genre and sub-genres (Francesconi 2014, 15-24; Maci 2020, 7-10).

For the qualitative discussion of the material processes, Destination Canada was selected as a case study, and two of the most frequent verbs according to the quantitative analysis were selected, namely *visit* and *explore*. While *visit* occurs with a relative frequency of 0.07% on both channels (11 times on Instagram and 289 on the website), explore figures 1,534.97 times per million tokens on Instagram (0.15%) and 1,157.4 times per million tokens (0.12%). These processes also represent two of the

most frequently occurring verbs in tourism discourse (Maci 2020, 132-133; Manca 2016) that circumscribe the tourist experience and visit to a new destination and its attractions.

The concordance lines in Figures 8.23 and 8.24 provide great insight into the usage of *visit* across the channels of Destination Canada. The table from Figure 8.25, additionally, shows the patterns detected through *Word Sketch* in Destination Canada Website, whereas no relevant trends were found in Destination Canada Instagram. This might be due to the relatively small size of the sub-corpora and low frequency of *visit* as a process on Instagram (only 11 instances). As the main Actor or performer of an action, causing a change in the flow of events through an input of energy (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 224), on the website, the pronoun *you* figures. *You* represents in fact the main addressee of the communication and animate Actor of the process, i.e. the prospective tourist. Previous works extensively confirm this finding as being characteristic of tourist promotional communication, as it isolates the reader as a privileged recipient who is part of an elitist in-group that *needs*, *derves* and *can afford* a vacation (Manca 2016, 51-62; Eka et al. 2017, 17; Trčková 2016, 90-92; Bianchi 2017; Francesconi 2014; Dann 1996). The direct address to the readers of the message through either *you* or the imperative form is in fact a subtle discursive device that both stimulates the prospective customers' attention and strategically confers a privileged position to them, making the assumption that they were *chosen* to enjoy and afford such vacation. By doing this, the advertisers subtly push the potential customers to purchase the experience. As a matter of fact, the imperative is a direct call-to-action in tourism marketing and widely recognized by the academic community of linguists in tourism discourse and scholars of advertising and communication studies, including Verstergaard and Schroeder (1992). Goals, on the other hand, are objects that are *impacted, affected* by the Actor and *suffer, undergo* the process initiated by the Actor (Halliday and Matthiessen 226; 236). This implies that Goals are passive recipients of an action perpetrated by an Actor, who actively puts energy in changing the flow of events and therefore has the power to change the state of things (Eka et al 2017; Trčková 2016). In tourism discourse on the website of Destination Canada, Goals are *represented* by the different attractions that are available to the tourists of a destination: buildings, parks, museums or galleries, archeological sites (Figure 8.23). Therefore, a certain agency and power over the destination is given to the tourist, who

is informed on which places should be visited when arriving at the destination. This is in line with previous findings by Eka et al. (2017, 17-18), according to whom the tourist is usually endowed with power when it comes to material processes: this might be due to the persuasiveness deriving from adding novelty and excitement, power, to activities in new places, and creating a contrast with daily routine and commitments (Mocini 2015, 154). However, destinations might also be considered *Scopes,* thus as inanimate entities that "exist independently of the process" (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 240) and which indicate the domain of action. This might be applied to nature, which exists independently of human beings, but tourist destinations and in particular attractions are made for a purpose, and therefore they would not exist without the *visitor*. Different aspects of the destinations are given a prominent position in Destination Canada on the website: the cultural, historical and artistic uniqueness is considered important and attractive information that might convince and guide the tourist throughout his virtual and physical journey. The goals of the process *visit*, then, seem to be physical and reachable, i.e. concrete information that the tourist can exploit to savor the experience.



1	s#45	dinner and a peek through the onsite telescope, is a top pick, or	visit	Port Bickerton Lighthouse on the Eastern Shore, now an artist re
2	s#56	1800s churches, tall ships, and scallop-catching boats. </s><s>	Visit	the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic and chat with retired fishern
3	s#80	held in Canada in the summer of 1976. </s><s> Today, you can	visit	the Olympic Park and see icons like The Montreal Tower. 2. </s>
4	s#99	website. </s><s> Related Posts Calling all book worms! </s><s>	Visit	these architecturally stunning buildings across Canada and imme
5	s#199	flights make it easy. </s><s> Tap into the Drake Eatery You can't	visit	BC's Craft Beer Capital without quenching your thirst along the w
6	s#224	ossibly thousands, of years. </s><s> Look up at totem poles and	visit	the smoke house and food cache. </s><s> In 1639, French Jesui
7	s#252	o Jump Interpretive Centre in Alberta. </s><s> Why You Need to	Visit	Algonquin Park Voyageur Quest Voyageur Quest When you think
8	s#259	so so many, really, but to start, here are 10 reasons you should	visit	Algonquin Park: 1. </s><s> Canoe: Voyageur Quest You're in Ca
9	s#401	ising that the New York Times named it one of the best places to	visit	in 2016. </s><s> Windsor Right across the water from Detroit sits
10	s#432	rs and audiences, meet to enjoy each other's company. </s><s>	Visit	the Art Gallery of Hamilton, the third largest public art gallery in C
11	s#441	mers' markets. </s><s> Then there's the entertainment. </s><s>	Visit	the Grand Theatre, Canada's oldest and longest-running live prol
12	s#476	he largest (and loudest!) popular gathering in Acadie. 7. </s><s>	Visit	the one and only "Sagouine" No visit to Acadie is complete witho
13	s#478	ly with live performances. 8. </s><s> Learn the history of Acadie	Visit	the Monument-Lefebvre in Memramcook to truly understand the
14	s#479	truly understand the story of the Acadian people. </s><s> Then	visit	the Musée acadien de l'Université de Moncton and discover one
15	s#606	ar about the Spirit bear's mythology from local First Nations, and	visit	significant Indigenous sites, including a traditional Big House. </s
16	s#618	> Explore interpretive trails that wind through the valley. </s><s>	Visit	archeological digs full of tipi rings, stones cairns, pottery fragmen
17	s#627	an participate. </s><s> To discover more experiences like these,	visit	the Indigenous Canada website. </s><s> Take part in a buffalo-h
18	s#702	sunrise. </s><s> Keep exploring this breathtaking province and	visit	the Hello BC website. </s><s> Related Posts From small town to
19	s#782	multi-day wilderness adventure on a heritage waterway. </s><s>	Visit	Alberta's national parks. </s><s> Hike, camp, paddle, cycle, or e
20	s#805	estival, a top stop on North America's folk music circuit. </s><s>	Visit	the carving studio in Carcross to see Keith Wolfe Smarch in actic

Figure 8.23: Concordance lines of *visit* on Destination Canada's official website

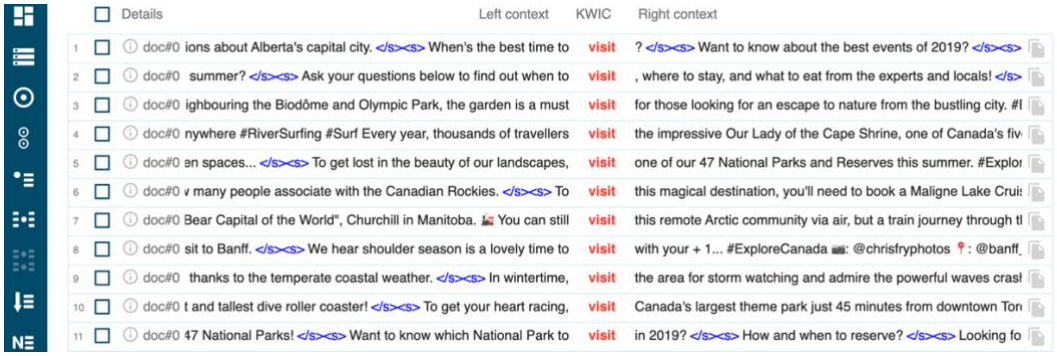


Figure 8.24: Concordance lines of *visit* on Destination Canada's Instagram account

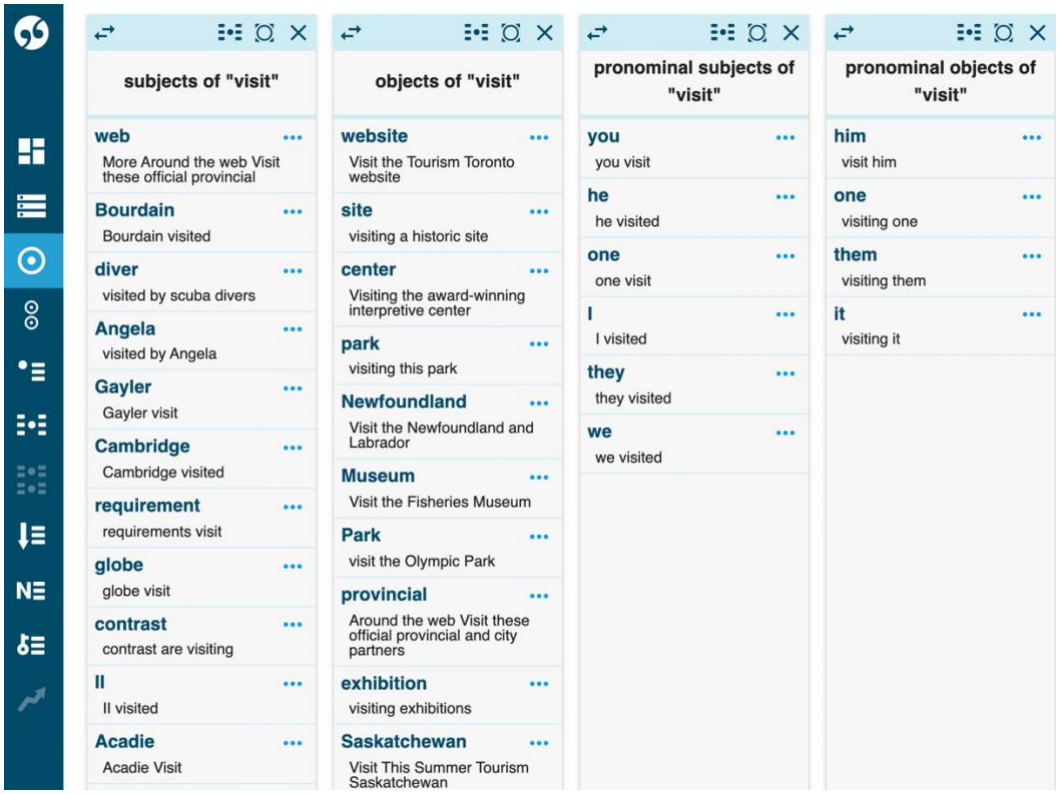


Figure 8.25: Word Sketch of the most frequent participants and processes around the material process *to visit* on Destination Canada's official website

On Instagram, similarly, the imperative form seems a pattern of usage, even if it is enriched by clauses of purpose through the infinitive -to in lines 5 and 10 (Figure 8.24) to convince further the reader of the magnificence of the destination, through emotions and imagination:

"**To get lost in the beauty of our landscapes**, **visit** one of our 47 National Parks and Reserves this summer. #ExploreCanada"

"**To get your heart racing**, visit Canada's largest theme park just 45 minutes from downtown…"

This pattern is also accompanied by a typically tourist discursive device of abundance (*one of our*…), greatness (*largest*) and easiness (*just 45 minutes from*…) (Jalilifar 2019) aimed to persuade the reader to purchase a beautiful and fulfilling experience, among the comforts of the city. Another similarity with the linguistic choices on the website is the adoption of a particular aspect of the destination as the Goal in the previous concordance lines and also line 4, as to highlight the cultural and historical uniqueness of the destination, even if with more sensationalist and evoking language, along with the features of abundance and greatness that were mentioned earlier:

"Every year, **thousands** of travellers **visit** Our Lady of the Cape Shrine, **one of**…"

Here, the Actor of the process is *travellers*, which indicates a sort of collectivity and group identity of people with a semantic focus on travel rather than tourist experience, thus suggesting a more off-the-beaten-track holiday (the *romantic gaze* introduced in the previous section) and a less mass-targeted tourist experience (Dann 1996, Francesconi 2014, Maci 2020). This latter strategy enhances the social and collective tourist gaze that seems to feel less attractive to Instagram users (Manovich 2017). Indeed, the low frequency of the process *visit* itself on Instagram confirms this tendency to underline a gaze that deviates from the standard tourist and comfortable experience of travelling, which could result "monotonous" to the social media prospective customer looking for inspiration and imagination, instead of information – which presupposes interest and intent – through careful aesthetics and visual design (Manovich 2017). Written text seems to align with this by being characterized, on Instagram, by evoking language that boosts imagination and fosters positive feelings, attitudes towards the destination represented. Lines 6 and 7 exemplify that, as the Goals are less concrete or indexical, but more shallow, elusive, and imbued with positive evaluations such as *magical* or *remote*, which is typical of tourism discourse's theme of authenticity (Dann 1996):

"To visit this **magical destination**, you'll need to book…"

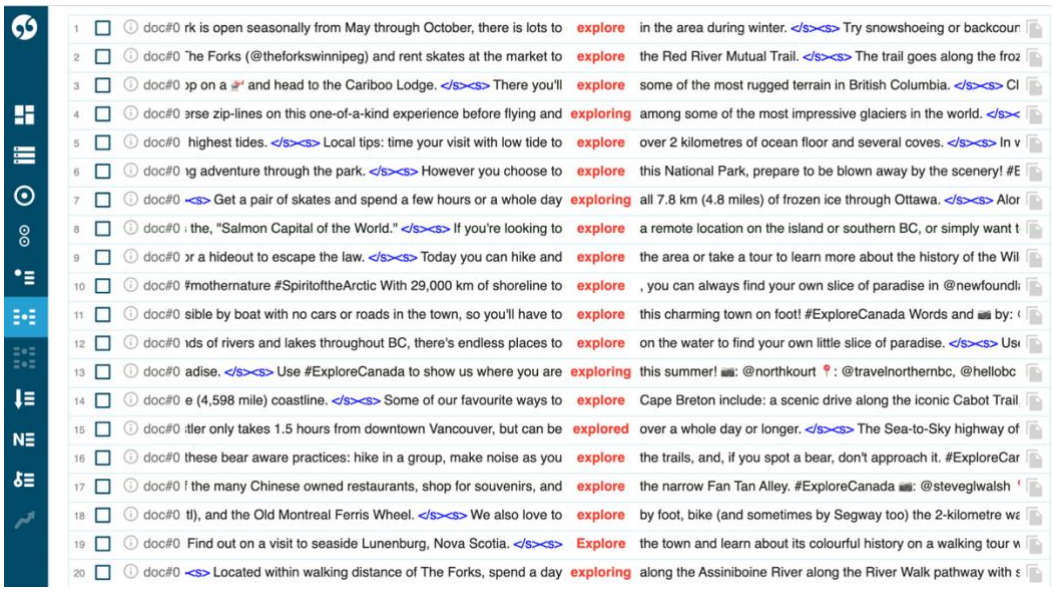
"You can still visit this **remote Arctic community** via air, but…"

These lines, in particular, unveil the asymmetricity of tourism discourse on Instagram; this type of narrative in fact reveals how an imaginary and "magical" (i.e. unreal, far from reality) world is carefully and subtly constructed to instill a desire for an extraordinary experience in an unknown place, away from the chaotic, dull metropolis and the everyday life. As mentioned in the visual analysis, this type of communication is constructed on purpose to answer to the needs – after creating them – of the contemporary society, which growingly feels the need to evade, escape the reality. Therefore, tourism discourse imposes its asymmetric view and designed products to manipulate the customer and make him believe that holidays are the only way to satisfy their need for happiness (Manca 2016, 1-2; Burr 2015, Dann 1996; Vestergaard and Schroeder 1992). The satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the customer feeds then this vicious cycle, as individuals are pushed to keep having and purchasing the holiday experience in an attempt to feel fulfilled in their ordinary life.

On the other hand, material processes such as *explore* occur with a modest frequency on both channels of Destination Canada (28 times, 0.19%c on Instagram; 649 times, 0.16% on the website). Like *visit*, *explore* is introduced as part of an infinitive clause; in this case, however, the particle *to* does not only denote a purpose but is also an implicit relative clause (see for example lines 1, 10, 12, 14 in Figure 8.26 and lines 6, 12, 16 in Figure 8.27). This trend, together with the use of the imperative, sometimes hides the Actor of the process, which is *you;* nonetheless, both these narratives boost a call-to-action.

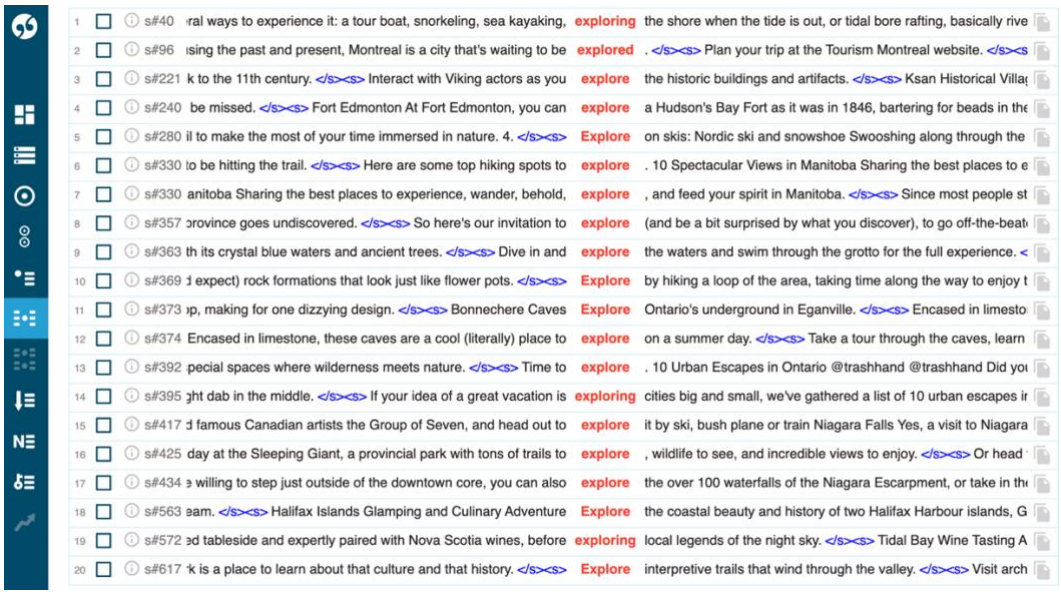
Despite the fact that imperatives concealing the pronominal subject *you* represented as Actor occur often (in lines 1, 5, 7, 16, 19, 20 in image 7.14 and 5, 9, 10, 11, 20 in Figure 8.26), there seem to be more instances of the pronoun *you* as Actor compared to *visit*: this might be due to the fact that through *explore* more prominence and agency is given to the reader, thereby fostering the idea of abundance of opportunities, possibilities and realization of many types of experience. This is confirmed by the fact that *you* is here associated with modals verbs and in particular *can* and *will*. The Goals of this process, on the other hand, are more related to natural elements of the destination and occasionally cultural ones. Examples of natural or cultural elements placed as Goals are *trail(s)* (lines 2, 16, Figure 8.26 and line 16, 20, Figure 8.27), *historic buildings, Bay's*

Fort (lines 3, 4 in Figure 8.27), *terrain, glaciers, ocean floor, frozen ice* (lines 3, 4, 5, 7 in image 8.26, respectively) and *the waters, the over waterfalls, the coastal beauty* (lines 9, 17, 18 in image 8.27, respectively).



1	doc#0	rk is open seasonally from May through October, there is lots to	explore	in the area during winter. </s><s> Try snowshoeing or backcour
2	doc#0	he Forks (@theforkswinnipeg) and rent skates at the market to	explore	the Red River Mutual Trail. </s><s> The trail goes along the froz
3	doc#0	p on a and head to the Cariboo Lodge. </s><s> There you'll	explore	some of the most rugged terrain in British Columbia. </s><s> Cl
4	doc#0	rse zip-lines on this one-of-a-kind experience before flying and	exploring	among some of the most impressive glaciers in the world. </s><
5	doc#0	highest tides. </s><s> Local tips: time your visit with low tide to	explore	over 2 kilometres of ocean floor and several coves. </s><s> In v
6	doc#0	g adventure through the park. </s><s> However you choose to	explore	this National Park, prepare to be blown away by the scenery! #E
7	doc#0	<s> Get a pair of skates and spend a few hours or a whole day	exploring	all 7.8 km (4.8 miles) of frozen ice through Ottawa. </s><s> Alor
8	doc#0	the, "Salmon Capital of the World." </s><s> If you're looking to	explore	a remote location on the island or southern BC, or simply want t
9	doc#0	r a hideout to escape the law. </s><s> Today you can hike and	explore	the area or take a tour to learn more about the history of the Wil
10	doc#0	#mothernature #SpiritoftheArctic With 29,000 km of shoreline to	explore	, you can always find your own slice of paradise in @newfoundl
11	doc#0	sible by boat with no cars or roads in the town, so you'll have to	explore	this charming town on foot! #ExploreCanada Words and by:
12	doc#0	ds of rivers and lakes throughout BC, there's endless places to	explore	on the water to find your own little slice of paradise. </s><s> Us
13	doc#0	adise. </s><s> Use #ExploreCanada to show us where you are	exploring	this summer! : @northkourt : @travelnorthernbc, @hellobc
14	doc#0	e (4,598 mile) coastline. </s><s> Some of our favourite ways to	explore	Cape Breton include: a scenic drive along the iconic Cabot Trail
15	doc#0	tler only takes 1.5 hours from downtown Vancouver, but can be	explored	over a whole day or longer. </s><s> The Sea-to-Sky highway of
16	doc#0	these bear aware practices: hike in a group, make noise as you	explore	the trails, and, if you spot a bear, don't approach it. #ExploreCar
17	doc#0	the many Chinese owned restaurants, shop for souvenirs, and	explore	the narrow Fan Tan Alley. #ExploreCanada : @steveglwalsh
18	doc#0	tl), and the Old Montreal Ferris Wheel. </s><s> We also love to	explore	by foot, bike (and sometimes by Segway too) the 2-kilometre wa
19	doc#0	Find out on a visit to seaside Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. </s><s>	Explore	the town and learn about its colourful history on a walking tour w
20	doc#0	<s> Located within walking distance of The Forks, spend a day	exploring	along the Assiniboine River along the River Walk pathway with s

Figure 8.26: Concordance lines of *explore* on Destination Canada's Instagram account



1	s#40	ral ways to experience it: a tour boat, snorkeling, sea kayaking,	exploring	the shore when the tide is out, or tidal bore rafting, basically rive
2	s#96	sing the past and present, Montreal is a city that's waiting to be	explored	. </s><s> Plan your trip at the Tourism Montreal website. </s><s
3	s#221	k to the 11th century. </s><s> Interact with Viking actors as you	explore	the historic buildings and artifacts. </s><s> Ksan Historical Villa
4	s#240	be missed. </s><s> Fort Edmonton At Fort Edmonton, you can	explore	a Hudson's Bay Fort as it was in 1846, bartering for beads in the
5	s#280	il to make the most of your time immersed in nature. 4. </s><s>	Explore	on skis: Nordic ski and snowshoe Swooshing along through the
6	s#330	o be hitting the trail. </s><s> Here are some top hiking spots to	explore	. 10 Spectacular Views in Manitoba Sharing the best places to e
7	s#330	anitoba Sharing the best places to experience, wander, behold,	explore	, and feed your spirit in Manitoba. </s><s> Since most people st
8	s#357	rovince goes undiscovered. </s><s> So here's our invitation to	explore	(and be a bit surprised by what you discover), to go off-the-beat
9	s#363	th its crystal blue waters and ancient trees. </s><s> Dive in and	explore	the waters and swim through the grotto for the full experience. <
10	s#369	expect) rock formations that look just like flower pots. </s><s>	Explore	by hiking a loop of the area, taking time along the way to enjoy t
11	s#373	p, making for one dizzying design. </s><s> Bonnechere Caves	Explore	Ontario's underground in Eganville. </s><s> Encased in limesto
12	s#374	Encased in limestone, these caves are a cool (literally) place to	explore	on a summer day. </s><s> Take a tour through the caves, learn
13	s#392	pecial spaces where wilderness meets nature. </s><s> Time to	explore	. 10 Urban Escapes in Ontario @trashhand @trashhand Did yo
14	s#395	ght dab in the middle. </s><s> If your idea of a great vacation is	exploring	cities big and small, we've gathered a list of 10 urban escapes ir
15	s#417	famous Canadian artists the Group of Seven, and head out to	explore	it by ski, bush plane or train Niagara Falls Yes, a visit to Niagara
16	s#425	day at the Sleeping Giant, a provincial park with tons of trails to	explore	, wildlife to see, and incredible views to enjoy. </s><s> Or head
17	s#434	willing to step just outside of the downtown core, you can also	explore	the over 100 waterfalls of the Niagara Escarpment, or take in th
18	s#563	am. </s><s> Halifax Islands Glamping and Culinary Adventure	Explore	the coastal beauty and history of two Halifax Harbour islands, G
19	s#572	d tableside and expertly paired with Nova Scotia wines, before	exploring	local legends of the night sky. </s><s> Tidal Bay Wine Tasting A
20	s#617	k is a place to learn about that culture and that history. </s><s>	Explore	interpretive trails that wind through the valley. </s><s> Visit arch

Figure 8.27: Concordance lines of *explore* on Destination Canada's official website

These findings might suggest that, through material processes and in particular verbs of investigation like *explore* (Maci 2020, 132-133), the prospective tourist plays a more active role and is the subject, represented participant which is designed by advertisers

to have the opportunity to explore the destination and the possibility of "dominating the nature" (Trčková 2016, 81, 89-90). It should, however, be kept into consideration that material processes occur less frequently on Instagram, as reported in the quantitative analysis of the processes: this might mean that either Instagram communication is not interested in giving agency to the reader, or that agency is provided to the recipient of the promotional message in another way. On Instagram, additionally, the communication is still more evocative and referring to a generic place or extended location, compared to the website narratives, which has different persuasive strategies. For example, in lines 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, the narrative suggests that the advertisers are more interested in creating the desire to *explore* the location by shaping its visual, mental representation in the mind of the reader, who becomes *unconsciously* the *creator, shaper* of that imaginary, with endless and customized imaginaries, rather than a concrete, definite place. Instead, website includes more concrete attractions (mostly historical ones) or activities, and more imperative forms, indicating a preference for more overt advertising strategies, including call-to-actions (Manca 2016, 103), and less covert promotional material such as the one appearing on Instagram. the direct reference to the website, in concordance line n.2, also suggests a direct focus on the sales. This might be due to the fact that prospective customers on the website are already interested in the offer, and want to gain more information in order to purchase the right service. According to the AIDA model – the marketing strategy that allows companies to influence prospective customers' behaviour through four steps of the persuasive process, namely Attention, Interest, Desire and Action (Manca 2016, 64) – imperatives and the provision of information are typical of the last steps of the marketing funnel of a purchase, which therefore are represented by the website, whereas brand awareness, interest, imagination and desire are stimulated and fundamental in the first part of the process, which might be played by Social Media and Instagram in particular, the most effective tool in tourism marketing for its visuality and aesthetics (Arefieva et al. 2021; Yu and Egger 2021). In particular, the focus on the destination's beauty attributes that make the product desirable, unique and that help establish an emotional connection with the tourist experience are used especially and proportionately in the first three steps of the AIDA model, concluding the "persuasive" process with call-to-actions (Manca 2016, 65). This might be the reason why on Instagram less attention is devoted to activities, services and

information, and artistic, gastronomic, cultural events but is focused on shaping the imagination, arousing interest and stimulating desire of the prospective, "not-yet interested" customer by means of evoking and emotional adjectives and nouns that describe the beauty of the destination, along with its popularity and desirability (Manca 2016, 80).

The presence of abstract material clauses that represent abstract events, which are not concrete but are more imaginary (Halliday 2014, 243-244), in tourism discourse and on Instagram in particular through evoking language, tells something about the lack of importance or persuasiveness (as just stated when introducing the AIDA model) of the undertaking of real action and activity on social platforms. It is therefore no coincidence that material processes are less frequent on Instagram: this also indicates also a certain passivity or other kind of "activity" on the part of the tourists, who might be more Sensers – of feelings, imagination, inspiration – rather than Actors, as indeed confirmed by the quantitative analysis. It is also no coincidence that, according to Halliday, abstract material clauses sometimes blur with *mental* processes.

Overall, it might be argued that material processes serve the purpose of convincing the readers of the presence of agency and power, opportunity to choose whatever kind of experience they want to have. The focus of both channels (and Instagram, in particular) on nature, additionally, fosters the postmodern romantic *gaze* of dominating and exploring the wilderness and remoteness of the travel destination, by means of evoking imaginaries that boost a self-creation of a personalized, customized experience.

Before moving on to the analysis of mental processes, it is necessary to investigate whether the patterns of Transitivity and material processes detected may be observed also in the communication designed by Tourism Western Australia and Tourism Ireland.

Figures 8.28-8.31 show the main Actors and Goals of *explore* and *visit* on Tourism Western Australia's Instagram account and website channel. As in Destination Canada's Instagram sub-corpus, the main Actor is *you*, whereas, on the website, occurrences of *you* are not enough to form a usage pattern, as it is not indicated by Word Sketch and the correlated graph. With reference to the objects, major trends can be observed instead on both channels. On Instagram, on the one hand, prominence is given to abstract or evoking attractions, or to concrete places which are introduced by hashtags or tags. This procedure is rather common on Social Media, (along with

informal and friendly) (Zappavigna 2015), as it serves the purpose of directly connecting the reader with either the source of the content or similar posts. Since these travel agencies promote their destination in a covert promotional language – by, for example, never mentioning prices or particular services (Francesconi 2014) – to further attract the interest of their audience and make their words and images look more authentic, they usually use hashtags and tags to engage the recipient of the message with similar types of non-promotional or user-generated content, which is felt as more realistic, and which can be explored and serves the function of further stimulating the imagination of the user and create desire. This straight connection, on the website, can be realized through hyperlinks, but serves more an informative function, as the reader already knows that he is *exploring* the offer of a specific website which has a purchase option and which therefore might be seen as less authentic. Furthermore, the objects (the Goals) on the website are diversified and more indexical, as they refer to specific locations and focus not only on the nature but also on the artistic and cultural uniqueness of the destination (Gotti et al. 2017). It is interesting to see how the reference to artistic elements is completely absent from the Instagram channel.



Figure 8.28: Actors and Goals of *explore* in Tourism Western Australia's Instagram communication

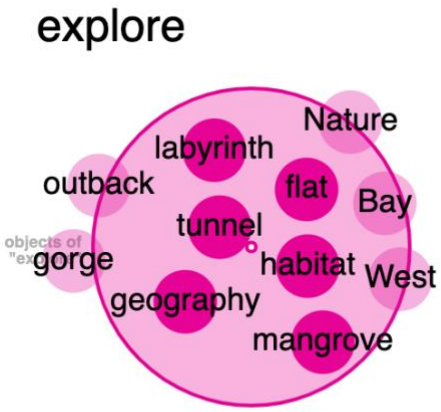


Figure 8.29: Goals of *explore* in Tourism Western Australia's website communication

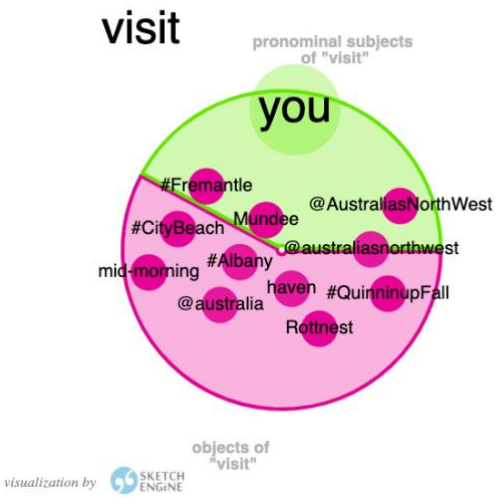


Figure 8.30: Actors and Goals of *visit* in Tourism Western Australia's Instagram communication



Figure 8.31: Actors and Goals of *visit* in Tourism Western Australia's website communication

On Tourism Ireland, additionally, also gastronomic entities appear (see the Goal *distillery* in Figure 8.33), together with artistic attractions of the destination (*museum*) but also historical and natural ones. Nature is portrayed, in particular, as the Goal of an imaginary *you* who has the opportunity and power to *explore* the *idea,* the *beauty* and the *landscape* of a particular location. This imaginary and evocative language, which is present on all channels of these travel agencies, serves here the purpose of inviting the reader to "virtually" and "mentally" take action and dominate the nature, as conceptualized by a Western Enlightenment ideology and confirmed by previous studies on ecotourism (Trčková 2016, 81, 90-92; Dorsey et al. 2004; Stamou et al. 2009). This postmodern romantic perspective and gaze that objectify, commodify ideologically the natural element, which is endowed with passivity, makes the nature the wild, untamed and untouched, pure "other" desired, conquered and possessed via imagination that is made so vivid and tangible (Urry 2011; Dann 1996). This trend and metaphorical language, however, sometimes blurs with mental processes, which were found to be more frequent on Instagram. This indicates again the tendency to use more evocative, "romantic" language that can attract the attention of the customer and instill the desire to actually get more information on the website and purchase the travel experience to *explore* the destination.



Figure 8.32: Actors and Goals of *explore* in Tourism Ireland's website communication



Figure 8.33: Actors and Goals of *visit* in Tourism Ireland's website communication

8.3.4 Mental processes: *to see* (perception) and *to enjoy* (emotion)

The qualitative analysis of material processes enabled the detection and interpretation of patterns of language use in terms of intentional representation of actions and their participants. In particular, it was demonstrated how nature is placed as the immutable and magic destination (the Goal) of the tourist or traveler, who is the Actor of most material processes. It was also discovered that other aspects of the destination are given prominence on both channels, such as the historical ones, whereas others are highlighted and considered attractive only on the website, such as the artistic, cultural and gastronomic elements. These varying trends align with an emerging postmodern view and romantic *gaze* at the tourist experience on sharing platforms, which is seen as a solitary, off-the-beaten track and away from the comforts of the typically tourist and chaotic, mass-targeted holiday. This return to the nature in a romantic fashion of the traveller rather than the tourist (Dann 1996; Francesconi 2014) is found especially on Instagram, as that is the place for customers who yet need to be inspired, and where their imagination needs to be boosted, in order to convince them to explore concretely the destination and purchase a holiday on the website of the travel company. The idea of domination of an aesthetically pleasant and "perfect" spot feeds the narcissistic

illusion of power, control over something, choice and escape into tranquility that the postmodern individual longs for constantly (Urry 2011).

In order to foster subtly this set of needs, tourist promotional language relies not only on making the tourist the main Actor on both channels, but also on figurative language (especially on Instagram, as discussed in the previous section), when choosing material processes, which makes the post of the destination promoted a covert, more attractive and imagination-booster advertisement (Manovich 2017). Imagery and visualization in fact are argued to be more effective in the stimulation of long-term memory, compared to the provision of information (Garrod 2009; Arefieva et al. 2021), especially if associated with emotions. This might be the reason why mental processes are exploited as linguistic and semiotic resources in tourism discourse to enhance persuasion (Manca 2016; Francesconi 2014). Mental processes are considered typical of the promotion of the tourist experience, even if they were found less frequent than relational or material processes in the previous literature on Transitivity and tourism discourse, which is mostly focused on website communication (Manca 2016, 43-44, 51-62; Francesconi 2014, 56-69; Eka et al. 2017, 16) except for online travel diaries (Francesconi 2014, 66). As a matter of fact, this type of processes subtly – and therefore asymmetrically, by proposing a designed view of reality – plays on the perceptions, emotions and inner desires of freedom, exclusiveness, perfection and tranquility of individuals to boost imagination, create needs, and lead into action. Indeed, mental processes are defined as the world of consciousness, as the filtered experience of the events occurring outside, in the real world (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 245). This implies that, by choosing them often, the advertiser attempts to portray thoughts and emotions as the reality and not some guided interpretation of it, consequently playing on some affected and unconscious reaction to the promotional material proposed.

If the analysis so far has concentrated on processes of *being* and *doing*, attention should now be focused on ways of *seeing* and *feeling*, as research on tourism discourse and promotional imagery shows (Berger 1983; Gotti et al. 2017). One of the main mental processes that focuses on the perception of "seeing", which is a fundamental property in the advertisement of an intangible product, is *to see*. This mental process occurs 77 times on Tourism Western Australia Instagram (with a relative frequency of 0.4%) and only 43 times on Tourism Western Australia website, which is almost twice in size the Instagram corpus (with a relative frequency of 0.13%).

The tables from Figures 8.34 and 8.35 show the patterns of usage concerning this mental verb detected by Word Sketch on both channels. What is similar across channels is the *Phenomenon*: in fact, the objects of *see* are either marine wildlife (such as dolphins, sharks, whales, turtles) or visual aspects related to reacting to the tourist experience or its visual pre-consumption and creation of expectations, which include *sunrise*, *light,* on the one hand, and *climb outline, nature, outline* on the other. Additionally, in the Instagram corpus trends of pronominal subjects and objects as *Sensers* occur, which confirm the dichotomous process of visual consumption and perception of the different aspects of the destination, the *it*, on the part of the tourist, the *you*. While the positioning of the potential customer and tourist *you* as the animate *Senser* might confirm the conferment of power and control over the immutable nature and its wildlife, which becomes an object of contemplation and consumption (Francesconi 2014), the fact that this type of processes is more frequent than material processes on Instagram poses questions as to whether a more passive role is provided intentionally, by the advertisers, to the recipient of the Instagram promotional message. In fact, the construction of the audience as mere observers, staring at a landscape, disempowers them, suggesting that they are not actively engaging with it but are instead part of the product nature and are themselves, together with their emotions, commodified, i.e. intentionally designed. This strategy might have social implications which enhances the asymmetricity of the discourse, as it fosters identification with a subject that is powerless in front of the magnificence of a perfect nature, in perfect tranquility, and admiring the untouched wilderness of real, untamed animals that are supposedly waiting to be "tamed", in a world that is completely different from the daily routine and which gives the illusion of power and control, when actually the exactly opposite process is occurring (Dann 1996; Urry 2011). Moreover, this finding works coherently within a framework of visual consumption of multimodal communication, which has growingly become "eventless" (Berger 1983) with the purpose of objectifying and packaging, in a fashionable and consumable way, a product or service (Manovich 2017).

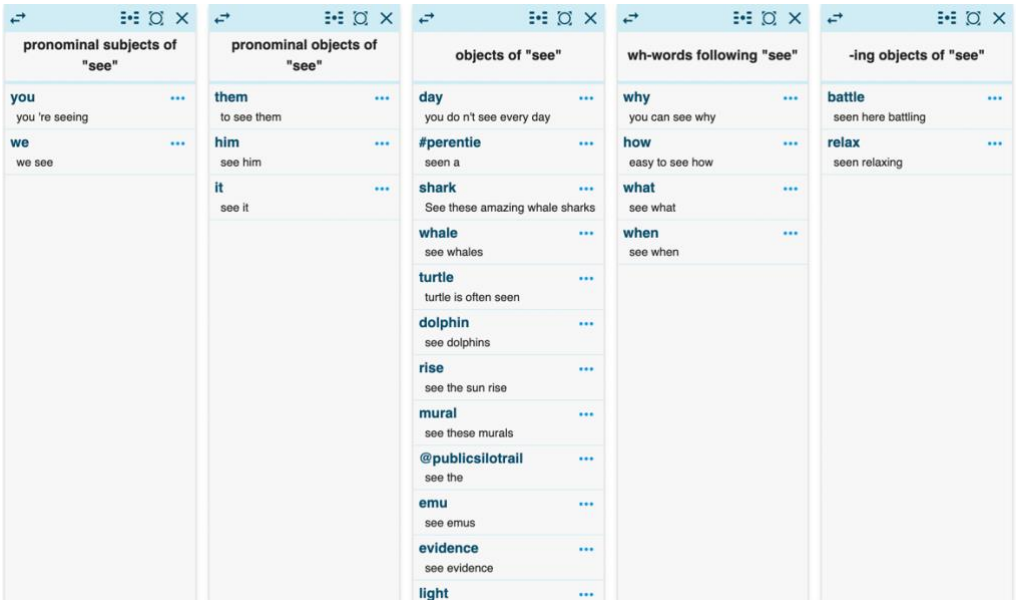


Figure 8.34: Main Sensers and Phenomena around the mental process *to see* on Tourism Western Australia's Instagram account

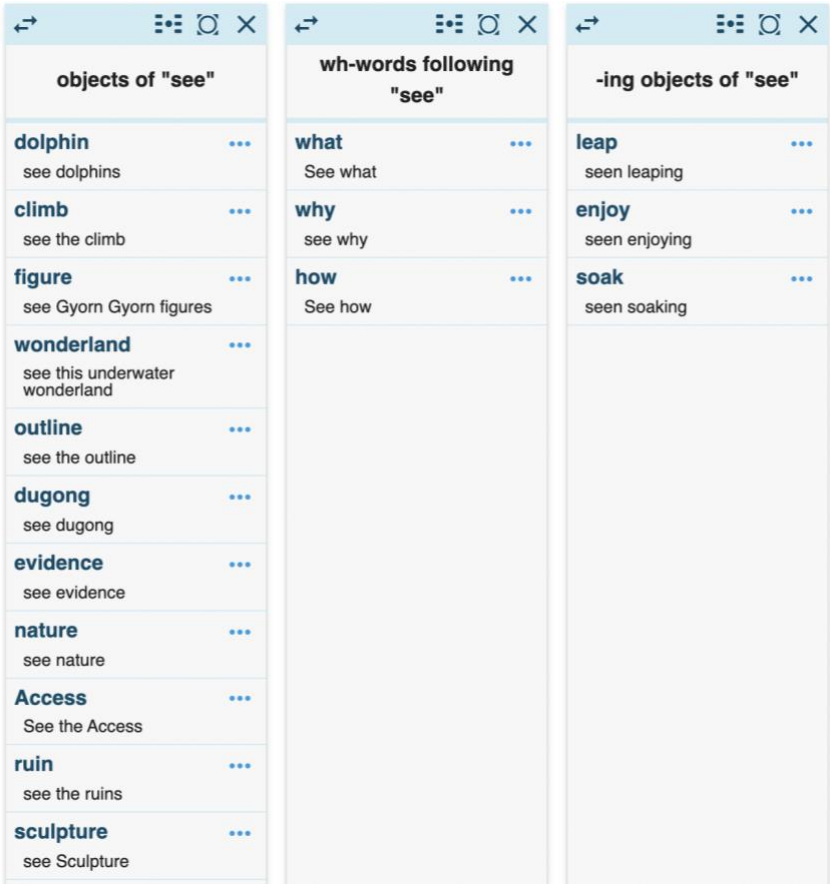
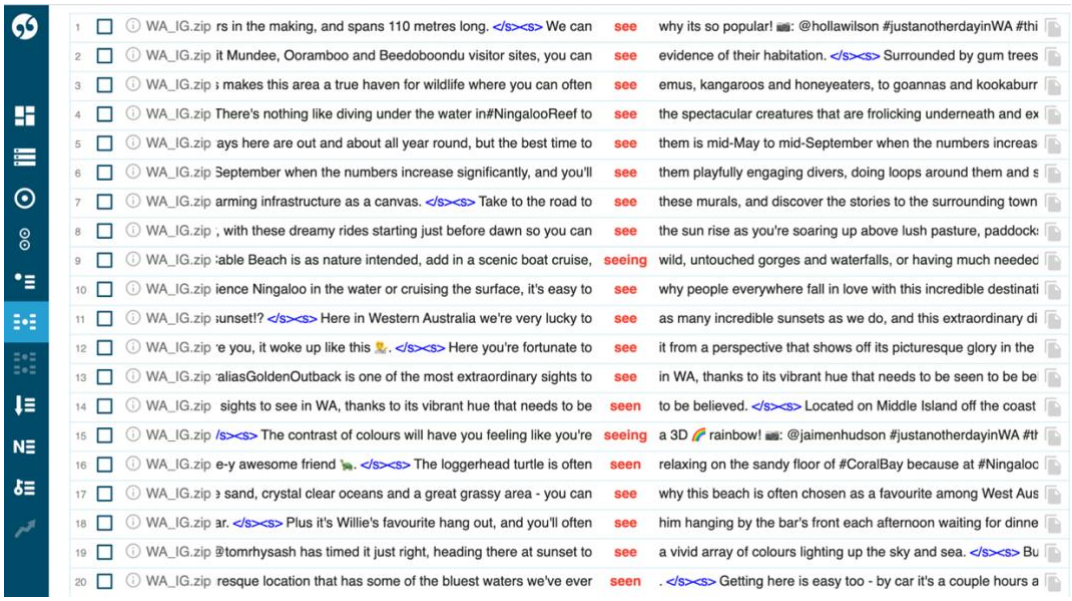


Figure 8.35: Main Phenomena around the mental process *to see* on Tourism Western Australia's official website

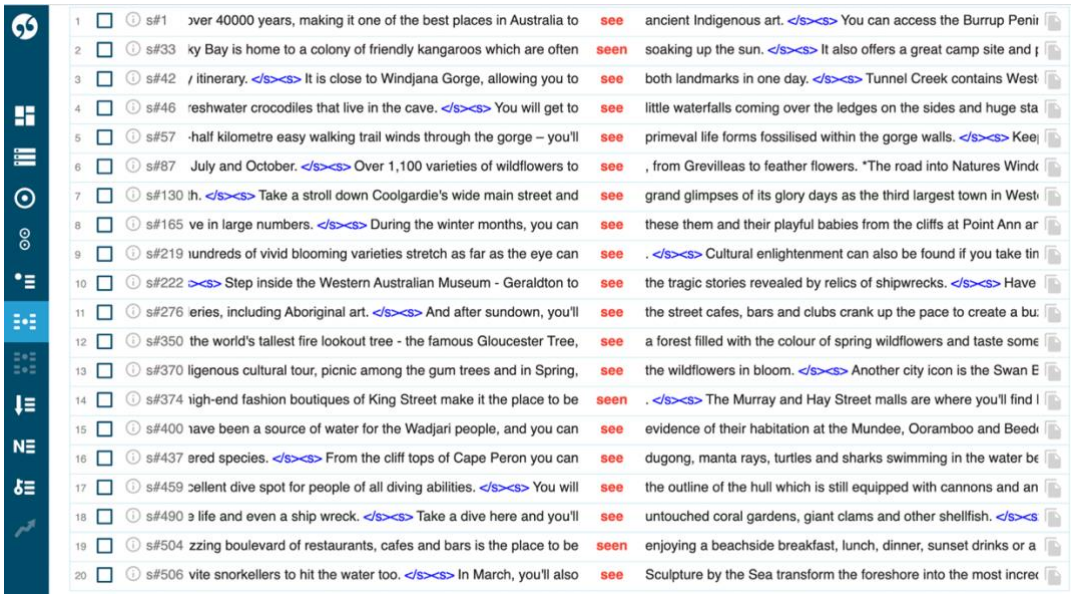
By inspecting closely the design of communication via concordance lines of this mental process (Figures 8.36 and 8.37), few additional similarities and differences across channels may be detected. While the discourse on both channels attempts to promote the destination by designing a travel experience which focuses on the passive contemplation of a commodified wilderness and designed, "perfect" authentic representation of pure nature, tourism website narratives seem to consider other aspects of the destination attractive and representative of an appealing holiday. Concordance lines 3-6, 8-9, 11-16 and 19-20 on Instagram confirm the first finding, accompanied by lines 2, 4, 6, 8, 12, 13, 16-18 on the website. A good number of instances on the website, on the other hand, places in the *Phenomenon* position cultural, artistic, historical, and gastronomic aspects, such as *ancient Indigenous art* (line 1), *street cafés, bars and clubs* (line 11), *the tragic stories revealed by relics or shipwrecks* (line 10).

Another pattern of usage which emerges in both channels is the inclusion of projected clauses through reported speech of wh-questions, in particular *why* (in this screenshot it only figures in Instagram concordance lines 1, 10, 17, but the table from Figure 8.34 confirms the presence of this pattern also on the website). This rhetorical strategy could be argued to have a similar effect of rhetorical questions (Francesconi 2014): it stimulates, in fact, an imaginary conversation with the audience, by fostering common ground and therefore the development of common understanding, imagination and expectations of a certain representation of reality. The recipient is subtly pushed to agree with the advertiser, who is asking for confirmation to an elitist in-group *you* or even *we* (line 1 in Figure 8.35, for example). Moreover, the specific use of the process *see*, which can be both interpreted as concrete seeing or *understanding*, plays an indexical, referential role that directly connects with the surrounding, evocative context, both written and visual, and also stimulates the inner thinking and visualization of the experience of each user. This discursive device always promotes a deviated construction of the destination image, which is based on perceptions, emotions, and imagination.



1	WA_IG.zip	rs in the making, and spans 110 metres long. </s><s> We can	see	why its so popular! 📷: @hollawilson #justanotherdayinWA #thi
2	WA_IG.zip	it Mundee, Ooramboo and Beedoboondu visitor sites, you can	see	evidence of their habitation. </s><s> Surrounded by gum trees
3	WA_IG.zip	s makes this area a true haven for wildlife where you can often	see	emus, kangaroos and honeyeaters, to goannas and kookaburr
4	WA_IG.zip	There's nothing like diving under the water in#NingalooReef to	see	the spectacular creatures that are frolicking underneath and ex
5	WA_IG.zip	ays here are out and about all year round, but the best time to	see	them is mid-May to mid-September when the numbers increas
6	WA_IG.zip	September when the numbers increase significantly, and you'll	see	them playfully engaging divers, doing loops around them and s
7	WA_IG.zip	arming infrastructure as a canvas. </s><s> Take to the road to	see	these murals, and discover the stories to the surrounding town
8	WA_IG.zip	, with these dreamy rides starting just before dawn so you can	see	the sun rise as you're soaring up above lush pasture, paddock:
9	WA_IG.zip	:able Beach is as nature intended, add in a scenic boat cruise,	seeing	wild, untouched gorges and waterfalls, or having much needed
10	WA_IG.zip	ience Ningaloo in the water or cruising the surface, it's easy to	see	why people everywhere fall in love with this incredible destinati
11	WA_IG.zip	sunset!? </s><s> Here in Western Australia we're very lucky to	see	as many incredible sunsets as we do, and this extraordinary di
12	WA_IG.zip	'e you, it woke up like this 🏄. </s><s> Here you're fortunate to	see	it from a perspective that shows off its picturesque glory in the
13	WA_IG.zip	aliasGoldenOutback is one of the most extraordinary sights to	see	in WA, thanks to its vibrant hue that needs to be seen to be be
14	WA_IG.zip	sights to see in WA, thanks to its vibrant hue that needs to be	seen	to be believed. </s><s> Located on Middle Island off the coast
15	WA_IG.zip	/s><s> The contrast of colours will have you feeling like you're	seeing	a 3D 🌈 rainbow! 📷: @jaimenhudson #justanotherdayinWA #th
16	WA_IG.zip	e-y awesome friend 🐢. </s><s> The loggerhead turtle is often	seen	relaxing on the sandy floor of #CoralBay because at #Ningaloc
17	WA_IG.zip	s sand, crystal clear oceans and a great grassy area - you can	see	why this beach is often chosen as a favourite among West Aus
18	WA_IG.zip	ar. </s><s> Plus it's Willie's favourite hang out, and you'll often	see	him hanging by the bar's front each afternoon waiting for dinne
19	WA_IG.zip	@tomrhysash has timed it just right, heading there at sunset to	see	a vivid array of colours lighting up the sky and sea. </s><s> Bu
20	WA_IG.zip	resque location that has some of the bluest waters we've ever	seen	. </s><s> Getting here is easy too - by car it's a couple hours a

Figure 8.36: Concordance lines of *to see* on Tourism Western Australia's Instagram account



1	s#1	over 40000 years, making it one of the best places in Australia to	see	ancient Indigenous art. </s><s> You can access the Burrup Penir
2	s#33	ky Bay is home to a colony of friendly kangaroos which are often	seen	soaking up the sun. </s><s> It also offers a great camp site and p
3	s#42	/ itinerary. </s><s> It is close to Windjana Gorge, allowing you to	see	both landmarks in one day. </s><s> Tunnel Creek contains West
4	s#46	reshwater crocodiles that live in the cave. </s><s> You will get to	see	little waterfalls coming over the ledges on the sides and huge sta
5	s#57	half kilometre easy walking trail winds through the gorge – you'll	see	primeval life forms fossilised within the gorge walls. </s><s> Kee
6	s#87	July and October. </s><s> Over 1,100 varieties of wildflowers to	see	, from Grevilleas to feather flowers. *The road into Natures Windo
7	s#130	h. </s><s> Take a stroll down Coolgardie's wide main street and	see	grand glimpses of its glory days as the third largest town in West
8	s#165	ve in large numbers. </s><s> During the winter months, you can	see	these them and their playful babies from the cliffs at Point Ann ar
9	s#219	undreds of vivid blooming varieties stretch as far as the eye can	see	. </s><s> Cultural enlightenment can also be found if you take tin
10	s#222	><s> Step inside the Western Australian Museum - Geraldton to	see	the tragic stories revealed by relics of shipwrecks. </s><s> Have
11	s#276	eries, including Aboriginal art. </s><s> And after sundown, you'll	see	the street cafes, bars and clubs crank up the pace to create a bu:
12	s#350	the world's tallest fire lookout tree - the famous Gloucester Tree,	see	a forest filled with the colour of spring wildflowers and taste some
13	s#370	ligenous cultural tour, picnic among the gum trees and in Spring,	see	the wildflowers in bloom. </s><s> Another city icon is the Swan E
14	s#374	igh-end fashion boutiques of King Street make it the place to be	seen	. </s><s> The Murray and Hay Street malls are where you'll find l
15	s#400	ave been a source of water for the Wadjari people, and you can	see	evidence of their habitation at the Mundee, Ooramboo and Beedo
16	s#437	ered species. </s><s> From the cliff tops of Cape Peron you can	see	dugong, manta rays, turtles and sharks swimming in the water be
17	s#459	cellent dive spot for people of all diving abilities. </s><s> You will	see	the outline of the hull which is still equipped with cannons and an
18	s#490	a life and even a ship wreck. </s><s> Take a dive here and you'll	see	untouched coral gardens, giant clams and other shellfish. </s><s
19	s#504	zzing boulevard of restaurants, cafes and bars is the place to be	seen	enjoying a beachside breakfast, lunch, dinner, sunset drinks or a
20	s#506	vite snorkellers to hit the water too. </s><s> In March, you'll also	see	Sculpture by the Sea transform the foreshore into the most increc

Figure 8.37 Concordance lines of *to see* on Tourism Western Australia's official website

The mental process *enjoy,* similarly to *see*, occurs with a lower frequency on the website, compared to Instagram, and seems to create a different narrative on both channels, as it displays varying usage patterns due to the presence of *Phenomena* underlining different aspects of the destination. If one looks at the table from Figure 8.38, which shows the detected patterns of objects on Instagram, it can be observed that the linguistic choices on the social platform are not only very evocative – as they include pre-modifiers to

define the Phenomenon that convey positive attitudes (such as *clear nights sky, delightful meal, relaxing vibe*) (Maci 2020) – but they are also abstract or refer to entities that stimulate internal experiences such as vision or feelings. Examples of that are, respectively, *day, night, holiday, sky, scenery, epic, vibe, escape*. Very few active, external activities *(grazing, stroll) or gastronomic* experiences are mentioned *(delightful meal)*.

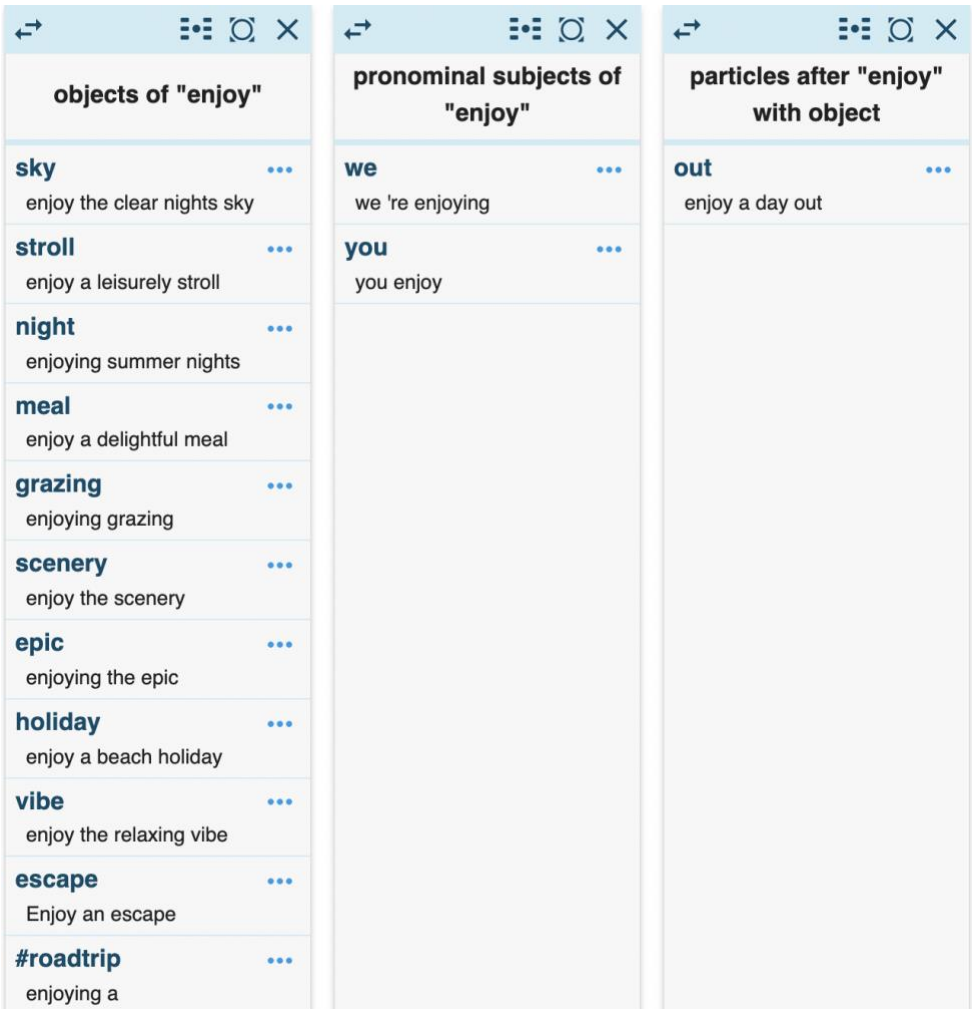


Figure 8.38: Main Sensers and Phenomena around the mental process *to enjoy* on Tourism Western Australia's Instagram account

Concordances from Figure 8.39 confirm this trend of abstract and imaginative, stimulating, evocative language and also include references to the experience of static observation and admiration of the nature by choosing *Phenomena* such as (*enjoy) this*

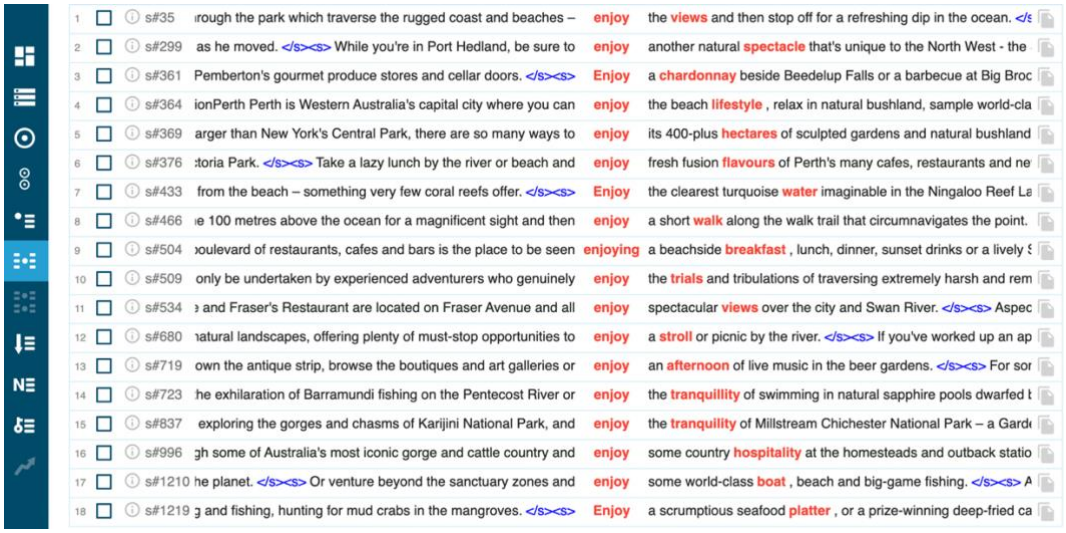
wondrous view (line 7), *the clear nights sky* (9), *the serene and calming view of waves* (13), *the relaxing vibe and picturesque surroundings* (17).



1	WA_IG.zip	ıdventures can be. </s><s> Whether it's passing the time and	enjoying	the beautiful wine region 🍷, exploring ancient caves or laying
2	WA_IG.zip	nade to be explored, wander through the ancient lands before	enjoying	complete and utter coastal bliss 🚣‍♂️🌊. </s><s> As cliche as it i
3	WA_IG.zip	ɔ do. </s><s> Right now, with @fringeworld in full swing we're	enjoying	summer nights with a bite at @yagansquare, followed by a sh
4	WA_IG.zip	treat yourself to some much need time out here, relaxing and	enjoying	the best of what nature has to offer! 📸: @zigaradsel #justanot
5	WA_IG.zip	hs on end of perfect warm weather, there is no better place to	enjoy	a beach holiday. ðŸ™Œ: @heathwhiley #justanotherdayinWA #th
6	WA_IG.zip	ıly is it a family friendly beach but the avid fisherman can also	enjoy	a spot of fishing as well 🎣. </s><s> Take a dip in the refreshin
7	WA_IG.zip	</s><s> But no matter when you visit, there is no bad time to	enjoy	this wondrous view. #justanotherdayinWA #thisisWA #Westerr
8	WA_IG.zip	is is now one of the locals! 😉 It seems like @chrishemsworth	enjoyed	his time on @rottnestislandwa and even learnt a thing or two c
9	WA_IG.zip	. @destinationperth starts to warm up, with endless options to	enjoy	the clear nights sky. </s><s> Whether you raise a glass at a lo
10	WA_IG.zip	missed when travelling to @destinationperth, especially when	enjoyed	at the beach with the glorious sound of waves crashing down
11	WA_IG.zip	ten 🏄 among this prehistoric rock formation is a great way to	enjoy	a day out in @AustraliasGoldenOutback. </s><s> Check out t
12	WA_IG.zip	mp Day in #Broome thanks to the camels that call it home! 🐪	Enjoy	a seaside adventure riding one of these incredible creatures, v
13	WA_IG.zip	side adventure riding one of these incredible creatures, whilst	enjoying	the serene and calming view of waves lapping at the shore on
14	WA_IG.zip	ı that are all contrasting yet perfectly complementing. </s><s>	Enjoy	a winding walk through the park, followed by a soothing swim
15	WA_IG.zip	ut there, this spot is calling your name. </s><s> Here you can	enjoy	all kinds of aquatic activities, including 🛶 canoeing, 🏊 swimm
16	WA_IG.zip	namic kaleidoscope of lights on the stadium's exterior as you	enjoy	a leisurely stroll along the #SwanRiver. </s><s> Perth city is ri
17	WA_IG.zip	redible @Australias_SouthWest region. </s><s> Sit back and	enjoy	the relaxing vibe and picturesque surroundings whilst idly pas
18	WA_IG.zip	y in the famed Fremantle markets, feasting on local bites and	enjoying	the relaxed and culturally rich city as the sea breeze drifts by 🌬
19	WA_IG.zip	ı could blink and be transported there right now 😍💙. </s><s>	Enjoy	a picnic and explore marvellously sculpted rock formations tha
20	WA_IG.zip	ɜr treats today, the local resident kangaroos of #LuckyBay are	enjoying	grazing on nature's goods 🌿 while soaking in what can only b

Figure 8.39: Concordance lines of *to see* on Tourism Western Australia's Instagram account

The narrative designed on the website of Tourism Western Australia differs, even though it may be considered also similar, to a certain extent. On the one hand, in fact, a similar usage of evocative language and reference to static observation, stimulation of feelings occur (through *enjoy the views,* line 1, *another natural spectacle*, line 2, *the clearest turquoise water imaginable*, line 7, *spectacular views,* line 11, *the tranquility of Millstream Chichester National Park,* line 15, Figure 8.40). On the other hand, there is a strong focus on the creation of expectations and mental pre-consumption of activities (lines 8, 10, 12, 14, 17) and gastronomic flavors (lines 3, 6, 9, 18). A smaller usage of evocative pre-modification of the *Phenomenon* with adjectives may also be detected, which confirms a certain degree of concreteness of the information provided and the intentional adoption of a more formal register. All these characteristics might contribute to the characterization of website and Social Media communication as different genres of the *macro-genre* of tourism discourse, as the two channels focus on different sub-genres or "topics": food, arts, history and activities, services on the one hand, and nature, emotions, imagination on the other (Francesconi 2014, 15).



1	s#35	rough the park which traverse the rugged coast and beaches –	enjoy	the views and then stop off for a refreshing dip in the ocean. </s
2	s#299	as he moved. </s><s> While you're in Port Hedland, be sure to	enjoy	another natural spectacle that's unique to the North West - the
3	s#361	Pemberton's gourmet produce stores and cellar doors. </s><s>	Enjoy	a chardonnay beside Beedelup Falls or a barbecue at Big Broc
4	s#364	ionPerth Perth is Western Australia's capital city where you can	enjoy	the beach lifestyle , relax in natural bushland, sample world-cla
5	s#369	arger than New York's Central Park, there are so many ways to	enjoy	its 400-plus hectares of sculpted gardens and natural bushland
6	s#376	toria Park. </s><s> Take a lazy lunch by the river or beach and	enjoy	fresh fusion flavours of Perth's many cafes, restaurants and ne
7	s#433	from the beach – something very few coral reefs offer. </s><s>	Enjoy	the clearest turquoise water imaginable in the Ningaloo Reef La
8	s#466	e 100 metres above the ocean for a magnificent sight and then	enjoy	a short walk along the walk trail that circumnavigates the point.
9	s#504	oulevard of restaurants, cafes and bars is the place to be seen	enjoying	a beachside breakfast , lunch, dinner, sunset drinks or a lively S
10	s#509	only be undertaken by experienced adventurers who genuinely	enjoy	the trials and tribulations of traversing extremely harsh and rem
11	s#534	and Fraser's Restaurant are located on Fraser Avenue and all	enjoy	spectacular views over the city and Swan River. </s><s> Aspec
12	s#680	natural landscapes, offering plenty of must-stop opportunities to	enjoy	a stroll or picnic by the river. </s><s> If you've worked up an ap
13	s#719	own the antique strip, browse the boutiques and art galleries or	enjoy	an afternoon of live music in the beer gardens. </s><s> For sor
14	s#723	he exhilaration of Barramundi fishing on the Pentecost River or	enjoy	the tranquillity of swimming in natural sapphire pools dwarfed b
15	s#837	exploring the gorges and chasms of Karijini National Park, and	enjoy	the tranquility of Millstream Chichester National Park – a Garde
16	s#996	gh some of Australia's most iconic gorge and cattle country and	enjoy	some country hospitality at the homesteads and outback statio
17	s#1210	he planet. </s><s> Or venture beyond the sanctuary zones and	enjoy	some world-class boat , beach and big-game fishing. </s><s> A
18	s#1219	g and fishing, hunting for mud crabs in the mangroves. </s><s>	Enjoy	a scrumptious seafood platter , or a prize-winning deep-fried ca

Figure 8.40: Concordance lines of *to see* on Tourism Western Australia's official website

The overall findings in terms of mental processes seem to support the ones discussed in the previous sections. The constant focus, on the part of popular advertisers on Instagram, on an informal, friendly, evocative language that adopts more mental processes and represents natural Phenomena or abstract, inner experiences based on emotions and visual perception which refer to a passive experience or contemplation, reflects a contemporary promotional attitude to consider attractive and persuasive (and effective) the stimulation of imagination and emotional pre-consumption rather than the provision of concrete information on the abundance of tourist services and diversification of the experience. This also reflects a discursive (and therefore ideological) positioning of the recipients of the promotional message mainly as the Sensers and own creators of their inner, *sensational* travel experience, which gives the readers the illusion of being in total charge of their feelings, perceptions and own purchasing decisions. In actual fact, the main role as Senser and minor role as Actor tells something about the real degree of passivity, rather than activity, which is given by the creators of the message to the recipients on purpose. This strategy strengthens the asymmetricity of information that is supposedly made "more available" on social media and Web 2.0: instead, by offering written text that does not actually provide information but which only provides a distorted version of the reality, the customer and their decisions become easily affected by this altered, if not false, content.

This differentiation in the persuasive strategy might be due to the fact that the main communicational aim and the audience present on Instagram differ from the website

ones. As mentioned earlier, the constant appeal to emotions, visuality, imagination and passive, perfect experience of the nature is characteristic of the post-modern society and tourism communication (Urry and Larsen 2011) that intentionally shapes an ideally idyllic *romantic gaze*, through which the traveller enjoys a privileged, solitary holiday merged with the nature and away from the dullness and chaos of the city, with all its duties and responsibilities. The *unknown* and the *remote*, *uncivilized* and *magic*, unreal nature, with its clear skies and tranquil nights, are highlighted as the solution, the *escape* into another (constructed) reality that attempts to fulfill individuals' needs for happiness, imagination, serenity and 'protagonism', power which is confirmed by the constant use of *you* as the main *Senser*. The tourist is therefore seen on Instagram as the Senser of an experience which is designed around the concept of perfection and inspiration, which are all strategies that aim to capture the attention of the Social Media user and hopefully lead him to look for more concrete information on the website of the company (Manovich 2017). This pre-trip strategies could be defined as "rhetorical" and define a new genre that relates to different purposes and recipients of Instagram communication (Bhatia 1993; Dann 1996; Francesconi 2014; Bateman 2014a) and tell something about the type of advertisement that works in the contemporary society. It seems in fact that contemporary promotional content works if it offers something extra-ordinary that makes someone one feel emotions through visuality and see what is *different* and *perfect,* compared to the everyday reality, to have the illusion of being *happy* and having the power of *choosing* an alternative reality, whereas, instead, the asymmetricity of this type of covert communication only serves the purposes of creating this illusion and needs by shaping and designing a perfect, imaginary world.

These social implications and interpretations also apply to the discourse constructed by the other travel organizations under investigation. For space reasons, only the results from Destination Canada will be briefly presented, and only by means of a visualization tool. Figures 8.41 and 8.42 show how the main *Sensers* are, similarly to Tourism Western Australia, either only the tourists through the pronominal subject *you,* or *we* (only on Instagram), in a rhetorical and stylistic effort to include the audience in the in-group of the advertisers, and on a friendly and intimate level. With regard to the *Phenomena*, similar trends that vary across channels can be observed: in fact, *view* and *scenery* are the preferred "objects" than may be *enjoyed* by the *Senser* on Instagram, together with either abstract entities related to the holiday experience (such as *hour,*

breath, range) or nature (*landscape, mountains).* It has to be mentioned, however, that few *Phenomena* related to activities (*stroll, skate)* or gastronomic experiences appear as well (*dinner, beverage).*

The proportions of these *Phenomena* change drastically on the website, where, except for *view*, *scenery* and *experience,* they are related to specific aspects of the destination, or sub-genres (Francesconi 2014, 15-16) which can be *enjoyed*: *music, food, art, meal,* and dinner. These characteristics of the destination are therefore considered attractive, according to the advertisers, on the website, the last step of the marketing funnel of persuasion or AIDA model. Their occurrence as direct objects of emotional pleasure only on this platform may be due to the perceived need to be more informative and include as many sensorial and cognitive experiences as possible, with the objective of enriching the tourist experience, thus adding more value and conveying more positive attitudes. These discursive devices might lead to the construction of persuasive communication on the website, if one keeps into consideration the main aim of official tourist website, i.e. to convince a prospective interested customer to purchase a travel package, and not to foster brand awareness or activate interest (Manca 2016), as the customer on the website is allegedly already interested (or at least is *aware* of the existence of the appeal of the destination).

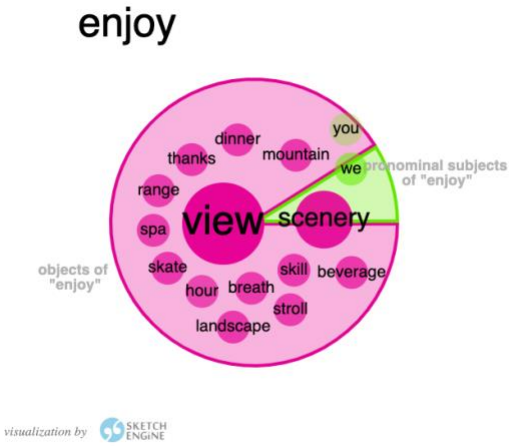


Figure 8.41: Sensers and Phenomena of *enjoy* in Destination Canada's Instagram communication

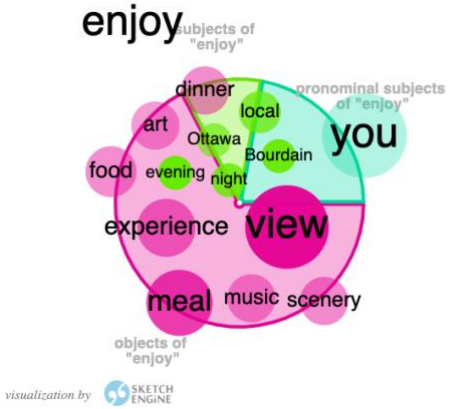
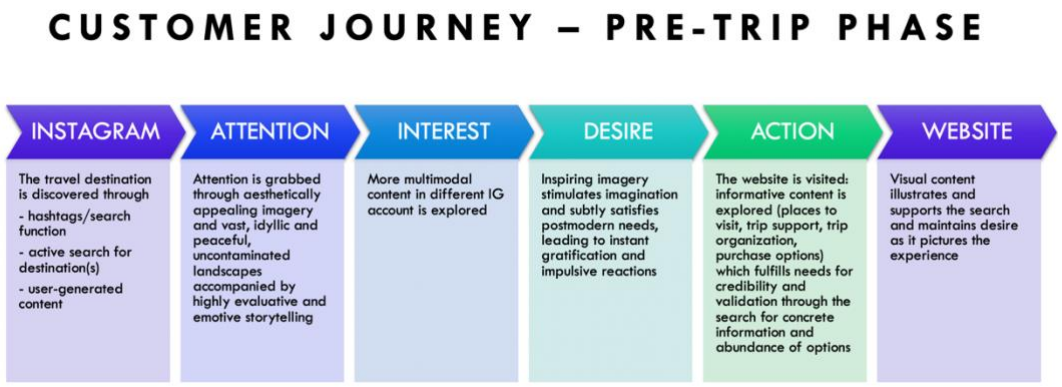


Figure 8.42: Sensers and Phenomena of *enjoy* in Destination Canada's website communication

In conclusion, the results from the Transitivity analysis provide support for the hypothesis that Instagram narratives define a new *genre* of tourism communication and

discourse, which includes different sub-genres such as *nature* (compared to sub-genres or "themes" such as *food*, *drinks*, *services, activities*) with specific communicative functions and language features that depend on a specific audience and purpose (Francesconi 2014 16-25, 29-39; Bhatia 2002, 22). The communicative functions coincide with the first steps of the AIDA model of persuasion (Manca 2016, 64-65) and focus on raising brand awareness, arousing interest and desire through the appeal to emotions, imagination and aesthetic appeal of the attributes of the destination as a remote, untouched and untamed natural entity (Dann 1996). This is the reason why the recipient of the promotional message is shaped, *represented* mainly as a Senser, and not as an Actor. This linguistic and communicative phenomenon aligns with a preference, on this social platform, for a *romantic gaze* on the nature and a tourist destination which is unknown, pure and different – and therefore so longed for – to the postmodern, emotion- and relaxation-seeking traveler of the contemporary aesthetic society, who eagerly needs to pre-consume the experience through imagination in order to desire it and purchase it (the last two steps of the AIDA model) (Dann 1996; Manovich 2017; Urry 2011). An overview of the AIDA process on social media and particularly beginning on Instagram compared to the digital, traditional customer journey in the pre-trip phase is offered in Figure 8.43.



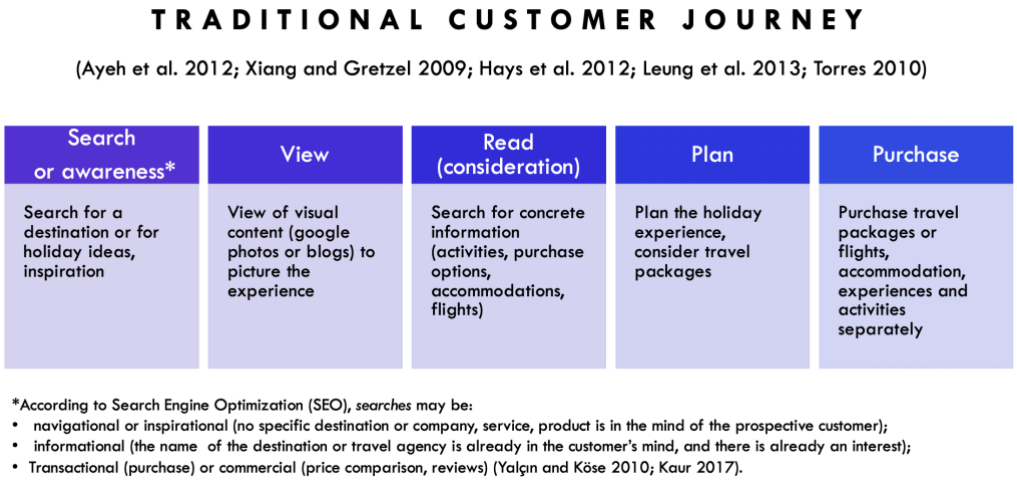


Figure 8.43: The digital customer journey in the pre-trip phase on Instagram and Internet before social media

8.4 Keyword analysis: some insights into semantic categorization

In order to explore further the differences between promotional discourse on Instagram and the website channel, a keyword analysis of the Instagram corpus and website corpus was performed on Sketch Engine. Keywords have been proved to provide insights into discourse (Baker 2004), thus allowing for the unveiling of "set[s] of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events" (Burr, 2015, 74-75). To support the process of identification of linguistic patterns, discourse analysts usually group keywords into thematic or semantic categories (Egbert et al. 2020; McEnery and Hardie 2014; Brezina 2019); this procedure has been performed by tourism scholars as well to enable the recognition of generic and discourse specificities of tourism promotional language (Maci 2020; Bianchi 2017).

Keyword results in Sketch Engine are usually ordered according to their keyness score, which uses as main reference the normalized frequencies of a focus corpus and reference corpus[1] (Kilgarriff 2012). For the current study, the reference corpus was EnTenTen 2018. The default settings for the cut-off point and the exclusion of proper names[2] allowed for the calculation and categorization of the keywords that most characterized the specialized corpora compared to online, general English. For reasons

[1] https://www.sketchengine.eu/documentation/simple-maths/ (Last visit: 22/01/2023)
[2] For this study, the minimum frequency was 3 occurrences.

of space, the list of keywords with their individual frequencies and keyness score is not reported in this section; however, this type of information may be visualized in the Appraisal analysis in the next chapter. The keyness score of each keyword may be found in the Appendix (7).

For the current study, the first 30 single-unit and first 30 multi-unit keywords were extracted and categorized semantically[3]. As can be seen from Table 8.27, the semantic fields of most keywords on Instagram are related to the visual and emotive consumption of the natural aspects of the tourist destination through evaluative and evocative vocabulary (*picturesque, turquoise, white sand)*. The proportions are highlighted in Figures 8.44-46, in which the distribution of each semantic field detected is expressed in terms of number of keywords or relative percentage. In essence, the semantic fields of evocative, emotional, imaginative lexis, visual and natural define 45 keywords out of 60 in Instagram, compared to 10 on the website. Website communication, on the other hand, is characterized by terms referring to the organization and support during the experience (category trip and guides, *trip advisor, lonely planet*), or to the historical, cultural, gastronomic and artistic aspects of the destination (*historic site, distillery, traditional music*). Keywords pertaining to these semantic fields are 49 out of 60 in the website corpus, as also highlighted by Figures 8.44 and 8.46, and stress the informative nature of tourism language on tourist official websites. The overall implications and further analysis of these terms is carried out in the next chapter, through the lens of Appraisal. Indeed, the next analyses will shed light on the types of attitudes and emotions these terms convey and contribute to the discussion about the potential reasons behind such linguistic choices, thus providing additional and generic insights into the different aim and audience of each channel under investigation.

[3] Sketch Engine calculates multi-unit keywords by extracting the phrases – specifically sequences of nouns and adjectives – which occur more often in the focus corpus compared to the reference corpus (https://www.sketchengine.eu/quick-start-guide/keywords-and-terms-lesson/, Last visit: 22/01/2023).

Semantic category (single terms and multi-terms)	IG NUMBER OF KEYWORDS & REL. FR	WS NUMBER OF KEYWORDS & REL. FR.	IG KEYWORDS		WS KEYWORDS	
Evocative, emotional, imaginative lexis	**16 (0.35%)**	**3 (0.02%)**	*Mesmerise, frolick, skywalk,jaw-dropping, maligne, towering, picturesque, paradise, serenity, secluded, gorge*	*Island paradise, bucket list, iconic spot, incredible destination, ideal spot,*	-	*Bucket list, warm welcome, perfect place*
Visual	**13 (9.3%)**	**0 (0%)**	*Turquoise, ochre, cityscape, kaleidoscope, photog, colourful,*	*Lovely photo, gorgeous photo, amazing photo, great photo, beautiful photo, great snap, stunning snap*		
Trip & Guides	9 (0.15%)	10 (0.08%)	*Getaway, snowshoe, stroll,*	*Scenic drive, scenic flight, beaten track, perfect getaway, leisurely stroll, romantic getaway*	*Trip advisor, guesthouse, tours, snowshoe, kayaking, must-see, must-visit*	*Lonely planet, outdoor adventure, walking tour*
Nature	**16 (0.19%)**	**7 (0.11%)**	*Quokka, icefield, iceberg, greenery, rockies, outback, bushwalking, coastline*	*White sand, ancient landscape, turquoise water, night sky, red rock, lush greenery, sea breeze, rock formation,*	*Geopark, cliff, coastline, craggy*	*Natural beauty, polar bear, country house*
History/Culture/Art	**2 (0.03%)**	**14 (0.33%)**	*Igloofest, lightkeeper,*	*glass floor, historic site,*	*Walled, gaol, castle, Craic, lighthouse, westeros, Irish, Dubliner,*	*Historic site, walled city, round tower, Monastic site, festival time, kitsch theme*
Food & beverage (Alcohol)	**2 (0.02%)**	**19 (0.24%)**		*Small bar, tasty lunch,*	*Distillery, foodie, whiskey, icewine, Guinness, seafood, chowder, lobster, pub, bistro, poutine*	*food scene, local produce, craft beer, irish whiskey, seafood chowder, fine dining, irish food, afternoon tea*
Music	**0 (0%)**	**6 (0.04%)**			-	*traditional music, irish music, traditional irish music, trad music, live music, music session*
Family	0 (0%)	1 (0.01%)			-	*Family run*

Table 8.27: Keyword semantic categorization across channel corpora

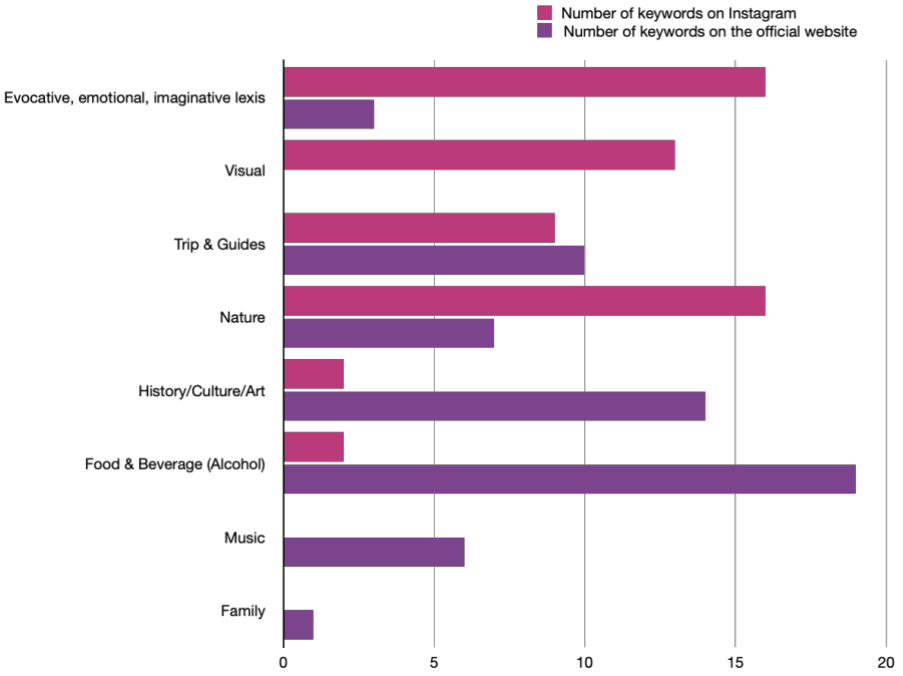


Figure 8.44: An overview of the number of keywords pertaining to different semantic fields in the Instagram and website corpora.

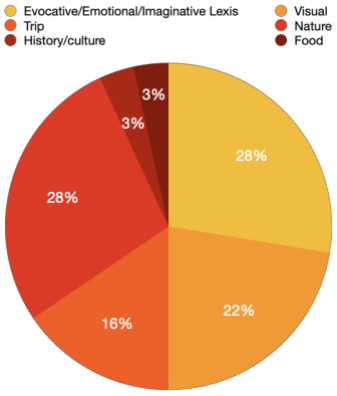


Figure 8.45: The distribution of each semantic field in terms of relative percentages of the number of keywords in the Instagram corpus

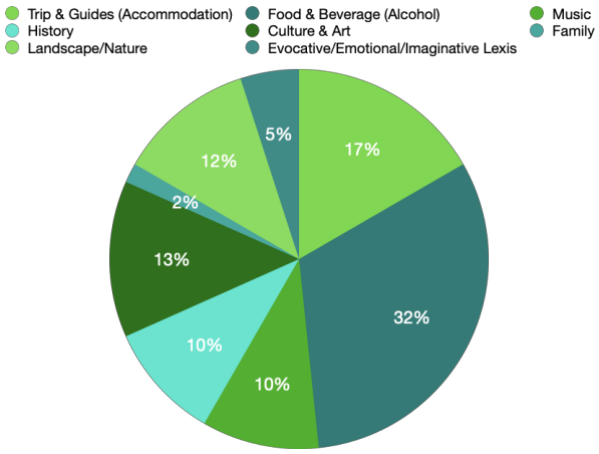


Figure 8.46: The distribution of each semantic field in terms of relative percentages of the number of keywords in the website corpus

8.5 Conclusions

The Transitivity analysis of the main processes in Chapter Five provided an overview of the narratives of representation of the travel experience designed by the three travel agencies across channels. While few similarities in the choice of verbs and participants on Instagram and the official websites were detected, a series of differences in the frequency and usage of specific verbs and their context confirmed the existence of a different rhetoric on Instagram. The latter, in fact, seems to be characterized by patterns of linguistic strategies focusing on the representation and indirect stimulation of inner "activities" and mental processes mainly based on emotions, feelings and perception. This has been achieved by means of high frequencies of not only mental processes and relational processes aimed at highlighting the beauty of the destination and its aesthetic appeal, thereby fostering desire and the visual consumption after catching the attention with an image, but by focusing on the naturalistic aspects and sociologically driven motivational forces related to the unknown, remote, and perfectly unspoilt *nature*, the main *Phenomenon* or *Attribute/Value* of the destination. The main subjects are the tourists (through the pronoun *you*) who are often *Sensers* of the destination: this means that they are unconsciously subjected to it and deprived of their *agency*, which is usually provided through *material* processes. The passive *Sensers* are given the illusion of being in control of the experience and the destination; indeed, linguistically, they are *assigned* the role of subjects of feelings and states of *being, perceiving* a reality and a set of expectations regarding the intangible service of the tourist

experience which are conveyed as real, but which are in fact, actually manipulated and constructed as desirable and flawless, or *romantic* (Urry and Larsen 2011). An overview of the main Transitivity patterns across channels is provided in Table 8.28.

Mixed methods and empirical process	Instagram (language)	Website (language)
Experiential metafunction - FIELD * Transitivity wordlists annotation and KWiC: syntactic roles and semantics, functions of processes, participants, circumstances in context of use * Topics (keyword semantic categorization)	❖ Mental (perception, emotion, cognition) processes ❖ Humans (addressed prospective tourists) as Sensers; Animals or natural aspects as Phenomena ❖ Relational processes: Tokens/Carriers = Proper nouns of destinations, abstract and natural sites; it, we, you; Values/Attributes = Abstract/generic places, evocative/evaluative attributes related to aesthetics	❖ Material and relational processes (provision of services and information on destinations and trip organization) ❖ Humans (addressed prospective tourists) as Actors; tourist attractions as Goals (Historical, cultural, gastronomic, artistic, natural) ❖ Relational processes: Tokens/Carriers = Proper nouns of destinations; services and activities/ tours; it, you, they; Values and Attributes: Places and services, concrete/informative language related the provision of organized activities

Table 8.28: Key Transitivity, lexicogrammatical resources of tourism, digital communication across channels

The linguistic realization of the ideational metafunction on Instagram posts unveils the subtle promotional purposes of tourism discourse on social media, in which marketing specialists take into consideration the specific context of dissemination, i.e. the audience and the initial steps of the marketing funnel in the process of persuasion of the prospective customer. Attracting the *attention,* then *the interest* to foster desire and possibly concrete call-to-actions requires a set of communication strategies aimed to make the audience *aware* of the existence of such product or service and eventually interested in it. Therefore, the creation of designed meaning, through the interconnection of syntagmatic and paradigmatic linguistic choices, is fundamental in this particular type of social communication, and informs as to the reasons why Systemic Functional Linguistic may contribute to the understanding of the perpetration of this type of asymmetrical discourse. As shown in Chapter Seven, Instagram images focus coherently on attracting tourists through visual strategies that stimulate the *romantic gaze* and a static, visual and emotive consumption of an exclusive, solitary experience in aesthetically appealing natural representations from a dominant position or in close contact with humanized and friendly animals. These strategies, in particular, convey an idea of extra-ordinary relationship with the untamed, which nurtures inevitably the desire to escape from ordinary, mass-targeted and chaotic everyday experience to enjoy the serenity of peaceful and uncontamined environments, in an attempt to 'tame' and control what the nature has to offer.

Chapter Nine

Exploring the attitudes and prosody of tourism discourse: An Appraisal Analysis

9.1 Introduction

The understanding of the encoded, ideological mechanisms of persuasion (Said 1991, 21; Bhatia 1993) in the promotion of the travel experience across digital channels may be improved by integrating an analysis of the attitudinal meaning conveyed to the prospective tourists towards the perception of the destination. By being constructed in promotional narratives, the attitudes are positive in their evaluation of the tourist experience; however, an analysis of their types, frequencies and context might provide a more comprehensive overview of how and why such persuasive mechanisms are effective.

The current chapter attempts to contribute to the study of discourse strategies in highly evaluative content such as Social Media posts and in particular Instagram captions of the multimodal artifacts objects of this study, together with the website content promoted by the three travel companies under investigation. Indeed, there seems to be the need to analyze in detail Appraisal resources in the construction of positively connotated semantic prosody (Sinclair 2004; Mocini 2015) in this type of discourse. In other words, this study exploits the Appraisal framework to clarify and classify the ways in which tourism discourse conveys positive attitudes towards the destination to the prospective customer, thus going beyond the concept of positive or negative semantic connotation, evaluation (Thompson 2008, 169-170). Additionally, an analysis of the interpersonal metafunction through the Appraisal system directly connects with the multimodal and Systemic Functional Linguistics framework of analysis which is considered the main theoretical grounding in this study.

As mentioned in Chapter One, the Appraisal framework builds on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics system and extends the account and classification of the lexicogrammatical resources for the realization of the interpersonal meaning at the *discourse semantics* level – i.e. the three metafunctions – and the contextual parameter of tenor (Martin and White 2005, 12-13). In particular, the Appraisal system elaborated by Martin and White extends the paradigmatic and syntagmatic choices available to the subjects of communication to build and communicate interpersonal *evaluative* meaning (Martin 2017,

22) through three main sub-systems: Attitude, Graduation and Engagement (2005, 34-38; Bednarek 2006; Cavasso and Taboada 2021). The literature that was reviewed in Chapter One showed that attitudinal meaning is created mostly through Attitude resources, and its persuasive force is enhanced through the use of Graduation strategies. Section 9.2 presents the theoretical framework that was adopted for the Appraisal analysis, while section 9.3 and 9.4 report the methodology and results of the keyword and wordlist categorization, respectively. Finally, section 9.5 discusses the most significant findings at a qualitative level by relying on Sketch Engine's *Word Sketch* and Concordancing searches for Key Word in Context (KWiC).

9.2 Theoretical framework and methodology: choices of resources and interpretation of classification systems

9.2.1. Choices of Appraisal resources

In order to shed light on the main evaluative narratives and patterns of attitudinal meaning that characterize tourism discourse, a classification of the keywords and wordlists according to the Appraisal sub-systems Attitude and Graduation was carried out. In particular, the corpus-based results from the keyword lists of the Instagram and website corpora and the adjective wordlists from the six sub-corpora were categorized to fit into the Attitude classification of Affect or Appreciation and, when present, of the Graduation resource *Force*. The reasons for the subdivision of the wordlists results according to sub-corpus instead of corpus lies in the different size of the website sub-corpora and the bigger size of the sub-corpus *Tourism Ireland website* which, if investigated together with the other website sub-corpora, would have skewed the frequency list results.

As the Transitivity analysis performed in Chapter Eight concerned mainly the most frequent verb choices – i.e. Affect resources –, the frequency analysis carried out in this chapter focused on the realization of attitudinal meaning through adjectives. For the categorization of the most frequent adjectives across digital corpora, the Appreciation category of Attitude and the Force category of Graduation were elected, as they realize meaning through this type of lexicogrammatical resource. Interestingly, adjectives may

also become a source of axiological evaluation in relation to a system of values or ideology, to underline the positive attributes of a state of being or entity for promotional purposes (Tutin 2010).

The category Judgement was excluded because it refers to human behavior assessment in terms of ethical and moral responsibility. As demonstrated in the previous section, the majority of the Attributes in the Transitivity analysis and the adjectives in the keyword analysis do not refer to human subjects and, when they do, they are not aimed at "judging" human behavior but the destination. Indeed, they mostly include the aesthetic evaluation of the destination by means of emotions or informative content on the different kinds of activities and aspects of the tourist experience.

In order to be able to classify all the keywords and adjective wordlists, the different categories of the Affect and Appreciation Attitude resources were reviewed and applied. The possibilities for each one of the two Attitude resources selected/chosen for this study are represented in Figures 9.1 and 9.2. Instances of Affect, in particular, in the study were categorized according to dis/inclination (fear, desire), un/happiness (misery, antipathy, cheer, affection), in/security (disquiet, surprise, confidence, trust) and dis/satisfaction (ennui, displeasure, interest, pleasure). The feeling of satisfaction, as defined by Mocini, is aroused in "the achievement of the goals, like the pursuit of pleasure and interest, the gratification of curiosity" (2015, 161), and in the admiration, contemplation or involvement in an abstract or concrete phenomenon (Martin and White 2005, 49-50). Appreciation, on the other hand, was categorized either as Reaction, Composition, or Valuation (Martin and White 2005, 56). Force, finally, when detected, was classified as Quantification resource (number, mass, extent) or Intensification, as described in Figure 9.3. This procedure enabled quantification of the occurrences of specific Appraisal resources in positive evaluative tourism narratives and also revealed patterns of use that underpin specific ideological representation and rhetorical, promotional moves that can differentiate Instagram tourism discourse from that found on the websites.

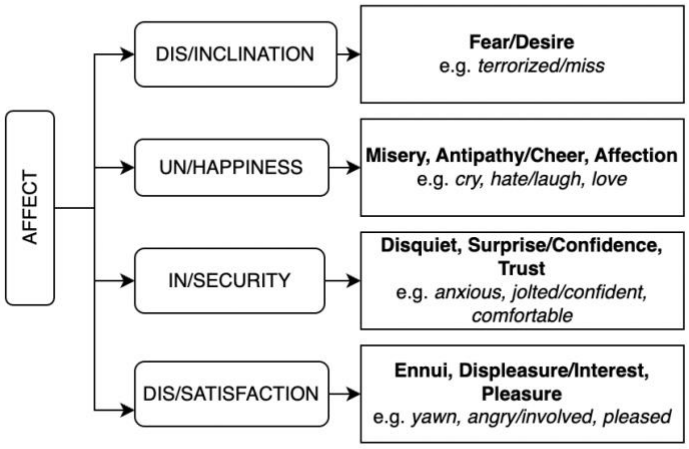


Figure 9.1: The Affect resource of the Attitude sub-system (adapted-from-Martin-and-White-2005)

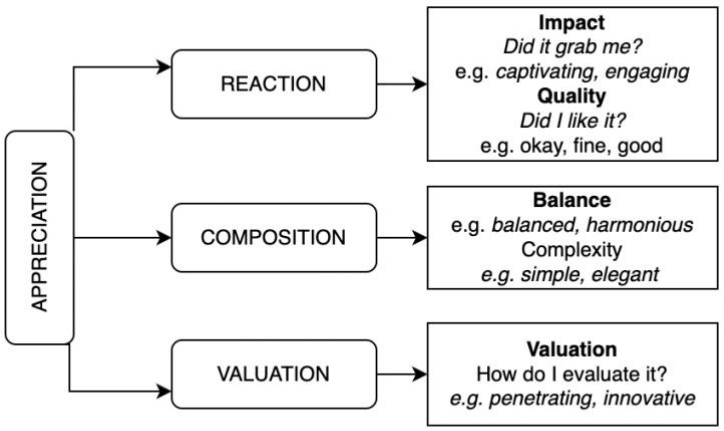


Figure 9.2: The Appreciation resource of the Attitude sub-system (adapted from Martin and White 2005)

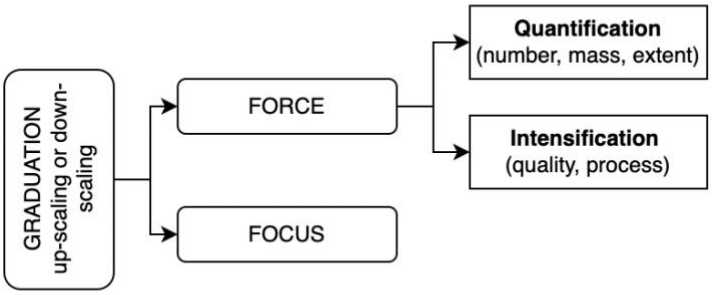


Figure 9.3: The Force resource of the graduation sub-system (adapted from Martin and White 2005)

Overall, an analysis through the system of Attitude and Graduation may shed light on linguistic choices such as verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs, which may convey particular emotions and boost emotional response (sub-system of Affect), or offer an (aesthetic) evaluation of things and natural phenomena (sub-system of Appreciation) (Bednarek 2006; Martin and White 2005, 34-36). Graduation may add elements of quantification or intensify the degree of gradable attitudinal resources, either by upscaling it or down toning it (in particular through the sub-system of Force).

Mocini (2015) shows, in particular, how the expression of emotions (Affect system) and the aesthetic, positive assessment of the destination work together with Graduation meaning-intensifying devices to increase the semantic load and construct a discourse prosody that conveys positive attitudinal meanings towards the destination, attracting potential customers "by enriching their texts with emotions and evaluations" (158). What is also worth mentioning is the power of emotional response through Affect resources such as *enjoy* attributed to subjects such as *visitors*: through this strategy, agreement is expected (Thompson 2008) and the negotiation of meaning will result in solidarity, approval and triggering of the emotion represented (Mocini 2015, 160). Similarly, the high frequency of Appreciation resources serves the purpose of conveying a positive image, representation of the destination through highly positive evaluation and description of the destination and its qualities, thereby boosting a similar assessment in readers, who will be invited to agree in order to understand the content (162-163).

9.2.2 Inscribed versus evoked attitude

An additional classification was carried out in terms of inscribed and evoked attitude. According to Martin and White (2005) and Thompson (2008, 172-174), attitudinal meaning can be realized through different lexicogrammatical choices that convey varying levels of evoked connotation and 'implied' meaning, which may be understood by taking into consideration the context or the social, cultural background (including discourse). Indeed, if one reads or listens to a clause such as "This dish is awful" or "The view is great" (Figure 9.4), the attitudinal meaning of Affect in the first example and Appreciation in the second one is clear and defined as *inscribed*, denotative of unhappiness or negative evaluation and whose implied meaning can be directly inferred. On the other hand, clauses such as "This dish is a bit too Italian/has 2000 calories" or "Local food is served here" may be considered positive or negative in relation to its co-textual environment as well as social, discursive context and intended meaning: the attitudinal evaluation is provoked or evoked by the personal and social context, but it is not inscribed in the direct meaning of the word. This means that meanings that seem merely experiential may be instead considered evoking positive/negative attitude in the reader (the prospective tourist) and take part in the construction of the evaluative prosody.

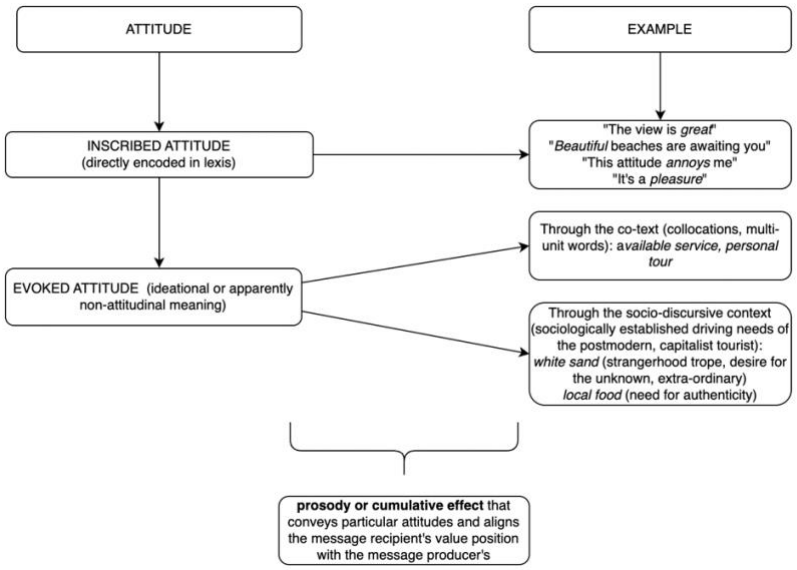


Figure 9.4: Inscribed versus evoked attitude in tourism discourse (building on Thompson 2008)

9.3 Keyword analysis: specific theoretical framework, methodology and results

9.3.1 Interpretation of Graduation resources for *keyword* analysis

The Graduation system was conceptually expanded in the keyword analysis to categorize the terminology typical of tourism discourse. In other words, each word (verb, adjective, noun) classified as a keyword in the two main corpora and which was categorized semantically in section 8.4 was classified according to the four sociological approaches and driving persuasive forces of tourism discourse (Dann 1996) that reinforce and sharpen the positive attitudes conveyed towards the destination described. The reason behind the exclusion of a classification according the original definition of Graduation lies in the fact that the majority of Graduation resources concern adjectives, adverbs or pre-modifiers in general (which intensify the Attitude resources) and was not considered apt for the categorization of nouns and verbs. However, the analysis of the adjectives in section 9.4 will provide insights into Appreciation (Attitude) resources as well as classical Graduation strategies.

In particular, Authenticity, Strangerhood, Tense or Magic and Play tropes or driving desires were used as classes[1] (Dann 1996; Maci 2020). While the first recurring theme attracts the tourist's attention through lexis that evokes the authenticity and typicality of a place (through its natural, cultural or gastronomic uniqueness), the second relates to the untamed, unspoilt or exotic nature of a desolate destination and its potential for adventurers. Finally, the Tense or Magic trope highlights the historical or futuristic characteristics of a destination, while also underlining its "timelessness", either as an historical artefact or remote destination. Here, also the sub-theme "denial of time" is included, which is evoked by recalling activities or time free of constraints that can be enjoyed while on vacation. This latter theme is linked to the last trope, "Play", which incarnates the enjoyment and vitality that can be felt during the performance of typical holiday activities.

Additionally, the work by Jalilifar and Moradi (2019) on the annotation of high attitudinal value on an intensity scale was taken into consideration, which is similar to Martin and

[1] Additional insights into these categories are provided in Chapter Four.

White's classification of infused intensification through qualities (Martin and White 2005, 143-147). For example, an adjective such as *beautiful* may be considered to have a high attitudinal value because it can be replaced or described with other adjectives – such *attractive, pleasant, kind* – preceded by *very*, as reported by Cambridge dictionary[2].

9.3.2 Methodology

The results of the keyword categorization were achieved through a manual filtering of the keywords that left proper nouns of location out of the semantic categorization of the keyword analysis and current analysis. Many of the results of the keyness analysis revealed in fact the presence of proper names of locations or attractions which occur more frequently compared to general English usage; still, which would have skewed both the semantic and Appraisal categorization.

The resource of Graduation, as mentioned in section 9.3.1, was interpreted here to include the number of keywords with a high value on a scale of intensity of attitudinal meaning and to indicate the presence of sociological, persuasive tropes (Dann 1996) that intensify the positive connotation and attractive force of the attitudinal meaning conveyed by the terms characterizing tourism discourse.

9.3.3 From semantic categorization to an Appraisal framework: categorization and results of single-unit keywords

The categorization of the single keywords and multi-unit keywords presented in section 8.4 confirmed the presence of positive attitudinal resources in the construction of the tourism discourse, both on Instagram and the official website. Both similar and different patterns were detected in the analysis, and they are reported in the following sections. For reasons of space, only the categorization of the single-unit keywords is presented and discussed. However, an overview of the multi-unit keywords and their categorization according to the Appraisal system is available in the Appendix (8). In particular, the analysis describes the construction of discourse and positive attitudes in terms of POS, Affect, Appreciation and Graduation, underlining how the narratives on the two channels

[2] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/beautiful (Last visit: 31/02/2023)

are similar in the metafunctional linguistic act of appraisal of the destination through attitudinal meaning or category, but also differ according to channel, thus contributing to the creation of a new genre of communication.

The categorization of the keywords according to the four layers described in the previous section can be seen in Tables 9.1and 9.2. The keywords are presented in order of the keyness score attributed by Sketch Engine and reported in the keyword analysis. As mentioned in section 8.4, keyness scores are reported in the Appendix (7).

The terms with the asterisk (*) indicate the presence of a high attitudinal value on an intensity scale developed according to the model created by Jalilifar and Moradi (2019) or as infused intensification through processes, qualities or modalities (Martin and White 2005, 143-147. In this analysis, Graduation will be determined according to the presence of sociological, persuasive tropes (Dann 1996) that intensify the positive connotation and attractive force of the attitudinal meaning conveyed by the terms characterizing tourism discourse on both channels.

N.	**Item**	**Frequency (focus)**	**Relative frequency (focus)**	**POS (RB)**	**Attitude** **Affect: Type of emotion/reaction boosted**	**Attitude** **Appreciation**	**Graduation** **Intensification of the attitudinal meaning**
1	**turquoise**	14	0.03%	JJ	---	Evoked Valuation	Authenticity (Nature) Strangerhood (Unspoilt)
2	**ochre**	7	0.02%	JJ	---	Evoked Valuation	Authenticity (Nature) Strangerhood (Unspoilt)
3	**quokka**	4	0.01%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (Nature)
4	**Mesmerise ***	6	0.01%	VB	Satisfaction	---	Tense (Timelessness)
5	**Frolick***	5	0.01%	VB	Happiness	---	Play
6	**getaway**	18	0.04%	NN	Satisfaction	---	Play/Tense (Denial of time)
7	**snowshoe**	8	0.02%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (Nature)
8	**skywalk**	4	0.01%	NN	Happiness	---	Play/Tense (Denial of Time)
9	**icefield**	4	0.01%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (Nature) Play
10	**jaw-dropping***	5	0.01%	JJ		reaction	Tense (Timelessness)
11	**igloofest**	3	0.007%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Play

12	**cityscape**	5	0.01%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction		Tense (Future/Timelessn ess)
13	**maligne***	3	0.007%	JJ		Valuation	---
14	**lightkeeper**	3	0.007%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Tense (Past)
15	**iceberg**	10	0.02%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (Nature)
16	**greenery**	7	0.02%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (Nature)
17	**towering**	10	0.02%	JJ	---	reaction	---
18	**kaleidosco pe**	5	0.01%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction		Authenticity (Nature)
19	**stroll**	22	0.05%	NN	Satisfaction	---	Play
20	**photog**	3	0.007%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Play
21	**colourful**	16	0.04%	JJ	---	Evoked Valuation	Authenticity (Nature)
22	**picturesqu e***	17	0.04%	JJ		Reaction	Strangerhood (enchanted) Tense (timelessness)
23	**outback**	7	0.02%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (Nature)
24	**bushwalki ng**	3	0.007%	JJ		Evoked valuation	Authenticity (Nature) Play Strangerhood (Adv)
25	**Paradise***	34	0.08%	NN	Satisfaction		Strangerhood (Unspoilt) Tense (timelessness)
26	**serenity***	10	0.02%	NN	Security	---	---
27	**Secluded**	8	0.02%	JJ	---	Evoked Valuation	Authenticity (Nature) Strangerhood (Unspoilt)
28	**Gorge***	15	0.04%	JJ	---	reaction	---
29	**Coastline**	15	0.04%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (Nature)
30	**snorkelling**	4	0.01%	VBG	Satisfaction	---	Play

Table 9.1: Categorization of the 30 most frequent keywords on Instagram

N.	Item	Frequency (focus)	Relative frequency (focus)	POS	Affect (emotion)	Appreciation	Graduation
1	**distillery**	294	0.03%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (gastronomic, typical)
2	**foodie**	146	0.01%	NN	Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (gastronomic, typical)
3	**craic**	67	0.006%	NN	satisfaction	---	Authenticity (cultural)
4	**geopark**	65	0.005%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (natural)

5	**lighthouse**	387	0.03%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Tense (past)
6	**walled**	143	0.01%	JJ	---	Evoked valuation	Tense (past)
7	**whiskey**	253	0.02%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (gastronomic, typical)
8	**westeros**	60	0.005%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (cultural) Tense (past)
9	**icewine**	53	0.005%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (gastronomic, typical)
10	**tripadvisor**	90	0.008%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Strangerhood (adventurous) Tense (Denial of Time)
11	**gaol**	95	0.008%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (cultural, typical)
12	**guesthouse**	109	0.009%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	---
13	**guinness**	157	0.01%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (gastronomic, typical)
14	**seafood**	388	0.03%	NN	- Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (gastronomic, typical)
15	**tours**	259	0.02%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Tense (denial of time) Play
16	**irish**	1784	0.2%	JJ	---	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (cultural)
17	**Dubliner**	53	0.004%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction		Authenticity (cultural)
18	**cliff**	666	0.06%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (natural)
19	**chowder**	63	0.005%	NN	- Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (gastronomic, typical)
20	**coastline**	254	0.02%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (natural)
21	**snowshoe**	88	0.007%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (natural)
22	**kayaking**	132	0.01%	VBG	satisfaction	---	Play
23	**lobster**	200	0.02%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (gastronomic, typical)
24	**must-see***	76	0.006%	NN	satisfaction		Play
25	**pub**	785	0.07%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (gastronomic, typical)
26	**must-visit***	44	0.004%	NN	satisfaction		Play
27	**bistro**	109	0.009%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (gastronomic, typical)
28	**castle**	1337	0.1%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Tense (past)
29	**craggy**	53	0.005%	JJ	---	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (natural)

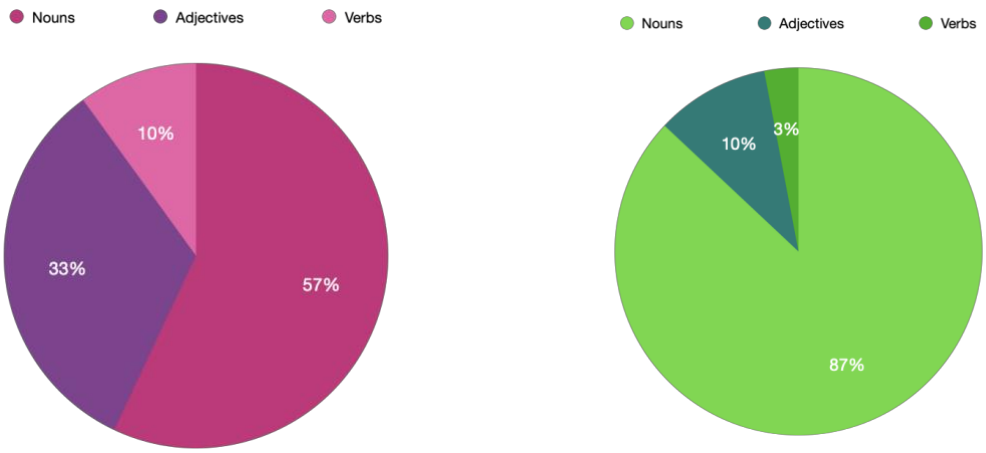
							Strangerhood (adventurous)
30	**poutine**	43	0.004%	NN	Primarily experiential/evoked Satisfaction	---	Authenticity (gastronomic, typical)

Table 9.2: Categorization of the 30 most frequent keywords on the website

9.3.3.1 POS tagging

The results achieved by means of automatic POS categorization indicate that the majority of the keywords consists of general nouns on both channels. In fact, seventeen keywords on Instagram are nouns (57%) and twenty-six on the website (87%). Only three terms on Instagram (10%) and one on the website are verbs (3%). A different pattern of use may be detected in the frequency of the adjectives as key terms proper of tourism discourse: indeed, on Instagram there are ten adjectives as keywords out of thirty (33%), whereas the website corpus search returned only three terms (10%).

Additionally, patterns of use of attitudinal meaning would not have been discovered. The subdivision according to part of speech on each channel corpus is available below.



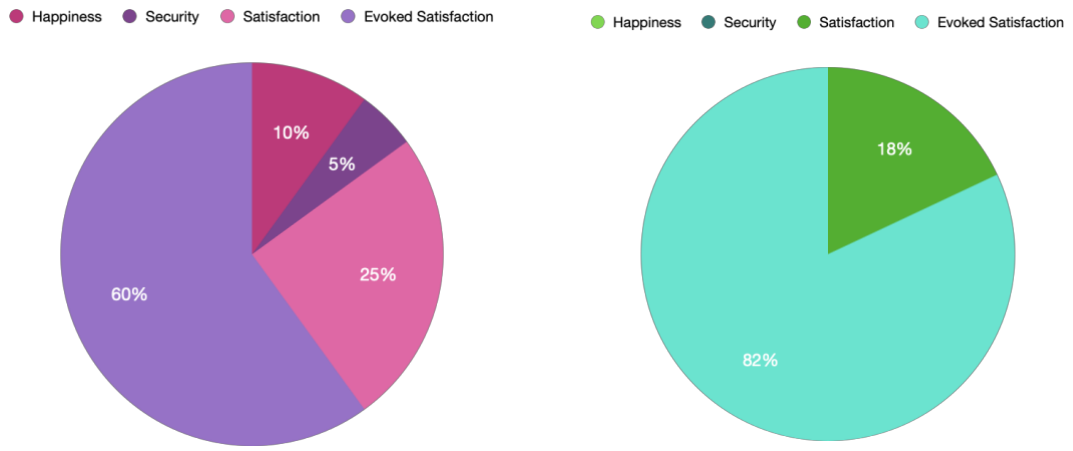
Figures 9.5 and 9.6: Subdivision of keywords according to POS on Instagram (left) and the website (right)

9.3.3.2 Attitudinal resource: Affect

The higher frequency of nouns as key terms on the website channel led to the categorization of a large number of keywords of positive Affect resources on the website corpus. The affect resources (verbs and nouns) represent indeed 90% of the most frequent keywords on the website (27 out of 30) and 67% of the Instagram corpus (20 out of 30). Of the 27 Affect resource keywords detected on the websites, 22 are *evoked* Satisfaction (with a relative frequency of 82%) such as *distillery, guesthouse, tours*, and 5 *inscribed* Satisfaction (18%), such as *foodie, craic, must-see*. On Instagram, similarly, the majority of keywords conveyed attitudinal meaning of *evoked* Satisfaction (12 occurrences out of 20, i.e. 60% of the Affect resources) such as *kaleidoscope, outback*, accompanied by 5 occurrences of *inscribed* Satisfaction (25%), such as *mesmerise, paradise, getaway,* 1 of Security (5%) and 2 of Happiness (10%) attitudes.

Keeping in mind that Affect resources are more frequent in the website corpora, the comparison by relative frequency reveals that Satisfaction is the most frequent attitudinal meaning constructed by tourism narratives to convey emotions within the Appraisal system. In particular, *evoked* Satisfaction is more frequent than *inscribed* Satisfaction on both channels, even if more consistently on the website (87% versus 60%). This might imply the importance of both referential (reference to the reality presented, Maci 2020) and linguistic context in the semantic prosody, including reference to the sociological values and persuasive connotative meaning typical of tourism discourse. For example, *coastline* might not have any kind of attached attitudinal meaning if taken out of its specific linguistic and discursive context; however, if analyzed together with the semantic connotation and linguistic co-text, it reveals positive attitude of Affect and in particular feeling of Satisfaction in the visual/imaginative consumption of such landscape on the part of the prospective tourist.

The subdivision of Affect resources and their relative frequency according to channel is provided in Figures 9.7 and 9.8.



Figures 9.7 and 9.8: Subdivision of keywords according to Affect resources on Instagram (left) and the website (right)

9.3.3.3 Attitudinal resource: Appreciation

The part-of-speech analysis confirmed the presence on Instagram tourism discourse of a large number of occurrences of Appreciation resources, compared to the website corpus. Indeed, they represent 33% (10 terms) of all resources in the keywords under investigation on Instagram and 10% (3 terms) on the websites. Of the 10 terms on Instagram, 5 are *evoked Valuation* (50%), 1 *inscribed* Valuation (10%) and 4 Reactions. On the website, all three Appreciation keywords convey *evoked* Valuation. The majority of the Appreciation resources realize Valuation on both channels, and in particular *evoked* Valuation. All the Appreciation resources, except for one (*maligne)* convey positive attitudes towards the destination and the tourist experience: an example of clearly positive evaluation on Instagram is *jaw-dropping, picturesque,* while on the website one may find adjectives such *Irish, craggy*. As is the case with the Affect resources, the key terms of tourism discourse *evoke* attitudes of Appreciation instead of conveying it directly to the reader. This might be due not only to the need to use referential key terms, in particular on the website, but also to the subtle use of lexicogrammatical resources that unconsciously create a positive persuasive semantic or "attitudinal" prosody of Appreciation that attaches positive connotations if considered in the socio-discursive context (such as, for example, *Irish*) and convince the prospective tourist of the typicality or cultural uniqueness of the destination.

Table 9.3 briefly outlines the relative frequencies of Appreciation resources in the keywords across channels.

Appreciation	Instagram (10 terms)	Website (3 terms)
Reaction	40%	0%
Composition	0%	0%
Inscribed Valuation	10%	0%
Evoked Valuation	50%	100%

Table 9.3: Relative frequencies of Appreciation resources in the keywords across channels.

9.3.3.4 Graduation: Intensification of positive semantic prosody and attitudinal connotative meaning

The resource of Graduation, as mentioned in section 9.3.1, was adapted here to include the number of keywords with a high value on a scale of intensity of attitudinal meaning and the sociological attractiveness of the promotional tourist tropes.

A high value of intensity or graduation through infused intensification (Martin and White 2005, 143-147) was detected in eight keywords on Instagram and in two on the website. The list of the high-intensity attitudinal terms is available in Table 9.4. Since the majority of the terms are part of the Instagram corpus and consisting of both verbs, nouns and adjectives, it may be argued that on Instagram different lexicogrammatical resources work together with the Attitude and Graduation sub-systems to up-scale the attitudinal and positive force of specific meanings and establish a both emotionally and aesthetically pleasant tourist experience.

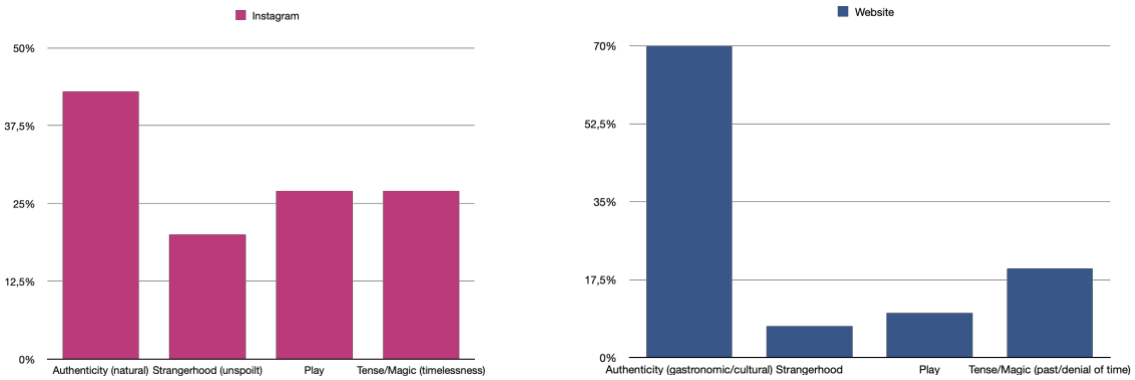
Graduation (Intensification) - List of keywords	Instagram	Website
1	Mesmerise	Must-see
2	Frolick	Must-visit
3	Jaw-dropping	
4	maligne	
5	Picturesque	
6	Paradise	
7	Serenity	
8	Gorge	

Table 9.4: List of high-intensity (infused intensification) keywords across channels.

Positive attitudinal meaning is reinforced by the adoption of persuasive terminology that enhances the attractiveness of a destination. This is achieved by leveraging semantic connotations pertaining to the sociology of tourism and capitalist-driven, postmodern driving desires in the contemporary tourist. In the current keyword analysis, the majority of the terms on both channels leverages implicit reference to the *authenticity* trope that underlines the typicality and genuine nature of specific aspects of the destination promoted. Indeed, 13 terms on Instagram (43%) and 21 terms on the website (70%) realize this trope: examples of such trope may be found in *turquoise, icefield, greenery, coastline* on Instagram and in *distillery, Dubliner, cliff, chowder, pub* on the website. Instagram discourse, in particular, praises the natural, pristine attractiveness of the destination (as confirmed also by the semantic categorization), whereas the website channel focuses on the gastronomic and cultural uniqueness of the destination.

The *authenticity* trope is accompanied by the *strangerhood* trope in four occurrences (out of six, for a total of 20%) on Instagram, underlining the unspoilt or untamed nature of the natural destination (*paradise, secluded).* On the website, on the other hand, the *strangerhood* trope occurs only twice (7%) and shifts the attention on the adventurous character of a holiday (*craggy*). *Tense* or *magic* techniques occur in a similar amount on both channels (8 on Instagram, 27%; 6 on the website, 20%) but underline different aspects of the destination: while Instagram fosters positive associations and appreciation of the destination by means of *timelessness* and the eternal, still quietness or perfection of the destination (*picturesque*), the website wishes to attract the audience by referring to the *past* history or tradition (*castle).*

Finally, play techniques occur more often on Instagram (27%, such as *snorkelling*), as they refer to the performance of activities in the nature, thereby underlining an experience without constraints or duties. This trope is similar to *denial of time* strategies which, however, indicate a more abstract and evocative condition, such as in *skywalk*. On the website they are less frequent (only 10%), for the majority of the Appraisal terms *praise* the cultural and gastronomic prestige, typicality. The visualization of the occurrences across channels is provided below. The relative frequencies in this case exceed the total of 100% because in some cases more than one technique is associated to a single term.



Figures 9.9 and 9.10: Subdivision of keywords according to intensification strategies through tropes on Instagram (left) and the website (right)

9.4 Adjectives as Appraisal resources: Report on their frequency

9.4.1 Introduction and methodology

The fundamental role of adjectives in the realization of attitudinal meaning (Martin and White 2005) and their presence in the keyword analysis conducted from the viewpoint of Appraisal led to the analysis of the adjectives in the wordlists of each sub-corpus. The main aim is to confirm the presence of positive connotative meaning and semantic prosody overall in tourism narratives designed online, and to confirm the presence of discursive differences across channels which were detected in the Transitivity analysis and in both the semantic and Appraisal categorization of the keywords. In particular, the current analysis provides insights into the type of attitudinal resource used to shape positive attitudes and negotiate a similar value position between the producer of the persuasive message and its recipient (Mocini 2015). Therefore, this section will shed light on the similar and different uses of the interpersonal Metafunction and act of appraisal of the destination through a categorization of the 20 most frequent adjectives in each sub-corpus. The reason for keeping the six sub-corpora divided lies in the different size of the website sub-corpora which, if grouped into one channel corpus, could skew results regarding the frequencies of the most frequent adjectives in each agency. Additionally, it should be mentioned that each quantitative result from the wordlists was manually checked and filtered to detect incorrect parsing of automatic POS tagging on Sketch Engine.

9.4.2 Categorization of Attitude and Graduation resources for *frequency analysis*

Each one of the first 20 adjectives in the frequency wordlists was categorized according to Attitude and Graduation resources (Jalilifar and Moradi 2019; Mocini 2015). In particular, the sub-system Appreciation of Attitude and the sub-system Force of Graduation were used as classification tools, as they are considered to be the key lexicogrammatical resources of Systemic Functional Linguistics for the realization and reinforcement of attitudinal meaning (Martin and White 2005, 56; Mocini 2015). Compared to the previous analysis (section 9.3), the analysis of Attitude includes the investigation of Appreciation resources and in particular the sub-categories of Reaction, Valuation and Composition. With regard to Graduation, the Force sub-

system, which up-scales the positive attitudinal force of gradable meanings to establish a pleasant tourist experience (Jalilifar and Moradi 2019, 211; 214; Mocini 2015, 164), was used to classify adjectives according to Quantification and Intensification. While Quantification refers to lexicogrammatical resources adopted to reinforce a semantic prosody of appraisal in terms of *number, mass, extent (of time, space),* the intensification adds to the overall evaluation in terms of (infused) quality, through verbs and adjectives (Martin and White 2005, 143-147). Finally, few resources were classified as either realizing gradable attitudinal meaning of Focus, which in tourism discourse reinforces the perception of authenticity of an evaluation regarding the tourist experience (Jalilifar and Moradi 2019, 220, 227), or as tropes of sociologically established driving desires of the postmodern tourist, similar to section 9.3 (Dann 1996).

The following sections provide an overview in terms of classification and frequencies of categories of the Appraisal resources that occur in each channel of Tourism Ireland (9.4.3), Destination Canada (9.4.4) and Tourism Western Australia (9.4.5). Section 9.4.6 summarizes the findings and sheds light on the similar and different trends of use of attitudinal lexicogrammatical resources according to channel.

9.4.3 Tourism Ireland across channels

The classification of the most frequent adjectives in *Tourism Ireland* according to their interpersonal attitudinal meaning is provided in Tables 9.5 (Instagram) and 9.6 (website). Their categorization according to Appreciation in the Attitude system and to Force and partly Focus in the Graduation system provide an overview of the main patterns of evaluation in the promotional narratives realized by this tourist board.

TI IG	**20 most frequent adjectives – Appraisal Framework**			
Item (20)	**Frequency**	**Relative frequency**	**Attitude: Appreciation**	**Graduation: Force mainly (Intensification or quantification)**
great	30	0.4%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
lovely	23	0.3%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
beautiful	22	0.3%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
gorgeous	20	0.3%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
more	18	0.2%	---	Quantification (Number)
amazing	15	0.2%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality

Irish	14	0.2%	Evoked Valuation	Focus (+ Trope)
stunning	8	0.1%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
good	7	0.09%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) – Quality (superlatives)
famous	6	0.08%	Evoked Valuation	Infused intensification (Upscaling) – Quality (+Trope)
incredible	6	0.08%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
dramatic	6	0.08%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
wild	5	0.07%	Evoked Valuation	Trope
ancient	5	0.07%	Evoked Valuation	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality Quantification (extent in time) Trope
perfect	5	0.07%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
old	5	0.07%	Evoked Valuation	Quantification (extent in time) Trope
true	4	0.05%	Valuation	Focus
magical	4	0.05%	Reaction	Trope
quiet	4	0.05%	Evoked Valuation	Trope
spectacular	4	0.05%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality

Table 9.5: Categorization of the most frequent adjectives in Tourism Ireland Instagram according to the sub-systems of Attitude and Graduation and in particular their sub-categorizations into Appreciation and Force resources, respectively.

TI WS	**20 most frequent adjectives – Appraisal Framework**			
Item (20)	**Frequency**	**Relative Frequency**	**Appreciation**	**Graduation**
Irish	1563	0.2%	Evoked Valuation	Focus (+Trope)
good	1160	0.2%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) – Quality (superlatives)
more	1019	0.1%	---	Quantification (number)
[number]	965	0.1%	---	Quantification (number)
local	915	0.1%	Valuation	Focus (+ Trope)
great	777	0.1%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) – Quality
beautiful	631	0.08%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
old	620	0.08%	Evoked Valuation	trope
many	576	0.08%	---	Quantification (number)
traditional	551	0.07%	Valuation	Trope
ancient	540	0.07%	Evoked Valuation	Infused intensification (Upscaling) – Quality

				Quantification (extent in time) Trope
famous	524	0.07%	Evoked Valuation	Infused intensification (Upscaling) – Quality Trope
own	457	0.06%	---	Focus
available	453	0.06%	Evoked Valuation	---
unique	440	0.06%	Valuation	Focus (+ Trope)
first	423	0.06%	Evoked Valuation	Quantification (extent in time)
perfect	421	0.06%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
new	398	0.05%	Valuation	Quantification (extent in time) (+ Trope)
large	387	0.05%	Evoked Valuation	Quantification (mass) Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
other	383	0.05%	---	Quantification (number)

Table 9.6: Categorization of the most frequent adjectives in Tourism Ireland Website according to the sub-systems of Attitude and Graduation and in particular their sub-categorizations into Appreciation and Force resources, respectively.

The frequency rate of each Appreciation resource is provided in Figure 9.12 below. As can be seen, Reaction resources occur very frequently on the Instagram channel: they are used to convey positive appreciation towards the destination in 60% of cases, i.e. 12 times out of 20, and appear in the top positions of the frequency list. Adjectives such as *lovely, gorgeous, stunning, spectacular,* etc. are chosen to make an impact on the perception of the recipient of the message. The inclusion of a high number of Reaction resources on Instagram might symbolize an interest in designing a promotional strategy based on the boosting of immediate reaction and stimulation of positive evaluation of the destination. Conversely, on the website, Reaction resources occur 4 times (20%), by means of adjectives such as *good, beautiful, perfect* and together with Valuation resources (20%). Adjectives which realize inscribed Valuation are *local, traditional, unique, new* on the website, compared to *true* on Instagram, as to shift the attention to the uniqueness and the traditional nature of the destination. The presence of *true* on Instagram, similarly, attempts to confirm the veracity or the genuine nature of the evaluation of the destination; however, the scarce presence of this type of Appreciation resource on Instagram as opposed to Reaction resources confirms the tendency, on this social platform, to persuade through emotions rather than clear evaluations. Evoked Valuation appears to be used consistently on both channels (6 occurrences, 30% on Instagram and 7, 35% on the website) as a means to attach connotative positive meaning to the destination indirectly. In fact, referential adjectives

such as *famous, wild, ancient* on Instagram and *Irish, ancient, famous, available* on the website convey a positive evaluation only if considered in the socio-discursive context as evoking sociologically established driving desires for natural authenticity, cultural uniqueness, and historical traditions.

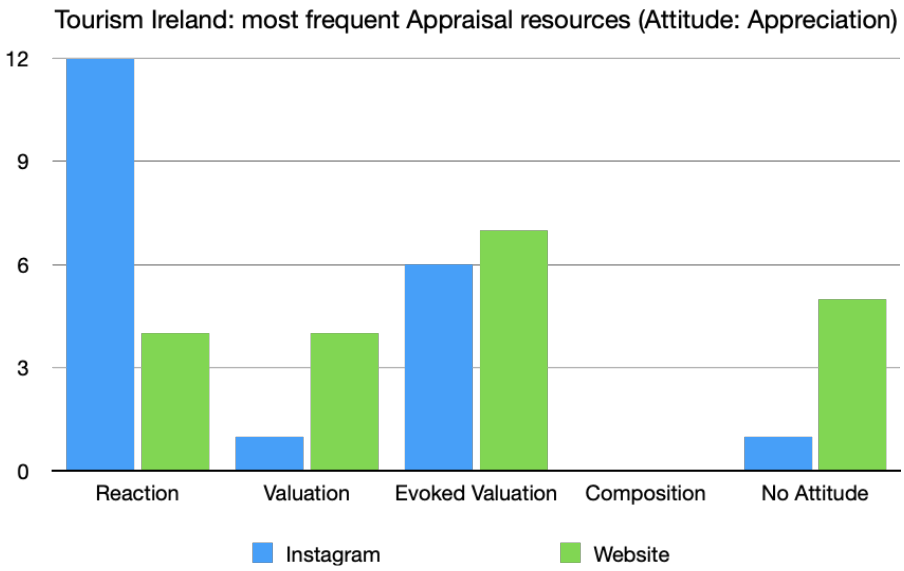


Figure 9.12: Classification of the most frequent adjectives in Tourism Ireland according to the Attitude sub-system and in particular Appreciation resources

Composition resources, which evaluate the object of Appraisal in terms of aesthetic or logical balance, asymmetricity, precision, are not used to realize attitudinal meaning in either channel (0%). Therefore, the promotional narratives in this tourist board do not attempt to persuade the prospective customers by praising specific features of the destination which might be considered *objectively* asymmetrical or balanced. Rather, the persuasive force is realized on both channels through Valuation, i.e. the expression of a subjective opinion, or Reaction (on Instagram), i.e. the *irrational* response (emotion) that derives from an aesthetically pleasant visual impact.

Finally, the website uses 5 times out of 20 (25%) a neutral stance to describe the destination, whereas this phenomenon is rare on Instagram, as it occurs 5% of the times. The use of *more, own, other* does not convey any particular positive association, either inscribed or evoked, and should perhaps be analyzed in its context to understand whether it influences the perception and appreciation of the destination those who read the promotional message.

The classification of the most frequent adjectives on *Tourism Ireland Instagram* according to the Graduation sub-system led to the quantification of the types of attitudinal, gradable meaning which can be seen in Figure 9.13. The categorization that was carried out manually divides the adjectives into five main evaluative, lexicogrammatical resources: a) qualitative enhancement of the destination's attributes; b) quantification strategies to convey positive attitudes; c) the strategic mixing of both intensification and quantification resources; d) the use of Focus to reinforce the prosody and e) the inclusion of lexis based on the sociological approaches and driving needs which have been already discussed in the previous section. Finally, space for the report and critical discussion was left for lexicogrammatical resources without gradable attitudinal meaning.

With regard to the attitudinal resources for quality enhancement, both channels in *Tourism Ireland* rely mainly on infused intensification strategies to upscale the attitudinal and positive force of particular meanings. As a matter of fact, 60% (12 out of 20) of the most frequent adjectives on Instagram and 30% (6) on the website carry a high or very high *degree* of positive attitude. Adjectives such as *great, lovely, gorgeous, amazing, dramatic, spectacular* on Instagram and *best* (from *good), great, ancient, famous* on the website, in fact, indicate an upscaling of the degree of evaluation through the process of amplification (Mocini 2015, 164-166). This is realized by adding a subjective stance or comparison in the original form of an adjective. In this sense, *best* is another word for *very good, great* is another form of *very well*, *ancient* stands for *very old*, *famous* for *well known*, *lovely* for *very attractive*[1] etc. However, the higher frequency on Instagram of infused intensification resources symbolizes a special attention on this channel to the appraisal of the destination through the upgrade of its quality, attributes which is reflected in reader's perception.

Quantification resources (type b) occur frequently on the website: they appear 5 times out of 20 (25%), compared to twice? on Instagram (10%). In particular, website discourse is characterized by quantification devices in terms of number (20%), which occur also in the top position of the frequency list. Some examples of this strategy are *more, many, [number]*. Instances of both intensification of quality and quantification (c) are rare on both channels (5% on Instagram and 10% on the website) and are

[1] https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/lovely_1

represented in this study by *large* on the website and *ancient,* which is common to both channels and entails a higher degree of attitude due to the infused intensification of *very old* and an extension of the meaning in terms of time.

Focus and trope strategies (d) occur with a similar frequency on Instagram (5 occurrences, 25%) and the website (6, 30%) and are realized through the adoption of adjectives such as *Irish, true, local* with regard to Focus and *wild, magical, quiet, traditional* with regard to tropes. These symbolize an attention to the authenticity of the destination and include other social values which are relevant from a discursive and persuasive point of view, as they play on the hidden desires of the individual for the *untouched*, *unknown* and *magic*, far from the chaotic reality (Dann 1996).

Finally, only the website channel includes the use of adjectives with no graduation strategies (1 occurrence, 5%) and with no clear intention of upscaling the degree of the positive evaluation, appreciation (e) towards the destination. This adjective is *available*.

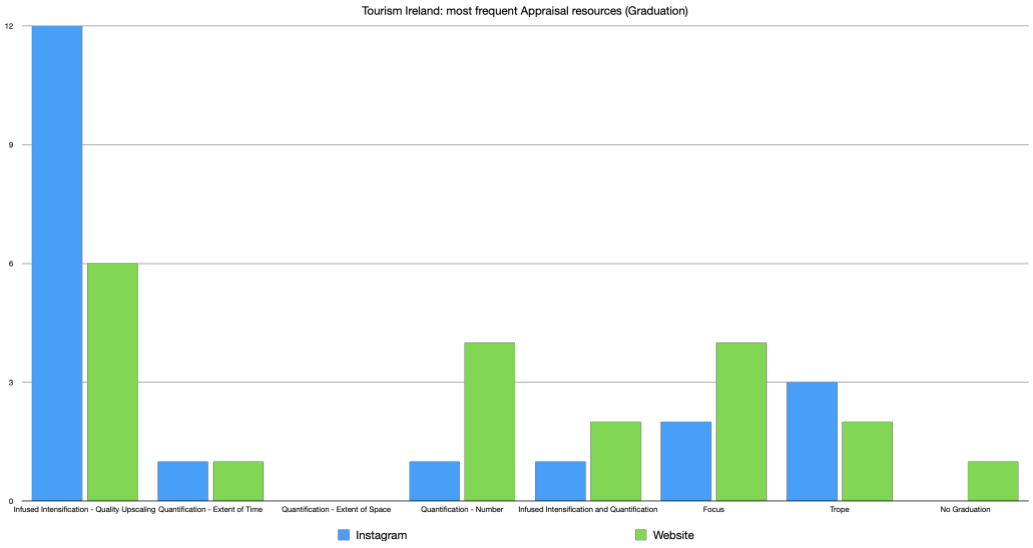


Figure 9.13: Classification of the most frequent adjectives in Tourism Ireland according to the Graduation sub-system and in particular Force resources

9.4.4 Destination Canada across channels

The classification of the most frequent adjectives in *Destination Canada* according to Appreciation and Graduation is provided in Tables 9.7 and 9.8, and it sheds light on

the main narratives of evaluation constructed by this tourist board on its Instagram account and official website.

EC IG	**20 most frequent adjectives – Appraisal Framework**			
Item (20)	**Frequency**	**Relative frequency**	**Appreciation**	**Graduation**
good	38	0.3%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) – Quality (superlatives)
few	20	0.1%	---	Quantification (number)
beautiful	16	0.1%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
more	15	0.1%	---	Quantification (number)
downtown	12	0.08%	Evoked Valuation	--- Why is this not Focus? Does it depend on the context?
local	11	0.07%	Valuation	Focus (+ Trope)
northern	11	0.07%	Evoked Valuation	---
open	11	0.07%	Evoked Valuation	---
perfect	11	0.07%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
long	11	0.07%	---	Infused intensification (Upscaling) – Quality (superlatives) Quantification (extent in space)
wild	10	0.07%	Evoked Valuation	Trope
next	10	0.07%	---	Quantification (extent in time)
scenic	9	0.06%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
old	9	0.06%	Evoked Valuation	Quantification (extent in time) (+ Trope)
unique	9	0.06%	Valuation	Focus (+ Trope)
historic	8	0.05%	Evoked Valuation	Quantification (extent in time) (+ Trope)
famous	8	0.05%	Evoked Valuation	Infused intensification (Upscaling) – Quality (+ Trope)
frozen	8	0.05%	Evoked Valuation	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
own	8	0.05%	---	Focus
colourful	8	0.05%	Evoked Valuation	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality

Table 9.7: Categorization of the most frequent adjectives in Destination Canada Instagram according to the sub-systems of Attitude and Graduation and in particular their sub-categorizations into Appreciation and Force resources, respectively.

EC WS	20 most frequent adjectives – Appraisal Framework			
Item (20)	**Frequency**	**Relative frequency**	**Appreciation**	**Graduation**
good	861	0.2%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
local	728	0.2%	Valuation	Focus (+ Trope)
more	596	0.2%	---	Quantification (number)
great	455	0.1%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
big	378	0.09%	Evoked Valuation	Infused intensification (Upscaling) – Quality Quantification (mass)
many	364	0.09%	---	Quantification (number)
large	358	0.09%	Evoked Valuation	Quantification (mass) Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
Canadian (?)	352	0.09%	Evoked Valuation	Focus (+ Trope)
outdoor	348	0.09%	Evoked Valuation	Trope
historic	332	0.08%	Evoked Valuation	Focus (+ Trope)
other	298	0.07%	---	Quantification (number)
beautiful	294	0.07%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
top	276	0.07%	Evoked Valuation	Quantification (extent in space)
new	269	0.07%	Valuation	Quantification (extent in time)
provincial	252	0.06%	Evoked Valuation	---
fresh	243	0.06%	Evoked Valuation	Trope
hot	235	0.06%	Evoked Valuation	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
first	230	0.06%	---	Quantification (extent in time)
perfect	225	0.06%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
own	222	0.05%	---	Focus

Table 9.8: Categorization of the most frequent adjectives in Destination Canada Website according to the sub-systems of Attitude and Graduation and in particular their sub-categorizations into Appreciation and Force resources, respectively.

The frequency of each Appreciation resource in the Destination Canada sub-corpus is provided in Graph 9.14. As can be noticed, all types of Appreciation resources occur in a similar frequency pattern across Instagram and the website channels. Compared to Tourism Ireland Instagram, adjectives fostering Reaction attitudes of appreciation are not the most frequent resources adopted to convey positive attitudes towards the destination. They occur four times (20%) and are realized by similar adjectives across channels, such as *good, beautiful, perfect, scenic* on Instagram and *good, great, beautiful, perfect* on the website. The most frequent resource is Valuation which, together with its Evoked form, represents 55% of all the adjectives under examination. This means that this travel board seems to prefer to describe the destination in terms of highly evaluative language, which answers to the question "was it worthwhile?" (Martin and White 2005, 56). This way of appraising the tourist experience and destination is subjective and focuses the attention on their positive, unique attributes, rather than the emotions their vision boosts. On Instagram, for instance, such narrative is designed through adjectives like *local, unique*, whereas *new* is used to evaluate the tourist experience on the website positively. Again, the form preferred is the evoked form, thus suggesting that the promotional discourse is designed to attract attention without overtly praising the destination but which, however, evokes positive associations and attitudes with it. Such a strategy is realized by apparently non-attitudinal ideational and referential meaning such as *northern* (Mocini 2015, 162) on Instagram and *big, outdoor* on the website. Or again, evoked evaluation may be realized by fostering positive associations with the destination through adjectives such as *wild, historic* on Instagram and *Canadian, fresh* on the website, which subtly play on the tourists' unconscious desires for the *authentic, typical and uspoilt* (Dann 1996). Compared to Tourism Ireland, one can discover a pattern of similarity in the realization of Appraisal through Evoked Valuation on both channels, while Reaction resources that aim to make an impact and boost immediate reaction to persuade the reader occur in a lower frequency.

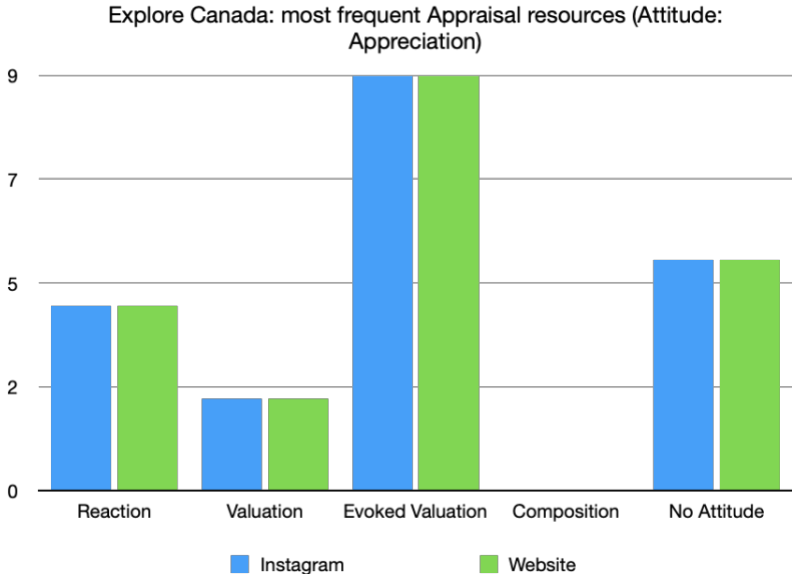


Figure 9.14: Classification of the most frequent adjectives in Destination Canada according to the Attitude sub-system and in particular Appreciation resources.

In a similar way to Tourism Ireland, there seems to be also the tendency to avoid evaluation in terms of compositional features. Adjectives referring to aesthetic and logical balance in the composition are absent and might underpin the interest to categorize the destination only in emotionally or subjectively evaluative charged terms, in order to be more convincing and align the potential visitor's value position to the subjective, positive evaluation advanced by the discourse specialists, also by means of irrational response.

Finally, adjectives showing no attitude of Appreciation occur more frequently on both channels, compared to Tourism Ireland: they are used, in fact, in 25% of the cases. Adjectives such as *few, more, many*, in fact, do not convey any particular positive associations or evaluation of the tourist experience.

The classification of the most frequent adjectives on Destination Canada (Instagram corpus) according to the Graduation sub-system has led to the quantification of the types of attitudinal gradable meaning which is available in Figure 9.15.

As can be seen from the figure, the upscale of the attitudinal, positive force of specific adjectives through the subjective reinforcement of its quality assessment is the most adopted resource on both channels for the creation of evaluation meaning. Indeed, 7 adjectives out of 20 on Instagram (35%) and 5 on the website (25%). For example, *good (*with *best), beautiful, perfect, scenic,* and *long (*with *longest)* on Instagram and *good, great, big*

*(*with *biggest)* and *hot* on the website carry a very high degree of positive attitude through the appreciation of quality and attributes. Again, *best* stands for *very good, beautiful* for *very attractive*[2], etc. and they indicate a process of amplification that upscales the degree of evaluation by adding a subjective stance or comparison. In a similar way to Tourism Ireland, the different frequency rate according to channel suggest a minor attention to this type of evaluation on the website, which seems to adopt more frequently other kind of resources. In particular, quantification strategies to upscale the positive attitude conveyed by the choice of the adjective and which is conferred to its meaning represent 40% of the resources on the website, compared to 30% on Instagram. This is further attested by the frequent use of quantification in terms of number (with *more, many, other*) and by instances of both space and time (*top, new, first)*. The latter of which figure in a small amount on Instagram as well.

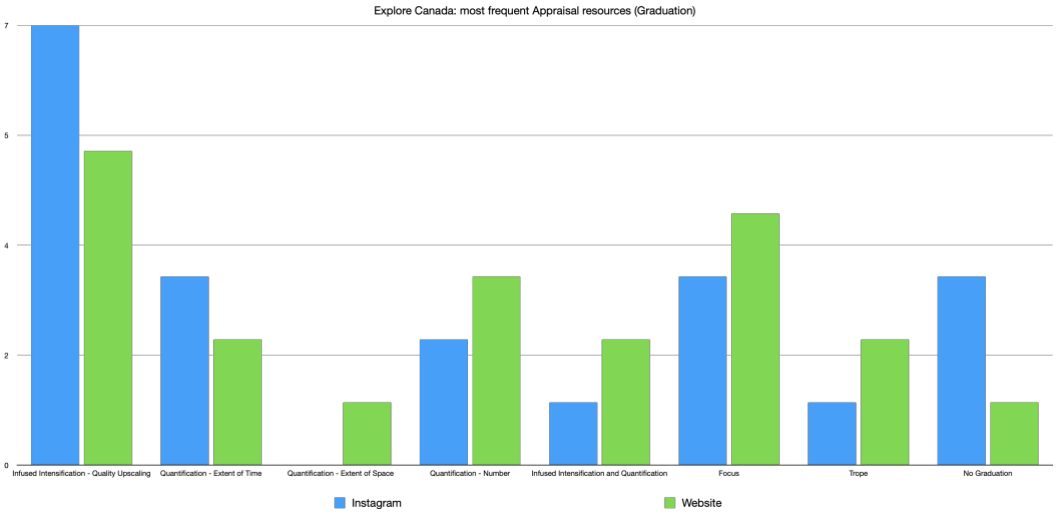


Figure 9.15: Classification of the most frequent adjectives in Destination Canada according to the Graduation sub-system and in particular Force resources

Instances of intensification and quantification device mixing is rare in the narrative designed by this agency as well. As a matter of fact, it occurs once in the Instagram sub-corpus (5%) with the superlative form of a lexicogrammatical resource for expressing extent in space (*long*) and twice on the website (10%), with *biggest* and *largest.*

[2] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/dizionario/inglese/beautiful

Focus and trope resources occur four times on Instagram and represent 20% of the most frequent graduation resources used, while they occur six times in the website sub-corpus (30%). They are realized through the choice of adjectives which reinforce the positive semantic prosody of the persuasive narratives by either conveying a sense of authenticity of the destination (through *local, unique, Canadian*) or social values which are regarded as driving human needs from a sociological perspective. For example, *wild* (Instagram) and *outdoor* (website) convey positive attitudes by stimulating a desire for exclusivity and extra-ordinary experience through the concept of *pure, untouched, natural* (strangerhood trope); similarly, *fresh* relates to an idea of authentic, clean and local food or other aspects of the destination which may not be typical of everyday life experiences.

Compared to Tourism Ireland, the transfer of positive attitudes without evaluation upscaling strategies occurs more frequently on the Instagram channel. As a matter of fact, its frequency is 15% (three times) on Instagram, whereas it occurs once on the website. Examples of this phenomenon are *northern, open,* and *provincial*, which do not show any graduation of attitudinal meaning and, consequently, any upscaling of the degree of the positive appreciation of the destination.

9.4.4 Tourism Western Australia across channels

The classification of the most frequent adjectives in *Tourism Western Australia* which realize the attitudinal meaning of Appreciation and Graduation is provided in Tables 9.9 and 9.10. Their categorization according to Appreciation in the Attitude sub-system on the one hand, and to Graduation and mainly Force on the other, provide an overview of the main patterns of evaluation in the promotional narratives in this tourist board.

WA IG	**20 most frequent adjectives – Appraisal Framework**			
Item (20)	**Frequency**	**Relative Frequency**	**Appreciation**	**Graduation**
good	49	0.3%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) – Quality (superlatives)
incredible	49	0.3%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) – Quality
beautiful	31	0.2%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
perfect	26	0.1%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality

natural	22	0.1%	Evoked Valuation	Trope
iconic	21	0.1%	Valuation	Infused intensification (Upscaling) – Quality (+ Trope)
white	21	0.1%	Evoked Valuation	---
amazing	21	0.1%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
clear	20	0.1%	Evoked Valuation	---
ancient	19	0.1%	Evoked Valuation	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality Quantification (extent in time) (+ Trope)
stunning	18	0.09%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
many	18	0.09%	---	Quantification (number)
local	17	0.09%	Valuation	Focus - Trope
big	17	0.09%	Evoked Valuation	Infused intensification (Upscaling) – Quality (superlatives) Quantification (mass)
more	17	0.09%	---	Quantification (number)
blue	15	0.08%	Evoked Valuation	---
unique	15	0.08%	Valuation	Focus (+ Trope)
spectacular	15	0.08%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
picturesque	14	0.07%	Valuation	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
Native	14	0.07%	Valuation	Focus (+ Trope)

Table 9.9: Categorization of the most frequent adjectives in Tourism Western Australia Instagram according to the sub-systems of Attitude and Graduation and in particular their sub-categorizations into Appreciation and Force resources, respectively.

WA WS	**20 most frequent adjectives – Appraisal Framework**			
Item (20)	**Frequency**	**Relative frequency**	**Appreciation**	**Graduation**
personal	84	0.3%	---	---
many	65	0.2%	---	Quantification (number)
more	50	0.2%	---	Quantification (number)
large	45	0.1%	Evoked Valuation	Quantification (mass) Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
local	42	0.1%	Valuation	Focus (+ Trope)
other	41	0.1%	---	Quantification (number)
old	41	0.1%	Evoked Valuation	Trope
good	40	0.1%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
unique	34	0.1%	Valuation	Focus (+ Trope)
aboriginal	33	0.1%	Evoked Valuation	Focus (+ Trope)

australian	33	0.1%	Evoked Valuation	Focus (+ Trope)
Ancient	32	0.09%	Evoked Valuation	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality Quantification (extent in time) (+ Trope)
scenic	29	0.09%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
natural	29	0.09%	Evoked Valuation	Trope
indigenous	27	0.08%	Evoked Valuation	Focus (+ Trope)
great	25	0.07%	Reaction	Infused intensification (Upscaling) - Quality
third	24	0.07%	---	Quantification (extent in time)
digital	23	0.07%	Evoked Valuation	---
White	21	0.06%	Evoked Valuation	---
fresh	21	0.06%	Evoked Valuation	Trope

Table 9.10: Categorization of the most frequent adjectives in Tourism Western Australia Website according to the sub-systems of Attitude and Graduation and in particular their sub-categorizations into Appreciation and Force resources, respectively

The frequency of occurrence of each Appreciation resource in the Tourism Western Australia sub-corpus is provided in Graph 9.16.

In a similar way to Tourism Ireland, Reaction resources occur frequently on the Instagram channel, as they are chosen to realize attitudinal meaning in relation to the tourist experience in 35% of the cases. On the website, conversely, fewer instances of Reaction resources appear (15%). Tourism Western Australia uses adjectives such as *incredible, amazing, stunning, spectacular* on Instagram and *scenic, great* on the website to construct a prosody of appreciation, and it privileges, on the social platform, descriptors that make an emotive impact on the perception of the destination and which boost an immediate and similar reaction through subjective evaluation. This is confirmed by the frequent usage of Valuation resources on the Instagram channel (25%), aimed at fostering positive associations with the destination and its unique aspects by including direct positive evaluation of the tourist destination. Examples of this Appraisal strategy are *iconic, local, picturesque* and *native*. The website narrative, on the other hand, adopts an indirect evocative stance by choosing Evoked Valuation strategies in 10 adjectives out of 20 (50%), compared to 30% on Instagram. This is in line with the previous results, both in Tourism Ireland and Destination Canada. As a

matter of fact, evoked Valuation is often the most frequent resource adopted by all the tourist boards and across both channels. Adjectives which realize evoked Valuation and contribute indirectly to conveying positive attitudes of appreciation towards the tourist experience are *aboriginal, Australian, digital* on the website and *natural, white* and *blue* on Instagram.

Therefore, both trends of persuasion through positive evaluation and emotions may be confirmed, thus creating a narrative that convinces by the description of a highly subjective stance or the boosting of irrational response by showing something that is aesthetically pleasant. This is the case of Tourism Western Australia Instagram (and Tourism Ireland Instagram) in particular, and of all agencies and channels with regard to evaluation.

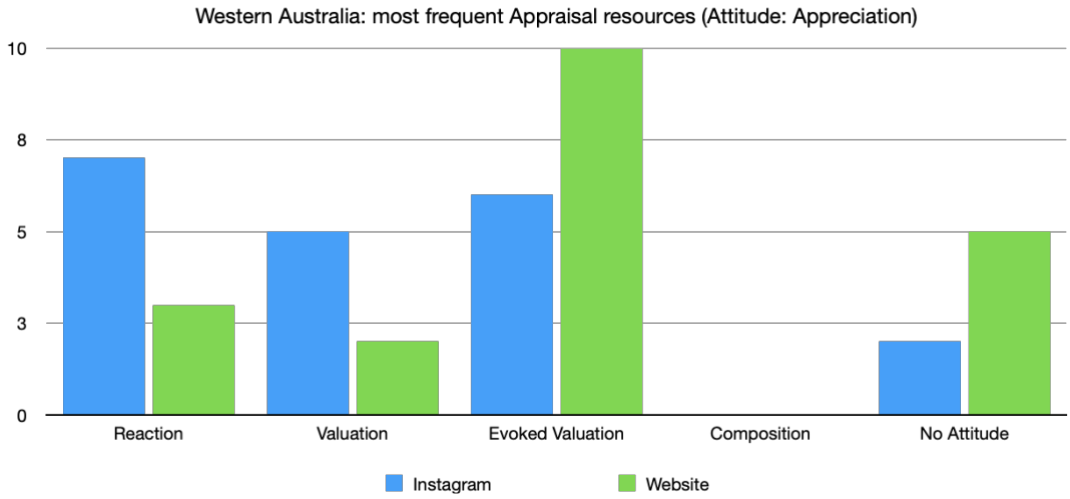


Figure 9.16: Classification of the most frequent adjectives in Tourism Western Australia according to the Attitude sub-system and in particular Appreciation resources.

Composition resources are absent also in the narratives designed by this agency. This confirms the results obtained in the previous analyses as well, and symbolizes a rejection, as a means of persuasion and promotion, of objective, specific and undeniable qualities to enhance the quality of the tourist destination or experience.

Finally, instances of no attitudinal meaning are found in 5 adjectives out of 20 on the website (25%), compared to 10% on Instagram. Again, the difference in the frequency rate is comparable to the one detected in Tourism Ireland: this confirms, to some extent, the presence of a trend of usage of non-attitudinal meaning on the website rather than on Instagram. Examples of non-attitudinal meaning may be found in

personal, many and *more*. Subjective and highly evaluative meaning occurs more frequently on Instagram; however, it represents the majority of the cases on the website channel corpus as well.

The classification of the most frequent adjectives on *Tourism Western Australia Instagram* according to the Graduation sub-system has led to the quantification of the types of attitudinal gradable meaning which is available in graph 9.17.

As can be noticed, infused intensification strategies that upscale the attitudinal force and quality assessment of specific adjectives occur 9 times out of 20 on Instagram (45%), compared to 3 times on the website (15%). This is in line with the results obtained in the quantitative analysis of the other two tourist boards under investigation. For example, *incredible, perfect, stunning, spectacular, picturesque* on Instagram and *good, scenic, great* show a very high degree of positive attitude through the appreciation of the attributes of the destination. The different frequency rate according to channel suggest that the website rhetoric underlines other aspects of the tourist experience. Quantification and focus strategies, in particular, seem to be the main source of meaning upscaling on the website, each one representing 30% and 25% of the most frequent evaluative resources on the website, compared to 20% and 10% on Instagram. Again, this variance in terms of frequency symbolizes an attention to the description of the destination in terms of number, with *more* and *many* on both channels.

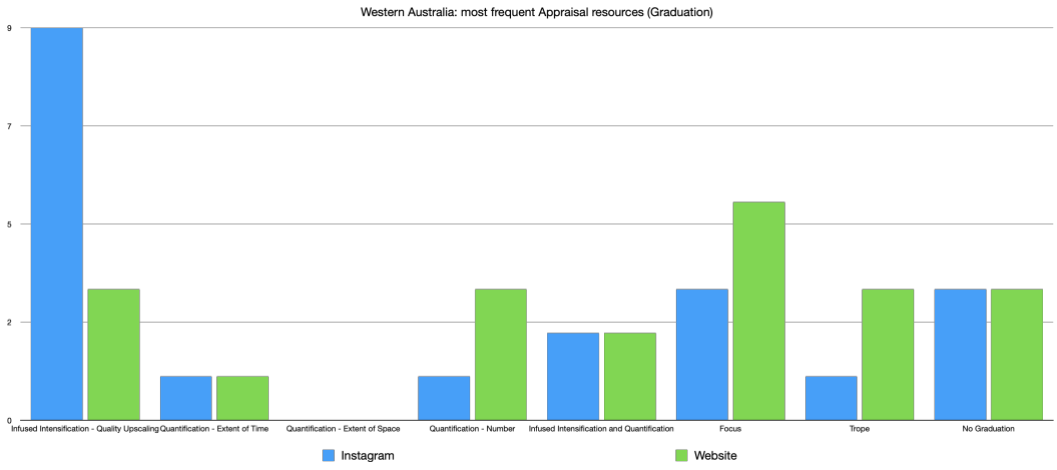


Figure 9.17: Classification of the most frequent adjectives in Tourism Western Australia according to the Graduation sub-system and in particular Force resources

Trope and focus resources occur four times on Instagram (20%), whereas they occur eight times on the website (40%). They are realized through the choice of particular adjectives (such as *natural, local*, *unique* and *native* on Instagram and *old, natural, fresh, aboriginal* and *Australian* on the website) which reinforce the positive prosody of the persuasive narratives. indeed, through these strategies discourse specialists attempt to bestow credibility to their narrative of authentic, genuine nature of the destination's attributes, thus pushing the reader to align their value position and worldview consisting of attitudes and feeling, with theirs, who allegedly know the destination very well and may make this kind of assumptions. This discursive strategy works also because all these adjectives attach connotative meaning by subtly referring to social values and needs created by the postmodern society which are relevant to the prospective tourist (Urry and Larsen 2011). Indeed, they play on hidden desires of the individual for the *authentic* compared to the *spurious, natural* and *pristine* versus *industrialized* and *polluted*, *traditional* and *local,* with a static look to the past versus *futuristic, agitated, busy* and *mass targeted.*

Finally, in contrast with Tourism Ireland and Destination Canada, the transfer of positive attitudes without graduation upscaling strategies occurs with a similar frequency on both channels. Indeed, their frequency is 15% (3 out of 20) and they are expressed by *personal, digital* and *white* on the website and *white, clear* and *blue* on Instagram.

9.4.5 Trends of use across channels

The quantitative analysis discussed in section 9.4 revealed the existence of patterns of use of Appreciation and Graduation resources which are characterized both by commonalities and differences across channels in terms of frequency rate. As a matter of fact, few categories appear to be prominent in the discourse designed by Instagram, whereas others characterize mainly website communication. A visualization of the patterns is available in Figure 9.18 below.

As can be noticed, the discourse specialists of both channels share attitudinal resources of Appreciation. In particular, they often rely on strategies of *evoked valuation* (47 occurrences out of 120, 39%) to convey subtle, positive evaluations of the destination's attributes and to persuade the reader to align their value position to the message

producers'. Therefore, there is a tendency in digital tourism discourse to construct positive attitudes by means of subjective evaluation that is conveyed by ideational, experiential meaning. This type of meaning, especially if associated semantically with the specific, socially driven desires of the postmodern tourist, contributes to the realization of the interpersonal meaning by creating a semantic prosody that shapes a highly evaluative, manipulated representation of the tourist experience.

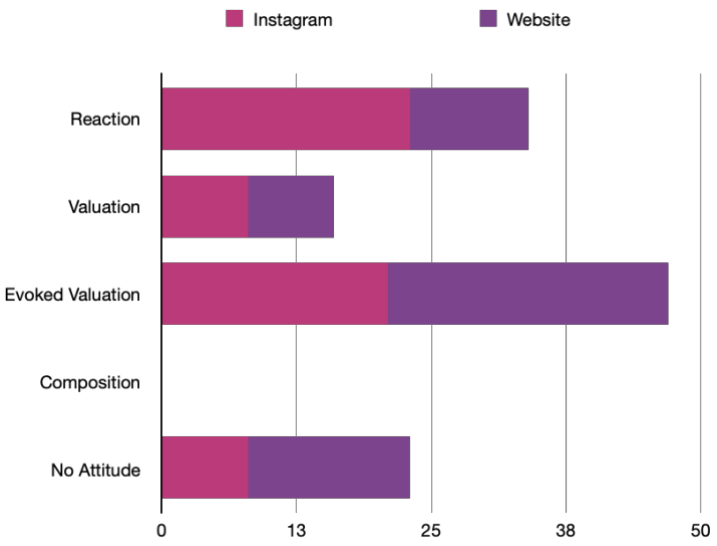


Figure 9.18: Trends of use according to the sub-systems of Attitude and in particular its sub-categorization into Appreciation resources across channels

This pattern of use of highly attitudinal language and subjective evaluation is accompanied by a total absence, on the part of the discourse specialists on both channels, of compositional resources (0%). This practice symbolizes a rejection, as a means of persuasion and promotion, of objective and undeniable qualities to enhance the quality of the tourist destination or experience, and represents, rather, an interest to categorize the destination only in emotional or subjective terms.

If one turns to the different patterns of use across channels in terms of Appreciation practices, a few considerations can be made. In particular, Instagram tourism narratives are shaped by frequent usage of Reaction resources, which occur 23 times on the social platform (19%), compared to 11 times on the websites (9%). Additionally, this resource often appears in the top positions of the frequency lists and, therefore, may be considered to be a pervasive strategy of Appraisal and irrational response booster by means of adjectives that incorporate an emotional reaction.

Website communication, on the other hand, adopts more non-attitudinal resources than Instagram discourse. Indeed, discourse on the website is designed by using adjectives (15 adjectives out of 120, i.e. 13% compared to 8 on Instagram, 7%) that do not evoke directly, as singular lexicogrammatical, paradigmatic choice, any positive associations with the destination promoted.

With regard to graduation resources, Instagram and website tourism narratives differ to a greater extent. As can be seen in Figure 9.19 below, Instagram discourse relies frequently on strategies of *infused intensification*, whereas website specialists adopt *quantification* strategies of Appraisal more often to upscale the attitudinal meaning provided by Appreciation resources. As a matter of fact, linguistic practices that reinforce the positive attitudes conveyed by means of quality enhancement are 28 out of 120 (23%) on Instagram, compared to 14 on the website (12%), whereas instances of interpersonal meaning upscaling through *quantification* are 15 on the website (13%) compared to 9 (8%) on Instagram, particularly in terms of extent in number.

Additionally, website communication is characterized by a similar number of *Focus* strategies (13, 11%), compared to Instagram (7%). This trend symbolizes an attention to reinforce the attitudinal and persuasive force of lexicogrammatical resources which focus on attaching a sense of authenticity and possibly credibility to the destination and its attributes, aspects, also by playing unconsciously on the driving desires of the individual for the *authentic, unique, traditional,* which are considered as such from a sociological perspective.

If one turns to similar trends of use, it may be said that they constitute a small amount in terms of number of categories and of adjectives belonging to those categories. Indeed, only the graduation strategy of trope occurs with a similar frequency across channels (5, 4% on Instagram and 7, 6% on the website). In a similar way, adjectives with no attitudinal meaning upscaling occur in a low frequency on both channels (6, 5% and 5, 4%, respectively).

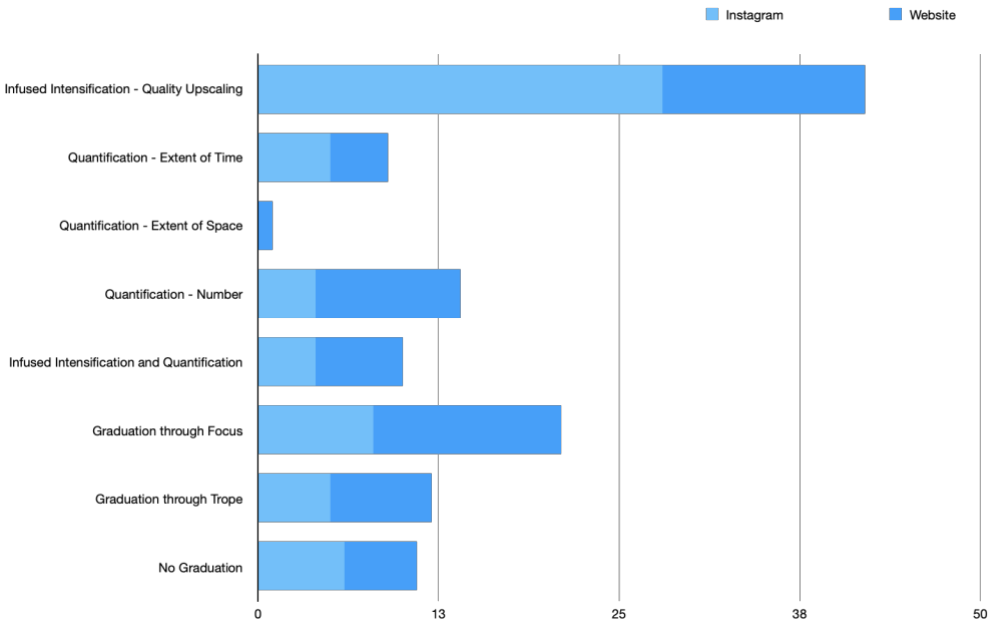


Figure 9.19: Trends of use according to the sub-systems of Graduation and in particular its sub-categorization into Force resources across channels

In conclusion, is clear that both channels choose strategies of appreciation and attitude upscaling very frequently, with the shared goal of shaping, conveying positive attitudes towards the destination to foster a shared value position in the reader and eventually persuade him or her to purchase a travelling experience. However, there are few differences which define particular narratives that vary across channels. These are designed with specific intent on the part of the discourse specialists – in order to boost specific reactions in the readers – that may vary across channels. Indeed, prospective customers do have a different degree of attention, focus and intentionality while navigating each channel (AIDA model of persuasion, Manca 2016), and might be driven by different needs and values, or simply be at a different stage of the purchasing process. For example, they might be looking for inspiration and subjective evaluations, reactions, or evoking content on Instagram, rather than concrete information, availability of services and ease of access to attractions, which are all useful at the moment of *planning* a trip to a *defined* destination. Therefore, the goals pursued by discourse specialists on Instagram and the official websites differ, and this is inevitably reflected in their linguistic and rhetorical strategies, which shape novel forms of promotional communication. In order to support this hypothesis and shed light on the persuasive power of the semantic prosody shaped by evaluative language, the context of instantiation of the Appraisal resources under investigation needs to be analyzed.

9.5 Qualitative analysis of Appraisal resources in Instagram and tourism websites narratives

9.5.1 Introduction: from a quantitative to a qualitative approach to Appraisal

The quantitative analysis of both keywords and adjective wordlists enabled the detection of patterns of use of Appraisal resources that are similar as well as different in the two channels under investigation. In the keyword analysis, *evoked satisfaction* as Affect resource proved to be the most frequent attitudinal resource on both channels; however, the major presence of adjectives as key words in Instagram tourism narratives led to the discovery of key Appreciation resources specifically on that channel, particularly in terms of *reaction* and *evoked valuation*. Similarly, graduation strategies such as *infused intensification*, which upscales the attitudinal meaning of an adjective, noun or process, were detected mainly on Instagram, making Instagram an effective means to establish an emotional attachment and boost both a reaction and positive evaluation of the tourist experience. Finally, positive attitudinal meaning was reinforced on both channels through the adoption of persuasive terminology that enhances the attractiveness of a destination. This was achieved by leveraging semantic connotation pertaining to the sociology of tourism and socially established driving desires that define the contemporary tourist consumer. Indeed, while both channels showed to varying degrees the importance of attracting the audience by means of *trope strategies* of *authenticity*, the use of other strategies was more frequent on Instagram, and includes the reference to tropes of *strangerhood*, *play*, *tense* and *magic*. These contribute to a representation of an extra-ordinary tourist experience that appears as completely and spectacularly different from the capitalist way of life, which is punctuated by sacrifices and work routines in an industrialized society (Urry 2011, Dann 1996; Plant 1992, 1-2, 5). Additionally, authenticity was discovered to be a powerful and persuasive strategy in different ways. As a matter of fact, key terms on Instagram tourism discourse praise the natural environment together with associated values and postmodern needs such as pureness, untamedness, idyllic eternity, whereas on the website authenticity is praised in terms of traditional customs and cuisine.

The analysis of the multi-unit keywords confirmed the different intention behind the design of these narratives. Indeed, the key collocations on the Instagram channel belong to the realm of aesthetics and nature and, therefore, to what is visually pleasant

and catches the eye, the attention, and stimulates inner reactions. On the other hand, website acts of appreciation are targeted at cultural and artistic aspects of the destination, such as music and local, culinary uniqueness. This in turn stimulates different gazes (Urry 2011) and different conceptions of exclusivity and of what is conceived as attractive, typical and expected as part of the tourist experience.

If one turns to the analysis of the adjective wordlists in which the most frequent sources of Appraisal in terms of attitudinal meaning figure, few considerations can be made, which shed light on the different narratives constructed by tourist boards digitally. Indeed, while both channels include a large amount of attitudinal meaning and processes of positive appreciation and upscaling, which focus mainly on *evoked valuation* strategies, the narratives of the two channels give prominence to specific ways of appraising the tourist experience and, consequently, stimulate different reactions. In particular, Instagram seems to prefer *reaction* resources of Appreciation to convey positive attitudes towards the destination: this type of linguistic strategy, in fact, has an immediate impact on the perception of the destination and, without providing any specific evaluation, fosters an irrational response and an immediate alignment between the value positions and attitudes of the producer of the message and its receiver. Similarly, Instagram prefers infused intensification strategies as acts of appraisal. In this sense, it focuses on the positive attributes of the destination by praising its qualities. On the contrary, website narratives carry out acts of appraisal by means of *quantification* and *focus strategies*.

Having established the different nature of Appraisal narratives and paradigmatic choices in the systems of Attitude and its sub-systems of Affect, Appreciation, and Graduation, attention may be shifted to the analysis of the context of use of these practices of persuasion through evaluative promotion. As a matter of fact, the investigation of syntagmatic, structural relations in a particular discursive and generic context is as important as the understanding of paradigmatic, systematic ones, despite their derivative nature in terms of analytical procedure (Butler 2019, 274). Additionally, the analysis of the co-text might provide a fuller understanding of the semantic prosody in tourism discourse across channels and further insights into the ways in which the meaning potential is realized intentionally (Sinclair 2004; Thompson et al. 2019; Thompson and Alba-Juez 2014). Section 9.5.2 will introduce the methodology applied to choose the specific key terms and adjectives for investigation, taking into

consideration the most significant results of both similarity and difference in terms of frequency of resources adopted. Sections 9.5.3 and 9.5.4 will analyze the context of keywords and of the most frequent adjectives, respectively.

9.5.2 Methodology

The analysis of the syntagmatic relations collocating with the Appraisal paradigmatic choices, which together construct the semantic prosody of online tourism narratives, concerned the most significant results in terms of frequency rate of resources across channels. On the one hand, terms and adjectives *realizing a similar resource with a similar frequency* rate were investigated to look for further similarities or find differences in discursive terms (Dann 1996; Urry and Larsen 2011; Bateman 2014a; Thompson et al. 2019; Thompson and Alba-Juez 2014). On the other hand, different resources of attitude which characterize the discourse on each channel were compared by means of sampling. Indeed, *the most frequent adjectives or key terms, even if belonging to different attitudes, were compared*. To this aim, the use of five main resources across channels was identified as worthy of investigation:

1) Keywords: *Evoked* Appraisal resources, in particular *evoked satisfaction* within the Affect sub-system of Attitude (Section 9.5.3.1);
2) Multi-unit keywords: Similar attitudinal meaning (Affect, Appreciation and Graduation), but different lexicogrammatical realization (Section 9.5.3.2);
3) Multi-unit keywords: Different attitudinal meaning (Affect, Appreciation and Graduation), and different lexicogrammatical realization (Section 9.5.3.3);
4) Adjective wordlists: same attitudinal meaning and same adjective (Section 9.5.4.1);
5) Adjective wordlists: same attitudinal meaning but different adjective (Section 9.5.4.2).

The qualitative investigation of these aspects contributed to the understanding of the similarities and differences in terms of semantic prosody across channels. For the sake of transparency and reproducibility, the keywords and multi-unit keywords with the highest keyness score, and the most frequent adjectives for each resource under investigation were extracted from the tables in sections 9.3-9.4 and in the Appendix

(7; 8) and grouped into Tables 9.11-9.14 below. These represent the main patterns of use of evaluative language on both channels; therefore, they are eligible for a qualitative investigation that may provide insights into the ways in which tourist boards realize attitudinal meaning on Instagram and their official websites.

Key type of Attitude (Affect and Appreciation): Keywords			
Channel	**Affect**	**Appreciation**	**Graduation (secondary category)**
Instagram	Evoked Satisfaction: quokka	Evoked Valuation: turquoise	Authenticity (Nature) Strangerhood (Unspoilt)
	Satisfaction: mesmerize	Rection: jaw-dropping	Tense (timelessness)
	Happiness: frolick	Valuation: maligne	Play
	Security: serenity		—
Website	Evoked Satisfaction: distillery	Evoked Valuation: walled	Authenticity (gastronomic, typical)
	Satisfaction: foodie	Reaction: —	Authenticity (gastronomic, typical)
	Happiness: —	Valuation: —	
	Security: —		

Table 9.11: Keywords for each resource of Appraisal with the highest keyness score according to channel

Key type of Attitude (Affect and Appreciation): Multi-unit Keywords				
Channel	**Item**	**Affect**	**Appreciation**	**Graduation (secondary category)**
Instagram	Lovely photo	Satisfaction	Reaction	Play
	White sand	Experiential/Evoked Satisfaction	Evoked Valuation	Authenticity (Nature) Strangerhood (Pure/exotic)
	Island paradise	Satisfaction	Evoked Valuation	Authenticity (Nature) Strangerhood (Pure/Exotic) timelessness
	Small bar	Experiential/Evoked Satisfaction	Evoked Valuation	Authenticity (Gastronomic) Tense (Denial of time)
	Iconic spot	Satisfaction	Valuation	Authenticity
	Romantic getaway	Happiness	Valuation	Tense (Denial of time)
Website	Traditional music	Security	Valuation	Authenticity (cultural/traditional)
	Food scene	Experiential/Evoked Satisfaction	Evoked Valuation	Authenticity (gastronomic/traditional)
	Lonely planet	Security	Evoked Valuation	Tense (Denial of time)
	Outdoor adventure	Satisfaction	Evoked Valuation	Tense (Denial of time)
	Perfect place	Satisfaction	Valuation	—-

Table 9.12: Multi-unit keywords for each resource of Appraisal with the highest keyness score according to channel

Most frequent Attitude resources (Appreciation): Adjectives					
Agency	**Channel**	**Reaction**	**Valuation**	**Evoked Valuation**	**No Attitude**
Tourism Ireland	Instagram	Great or lovely	True	Irish	More
	Website	Good	Local	Irish	More
Destination Canada	Instagram	Good	Local	Downtown	Few
	Website	Good	Local	Big	More
Tourism Western Australia	Instagram	Incredible	Iconic	Natural	Many
	Website	Good	Local	Large	Personal

Table 9.13: Most frequent adjectives for each resource of Attitude according to channel

Most frequent Graduation resources: Adjectives						
Agency	**Channel**	**Infused Intensification**	**Quantification**	**Focus**	**Trope**	**No Graduation**
Tourism Ireland	Instagram	Great or lovely	More	Irish	Wild	0
	Website	Good	More	Irish	Local and old	Available
Destination Canada	Instagram	good	Few	Local	Wild	Downtown or northern or open
	Website	Good	More	Local + Canadian	Outdoor	Provincial
Tourism Western Australia	Instagram	incredible	Many	Local	Natural	White
	Website	Large or good	Many	Local	Old	Personal

Table 9.14: Most frequent adjectives for each resource of Graduation according to channel

The lexicogrammatical instantiations that realize attitudinal meaning of Appraisal are the following, for each point of investigation listed above:

1) Keywords: *quokka* (IG) versus *distillery* (WS) (Section 9.5.3.1);
2) Multi-unit keywords: *white sand* (IG) versus *food scene* (WS) (Section 9.5.3.2);
3) Multi-unit keywords: *lovely photo* (IG) versus *traditional music* (WS) (Section 9.5.3.3);
4) Adjective wordlists: *good, local, incredible, more* across channels (Section 9.5.4.1; 6.5.4.2);
5) Adjective wordlists: *white* (IG) versus *available* and *personal* (WS) (Section 9.5.4.2).

9.5.3 Keywords

9.5.3.1 Comparing *evoked* Appraisal resources across channels: the Affect resources *quokka* and *distillery*

By comparing the Instagram and website corpora, two keywords appear in the top position and realize the same lexicogrammatical Affect attitudinal resource of *evoked satisfaction*. While on Instagram the term refers to an animate entity and wild animal (*quokka*), on the website the resource instantiates linguistically through an inanimate entity, i.e. a location (*distillery*). This suggests that the discourse strategies of the tourist boards on the social platform consider the promotion of natural entities and environments to be attractive and characteristic of the destination, compared to cultural and gastronomic ones. In particular, it implies that these terms play a key role in evoking positive attitudes through a sense of authenticity and a feeling of satisfaction by means of linguistic pre-consumption in the mind of the reader, thus persuading him or her to get to know more and potentially purchase an experience. The construction of positive feelings and emotional reaction through experiential meaning establishes a direct contact and involvement with the readers, as their emotional sphere is targeted and they are triggered to align their feelings with the ones expressed through the words (Mocini 2015, 159-160). For this reason, the positive semantic connotation of authenticity attached to the ideational meanings *quokka* and *distillery* that conveys its powerful, asymmetrical "stratum of meaning" by playing on the sociologically established desire for the characteristic, authentic, different from the everyday, known reality, shapes a sense of satisfaction which is realized through an illusionary achievement of narcissistic goals, such as the pursuit of pleasure or interest or desires such as curiosity (Mocini 2015, 161). These feelings are then negotiated with the reader, who is led to welcome positive feelings for instant gratification and emotional solidarity with the writer.

In this case, *evoked satisfaction* comes from apparently non-attitudinal ideational meaning and is realized through the reference to different aspects of the destination according to channel. It appears, in fact, that Instagram discourse shapes a sense of exclusivity and, therefore, added value of authenticity by establishing an intimate and friendly

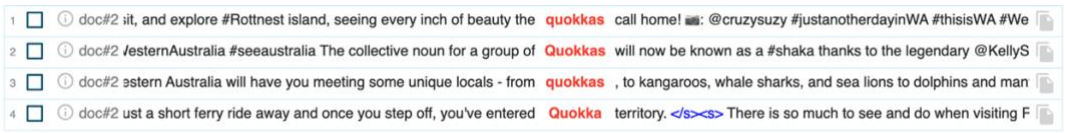
relationship with the untamed, unspoilt and unknown nature in the form of an animate entity, which consequently becomes tamed and "human", reachable, whereas the website prefers to construct an autoethnographic representation that creates a connection with the cultural environment, which represents the traditions and continuity of a country (Hallet and Kaplan-Weinger 2010, 13). The different feeling of exclusivity across channels might be due to the fact that Instagram discourse specialists consider natural representations and empathetic, humanized relationships with the concept of wild as attention boosters and drivers of action in the potential tourist, who finds the contact with nature as essential and "unreachable without traveling" in the postmodern society. (Urry and Larsen 2011; Plant 1992, 32). Hence, the concept of wild becomes a commodity which is symbolically transformed into an extra-ordinary, reified experience that is ready to be consumed (Hummon 1988, 181), and the same concept is turned into a living entity that awakens the passive minds of a powerless capitalist, alienated worker (Plant 1992, 9-10). This process gives the illusion of activity through emotional response and actually pushes the prospective tourists "out of the armchair and on to the plane" (Dann 1996, 2), to actually experience the gaze and avoid spending their lives only "watching themselves" (Plant 1992, 10; Ritzer and Liska 1997, 102; Hallet and Kaplan-Weinger 2010, 3). The existence of this process is confirmed by the presence of grammatical metaphors in Instagram narratives, which were detected in the Transitivity analysis. These assign consciousness and feelings to inanimate entities and abstract concepts through mental processes, consequently conferring an aura of mystic, alternative reality that distances itself from the everyday life which, in turn, due to its capitalist nature, legitimates the existence and charm of extra-ordinary, "hyperreal" tourist experiences (Taverniers 2003; Plant 1992, 5-6; Debord 2014, 17) and fuels this vicious cycle.

In the visual analysis, nature was also proved to be the most frequent *Phenomenon* that the humans sense: whether it is a landscape that can be consumed and controlled by means of imagination through long shots and high angles, or a close shot of animals that stimulates engagement and sense of belonging to an in-group that is able and can afford to have a close contact with the wild and the other. On the social platform, humans and the reference to humans or places with humans and gatherings, social relationships are avoided, as to imply that these are not exclusive, extra-ordinary and do not stimulate imagination. Conversely, on the website, there is a tendency to

construct socially the unique identity of the country, worthy of visit and whose originality, continuity is legitimate, through the commodification of ethnocentric, cultural sites of people gatherings (Hallet and Kaplan-Weinger 2010). Figures 9.20 and 9.21 are two screenshots that show the use in context of the terms discussed.

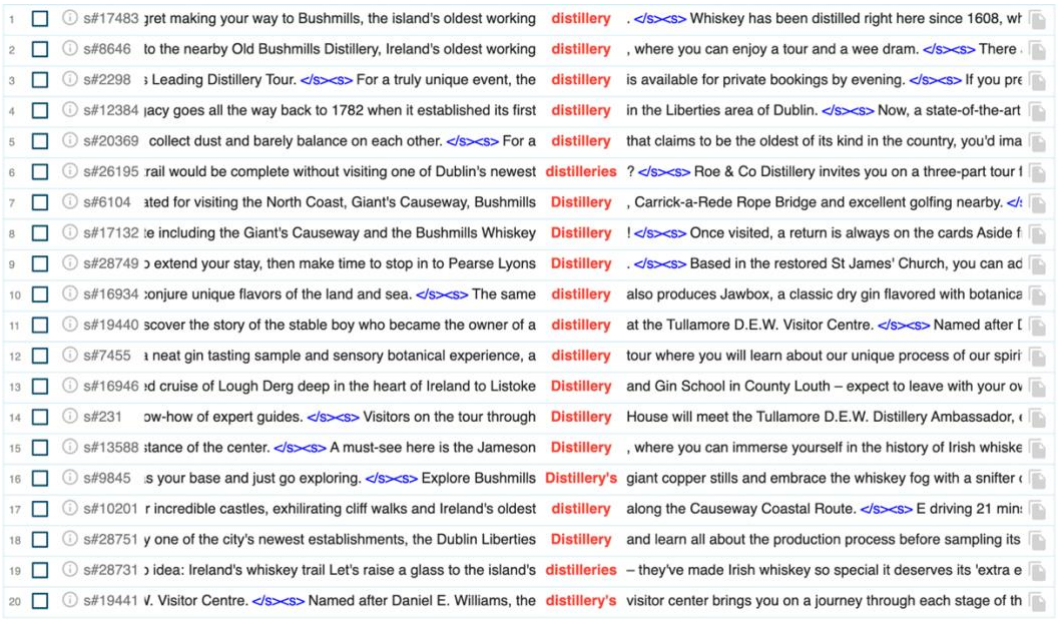
As can be seen from the screenshots, positive attitudes are conveyed through a sense of satisfaction that is realized by referring to different aspects of the destination and using different registers. While on Instagram a friendly tone and informal register invites the readers to explore the beauty of the home of the quokkas and become part of the exclusive group who can find out more about the locals (the animals), the website plays on historical and cultural information regarding the unique and long-lasting traditions that is made readily *available* to the tourists for the organization of their trip to public places. The less evocative and more informative content on the website performs the function of further convincing and pushing and already interested reader to experience concretely the destination by providing practical sets of information. This practice, in fact, bestows credibility and confers reliability to the information provided, which needs to be tangible in order to be used for the purchase on the website, which represents the last step of the marketing funnel in the AIDA model of persuasion (Manca 2016). On the other hand, the Instagram channel mainly aims to create awareness of travel needs and stimulate attention, desire in the postmodern individual. In 9.20, it does so by first involving directly the reader, the *you*, and then by stimulating their imagination and creating an imaginary reality where the visitors seem the first ones to explore uncharted territory and enjoy wild fauna from close distances ("you've entered Quokka territory"). This type of destination framing and positioning through the ritual transformation of the ordinary into the extraordinary constructs a tourist's social identity (Hallet and Kaplan-Weinger 2010, xv) that yearns for an escape into a well-deserved, extra-ordinary experience, which functions as status display for a dedicated worker, who can afford an exclusive holiday and avoid mass-targeted experiences (Hummon 1988, 180; Hallet and Kaplan-Weinger 2010, 121; Plant 1992, 22, 36). Additionally, if the social identity of the tourist is constructed through *desire* and *memory* (libro Hallet and Kaplan-Weinger 2010, 116-117), these are realized nowadays through social media awareness and constant exposure to visuo-linguistic content that is saturated with evaluative ideational meaning. This is realized through lexicogrammatical choices that put the tourists in

relationship with the nature as spectators, either in the role of passive Sensers that have the illusion of control over an alternative, idyllic hyper-reality (Debord 2014, 30; Plant 1992, 5-6, 11, 15; Kress 2010; Manovich 2017), or as part of an in-group that is involved strategically in a narration led by animate abstract entities.



1	doc#2	ıit, and explore #Rottnest island, seeing every inch of beauty the	quokkas	call home! 📷: @cruzysuzy #justanotherdayinWA #thisisWA #We
2	doc#2	/esternAustralia #seeaustralia The collective noun for a group of	Quokkas	will now be known as a #shaka thanks to the legendary @KellyS
3	doc#2	ɘstern Australia will have you meeting some unique locals - from	quokkas	, to kangaroos, whale sharks, and sea lions to dolphins and man
4	doc#2	ust a short ferry ride away and once you step off, you've entered	Quokka	territory. </s><s> There is so much to see and do when visiting F

Figure 9.20: Key Word in Context of the Instagram *evoked satisfaction* resource *quokka*



1	s#17483	ɣret making your way to Bushmills, the island's oldest working	distillery	. </s><s> Whiskey has been distilled right here since 1608, wh
2	s#8646	to the nearby Old Bushmills Distillery, Ireland's oldest working	distillery	, where you can enjoy a tour and a wee dram. </s><s> There
3	s#2298	ı Leading Distillery Tour. </s><s> For a truly unique event, the	distillery	is available for private bookings by evening. </s><s> If you pre
4	s#12384	ıacy goes all the way back to 1782 when it established its first	distillery	in the Liberties area of Dublin. </s><s> Now, a state-of-the-art
5	s#20369	collect dust and barely balance on each other. </s><s> For a	distillery	that claims to be the oldest of its kind in the country, you'd ima
6	s#26195	rail would be complete without visiting one of Dublin's newest	distilleries	? </s><s> Roe & Co Distillery invites you on a three-part tour f
7	s#6104	ıted for visiting the North Coast, Giant's Causeway, Bushmills	Distillery	, Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge and excellent golfing nearby. </s
8	s#17132	ːe including the Giant's Causeway and the Bushmills Whiskey	Distillery	! </s><s> Once visited, a return is always on the cards Aside f
9	s#28749	ɔ extend your stay, then make time to stop in to Pearse Lyons	Distillery	. </s><s> Based in the restored St James' Church, you can ad
10	s#16934	ːonjure unique flavors of the land and sea. </s><s> The same	distillery	also produces Jawbox, a classic dry gin flavored with botanica
11	s#19440	ɔcover the story of the stable boy who became the owner of a	distillery	at the Tullamore D.E.W. Visitor Centre. </s><s> Named after D
12	s#7455	ı neat gin tasting sample and sensory botanical experience, a	distillery	tour where you will learn about our unique process of our spiri
13	s#16946	ıd cruise of Lough Derg deep in the heart of Ireland to Listoke	Distillery	and Gin School in County Louth – expect to leave with your ov
14	s#231	ɔw-how of expert guides. </s><s> Visitors on the tour through	Distillery	House will meet the Tullamore D.E.W. Distillery Ambassador, (
15	s#13588	ıtance of the center. </s><s> A must-see here is the Jameson	Distillery	, where you can immerse yourself in the history of Irish whiske
16	s#9845	ːs your base and just go exploring. </s><s> Explore Bushmills	Distillery's	giant copper stills and embrace the whiskey fog with a snifter (
17	s#10201	r incredible castles, exhilirating cliff walks and Ireland's oldest	distillery	along the Causeway Coastal Route. </s><s> E driving 21 mins
18	s#28751	y one of the city's newest establishments, the Dublin Liberties	Distillery	and learn all about the production process before sampling its
19	s#28731	ɔ idea: Ireland's whiskey trail Let's raise a glass to the island's	distilleries	– they've made Irish whiskey so special it deserves its 'extra e
20	s#19441	ɣ. Visitor Centre. </s><s> Named after Daniel E. Williams, the	distillery's	visitor center brings you on a journey through each stage of th

Figure 9.21: Key Word in Context of the website *evoked satisfaction* resource *distillery*

These findings are in line with the visual and Transitivity analysis carried out in Chapter Eight. Indeed, they confirm the main intention of promoters on Instagram to give an idea of exclusive, targeted relationship and emotive, perceptive experience of sensing the untamed nature, which embodies the idea of *authentic* and *different* and is, for these reasons, effective, compared to representations of human culture and organization. For example, the use of close shots and gazes of *demand* of wild animals such as the *quokka* not only confers an idea of exclusivity and authenticity of the Australian typical animals, but it also establishes a direct emotional connection with the viewer, who is invited to embrace the positive feeling of satisfaction and, therefore, have an irrational response, based on emotions and attitudes. This is achieved through direct

confrontation with animals or landscapes, which both stimulate emotive response and, in the case of landscapes, imagination and consumption. In-group identification, which reinforces the prosody of the promotional strategy, is realized linguistically through the use of the pronoun *you* and mental processes, and through reaction processes of back posing individuals, as close shots of human, demand gazes may stimulate negative confrontation with other individuals without boosting imagination.

9.5.3.2 Comparing different and similar attitudes

White sand and _food scene_: same attitude, different keywords, different values

Affect resources of *evoked satisfaction* that stimulate irrational thinking and potentially action may appear in combination with other sources of attitudinal meaning such as Appreciation, as in the case of the multi-unit keywords *white sand* in the Instagram corpus and *food scene* in the website corpus. The aesthetic or subjective assessment of entities or phenomena is characteristic of ideological discourse and in particular promotional communication. As a matter of fact, it stimulates an alignment between the evaluation presented and the reader's thinking, thereby boosting the stimulation and internalization of particular attitudes, and increasing the semantic load of the discourse and the perceived value of the service promoted (Mocini 2015, 157). It follows that collocations consisting of two Appraisal resources construe a semantic prosody that is elected on purpose by specialists to negotiate specific interpersonal meaning, which is encoded in highly evaluative and positive acts of appraisal. These involve directly and emotionally the reader, and eventually persuade him to become compliant with the attitudes presented and commit to the value position advanced (Mocini 2015, 169).

The lexicogrammatical choice of the syntagmatic relation *white sand* on Instagram, for example, serves the dual function of evoking aesthetic assessment of the destination and positive emotions. While on the surface the adjective *white* might be empty of attitudinal meaning and be merely referential/indexical or experiential/ideational (Maci 2020; Mocini 2015), it carries a positive semantic load, especially when collocated with *sand*. *White* is indeed an attribute that defines the experiential meaning *sand*, which entails a representation of the tourist experience based on the sociological desires for *authenticity* and *strangerhood* (Dann 1996). In particular, the abovementioned collocation

recalls in the mind of the reader an image of exotic, unspoilt and possibly yet unreached natural places in Tourism Western Australia, which are ready to be explored and enjoyed. The resort to typical aspects of a particular destination associated with the idea of the unknown, unexplored (at least by the prospective visitor) creates a set of expectations that is desired because it stays in contrast with the current situation of the person reading the promotional message. From a sociological perspective, the promotion of holidays and natural destinations is persuasive as it provides an alternative, ideal reality without life, work constraints and the chaoticity of the city (Dann 1996, Urry 1990). This ideological assumption is reinforced through the establishment of emotional attachment, which is made possible through the use of evoked satisfaction resources that provide instant, palpable gratification of achieving mentally an aesthetically spectacular place and pursuing insatiable pleasure. Therefore, this strategy proves to be particularly effective in a capitalist society in which work and leisure are seen as two complementary but necessary aspects of human life, and which legitimate the social construct of and need for holidays (Plant 1992, 9, 24-27; Debord 2014, 10, 83-84). The context surrounding this syntagmatic choice, which is provided in Figure 9.22, confirms this hypothesis and shows how Instagram promotional narratives leverage their persuasive power and asymmetrical relationship with the reader to negotiate interpersonal meanings that are based on the positive evaluation of the pureness and uncontaminated nature of the destination. Modifiers such as *pristine, picturesque, secluded, pure* accompany syntagmatically this collocation and reinforce the semantic prosody of aesthetic assessment and positive evaluation, thereby fostering alignment with the reader, boosting satisfaction in his mind and eventually leading him to feel desire.

1	doc#2 ɔm with a view! 🐵🏄‍♂️ Sandy Cape in #JurienBay offers pristine	white sand	, a sheltered bay and is made for sandboarding, swimming anc
2	doc#2 Norfolk pines that line the beach all the way to the edge of the	white sand	. </s><s> In the background, the Perth city skyline accents the
3	doc#2 ercheArchipelago, surrounded by lush greenery, a thin strip of	white sand	and deep blue ocean. </s><s> The contrast of colours will hav
4	doc#2 lestinationperth is the perfect swimming spot, with picturesque	white sand	, crystal clear oceans and a great grassy area - you can see w
5	doc#2 rs of the Indian Ocean, drop the fishing line or laze on the soft	white sand	, it's the little things that make this beauty an absolute 10 out o
6	doc#2 ıncelin sand dunes feels almost dreamlike the way the pristine	white sands	reflect the golden glow of the 🌞 sun to create the gorgeous co
7	doc#2 ɜtralia #australiasgoldenoutback #roadtotherock Colourful sky,	white sand	, blue ocean - is this perfection!? 🏄‍♂️🙌 We could talk your ear c
8	doc#2 ashing about in the ocean as well as lying back on the pristine	white sand	and soaking up the salty seaside air. </s><s> Whether you're s
9	doc#2 ɔf! 🏄‍♂️💧Known as @Australia's whitest beach, with its squeaky	white sand	and crystal clear water, it's no wonder this @AustraliasGolden(
10	doc#2 he sights, look no further than Hangover Bay with its secluded	white sand	beach ideal for swimming, snorkelling or a picnic. #justanother
11	doc#2 \ #WesternAustralia #seeaustralia Blue skies, turquoise water,	white sand	and surrounded by lush greens - can you believe this incredibl
12	doc#2 denoutback. </s><s> With #kangaroos on the beach, squeaky	white sand	, turquoise waters and a coast line that makes you think you've
13	doc#2 ıisisWA #WesternAustralia #seeaustralia #australiasnw If pure	white sand	next to the clearest 💧 water you've ever seen is your idea of p
14	doc#2 ıationPerth! </s><s> Take your time enjoying a stroll along the	white sand	, letting the cool of the ocean wash over your toes whilst you s

Figure 9.22: Key Word in Context of the Instagram multi-unit *evoked satisfaction* resource *white sand*

A similar scenario may be applied to the website corpus and the multi-unit keyword *food scene*, (Figure 9.23) even though the sociological value exploited implies an idea of authenticity which refers to the cultural and gastronomic traditions of the destination. The aesthetic assessment, here, is evoked by the noun *scene,* while the pre-consumption of satisfaction and pursuit of pleasure is here accomplished by *food*. The two terms together not only convey positive feelings but also stimulate visual and "taste" consumption, thereby involving more senses and becoming more appealing to the tourist (Manca 2013). The combination of experiential terms establishes a prosody of positive evaluation that involves and convinces the reader throughout the narrative. However, the website does so by playing on the cultural uniqueness instead of the natural one. Like the use of *distillery*, *food scene* shapes a set of expectations focused on the satisfaction deriving from a tasting experience and the awareness of discovering the tradition of the destination (Gotti et al. 2017). Additionally, the term includes an idea of abundance of choice that is always praised by the tourist. If one looks at the term in context, a pattern of lexical density around the Appraisal set of resources may be detected, which increases the attitudinal load and possibly the chances of persuasion (Francesconi 2014; Thompson et al. 2019; Thompson and Alba-Juez 2014). The use of *incredible* and *local*, *delicious* and *diverse* as inscribed sources of evaluation, indeed, construe a semantic prosody similar to the Instagram one but which is more based on the *typicality* of the destination rather than its *pureness*. The inclusion of reference to the cities where the attraction may be found, additionally, adds practical information which bestows credibility and serves the function of directing the reader who is searching for advice after being molded and seduced to visit the destination on social platforms.

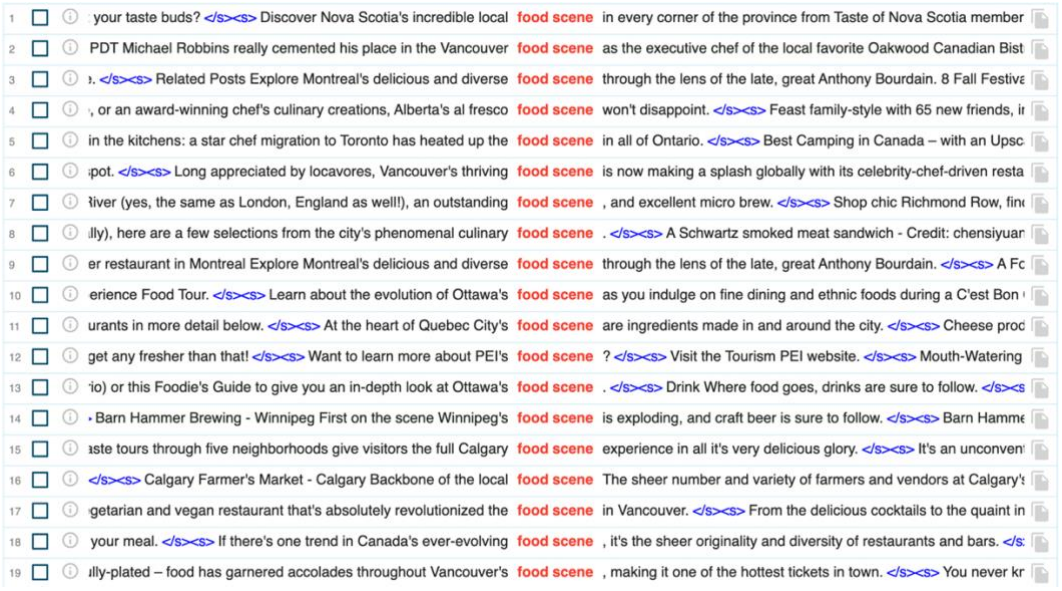


Figure 9.23: Key Word in Context of the website multi-unit *evoked satisfaction* resource *food scene*

9.5.3.3 *Lovely photo* versus *traditional music*: different attitude, different keywords, different values

The negotiation of interpersonal meaning through Appraisal strategies may be conducted also through different resources across digital channels and, therefore, convey different attitudes. As seen in the quantitative analysis of keywords and adjectives, website communication is characterized, in terms of key Affect resources of Attitude, also by Security resources. In terms of Appreciation, Instagram is characterized by a high frequency of Reaction resources. These two practices converge into the multi-unit keywords *lovely photo* and *traditional music* that occupy the top positions on Instagram and the official website, respectively. While Satisfaction was introduced earlier, in sections 9.5.3.1 and 9.5.3.2, as it is the most frequent and key Affect resource on both channels, Security is a less frequent but key resource which appears only in website communication. Therefore, compared to Satisfaction, the dissemination of language that constructs a sense of security conveys a sense of safety and reassurance that may be perceived as positive only by prospective tourists who are visiting the website, possibly to look for information regarding the experience. *Traditional*, in *traditional music*, serves the function of *reassuring* the target audience of the quality of the service or experience offered, which is *ensured* by its traditional, local nature. Hence, the key use of this attitudinal meaning might unveil a need to bestow credibility during the critical search of information on the part of the interested – not

yet convinced – busy prospective customer, who is allegedly looking for authentic experiences that may be had only in the specific destination which one travels to. In the case of website communication, this sense of security is assigned to a cultural aspect, i.e. *music*. It seems that cultural and gastronomic positive evaluation defines website narratives: indeed, by assigning this kind of attitudinal emotive meaning to the ideational realm of music, website target customers are persuaded to align to a value position that sees cultural diversity and customs as alluring and tantalizing. This process, eventually, will lead them to purchase an experience. However, this phenomenon does not seem to define Instagram communication; this might be due to the fact that linguistic strategies that praise music do not stimulate imagination in terms of visual pre-consumption on Instagram, which is the visual medium per excellent and which targets individuals who need to focus their attention on a specific destination in order to be interested in its cultural aspects and make additional cognitive effort. The use of the multi-unit term in context, as shown in Figure 9.24, shows that this syntagmatic choice contributes to the construction of a semantic prosody based on a need for authenticity that also serves the function of providing practical, indexical information to the tourist. At this stage of the decision-making process, in fact, tourists have probably decided to visit the destination and wish to plan their visit with trustworthy information: for this reason, advice from specialists on what to visit or what events to attend is welcome (Munar and Jacobsen 2013).

The presence and need for less informative and evocative content on social media may be found in the key use of *lovely photo* (Figure 9.25). This term, indeed, not only stimulates visual pre-consumption and works coherently in a multimodal communicative event in which a picture is the first semiotic resource encountered by the customer; it is also an effective combination of appraisal resources. As a matter of fact, it includes a *reaction* resource (*lovely*) that associates a reaction of positive evaluation to the picture, which is then conveyed to and perceived immediately by the viewer/reader. It establishes an emotional attachment with him and fosters irrational response in the mind of the reader, who is led to feel a sense of appreciation of the picture and indirectly the content of the caption. Additionally, the sense of satisfaction and accomplishment evoked by the ideational meaning *photo* entails both a strong indexical force, as the term refers to a photo actually taken and displayed on the screen, and an inherent sense of visuality and imagination, since the term refers to an image.

Therefore, the aesthetic assessment provided by the valuation resource *photo* associated with *lovely* construes an evaluative prosody of appreciation that involves not only the picture – and indirectly the experience – but also the person who took the photo. If one looks at the KWiC, it can be noticed how this compliment is paid to other users of the social platforms. This way, the reader is persuaded to evaluate the picture and probably assign a value which is similar to the promoters'; accordingly, he or she will respond positively from both a mental and emotive perspective. This also coincides with a predisposition to a desire to belong to the in-group consisting of the photographers who make *lovely photos* that are worthy of thousands of likes, and unconsciously wish to recreate a picture with similar attributes (Garrod 2009). This tourist gaze of reproduction of the visual set of expectations regarding the tourist experience is not key on the website communication, in which the idea of pre-established, organized set of activities and less evocative visuo-linguistic information are preferred. Conversely, the practice of replicating visual content on social media influences positively individuals' personal image and, consequently, leads to an active engagement of the Instagram user, who will explore the account of the tagged photographer and continue his pre-trip journey of visual pre-consumption by looking at other images on Instagram related to either the photographer or the agency's account. This is in line with the AIDA model of persuasion, that sees attention and stimulation of interest as primary steps in the process of convincing a prospective customer of the worthiness of a destination.

1	l terraces. </s><s> Try the Ferris Wheel and zipline, and enjoy	traditional music	. </s><s> On Dec. 31, the party culminates at Place de l'Assen
2	of life. </s><s> Watch artisans work at their crafts, experience	traditional music	and performing arts, or head into the true wilds to visit remote r
3	ı in Old Montreal while listening to the piano. </s><s> With live	traditional music	nightly, Hurley's Irish Pub is best on Thursdays for pints and mı
4	ival happens annually on August 15th, and also features more	traditional music	you can dance to. </s><s> But for the ultimate cultural experier
5	nd culture with its charming craft shops, ancient city walls, and	traditional music	wafting from old-style pubs. </s><s> And Belfast is abuzz with
6	ıe passionate rhetoric of a guided tour and in the wild beat of a	traditional music	session. 8 Ireland on screen In Northern Ireland, you can explc
7	with its thatched-roofed cottages, old stone walls, and cracking	traditional music	sessions in Gus O'Connor's and McGann's. </s><s> In Norther
8	Cormick 9. </s><s> Musical instruments Enjoyed the seisiúns (	traditional music	sessions) on your holiday? </s><s> Take that sweet music hon
9	f at one of their country pubs, famed for their lively sessions of	traditional music	. </s><s> Kilvahan Horse Drawn Caravan operates at the mom
10	n room can be reserved for parties and larger groups. </s><s>	Traditional Music	Sessions: Monday to Thursday nights 9.30 pm to 11.30pm and
11	lities, children's play area, and bar and lounge with regular live	traditional music	shows. </s><s> Visiting musicians are always welcome. </s><(
12	es, restaurants and pubs, many with nightly entertainment and	traditional music	. </s><s> Many ancient and historic sites are to be found near
13	painting, as well as plenty of quality restaurants and pubs with	traditional music	and lots of 'Irish craic'. </s><s> Currarevagh House Currarevaç
14	reet entertainers. </s><s> You can also visit many of Galway's	traditional music	pubs including The Crane, Taffes Bar, Tig Coili and The Quays.
15	ıda upstairs, recently refurbished, gives a perfect ambience for	traditional music	and ballads. </s><s> Well worth a visit for great quality and cra
16	trained with the legendary piper Leo Rowsome at a time when	traditional music	was confined to the back streets and the kitchens. </s><s> But
17	ı, Fáilte go Fleadh Laighean. </s><s> Witness the best of Irish	Traditional Music	as competitors compete to represent the province of Leinster. <
18	ded by the beautiful serenity of the Dublin Mountains. </s><s>	Traditional Music	sessions are as much alive today as they were in the past. </s:
19	Bantry House hosts a number of events including classical and	traditional music	festivals, product launches, food festivals and outdoor theatre ı
20	ast of Ireland, a region steeped in culture, it's the home of Irish	traditional music	, song and dance, The Cliffs of Moher, Bunratty Castle & Folk F

Figure 9.24: Key Word in Context of the website multi-unit *evoked security* resource *traditional music*

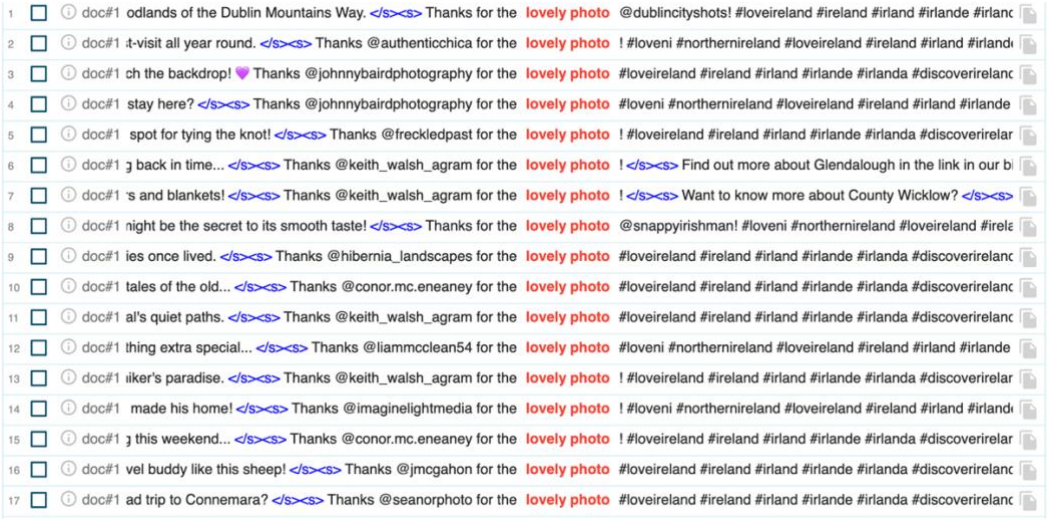


Figure 9.25: Key Word in Context of the Instagram multi-unit *evoked satisfaction and* reaction resource *lovely photo*

9.5.4 Wordlists

9.5.4.1 Same adjective, same resource: what is *good* and *local* on digital channels

The qualitative analysis of the keywords and multi-unit keywords shed light on how similar or different resources for interpersonal meaning design may vary in terms of their use according to the co-text, thus unveiling different patterns of attitudinal meaning according to the channel of dissemination of the promotional message. These are arguably related also to the presence of different participants in the Transitivity construction of the communicative event. As a matter of fact, participants on Instagram are either the traveler, natural aspects and animate entities or abstract, inanimate entities, all of which are subjects of mental or relational processes. On the website, participants are often artistic and gastronomic, cultural aspects of the destination, which are accompanied by a high frequency of material processes. These findings seem to legitimate the presence of more highly attitudinal evaluative and emotive prosodies on Instagram, compared to a more practical, active and concrete connotation on the website. This also highlights and confirms the presence of a collective and typical tourist gaze at the tourist experience on this channel, compared to a multimodal romantic, exclusive gaze of superiority and control over the natural *authenticity* and *strangerhood* on the social platform.

Therefore, the semantic and Appraisal categorizations and analyses of keywords confirm the second hypothesis of the study, which suggests that there are significant generic and linguistic differences in the communication design of tourism boards across digital channels. Moreover, the importance of the visual pre-consumption and emotional attachment detected in the semantic analysis was reinforced by the Appraisal analysis of key evoking terms. The analysis of the context of the most frequent adjectives as Appreciation and Graduation resources aims to further confirm these results by investigating, in particular, the syntagmatic co-text of realization of the attitudinal prosody across the tourism boards' digital channels. In contrast to the Appraisal analysis of the key terms, in which the compared terms across channels displayed a similar value of keyness despite the different number of key Appraisal resources occurring in each category, the qualitative analysis of the adjectives relies on the presupposition that attitudinal prosodies vary across channels, as revealed by the quantitative analysis of the frequencies of the types of Appraisal resources. The current analysis wishes to explore in detail how these patterns of differences are realized in prosodic configurations that reverberate throughout the text and achieve the main aim of Appraisal, i.e. to persuade the reader to align their value position to the one advanced by discourse specialists (Mocini 2015, 169).

In order to test the hypothesis of linguistic variance across channels, this framework was applied only to similar attitudinal resources across channels, keeping in mind that the frequencies of occurrences of the categories vary according to medium and consequently play a different role in the prosody of persuasion constructed.

The distribution and realization of *good* as a Reaction resource of Appreciation is interesting as it plays a major role in both channels. It also entails *infused intensification* strategy of Graduation – which is more prominent in the Instagram discourse – and pervades both narratives. Therefore, it represents a common resource of Appraisal even if the category of Reaction is more frequent on Instagram, and for these reasons deserves critical attention. Similarly, the frequent adjective *local* characterizes interpersonal meaning across all channels and is representative of valuation resources which are very frequent in both channels. Additionally, it represents a *focus* graduation strategy, which has yet not been investigated in detail. Finally, it might be interesting to analyze the context of realization of similar attitudes with different adjectives across channels, in order to see whether the use of a specific adjective influences the overall

narrative in terms of connotation, or it is collocated with specific participants. For this purpose, *incredible* was compared with *good* and the graduation resource of quantification *more* was compared across channels.

The Reaction resource of Appreciation *good* and its upscaled form *best* are a widely used and general way of conveying attitudinal meaning (Martin and White 2005, 56); however, its strategic use might be key to the development of specific feelings in the reader. Indeed, reaction resources convey an irrational, internal response to an external stimulus that serves the purpose of generating the same reaction in another person. Being tourism discourse promotional by nature, the type of appreciation conveyed by texts is always positive, and intends to convince the audience of an evaluation by transferring to the audience an instant feeling, while also creating common ground and emotional attachment. On Instagram (Figure 9.26), emotional response is enhanced by interrogative moods and wh-questions, which establish a connection, direct involvement with the reader, and predispose him to listen to and believe the advice given, eventually pushing him to continue reading. For example, few captions read: "When's the best time to visit? Want to know more about the best events of 2019?". Therefore, this strategy works as a persuasive tool to create expectations and trigger the alignment of value positions. Additionally, the reaction resource *good/best* collocates with abstract or visual lexis such as *places, things, time, view,* which supports the creation of a romantic gaze that seeks to stimulate imagination and curiosity before the actual provision of concrete information. On the other hand, website discourse specialists collocate *good* also with practical information and instructions, such as in "After taking a good panoramic shot, head up to the mountain for some hiking in the summer, or skiing in the winter […]" (Figure 9.27, line 8). This finding supports a view that considers this type of syntagmatic construction to be persuasive and useful for the decision-making process of the website visitor, as the actual and straight provision of instructions, details will help the tourist to actually organize and realize the holiday. This is correlated also with references to tour guides or experts who are repositories of the know-how and know-what to visit in terms of gastronomic cultural attractions: "A walking food tour with an expert guide is a great way to discover Toronto's best bites and sips".

Additionally, many instances in both channels feature an upscaling of the attitudinal meaning and, therefore, persuasive force through the process of *infused intensification*.

The use of comparatives and superlatives, in fact, is a interpersonal strategy that may be applied to gradable attitudinal resources and increase the possibility of alignment of the value position (Martin and White 2005 37-39, 43-44, 142). By using *best* in many occurrences, both narratives wish to confer an idea of exclusivity of the experience and superiority of the quality of the product or service promoted. This in turn stimulates not only higher expectations regarding the travel experience, but also desire to be part of the in-group which will actually enjoy the experience and share their opinions on social platforms in particular.

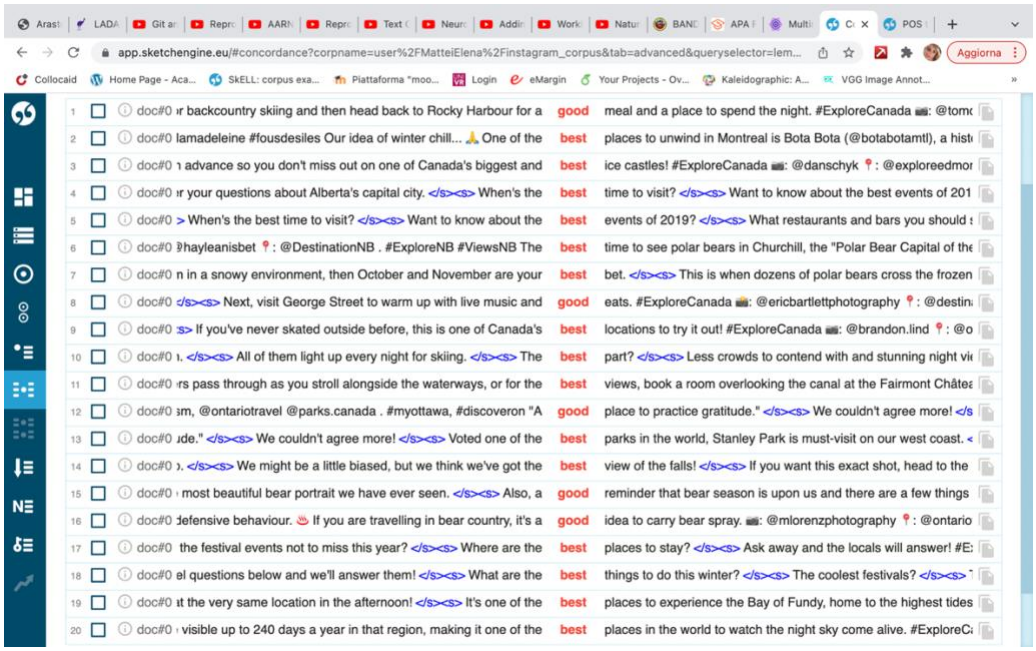
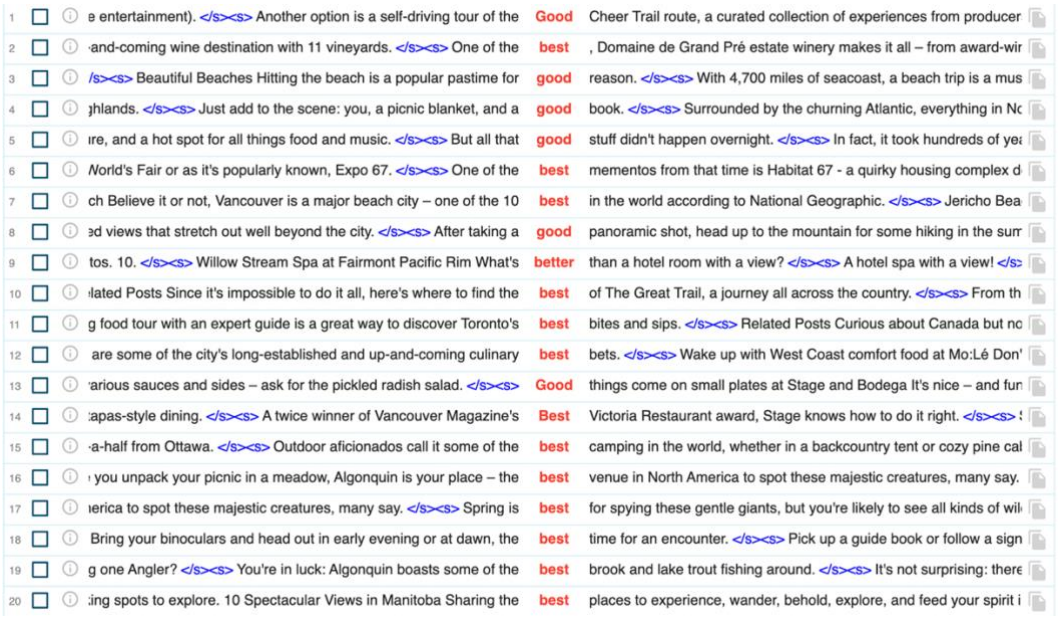


Figure 9.26: Key Word in Context of the Instagram reaction resource *good*



1	e entertainment). </s><s> Another option is a self-driving tour of the	Good	Cheer Trail route, a curated collection of experiences from producer
2	·and-coming wine destination with 11 vineyards. </s><s> One of the	best	, Domaine de Grand Pré estate winery makes it all – from award-wir
3	/s><s> Beautiful Beaches Hitting the beach is a popular pastime for	good	reason. </s><s> With 4,700 miles of seacoast, a beach trip is a mus
4	ghlands. </s><s> Just add to the scene: you, a picnic blanket, and a	good	book. </s><s> Surrounded by the churning Atlantic, everything in Nc
5	ire, and a hot spot for all things food and music. </s><s> But all that	good	stuff didn't happen overnight. </s><s> In fact, it took hundreds of yea
6	World's Fair or as it's popularly known, Expo 67. </s><s> One of the	best	mementos from that time is Habitat 67 - a quirky housing complex d
7	ch Believe it or not, Vancouver is a major beach city – one of the 10	best	in the world according to National Geographic. </s><s> Jericho Bea
8	ed views that stretch out well beyond the city. </s><s> After taking a	good	panoramic shot, head up to the mountain for some hiking in the sum
9	tos. 10. </s><s> Willow Stream Spa at Fairmont Pacific Rim What's	better	than a hotel room with a view? </s><s> A hotel spa with a view! </s>
10	lated Posts Since it's impossible to do it all, here's where to find the	best	of The Great Trail, a journey all across the country. </s><s> From th
11	g food tour with an expert guide is a great way to discover Toronto's	best	bites and sips. </s><s> Related Posts Curious about Canada but no
12	are some of the city's long-established and up-and-coming culinary	best	bets. </s><s> Wake up with West Coast comfort food at Mo:Lé Don'
13	arious sauces and sides – ask for the pickled radish salad. </s><s>	Good	things come on small plates at Stage and Bodega It's nice – and fun
14	apas-style dining. </s><s> A twice winner of Vancouver Magazine's	Best	Victoria Restaurant award, Stage knows how to do it right. </s><s> S
15	·a-half from Ottawa. </s><s> Outdoor aficionados call it some of the	best	camping in the world, whether in a backcountry tent or cozy pine cal
16	you unpack your picnic in a meadow, Algonquin is your place – the	best	venue in North America to spot these majestic creatures, many say.
17	erica to spot these majestic creatures, many say. </s><s> Spring is	best	for spying these gentle giants, but you're likely to see all kinds of wil
18	Bring your binoculars and head out in early evening or at dawn, the	best	time for an encounter. </s><s> Pick up a guide book or follow a sign
19	g one Angler? </s><s> You're in luck: Algonquin boasts some of the	best	brook and lake trout fishing around. </s><s> It's not surprising: there
20	ing spots to explore. 10 Spectacular Views in Manitoba Sharing the	best	places to experience, wander, behold, explore, and feed your spirit i

Figure 9.27: Key Word in Context of the website reaction resource *good*

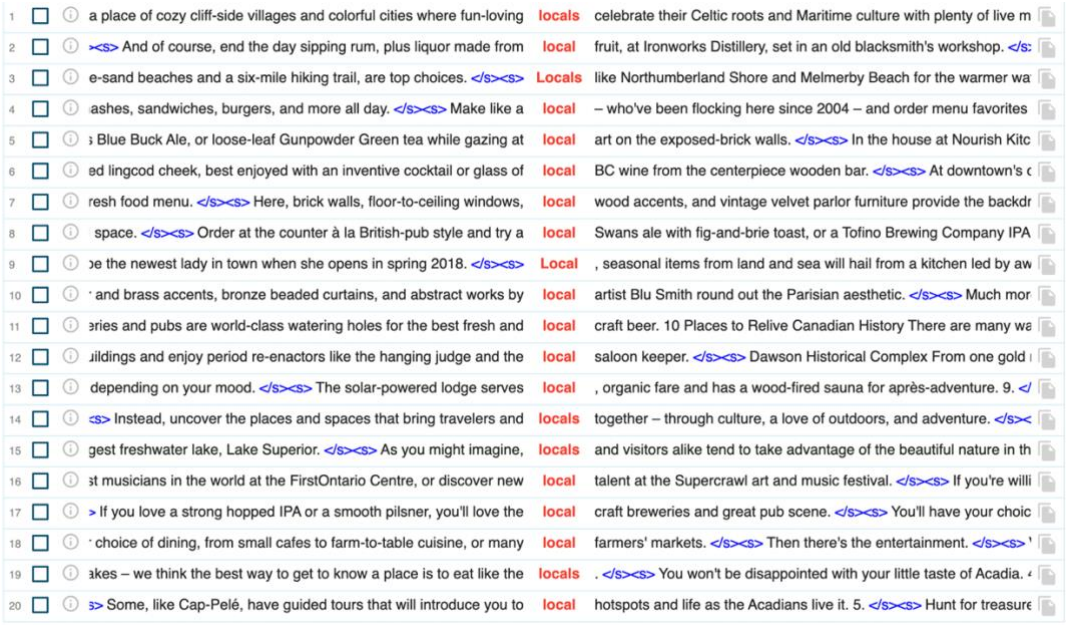
If one turns to the use in context of the Valuation resource of Appreciation *local,* additional considerations may be made. As confirmed by Tables 9.13 and 9.14, this type of attitudinal choice pervades both the Instagram and the website tourism narratives; for this reason, it represents the main common trend of Appreciation resources throughout all the tourism sub-corpora under investigation. Thus, it seems that subjective evaluation is the interpersonal meaning which is constructed and negotiated consistently in tourism discourse to persuade the readers of the high-quality attributes and worthiness of a destination. In terms of Appraisal framework, it answers the question "Was is worthwhile?" (Martin and White 2005, 56). This means that this resource possibly constructs a semantic prosody of acts of appraisal that assigns a positive value to the entity which is the object of appraisal, consequently molding the readers' perception and pushing them to comply with the value position promoted.

Local is a type of evaluation that is inherently positive in the field of tourism discourse (Dann 1996), as it confers a high degree of authenticity and typicality which is usually associated with genuineness. Accordingly, it is an effective lexicogrammatical resource that, when used to praise an aspect of the destination or attraction, directly plays on the social need for exclusiveness and uniqueness, peculiarity that make that a place worthy of visit (Hallet and Kaplan-Weinger 2010). The combination of the traditional – which entails cultural and temporal continuity – and the typical – which may be found in a specific place – in the term *local* make its attitudinal value a strong source of

persuasion. It may also include a reference to the excitement of the *different* and the *other,* compared to the predictable and, consequently, worthlessness of the present situation (Plant 1992; Urry and Larsen 2011). For these reasons, *local* is the instantiation of a Graduation resource of Focus, whose function is to bestow credibility to the value position advanced (Mocini 2015) and to ensure the truth of the statement about the quality of the aspect praised. If one looks at its use across channels, it is clear how this resource adds credibility and attractiveness to different kinds of experiences. While on the website *local* is collocated often with a dish or a drink (Figure 9.29), i.e. a gastronomic experience – such as in *local fruit* (line 2), *local craft beer* (line 11) –, on Instagram it collocates with natural aspects and related entities (Figure 9.28). In particular, the reference to wildlife in syntagmatic relations such as *local sea life* (line 16) or *local wildlife* (line 18) adds a connotative stratum of *authenticity* and strangerhood, i.e. pureness, extra-ordinariness. This has been shown to be consistently/considerably? present on Instagram discourse compared to website promotional communication, in which authenticity is related to other types of experiences and *gazes*. In any case, this resource seems to be effective in conveying a feeling of safety (similarly to an Affect resource of security) which, together with a desire for the *unknown and typical* of a place, increases the sense of exclusivity and perceived value in the prospective tourists who wish to escape reality.



Figure 9.28: Key Word in Context of the Instagram valuation resource *local*



1	a place of cozy cliff-side villages and colorful cities where fun-loving	locals	celebrate their Celtic roots and Maritime culture with plenty of live m
2	><s> And of course, end the day sipping rum, plus liquor made from	local	fruit, at Ironworks Distillery, set in an old blacksmith's workshop. </s:
3	e-sand beaches and a six-mile hiking trail, are top choices. </s><s>	Locals	like Northumberland Shore and Melmerby Beach for the warmer wa
4	ashes, sandwiches, burgers, and more all day. </s><s> Make like a	local	– who've been flocking here since 2004 – and order menu favorites
5	Blue Buck Ale, or loose-leaf Gunpowder Green tea while gazing at	local	art on the exposed-brick walls. </s><s> In the house at Nourish Kitc
6	ed lingcod cheek, best enjoyed with an inventive cocktail or glass of	local	BC wine from the centerpiece wooden bar. </s><s> At downtown's c
7	resh food menu. </s><s> Here, brick walls, floor-to-ceiling windows,	local	wood accents, and vintage velvet parlor furniture provide the backdr
8	space. </s><s> Order at the counter à la British-pub style and try a	local	Swans ale with fig-and-brie toast, or a Tofino Brewing Company IPA
9	e the newest lady in town when she opens in spring 2018. </s><s>	Local	, seasonal items from land and sea will hail from a kitchen led by aw
10	and brass accents, bronze beaded curtains, and abstract works by	local	artist Blu Smith round out the Parisian aesthetic. </s><s> Much mor
11	ries and pubs are world-class watering holes for the best fresh and	local	craft beer. 10 Places to Relive Canadian History There are many wa
12	ildings and enjoy period re-enactors like the hanging judge and the	local	saloon keeper. </s><s> Dawson Historical Complex From one gold
13	depending on your mood. </s><s> The solar-powered lodge serves	local	, organic fare and has a wood-fired sauna for après-adventure. 9. </
14	s> Instead, uncover the places and spaces that bring travelers and	locals	together – through culture, a love of outdoors, and adventure. </s<
15	gest freshwater lake, Lake Superior. </s><s> As you might imagine,	locals	and visitors alike tend to take advantage of the beautiful nature in th
16	st musicians in the world at the FirstOntario Centre, or discover new	local	talent at the Supercrawl art and music festival. </s><s> If you're willi
17	> If you love a strong hopped IPA or a smooth pilsner, you'll love the	local	craft breweries and great pub scene. </s><s> You'll have your choic
18	choice of dining, from small cafes to farm-to-table cuisine, or many	local	farmers' markets. </s><s> Then there's the entertainment. </s><s> '
19	kes – we think the best way to get to know a place is to eat like the	locals	. </s><s> You won't be disappointed with your little taste of Acadia.
20	s> Some, like Cap-Pelé, have guided tours that will introduce you to	local	hotspots and life as the Acadians live it. 5. </s><s> Hunt for treasure

Figure 9.29: Key Word in Context of the website valuation resource *local*

9.5.4.2 Different adjective, same resource: grading practices and apparently non-evaluative meaning

The final section of the Appraisal analysis focuses on the analysis of the context of realization of similar attitudes realized with different adjectives across channels. The goal is to explore whether the use of a specific adjective influences the overall narrative in terms of connotation, and if it is collocated with specific participants. For this purpose, *incredible* as both *reaction* resource and graded meaning of *infused intensification* was compared with the analysis of *good,* and the graduation resource of quantification *more* was examined across channels. Finally, another couple of frequent adjectives with apparently no attitude were investigated, i.e. *available* and *personal* on the website versus *white* on Instagram.

The analysis of the most frequent Reaction resources of Appreciation showed that *good* pervades the narratives of both channels; however, each channel presents its own peculiarities in terms of use of the attitudinal resource in context. Additionally, as can be seen in Tables 9.13 and 9.14, other adjectives (*great* and *incredible*) appear to be Instagram frequent communicative resources for the negotiation of positive attitudes through the linguistic externalization of feelings, which is characteristic of the social platform under investigation. While *great* was found to be collocated mostly with *photo* or *snap,* thus serving a similar function of *lovely* in *lovely photo*, *incredible* connotates

positively also other semantic spheres of promotion. Indeed, if one takes a look at Figure 9.30, it is evident how the Appraisal resource constructs a prosody of appreciation of the natural landscape and entities. For example, *incredible* collocates with *views, natural beauty, cerulean water, biodiversity, sunsets, shades of turquoise.* This narrative stimulates positive evaluation and curiosity about the natural authenticity and pureness in the mind of the reader, also by fostering the visual pre-consumption of the experience through "visual", evoking semantic content which the resource collocates with. The other terms collocated with *incredible* are either abstract concepts (*biodiversity, beauty*) or experiential, indexical terms such as *sunsets* or *water* that act as cohesive ties in the multimodal orchestration. Subsequently, this multimodal strategy draws the reader's attention to its meaning and the feelings conveyed by both semiotic resources. At this point, the reader's interest is attracted, and he or she will be pushed to get to know more about the destination and explore virtually *why* the destination is said to be incredible. This procedure serves the additional purpose of building both trust in the statements – and in the value positions advanced – and desire to organize a trip to the destination promoted.

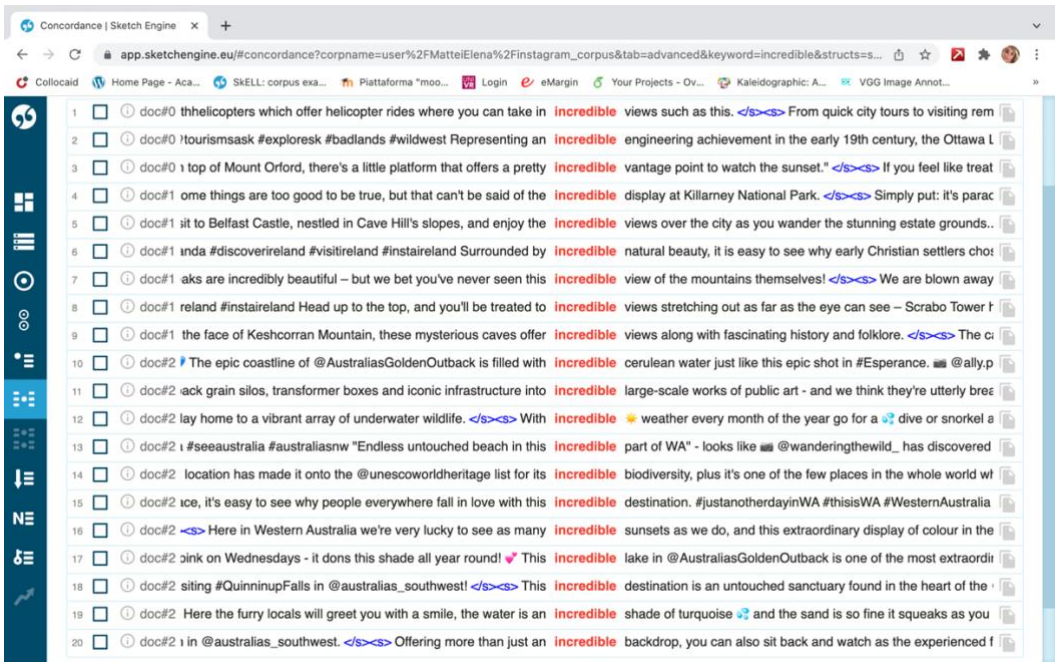


Figure 9.30: Key Word in Context of the Instagram reaction resource *incredible*

The creation of positive perceptive and emotive expectations and the stimulation of interest in the destination is facilitated linguistically also by the graduation resource of

quantification. As a matter of fact, positive assessments may not only the graduation of the feelings evoked along a scale of intensity that increases the worth and quality of the destination praised, can be made in terms of amount (Martin and White 2005, 137). In particular, evaluation may be performed by means of reference to extent in time, number and distance. The quantitative analysis revealed that website narratives focus on strategies of quantification and specifically of number compared to Instagram, which, instead, prefers prosodies of quality appreciation. By looking at the context of the resource of quantification *more* across channels, one sees that the differences do not only concern the frequency, but also of rhetorical use of this type of appraisal resource online. Figures 9.31-9.32 show the co-text of *more* on Instagram and on the website: apart from a similar strategic use of the resource to prove the wealth of *mental* experiences and opportunities the traveler may have (more *adventures, opportunities, adrenaline, lakes* on Instagram *versus* more *Instagram, Ontario inspiration)*, *more* collocates with particular prepositions that vary according to channel. Indeed, it co-occurs with *about* on Instagram and with *than* on the website. This suggests that *more* is used strategically as and adverbial graduation resource to arouse interest, curiosity without providing too much information or drawing too much attention to less evocative or linguistic content. In examples such as "Find out more about Glendalough in the link in our bio ⛰", this attitudinal resource serves the additional function of satisfying the feeling of curiosity in the mind of the prospective tourist by linking the social media text to the website channel, subtly driving website traffic and increasing visibility of the purchasing platform. On the other hand, website discourse's use of *more* includes concrete, specific information that adds to the overall positive prosody of evaluation in a different way, i.e by either bestowing credibility to the promotional narrative or by focusing on themes maximizing the opportunity and ability to choose (Maci 2020, 129). For example, the imperative mood in "Choose from more than 20 plates and just as many pours" invites the readers to take action and instantly imagine an abundant and tasty gastronomic experience in the destination promoted. On the other hand, the role of the website as main repository of information is evident in propositions such as "It's a stunning outdoor playground made up of more than 2950 square miles of parkland". This type of content, in fact, might prove to be useful to the tourist who is already planning to visit the destination and wants to know more about the geographical position, distribution and composition of potential attractions in order to

choose in an informed way (Jalilifar and Moradi 2019, 224). The frequent use of *easy* and *available* as Value or Attribute in the Transitivity analysis confirms the importance of providing information on the accessibility and availability of services and, in general, of conveying a sense of ease of organization and realization of the experience. Unsurprisingly, *Available* is also very frequent non-attitudinal website resource, and its use in context may be viewed in Figure 9.33. The negotiation of this type attitude is essential to push prospective tourists to carry out the last step of the marketing funnel and decision-making process of the pre-trip stage, i.e. *action* (Vestergaard and Schroder 1985; Manca 2016; Maci 2020; Munar and Jacobsen 2013). Additionally, this attitudinal strategy is considered to be effective with imperative moods, as these intensify the compelling force that stimulates the customer to perform a specific action (Francesconi 2014).

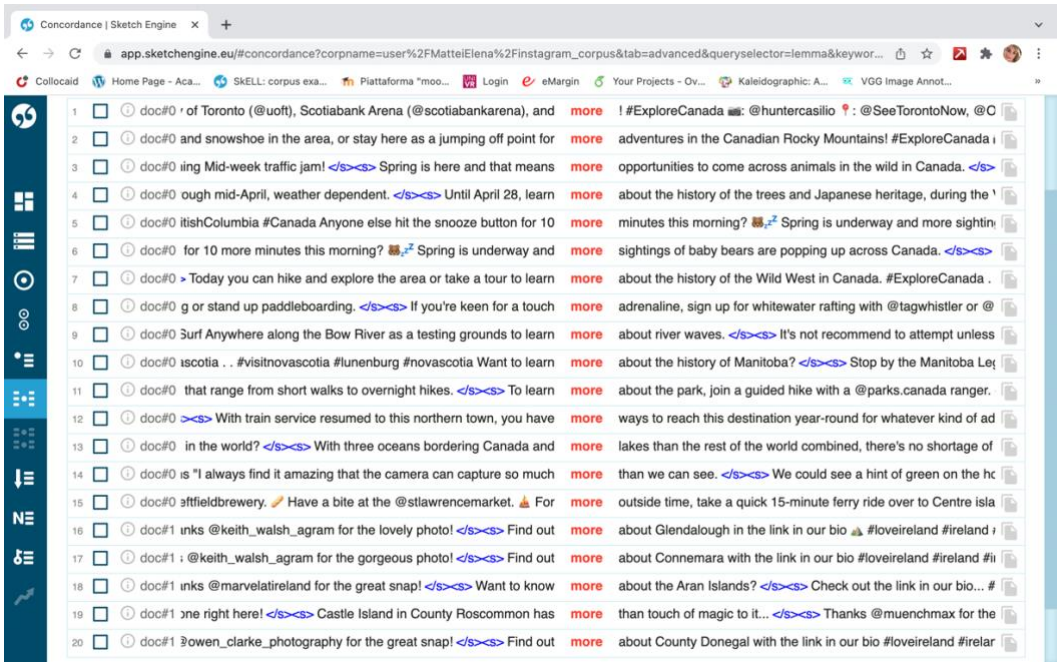


Figure 9.31: Key Word in Context of the Instagram quantification resource *more*

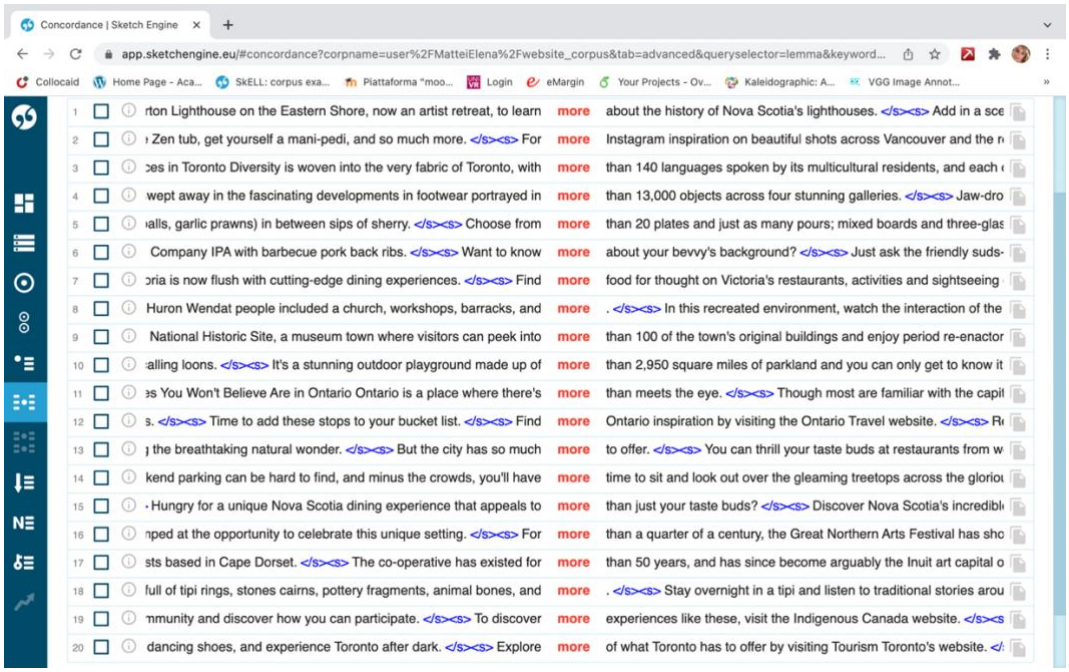


Figure 9.32: Key Word in Context of the website quantification resource *more*

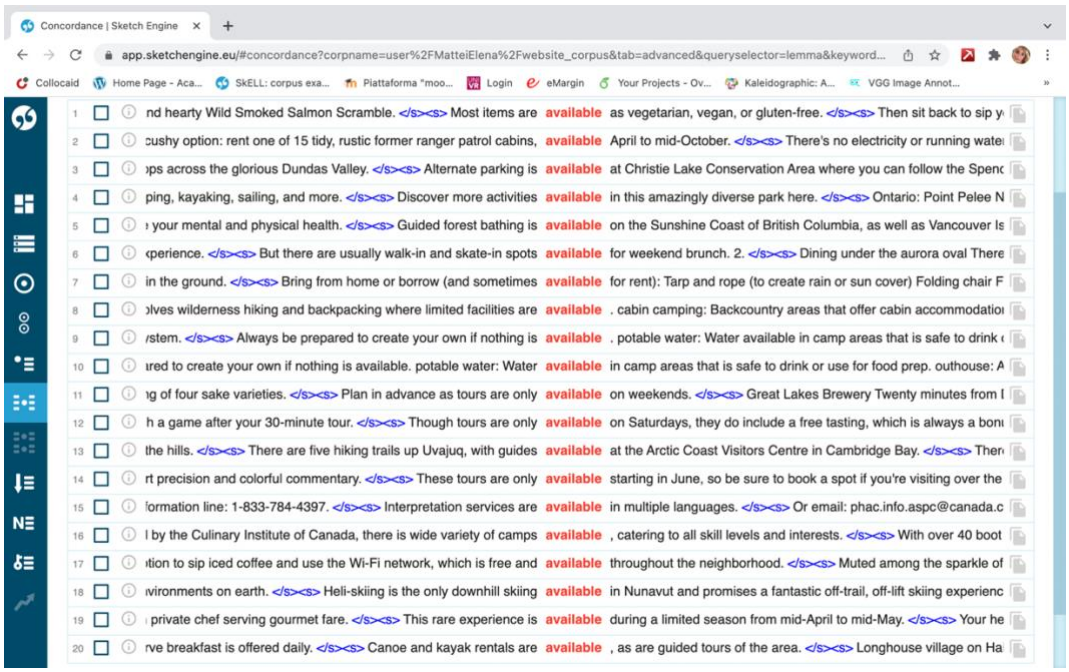


Figure 9.33: Key Word in Context of the website non-attitudinal resource *available*

To conclude the section, the analysis of two very frequent non-attitudinal adjectives confirmed the implications of the findings discussed in this section with regard to attitudinal meaning across channels. As a matter of fact, their use influences the overall

narrative and adds to the attitudinal semantic prosody. Figures 9.34-9.35 show the main collocates of *personal* (which is very frequent on the website) and *white* (which is very frequent on Instagram): while *personal* occurs with nouns such as *tour, instructions, data* and *stories*, *white* appears together with natural aspects (*cliffs, snow, sand, shoreline*) on the right, and with lexically dense constructions referring to the sensorial, visual semantic spheres (colors, *bright, picturesque, pristine/pure/secluded)* on the left. As mentioned earlier, ideational meanings that contribute to the construction of a particular representation of the tourist experience play an important role in the mind of the reader, who is, unconsciously, led to imagine the experience presented and feel, perceive it and its positive attributes as real and worthy of both attention and desire. They play in fact on specific social needs which are regarded by the sociology of tourism as emotions' boosters and action drivers: *white,* in this case, symbolizes a condition of pureness, unspoilt and tranquility that clashes with the reader's everyday reality of pollution, chaos and hurry (Cohen 1972; Dann 1996 12-15). The *strangerhood* technique may be detected here not only through the use of *white* associated with the nature, which is, in tourism discourse, a source of *evoked satisfaction* as pursuit and achievement of inner goals such as pleasure (Martin and White 2005, 49), but also with the use of attitudinal meanings of *(evoked) valuation*. These, in fact, create a positive semantic prosody of appreciation towards the destination, which pushes the reader to feel and believe what the writer is saying. This prosody is reinforced by the presence of colors which, in a multimodal communicative event, play an indexical role that establishes a coherent written promotional message. Indeed, this strategic adoption of linguistic cues carries and reiterates the powerful role of imagery in the consumption of an intangible service: the repetition of colors stimulates, once again, the visual pre-consumption of the travel experience with the feelings associated with it, which are described in the caption through highly attitudinal meaning. (Manca 2013; Kress and van Leeuwen 2010).

Conversely, *personal* is either surrounded by less attitudinal meaning or plays on other needs to stimulate the creation of tourist expectations. As a matter of fact, the use of *personal* with *data* simply refers to the use of the users' data in order to ensure their privacy and *safety*. This does not include any attitudinal meaning related to the tourist experience; however, if one keeps into consideration the virtual experience that a tourist has while navigating websites, its use might be associated with an *Affect* sense

of security that wishes to put the tourist in a comfortable position. Similarly, the use of *tours* and *instructions* reminds of the feeling of ease that a tourist may enjoy if he or she allows a travel agency to help them organize the trip. This in turn stimulates the *tourist, collective* gaze of mass-targeted experience which still seems to play a huge role in website communication, as it implies a sense of exclusivity which the tourist may benefit from. It may prevent the reader, in fact, from having any negative feelings, such as worry for the trip organization. On the other hand, *personal* used as a synonym for *authentic, local* (first line) creates a connotative meaning of cultural *authenticity*.

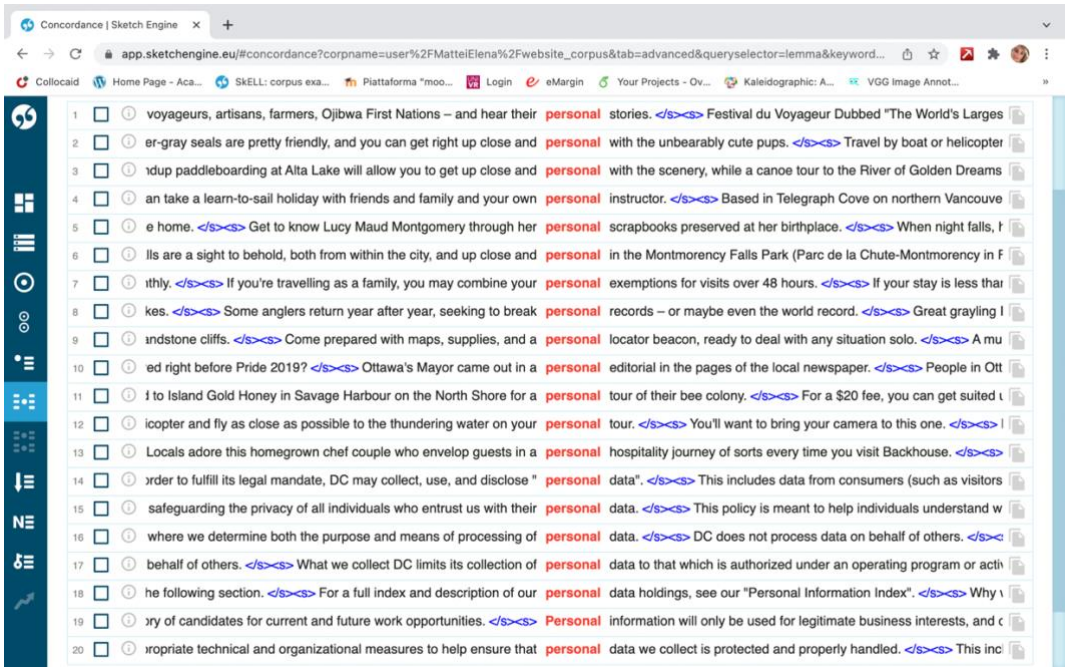


Figure 9.34: Key Word in Context of the website non-attitudinal resource *personal*

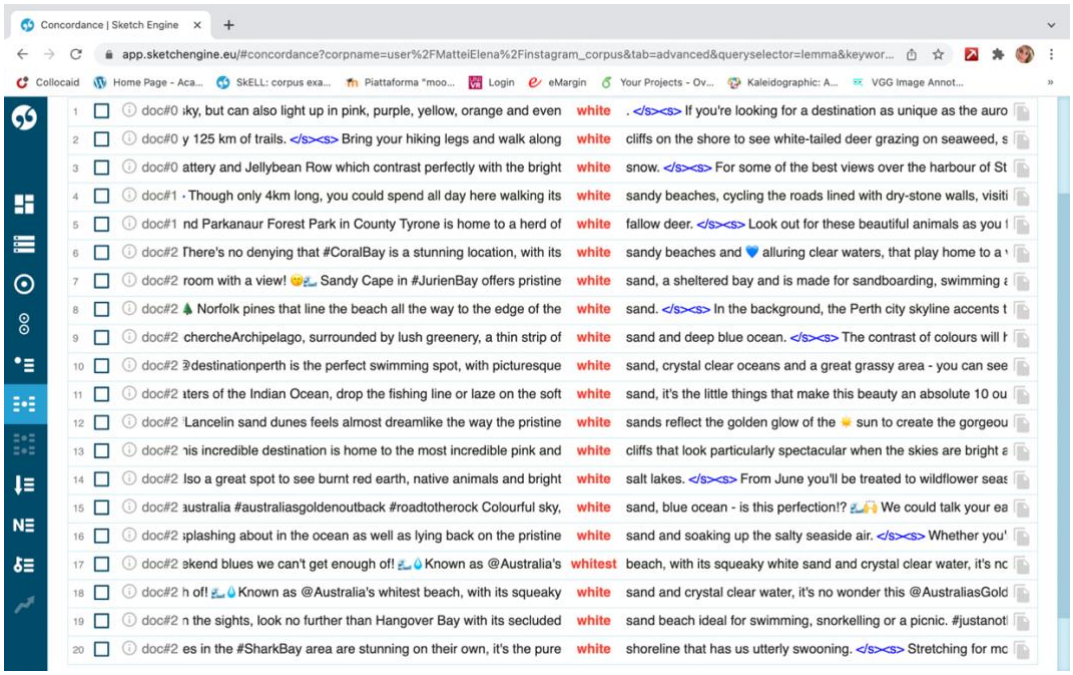


Figure 9.35: Key Word in Context of the Instagram non-attitudinal resource *white*

9.5.4.3 Conclusion

From the Appraisal analysis it can be assumed that the two channels, even in terms of apparent non-attitudinal meaning, play on different tropes and gazes of exclusivity to secure the attention and persuade the reader. The leveraging of sociologically established desires such as the needs for authenticity and strangerhood on Instagram works precisely because such aspirations already exist in the mind and imagination of the readers; additionally, they are stimulated particularly at a multimodal level (Kjeldsen 2021 2, 9; Macken-Horarik and Isaac 2014, 76). If the appeal to different gazes and the focus on specific needs vary according to channel and, especially on Instagram, may be considered to be effective – by examining objective parameters such as the number of followers and likes – one can safely argue that the audiences as well as the communicative, marketing aims are different on each digital channel. In other words, the rhetorical strategies designed by tourism discourse specialists on Instagram, both at a linguistic and visual level, are peculiar and do not depend on the constraints or affordances of the medium through which they are conveyed; instead, they are related to other factors such as the target audience and its social needs (Bateman 2014a). A

summary of the main differences at the linguistic and metafunctional level across channels is offered in Table 9.15.

Mixed methods and empirical process	Instagram (language)	Website (language)
Experiential metafunction - FIELD * Transitivity wordlists annotation and KWiC: syntactic roles and semantics, functions of processes, participants, circumstances in context of use * Topics (keyword semantic categorization)	❖ Mental (perception, emotion, cognition) processes ❖ Humans (addressed prospective tourists) as Sensers; Animals or natural aspects as Phenomena ❖ Relational processes: Tokens/Carriers = Proper nouns of destinations, abstract and natural sites; it, we, you; Values/Attributes = Abstract/generic places, evocative/evaluative attributes related to aesthetics	❖ Material and relational processes (provision of services and information on destinations and trip organization) ❖ Humans (addressed prospective tourists) as Actors; tourist attractions as Goals (Historical, cultural, gastronomic, artistic, natural) ❖ Relational processes: Tokens/Carriers = Proper nouns of destinations; services and activities/ tours; it, you, they; Values and Attributes: Places and services, concrete/informative language related the provision of organized activities
Interpersonal metafunction - TENOR * Appraisal wordlists, keywords annotation and KWiC: type of Attitude and Graduation (emotion, evaluation, reaction, intensity) * Semantic connotation of adjectives and adverbs (keyword semantic categorization)	❖ Evoked Satisfaction ❖ Evoked Evaluation ❖ Reaction ❖ Infused Intensification	❖ Evoked Satisfaction ❖ Evoked Evaluation ❖ Quantification ❖ No Attitude
Textual metafunction - MODE * Tourism tropes and gazes (not only linguistic)	❖ Authenticity (Nature); Strangerhood; Tense and Magic (Bucolic past and eternality); Social trope (Single or couple) —> ❖ ROMANTIC GAZE and POSTMODERN, PERSONALIZED TOURISM: passivity, emotive consumption; friendly and exclusive relationships; nature as commodity ❖ Being, seeing, perceiving	❖ Authenticity (cultural, gastronomic,natural); Tense and Magic (Bucolic past and denial of time); Social trope (Couple, family, friends, groups) —> ❖ COLLECTIVE GAZE AND MASS-TARGETED TOURISM: Agency, concrete consumption and organization of activities; commercial relationships; overall tourist experience as commodity ❖ Doing, being
Linguistic artifact (sociological reasons, i.e. postmodern needs and semiotic shift)	**Inter-semiotic cohesion**	**Inter-semiotic cohesion**
	Inter-channel divergence	

Table 9.15: Main lexicogrammatical resources of tourism sub-genres across channels

These findings are in line with the previous results, which detect a new, image-centric genre of tourism discourse on Instagram (Stöckl et al. 2019; Thompson et al. 2019), which constructs a visual representation of a natural travel experience (Francesconi 2014) and assigns to the tourists the role of Sensers in an alleged position of power. This particular type of representation focuses on the authenticity, extra-ordinariness and pureness of natural aspects and aims to evoke both positive feelings and evaluations to stimulate the attention and the visual pre-consumption of the holiday. This, in turn, stimulates emotional attachment and irrational response that pushes the social media user to explore more visuo-linguistic content and, when convinced, to navigate the website and look for more informative, practical content and suggestions from trustworthy specialists (AIDA model, Manca 2016). Moreover, the constant exposition to organic advertising unconsciously aligns, day by day, the position of readers with the specialists', thereby pushing the audience to abandon impactful and

strictly visual and emotive content to find the time and willingness to make a cognitive effort and organize intentionally a holiday.

To conclude, one may say that even "not intrinsically evaluative" resources (Macken-Horarik and Isaac 2014, 75) may become graduation resources and add to the semantic positive prosody when they are accompanied by highly attitudinal meaning or considered within their context (Thompson and Alba-Juez 2014). There cannot be, in fact, neutral words (Bakhtin 1981, 293; Macken-Horarik and Isaac 2014, 83). "Evaluation is both everywhere and – at its most powerful – invisible" (Macken-Horarik and Isaac 2014, 67) and is both defined and enriched by the context (Thompson and Alba-Juez 2014 8, 11). Because evaluative meaning may be not only encoded directly in a lexical entity but also *evoked* connotatively by the textual environment and the socio-discursive context in reverberant prosodies, it becomes challenging to detect it and categorize it, either with fixed parameters or lexical boundaries (Horarik and Isaac 2014, 68-70). This represents the main challenge to face when investigating evaluative practices in language. As Horarik and Isaac (2014, 67) and also Thompson and Alba-Juez (2014) argued, classification and interpretation of evaluation mostly depend on the data under investigation: managing to adapt the Appraisal system to analytical procedures in a justified and consistent way is the most reliable method to achieve consistent, reproducible results and obtain significant qualitative insights.

CONCLUSION

Evoking romantic gazes of evaluation as means of persuasion and construction of an extra-ordinary reality

1. Overview of results, aims, and research questions

The current study demonstrated, through a multidisciplinary approach and mixed methodological framework, the existence of multimodal patterns of choices in the design of the travel experience on the Instagram account and company websites of *Tourism Ireland, Destination Canada* and *Tourism Western Australia*. It showed specifically that these three tourism boards design social media and website communication strategically and systematically for persuasive purposes, and that they do so by taking into consideration the recipient and the main communicative aim of the media in the marketing funnel of persuasion and journey towards purchase. Consequently, the analyses unveiled the existence of an Instagram, image-centric genre of tourism discourse, which assigns to imagery a prominent role in terms of visibility and semiotic labor through a careful use of its materialities and metafunctional meaning. These were demonstrated specifically to foster a pre-consumption of the travel experience and emotionally charged reactions by means of perceptive and emotive expectations at the multimodal level.

These results were obtained through the development and implementation of a research design that included a SFL-based table for the comparison of the metafunctional realization of imagery and language across digital channels, and both a data-driven tagging system and software for image annotation and statistical measurement of the materialities of the modes across channels. The linguistic annotation was conducted by interpreting the systems of Transitivity and Appraisal to the data under investigation.

This procedure was guided by two main research questions:

- Are there systematic choices of multimodal, persuasive strategies in tourism, digital communication? How are the three metafunctions realized at the visual and linguistic level?

- Are there any differences in the use of the semiotic resources under investigation across media? If present, are they related to the different recipient and communicative aim of the channel?

The analysis through the lens of Systemic Functional Linguistics and the Grammar of Visual Design, accompanied by empirical, hypothesis testing of the presence and variance of metafunctional meaning, therefore, led to the discovery of patterns of realization of metafunctional meaning and social uses that vary across channels. In particular, the presence multimodal Instagram genre of tourism discourse was unveiled by detecting and discussing patterns of occurrences and co-occurrences of:

- Visual strategies for the representation of natural and uncontaminated environments that stand directly in contrast to every-day reality and industrialized, social settings. The intimate and equal relationship with wild animals, additionally, stimulates sympathetic feelings and a sense of an alternative dimension, in which humans, when present, sense passively, in acts of contemplation, aesthetically appealing landscapes;
- Linguistic strategies that convey highly evaluative and emotionally charged attitudes towards the travel destination; these have an impact on the perception of the tourist experience and boost instant gratification of social needs. Positive attitudes foster specifically agreement with the value position advanced by discourse specialists and urge prospective tourists to search for concrete, linguistic information on the travel packages on the website of tourism boards. Indeed, the company websites under investigation were shown to provide detailed information about the wealth of gastronomic and cultural events and services available for purchase, with the objective of constructing a positive and reliable image of the company. These strategies were claimed to work for they add credibility to the promotional content and ultimately convince interested clients to finalize the purchase.

2. Connecting materialities with social uses of modes and the construction of different gazes

The systematic annotation and statistical measurement of the *materialities* across channels enabled inference as to the presence of similar and different social uses of semiotic resources and of a varying role of imagery which create different social practices and *gazes* at the tourist experience. Indeed, this is related to the main communicative aim and audience of the media. While both channels construct effective and engaging communication by exploiting sociological approaches which play on prospective tourists' desire for exclusivity and expectations – such as the desire for the unspoilt, the exclusive and the authentic – Instagram favors the construction of a *romantic gaze of visual and emotive, passive consumption that* appeals to the extraordinary. Here, *extraordinary* experience is constructed by representing the solitary fruition of natural destinations, away from social and industrialized, everyday life which offers mass-targeted, collective experiences. Its focus, therefore, is on the construction of an alternative reality which legitimates both an escape into the charming existence of extra-ordinary tourist experiences and the capitalistic ordinary, its time constraints and schedules (Taverniers 2003; Plant 1992, 5-6; Debord 2014, 17; Urry and Larsen 2011; Dann 1996). An overview of the main differences across channels in terms of *gaze* construction and perpetuation from a sociological perspective is offered in Table 1. The latter complements the tables comparing the metafunctional instantiation of meaning at the visual (Table 7.1) and linguistic level (Tables 8.28 and 9.15) by providing insights into the intra- and inter-semiotic cohesion as well as semiotic division of labor in Instagram and website tourism communication.

Key features or main lexicogrammatical resources of tourism sub-genres across modes and channels

Mixed methods and empirical process*	**Textual metafunction - MODE** * Tourism tropes and gazes (not only linguistic)	**Final monomodal artifact** * Intra-semiotic and inter-semiotic cohesion; division of labor	**Multimodal artifact** (sociological reasons, i.e. postmodern needs and semiotic shift) **Novel tourism multimodal genres & literacy**	
Instagram	❖ Authenticity (Nature); Strangerhood; Tense and Magic (Bucolic past and eternality); Social trope (Single or couple) —> ROMANTIC GAZE and POSTMODERN, PERSONALIZED TOURISM: passivity, emotive consumption; friendly and exclusive relationships; nature as commodity ❖ Being, seeing, perceiving	❖ **Dominance, centrality and centricity of imagery with coherent linguistic support** = RELAY Evoking, symbolic, aesthetically appealing imagery; passive consumption and solitary appreciation of natural, nonindustrialized spectacles ❖ **Subordinate (unnecessary) or equal role of language** = RELAY OR ANCHORAGE Emotive, passive consumption of highly evaluative and aesthetic assessment of abstract, general, evoking sites and natural environments. Focus on instant gratification and reaction	**Inter-semiotic cohesion**	**Inter-channel divergence**
Website	❖ Authenticity (cultural, gastronomic,natural); Tense and Magic (Bucolic past and denial of time); Social trope (Couple, family, friends, groups) —> COLLECTIVE GAZE AND MASS-TARGETED TOURISM: Agency, concrete consumption and organization of activities; commercial relationships; overall tourist experience as commodity ❖ Doing, being	❖ **Dominance, centrality and centricity of language and concrete information with coherent visual support** = RELAY Linguistic information and concrete support with purchase options and abundance of information is key ❖ **Illustrative/supportive or equal role of imagery** = RELAY OR ANCHORAGE Illustrative role (often iconic or indexical) of images	**Inter-semiotic cohesion**	

Table 1: The construction of gaze and the division of semiotic labor across digital channels

Instagram, in particular, was used to raise awareness of particular desires of postmodern individuals by taking into account the aim and use of the platform, including the need to receive instant satisfaction and gratification of the senses and avoiding cognitive effort in a pervasive digital sphere with endless sources of information. Here, the highly evocative visual content first attracts the attention (A) and stimulates interest (I) and desire (D) through the support of abstract and evaluative, linguistic information. Both modes, additionally, shape a mental and emotive consumption of the tourist destination in a position of control over nature or close contact with wild animals by assigning to the participants specific roles and by using particular settings, and by focusing on linguistic patterns that boost positive evaluation of natural aspects and instant, irrational gratification. The user, then, has the opportunity to explore more content (A) or visit the website for further and concrete information that requires attention for the planning and purchase of the travel experience. The description of travel opportunities is characterized by an appraisal of different aspects of the destination, including its cultural, artistic and gastronomic uniqueness, and both visual and linguistic agency, with a predominance of humans to stimulate action (A). A summary of these steps is provided in Figure 1.

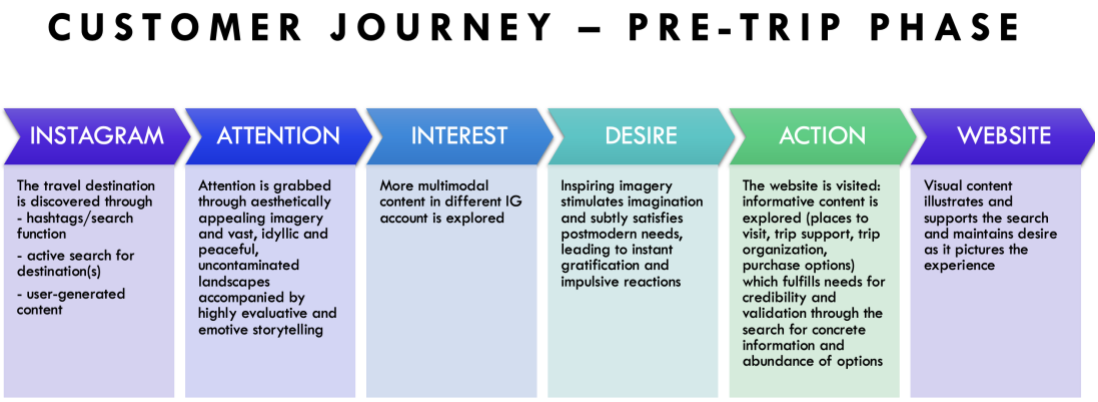


Figure 1: The customer journey of the Instagram user

3. Unveiling generic conventions by comparing inter-channel discourse through an integrated, data-driven, Functional approach: a roadmap for future research

The concluding section of this study wishes also to offer a review of the main theoretical and methodological contributions of the current dissertation. The main aim is to attempt to outline a roadmap of the main steps involved in the conduction of a systematic as well as reliable analysis of visual and linguistic trends of contemporary multimodal genres. This procedure may allow, indeed, for a comprehensive understanding of contemporary, semiotic choices that shape and legitimize *gazes*. The multi-layered analysis of this study started specifically from the systemic, integrating theoretical notion of *metafunction* and adapted it to the data under investigation through annotation systems and empirical testing. Ultimately, this procedure allowed for a qualitative and interdisciplinary discussion of the main implications of digital, tourism discourse from a social and semiotic perspective, which was followed by insights into ways to develop a multimodal literacy at the systematic and critical level in order to question and resist preestablished, biased narratives and power relationships.

In order to achieve the objective mentioned above, the following sections will first summarize the multidisciplinary and original framework developed for this Digital Humanities research (3.1). Indeed, the latter allowed for an informed and comprehensive understanding of how theories belonging to different scholarly traditions may intersect and transcend disciplinary boundaries to draw reliable conclusions about social practices.

Then, the mixed methodological approach will be reviewed, with additional insights into the theoretical, comparative table updated with the actual intra- and inter- modal results across channels, which were detected with the data-driven approach (3.2). This will be accompanied by a review of the analytical steps taken to interpret multisemiotic findings at a sociological and discursive level, to shed light on the different gazes constructed across channels and the classification of different digital genres depending on the aim and behavior, needs of online customers and resulting in an updated customer journey designed for persuasive and profit purposes (3.3). Finally, a suggested roadmap for future studies on multimodal, digital discourse through an integrated framework of linguistic and visual systematic analysis will be provided (3.4). The main limitations and future lines of research will conclude the current dissertation in section 4.

3.1 Reviewing the theoretical framework: a multidisciplinary approach for Digital Humanities research

In the expanding field of Digital Humanities, the use of quantitative and empirical measures proved crucial to the obtainment of reproducible and reliable results, and to drawing meaningful conclusions about social practices. The incorporation of theoretical, analytical, and technological tools for data-driven methods and research was the product of a review of the main contributions from the fields of Linguistics (Chapter One); history and impact of media, sociology and semiotics in the shift towards image-centricity (Chapter Two); multimodality (Chapter Three); and tourism industry and communication from the Industrial Revolution up to post-Fordism and hyper-consumerism, or *imaginative hedonism* (Campbell 1987). The following sections summarize the content of these chapters to draw new connections and provide novel insights into each of these disciplines. This procedure was key to the development of data-driven tools for multisemiotic research, reliable results and new understandings of possibilities of agency in contemporary, persuasive communication.

3.1.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics: a systematic and comprehensive view of the function of language and other signs in context

The review of the fields of linguistics studies in Chapter One proved useful to emphasize the growing focus on a systemic perspective of language to achieve a comprehensive and structured understanding of human communication and knowledge building. The discussion also highlighted the renewed significance of language and other communication methods as resources for creating meaning, which are continuously shaped by the socio-economic and cultural context, and shed light on the key role of the non-linguistic environment in comprehending current digital practices of language use, which are often unconsciously replicated by individuals. In essence, the chapter stressed the importance of a linguistic theory that perceives language as one of the tools for meaning creation, while also recognizing the complementary role of other semiotic resources in communication.

Given its systematic approach in relation to the non-linguistic context, Systemic Functional Linguistics holds great potential for analyzing various types of discourse or genres empirically, especially if coupled with the analysis of large datasets of naturally occurring language using NeoFirthian Linguistics. Particularly, by formalizing the concept of function as a sign and structuring meaning layers, metafunctions, and the range of lexicogrammatical resources, linguists are able to examine language from a scientific and multidisciplinary standpoint. This approach allows for the quantification and tracking of language as a system of semiotic resources across different contexts. Consequently, it opens up new avenues for analyzing other systems of meaning-making, which can be compared to language through the notion of metafunction and contextual variables.

3.1.2 The intersection of technological, economic, and social processes and the emergence of a visual shift in the postmodern age

The need for an analysis of the role and function of different means of expression in an increasingly visually oriented communication practices was particularly emphasized in Chapter Two. Through a logico-historical approach, the second chapter of the current dissertation examined how technology, social change, and semiotic usage have influenced

the production and reception of communication in contemporary society. It argues specifically that the introduction of photography, mass media, and Internet have impacted how social semiotic practices extend beyond language. By examining past technological and socio-semiotic developments, the chapter lays the foundation for understanding current practices in human exchange across semiotic trends in the 21st century. Technological advancements respond to emerging socio-economic needs and inevitably shape the semiotic landscape, leading to new social practices and rhetorical strategies. The logico-historical approach developed for this argument is reproposed in Figure 2.

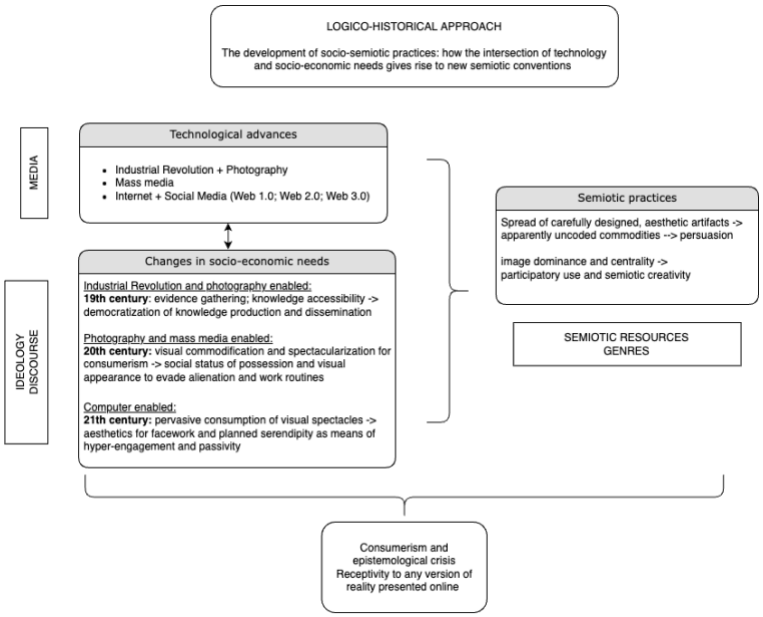


Figure 2: A diagram that shows how the intersection of different advances and changes in society led to the shift towards image-centricity in the 21st century

Spectacularization of the *ordinary* and commodification of *immateriality*

The chapter further demonstrated how these technological advances in the 19th and 20th centuries, such as photography, mass media, and the internet, addressed and shaped socio-economic needs in a capitalist and consumerist environment. These developments gave rise to novel communicative practices that leverage semiotic resources to construct

representations and convey persuasive viewpoints. The chapter explored specifically how these historical developments have led to an epistemological crisis in a consumerist society, where everything is marketed as the ultimate truth. In this context, communication practices prioritize visually evocative and seemingly straightforward meanings over written communication.

The persuasive power of photography, therefore, was proved to lie in its ability to appear as an unmediated reflection of reality, meeting the desires of postmodern individuals seeking certainty, simplicity, and fulfillment within a content-rich and visually persuasive virtual world (Mitchell 1994; Messaris 1997).

Alienation and passivity in consumption practices through narratives of commodification and possession

Chapter Two also demonstrated how narratives of commodification and possession are used in the digital sphere to legitimize consumption and profit while promoting alienation and passivity. Industries manipulate human desires for community, recognition, control, and attention, externalizing them into controllable and short-term satisfactions through the purchase of goods. This fosters the belief that acquiring goods and displaying social status through exclusive ownership and appearance are essential for personal satisfaction. Consequently, individuals are driven to work and contribute to the ideology of capitalism (Berger 1972; Barthes 1977; Stöckl et al. 2019).

The illusionary satisfaction and power derived from capitalism are further enhanced through entertainment and leisure, which distract people from the true injustices and unhappiness caused by work alienation. Leisure and tourism, particularly, are portrayed as enticing counter-realities that contribute to the legitimization of this ideology. Ultimately, the consumption of immaterial goods, such as services, feelings, and needs, is presented as commodities that can be consumed through the medium of images, effectively increasing profits when all aspects of life are designed and represented to foster consumption.

Photography as an aesthetic product for consumption: the need for exclusivity through appearance and possession

Chapter Two discussed particularly how technological advances, specifically the emergence of photography, contributed to changes in its nature and role, influenced by socio-economic and ideological shifts. Photography, indeed, became a tool for promoting consumerism and the values of capitalism by aesthetically representing real-life events and products. This not only encouraged passive reception of these values and signs but also played a significant role in the resulting epistemological crisis. Photography presented allegedly unmediated 'truths' and accurate social representations as the key to satisfaction and happiness. The spread of mass media, including television, radio, and later digital media, further amplified this ideological and epistemological shift; it also had narcotic effects on individuals and their key role as *agents* and socio-semiotic creators in challenging practices of staged authenticity – or *planned serendipity* – and spontaneity in the visual advertisement of social needs. This section highlights the need for critical reflection on individuals' role in reproducing or changing representations and social values in a society where attractive, evocative, and seemingly unmediated content is provided for consumption and profit.

3.1.3 Critical awareness in the post-Fordist era of coded reproduction of spectacles: do cybersituations hinder agency in real life or foster participation?

Chapter Two also paved the way for the definition of cybersituations as opportunities to engage and resist established trends of discourse and construct counter narratives through a critical awareness of contemporary media and their semiotic potential. The negative effects of consuming online content in the digital age, such as feeling intoxicated and disconnected from real-life interactions, can lead individuals to reproduce similar content in order to fulfill unmet social needs. This blurring of reality and hyperreality may be a result of people's alienation and their belief in reproductions due to a perceived inability to change their lives within a dominant ideology of work and spending.

Resorting to language and imagery to *fight* social constructs and ideology

To address these issues and avoid passive reproduction, critical awareness of interaction and semiotic use were argued to become crucial. Developing an awareness of the use of language and other communication tools in the digital sphere, indeed, allows individuals to become conscious of the design and impact of social practices of meaning making (Ahearn 2001).

This possibility, however, raises questions about how change may actually occur, how individuals can challenge culturally constructed meanings, how they can reshape relationships in society, and whether cybersituations can have real-life consequences.

In relation to this, three stages of response to narratives were detected, varying in the level of involvement and information elaboration. These are available in Table 2.

Response to the presentation of an interpretation of events	**Possible effect on narratives**
Acceptance and internalization (*passivity*)	Reproduction
Active elaboration, or reflection (*reception*)	Potential for action and social change
Interpretation, awareness and proposal of a counternarrative (*agency*)	Social change

Table 2: Stages of response to social narratives and possibility of agency

In relation to this phenomenon, the chapter also provided the theoretical tools to cultivate a critical, semiotic awareness that can pave the way for the challenge of social constructs, ideologies, thereby facilitating the development of new narratives both in the digital and physical world. It argued specifically that it is important to develop a critical understanding of:

1- why specific actions are performed;
2- whether there are alternative ways to use signs and symbols (semiotic use) and position oneself ideologically;
3- how actions and responses in the digital realm can impact individuals and shape their views of reality.

In conclusion, the overall section demonstrated that agency in contemporary society may not only exist but can also be "amplified" through the digital sphere. However, in order to possess the ability to understand and respond to dominant representations of reality with awareness and greater social participation, critical examination of how semiotic resources are currently employed to shape specific views is necessary. This requires investigating the social and semiotic trends in meaning making, also from a multimodal perspective.

3.1.4 Towards the integration of a SFL-based, social semiotic approach and the semiotics of materialities for multimodal literacy and agency

Chapter Three demonstrated the possibility of analyzing visual communication systematically and critically, alongside language, in order to develop the skills to become an active and aware participant in contemporary society. This chapter is important as it describes the development of socio-semiotic practices and scientific methods for studying their complex nature as a solution to the need to systematize the way in which we find, create, and understand meaning in multisemiotic practices. It served as a bridge between a Systemic Functional Linguistics framework and a historical, philosophical, semiotic, and sociological approach, explaining the emergence of visual practices. Corpus and empirical methods, combined with critical awareness of theories like semiotics and discourse studies, enable a scientific analysis of contemporary *choices* in meaning creation. The chapter also established the foundation for the methodology used in the dissertation, as it detected specific modal behavior in tourism discourse across digital channels and identified the image-centric genre of tourism discourse.

Semiosis as means to access world phenomena and meaning creation: different approaches

The chapter explored specifically different approaches to meaning-making practices, including multimodality as a socio-semiotic approach to communication and Peirce's theory of signs. It discussed the advantages and disadvantages of Systemic Functional Linguistics-based quantitative studies and the empirical approach that validates theory-based assumptions through data-driven annotations and statistical analysis. By integrating

linguistics and semiotics, multimodality scholars may offer a structured analysis and reliable interpretations of linguistic and visual data (Peirce 1931; Bateman et al. 2017; Bateman 2018; Kress 2010). The chapter also emphasized the importance of understanding the act of meaning creation from different perspectives and introduces the concept of *metafunctional tripartitioning* of meaning in imagery. In relation to this, it discussed particularly the relationship between contextual variables, semiotic creativity, agency, and awareness of choices in a digital, visual epistemic crisis. The creation and study of signs require theoretical tools that address the current social and cultural situation. The chapter reviewed the development of multimodality theory, highlighting its emphasis on the role of the social environment in sign making and the importance of rhetorical skills in navigating restrictions and possibilities. It also discussed the increasing importance of visual information and visual literacy in learning processes and digital spaces.

In conclusion, the chapter provided a review of the major innovations in social semiotics, also by showcasing studies that demonstrate its implementation and effects. It critically reviewed the theory's main points and their contribution to a combined approach to multimodal communication. To this aim, it also explored specifically the application of a grammar of visual design for detecting visual strategies in meaning construction, while acknowledging the limitations of this framework without empirical verification. The final contribution of this chapter was the introduction of a methodological shift in multimodal research towards data-oriented approaches, in order to emphasize the need for a stronger multimodal theory and empirical tools to provide situated and replicable, justified discourse interpretations.

3.1.5 Semiotic manipulation in postmodernism: post-Fordist discourse of exclusivity from mass tourism to the passive, visual and solitary consumption of the uncontaminated

The final chapter of the literature review discussed the role of promotional and tourism discourse in shaping the meaning of travel in contemporary society through digital media. By examining the influence of persuasive language and imagery at a sociological and discursive level, the chapter showed that individuals can develop the skills to resist

manipulative desires driven by capitalism. Persuasive communication, in particular, often takes advantage of the social conditions created by capitalism to legitimize its legacy, while perpetuating unequal relationships based on ownership and appearance. This discourse also creates the illusion of satisfaction and happiness by appealing to capitalist-driven desires, promising an escape from an unchangeable reality controlled by capital. As a result, the capitalist perspective is reinforced and presented as an unalterable but escapable reality.

The legitimation and spread of capitalism through leisure activities of the spectacle: the development of the tourism industry

To understand this process, the chapter explored how capitalist-driven desires and privileges are established and exploited through linguistic and visual signs, particularly in the digital realm. Postmodern travelers, indeed, are argued to perceive tourism activities and affordable consumption as commonplace and similar to everyday life. Tourism discourse, therefore, has shifted towards the promotion of an exclusive and passive *gaze* that encourages solitary, visual, and emotional consumption. This gaze also enables specialists to exercise control over travel destinations for profit-oriented purposes, by appealing to the extraordinary and uncontaminated. In other words, the tourist gaze perpetuates the perception of capitalism as ordinary and unchangeable, while creating the illusion of choice and escape. In this sense, tourism discourse functions as a set of socially constructed representations that persuade individuals as long as work and financial means are necessary for survival.

Mass tourism and the collective gaze

In order to increase awareness of social needs and techniques that make alternative views of reality appealing in tourism communication, the chapter offered a review of the root causes of its persuasive nature at the sociological and semiotic level. The chapter delved first in the exploration of mass tourism in the capitalist era, tracing its development back to the Industrial Revolution and the spread of capitalist thinking, during which leisure activities and the tourism industry emerged as a result of technological advancements and the desire for exclusive possession and appearance. Additionally, the legitimation of

capitalist practices was facilitated by the regularization of leisure activities and the promotion of travel as a fulfillment of human needs.

Solitary and visual consumption of the pristine and non-social: the Romantic gaze in the postmodern, digital age

As a consequence of this regularization, the chapter described critically the emergence of the romantic gaze in postmodern societies, where individuals seek the unfamiliar and uncontaminated to escape ordinary life. Daydreaming and anticipation – which are visual by nature – were shown to play a crucial role in generating satisfaction (Campbell 1987) as well as desire for pleasure-seeking activities, which leads to disillusionment and insatiable longing for new products. This kind of imaginative hedonism has fueled post-Fordist consumption practices that focus on exclusive pleasure. The easy accessibility to organized and prepackaged holidays and online information has, however, influenced and changed tourists' expectations, or *gazes*, and decision-making processes (Urry and Larsen 2011). In this regard, social media platforms and photography play a significant role as they disseminate signs of romantic consumption, catering to the desire for instant gratification through escape and control, while legitimizing passive acceptance. The provision of aesthetically appealing views is argued to offer specifically instant gratification and pleasure in virtual sceneries, without the need for physical travel.

Legitimating and reversing capitalist ideology through an understanding of ideological representations of authenticity in the extra-ordinary and remote

The concluding section of the literature review was crucial to examine how tourism discourse reinforces and legitimizes capitalist ideology through promotional language and semiotics in the era of Web 2.0. As a matter of fact, the analysis of linguistic and visual strategies in tourism discourse was proved to reveal underlying intentions and ideologies (Francesconi 2014). Tropes of *authenticity*, *strangerhood*, and *extraordinariness* continue to be manipulated to align tourist expectations with marketing interests (Manca 2016; Maci 2020). These tropes, in particular, are connected to the fulfillment of capitalist-driven

desires, such as escaping time constraints and experiencing pristine environments (Cohen 1988; MacCannel 1989) or a crystallized "beauty of the location for eternity" (Gotti et al. 2017, 11).

The key findings of linguistics research on tourism tropes detailed in the chapter confirmed the existence of a tension, or conflict, between the desire for a mythical and sacred past that remains untouched by modernity, symbolized by unspoiled natural environments with eternal qualities, and the attraction towards an exciting and different present or future reality that offers unpredictability, leisure, adventure, and spontaneity. This alternative perspective, akin to a denial of time, constructs a contrasting view characterized by novelty and thrill. In all cases, tourism narratives were demonstrated to be permeated with notions of authenticity and strangerhood surrounding both traditions and environments, also by promoting magical experiences in the unknown and remote pristine (Maci 2020; Manca 2016; Bianchi 2017; Gotti et al. 2017; Fodde 2017; Francesconi 2014; Mocini 2013). Table 3 offers an overview of the persuasive effects of tourism tropes with their correlated meanings and hints at potential combinations.

Matrix	**Unknown, unfamiliar**	**Remote, pristine**	**Orientation or positioning**
Authenticity	Cultural, gastronomic traditions; history	Typical natural environments	Other-centered but commodification
Strangerhood	Extra-ordinary and different traditions, customs	Alluring, extraordinary nonsocialized and nonindustrialized settings	Tourist-centered but fear and separation
Result	Semantics of human culture, collective experience	Semantics of natural environments untouched by modernity and humans	Dichotomy for marketing purposes

Table 3: The combination of tourism tropes and their meanings from a sociological perspective

The linguistic opposition between a sacralized past and an exciting future, particularly, was shown to play a significant role in attracting postmodern tourists by providing a solution to their dissatisfaction. Table 4 was developed in Chapter Four as a review of the literature on tourism discourse and is reproduced here for review purposes.

Binary structure of tourism discourse	**Sacralized, magic past and pristine eternality**	**Present-day capitalism**	**Unpredictable and pleasure-oriented future**
1.opposition	- sacralized and mythologized past (*unknown, unfamiliar*) - unchanged traditions (*eternal*)	- Familiar routines, work constraints and time schedules - Fast-paced, ever-changing reality	- Exciting, unpredictable future - Freedom and control - Leisure
2.opposition	Untouched, primitive environments (*remote, pristine, idyllic*)	Industrialized, overpopulated, polluted cities	Progress, technology

Table 4: An overview of the binary structure of tourism discourse

3.1.6 Changing practices and generic trends: social media to raise awareness and provide instant gratification and the current dissertation

The review of different disciplines belonging to the humanities served as a means to draw fruitful connections for the creation of a framework that could assist in the empirical and systematic, integrated analysis of digital language and photography for promotional purposes in contemporary society. Digital Humanities, indeed, acknowledges the importance of such complex phenomenon in an attempt to provide insights into the perpetuation of inequalities and power dynamics for profit, and to support the development of analytical skills to interpret and produce signs actively (Sayers 2018). However, as the literature review showed, empirical research on persuasive strategies in static imagery and written text in the field of English Linguistics and tourism discourse, especially concerning Instagram, is still in its early stages. Consequently, knowledge about the systematic legitimization of ideologies at the multimodal and digital level through a careful consideration of contextual factors – such as communicative function or purpose, audience, medium, topic, mode – remains limited. The study presented in this dissertation positions itself in this research area, with the objective to provide novel insights into discourse phenomena in the contemporary and multimodal digital sphere.

3.2 Mixed methods and data-driven research in DH: how to obtain reliable results

3.2.1 Methodological considerations

This dissertation adopted a mixed methodological approach to address the need for:

1- testing hypotheses and assumptions on large bodies of data for a generalization and reliability of the inferences drawn;
2- addressing new questions that may arise from the empirical process of theory-based but data-driven annotation and statistical analysis.

The challenges intrinsic to this process arose in the quantification of visual strategies within a qualitative and abstract social semiotics theory (Kress and Van Leeuwen in 2006) and in the adaptation of the theoretical and analytical framework to encompass both generic and discourse-specific aspects pertaining to the domain of tourism communication. This adaptation enabled specifically the identification and measurement of specific features within corpora related to this specific discourse. A crucial aspect of this process was the need for a "situated discourse interpretation of material patterns," as emphasized by Bateman (2019a, 535).

By incorporating the principles of "hard sciences" research methods, this dissertation aimed to provide a comprehensive and rigorous investigation of socio-semiotic and linguistic phenomena. The integration of quantitative analysis into the qualitative framework, combined with an adapted theoretical approach, hopefully contributed to a deeper understanding of visual strategies employed within tourism discourse and genres. This research also sought to address the challenges and complexities associated with the measurement and interpretation of these features in a meaningful and contextually grounded manner.

3.2.2 The adapted framework associated with data-driven results and considerations

The multidisciplinary framework based on the integration of a SFL-based and socio-semiotic approach and empirical trends of multimodal research allowed to retrieve patterns of visual and linguistic instantiation of sociological and persuasive tropes typical of tourism discourse.

A SFL-oriented comparative table was drawn to compare semiotic trends across channels at the metafunctional level. The process of manual annotation through a tagging model and software for visual corpora tagging, and the measurement of frequency and significance through a multilayered statistical analysis led to the detection of patternings and co-patternings of multimodal choices that were proved to be related to the channel of dissemination. This was specifically discovered through Principal Component Analysis, Correspondence Analysis and the Chi-Square. Tests of inter-annotation were implemented as to measure the degree of reliability of the tagging procedure and results. This procedure contributed to the definition of an Instagram genre of tourism discourse (Bateman 2014a; Bateman et al. 2023). A comprehensive overview of the most frequent and key quantitative results of the current dissertation is offered in Table 5.

Key features or main lexicogrammatical resources of tourism sub-genres across modes and channels

Mixed methods and empirical process*	Instagram (imagery)	Instagram (language)	Website (language)	Website (imagery)
Experiential metafunction - FIELD * Transitivity wordlists annotation and KWiC: syntactic roles and semantics, functions of processes, participants, circumstances in context of use * Topics (keyword semantic categorization)	❖ Rare presence of humans ❖ Non-transactional Reactions (humans and animals); Reactions ❖ Humans and wildlife as Sensers ❖ Wildlife, nature as Phenomena ❖ Evocative, emotive, imaginative lexis, related to nature, history; cuisine, culture, trips, the visual	❖ Mental (perception, emotion, cognition) processes ❖ Humans (addressed prospective tourists) as Sensers; Animals or natural aspects as Phenomena ❖ Relational processes: Tokens/Carriers = Proper nouns of destinations, abstract and natural sites; it, we, you; Values/Attributes = Abstract/generic places, evocative/evaluative attributes related to aesthetics	❖ Material and relational processes (provision of services and information on destinations and trip organization) ❖ Humans (addressed prospective tourists) as Actors; tourist attractions as Goals (Historical, cultural, gastronomic, artistic, natural) ❖ Relational processes: Tokens/Carriers = Proper nouns of destinations; services and activities/ tours; it, you, they; Values and Attributes: Places and services, concrete/informative language related the provision of organized activities	❖ Frequent presence of humans ❖ Transactional Actions; Reactions ❖ Humans as Actors; Wildlife as Actors ❖ Cultural, historical, gastronomic, artistic, artificial, natural entities as Phenomena ❖ Trip/guides; accommodation; food and beverage; history, nature, culture and art; food; family; music
Interpersonal metafunction - TENOR * Appraisal wordlists, keywords annotation and KWiC: type of Attitude and Graduation (emotion, evaluation, reaction, intensity) * Semantic connotation of adjectives and adverbs (keyword semantic categorization) * Type of gaze, shot and angle	❖ Offer gaze with natural entities and destinations ❖ Demand gaze with wildlife ❖ Long and high shots of natural settings (dominance, control, power, exclusivity) ❖ Close shots of wildlife (exclusive contact with humanized, tamed and commodified wilderness) ❖ Rear views of humans ❖ Subjective (partial-view) angles; when objective: top-down to avoid distortions and portray aesthetic perfection (more symbolic)	❖ Evoked Satisfaction ❖ Evoked Evaluation ❖ Reaction ❖ Infused Intensification	❖ Evoked Satisfaction ❖ Evoked Evaluation ❖ Quantification ❖ No Attitude	❖ Offer gaze with cultural, artificial, historical, gastronomic, artistic and natural entities ❖ Demand gaze with humans ❖ Long and high shots of various settings (dominance, control, power, exclusivity) ❖ Close and medium shots of humans ❖ Subjective angles ❖ Objective angles: logos and maps (more conceptual images)
Textual metafunction - MODE * Space composition and distribution * Tourism tropes and gazes (not only linguistic)	❖ Rule of Thirds and natural Negative Space ❖ Human-nature polarization ❖ Visual flow ❖ Nature salience (visual weight) ❖ Indexical reference (e.g. backpack, dress, hat, camping equipment, swimwear, sunglasses, meals, towel)	❖ Authenticity (Nature); Strangerhood; Tense and Magic (Bucolic past and eternality); Social trope (Single or couple) —> ❖ ROMANTIC GAZE and POSTMODERN, PERSONALIZED TOURISM: passivity, emotive consumption; friendly and exclusive relationships; nature as commodity ❖ Being, seeing, perceiving	❖ Authenticity (cultural, gastronomic,natural); Tense and Magic (Bucolic past and denial of time); Social trope (Couple, family, friends, groups) —> ❖ COLLECTIVE GAZE AND MASS-TARGETED TOURISM: Agency, concrete consumption and organization of activities; commercial relationships; overall tourist experience as commodity ❖ Doing, being	❖ Centric, Polarization, Rule of thirds ❖ Human and Object salience (sometimes natural) ❖ Indexical reference (e.g. luggage, camera, backpack, cap, meals)
Final monomodal artifact * Intra-semiotic and inter-semiotic cohesion; division of labor	❖ **Dominance, centrality and centricity of imagery with coherent linguistic support** = RELAY ❖ Evoking, symbolic, aesthetically appealing imagery; passive consumption and solitary appreciation of natural, nonindustrialized spectacles	❖ **Subordinate (unnecessary) or equal role of language** = RELAY OR ANCHORAGE ❖ Emotive, passive consumption of highly evaluative and aesthetic assessment of abstract, general, evoking sites and natural environments. Focus on instant gratification and reaction	❖ Dominance, centrality and centricity of language and concrete information with coherent visual support = RELAY ❖ Linguistic information and concrete support with purchase options and abundance of information is key	❖ Illustrative/supportive or equal role of imagery = RELAY OR ANCHORAGE ❖ Illustrative role (often iconic or indexical) of images
Multimodal artifact (sociological reasons, i.e. postmodern needs and semiotic shift) **Novel tourism multimodal genres & literacy**	**Inter-semiotic cohesion**		**Inter-semiotic cohesion**	
	Inter-channel divergence			

Table 5: Key features or main lexicogrammatical resources of tourism communication across modes and channels

3.2.3 Results: details

The visual analysis revealed a large number of Instagram *reaction processes* involving spectacular aerial views of solitary, back posing individuals surrounded by aesthetically pleasant natural environments. This shapes an impersonal relationship with dehumanized subjects that fosters visual pre-consumption through a *romantic gaze* of capitalist privilege and illusion of control over an extra- ordinary experience (Debord 1977). The commodification of the intangible service also stimulates in-group identification.

The study of the most frequent *processes*, *participants* and the keyword semantic categorization shed light on the ways in which Instagram, semantic and evaluative prosodies foster service pre-consumption by shaping perceptive and emotive expectations. These are realized through a) *relational processes* describing the destination's aesthetic attributes, b) *material processes* and c) *mental processes*. The latter assign to prospective tourists the role of passive *Sensers* of natural *Phenomena*, while allegedly placing them in an exclusive position of control that legitimizes a capitalist, romantic gaze of superiority. Conversely, website communication focuses on the provision of services and concrete information useful to the realization of gastronomic and artistic activities.

Finally, the adjective wordlists analysis enabled the detection of patterns of *evoked satisfaction* as the most frequent *Affect* resource of *Attitude* online. However, the major presence on Instagram of *reaction* and *evoked valuation* Appraisal acts (Thompson 2008), upscaled by *infused intensification graduation* strategies, makes the social platform a means to establish an emotional attachment with the natural destination that boosts immediate response. These attitudinal strategies are reinforced through procedures of semantic connotation pertaining to socially driven desires, such as the need for *strangerhood* and *authenticity* of natural aspects or traditional cuisine.

3.3 From empirical analysis to sociological interpretation of data: procedures and effects

The statistical investigation conducted in the study was crucial to unveil systematic techniques for the promotion of different tropes and gazes across digital channels and in terms of ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning. The comparative table and interdisciplinary framework designed at the beginning of the study, particularly, allowed

for an interpretation of the findings in light of recent sociological and semiotic trends that pervade contemporary media in our society. These also explained the reasons behind the different division of semiotic labor, alongside visual and linguistic patterns, according to digital media, and were key to move from the term *patterns of materialities* to *patterns of choices*, or *strategies*, and *conventions*. The latter emerged as they were reflected in the different trends of use of semiotic resources. In other words, the sociological interpretation of multimodal choices in their actual context of use – tourism communication on Instagram and company websites – confirmed the existence of an Instagram, image-centric genre of tourism discourse as:

1- the communicative *purpose* of each medium differs due to the different *role* in the marketing funnel of persuasion and the *audience* it communicates with. The latter has specific *needs*, constraints, desires, and therefore behaviors depending on the platform used;
2- the multisemiotic partitioning of labor, or *role*, varies according to channel, and responds coherently to the need of inspiration and instant gratification in a society of the spectacle pervaded with content in short time frames, compared to the provision of information and reassurance to customers that are interested in traveling to a specific destination;

This results in a different *relationship* between text and image that does not rely merely on channels constraints but on channels' *uses* and *aim*. The qualitative analysis, therefore, allowed to understand how different communicative trends of *gazes* attract the attention of postmodern social media users and create visually appealing representations. The mixed methodological approach, ultimately, uncovered patterns of ideological meaning that construct and legitimize a particular view of or gaze at the travel experience for profit purposes.

3.4 A roadmap for future research: steps and quality criteria of empirical research

The review of the major contributions of this dissertation also showed how different but complementary theoretical, methodological and analytical processes may intersect and provide a comprehensive understanding of contemporary practices. Interdisciplinary frameworks and mixed methodologies may, therefore, work together successfully to ensure the generation of new and reliable 'knowledge' about social uses, practices and genres, particularly in multimodal communication (Bateman et al. 2017, 152-154).

To assist researchers in the analysis of complex phenomena that would benefit from multidisciplinary perspectives and empirical approaches, this section outlines a potential roadmap for solid and transparent research efforts, based on Bateman and colleagues' guidelines, which were discussed in Chapter Three and which were followed in the conduction of the current study (Pflaeging et al. 2021, 17-24; Bateman and Hiippala 2021, 70-75). Successful empirical research studies should, in the following order:

a. Ensure a deep understanding of theories and studies related to a specific issue, discourse, or topic, in a specific social, generic context and medium, from the point of view of different disciplines (the contextual variables or the preliminary step, Bateman et al. 2017, 230);
b. Define the research gaps and questions in terms of methodological contributions for the testing of previous results or hypotheses, or for the exploration of understudied phenomena;
c. Understand the scope as well as limitations of the research and their implications. Multimodal analysis or linguistic analysis through annotation and statistical testing represent an emerging methodological approach in Digital Humanities, with potentially novel and reliable insights into previously studied phenomena;
d. Design the theoretical framework with diagrams and table to allow for a schematic classification of each step, contribution, type of data and variables, tests needed to explore the topic or discourse, and to validate or reject hypotheses with the elected methods and theories. These schemas work as a foundation for the creation and use of analytical and technological tools in the study;

e. Collect large bodies of data, or corpora, that are representative samples of the discourse selected and are balanced in terms of size across time (diachronic) or other contextual and statistical variables (medium, mode, register, genre, etc.)
f. Develop the tools that enable the identification, tracking and measurement of patterns of features (choices) in the construction of the discourse. They could be:

    - Hierarchical tagging models that are based on conceptual categories but are tested on a set of data (10%-30% of the overall corpus data) by more people to verify whether the meaning of the tag is intelligible, shared and does not depend on the educational background or subject interpretation of experienced and non-experienced researchers.
    - Software for the conduction of the tagging procedure with storage options and transparent, reliable export of tags.

g. Perform data-driven tracking and quantify patterns of material regularities through annotation sessions;
h. Perform inter-annotation procedures and statistical testing of the same data, the same tagging model, on the part of independent coders, after the provision of coding instructions, explanations, and feedback in preparatory sessions. This allows to assess the degree of reproducibility of the tagging choices;
i. Measure statistically frequencies, correlations and variance of strategies (tags) through descriptive, inferential statistics and statistical modeling (Bateman and Hiippala 2021, 70-75). In particular:

    1) bottom-up approaches on R let data patterns and co-patterns emerge without any instruction in terms of hypothesis and conditioning;
    2) top-down approaches and statistical significance testing usually follow to confirm or reject initial interpretations and hypotheses that emerge from data behavior or that were defined at the beginning of the research study;

j. Interpret and contextualize the findings through qualitative analysis and the state-of-the-art assumptions at the basis of the theoretical framework. The tables and diagrams outlined in (d) may assist in the classification of the main trends and comparison across the contextual variables selected.

4. Conclusions: possibilities, limitations, and future studies

The current dissertation proved useful to the analysis of visual and multimodal practices on digital media, confirming the existence of highly persuasive, multisemiotic practices of tourism promotion that assign a major role to photography on social platforms such as Instagram. This study also underlines the importance of investigating empirically and discussing the social implications of 'apparently uncoded' communicative situations in the contemporary, pervasive spectacularization of every aspect in society. Indeed, an awareness of the construction and dissemination of partial views for promotional purposes might allow individuals to question and resist established practices that serve others' interests. As envisaged by Berger and Debord, photography has once again become a means to perpetuate capitalism through the commodification and dissemination of visually appealing, subtly mediated representations of real-life events that promise, with their aura of authenticity, to fulfill capitalist-driven social desires of *owning* and *showing* for social validation and status. In this sense, imagery is increasingly leveraged to commodify the needs and values that are perpetrated by capitalism for its survival. These, in turn, push individuals to work in order to feel satisfaction in an alienating world and evade the current state of affairs – instead of challenging it – through the illusionary power of financial means.

Despite the empirical nature and potentially wide applicability of the methodology to other research studies, this study presents some limitations, which may become the starting point for future research attempts in the field of data-driven, multimodal analysis. In particular, these concern the 1) research objects, the 2) modes under investigation, the 3) process of genre identification, 4) the empirical investigation of the effects of communication strategies on customers' behavior, and 5) the processes of annotation and inter-annotation. With regard to the first point, the number of tourism boards and retrieved multimodal content may be considered to be limited compared to the standards of corpus analysis

(McEnery and Hardie 2014). However, as Pflaeging et al. suggest (2021), empirical analysis of multimodal materials might need to be first conducted in small-scale studies due to its exploratory nature. Additionally, specialized multimodal corpora are currently rare and require a considerable investment in terms of human resources and time, particularly due to the annotation process. Finally, as mentioned in this chapter, very few tourism boards construct effective and highly articulated multimodal orchestrations on Instagram; for this reason, and for reasons of time, this thesis focused on the detailed investigation of multimodal tourism narratives that featured both images and captions.

With regard to the second point, layout (Francesconi 2014) and degree of interactivity (Adami 2015) were not taken into consideration in the current dissertation, as their analysis would have involved the annotation of additional features and the design of more articulated tagging models. Additionally, the choices in terms of layout design on Instagram are limited and cannot be compared with website layouts due to the presence of a different degree of intentionality.

The most critical points and potential future lines of research concern the processes of identification of genres and effects on customers' behavior, and the annotation and inter-annotation procedures. In relation to these, the following considerations may be made:

- The media-contrastive research design delivered evidence of (sub-)generic differences in terms of lexicogrammatical and visual design choices. However, an investigation of generic stages, structures, functions or context, and rhetorical styles would offer additional insights into the nature and existence of these (sub-) genres.
- As mentioned in Chapter Five, the current study was intended to be enriched with a marketing inquiry and the conduction of in-depth interviews with the business owners and semi-standardized surveys on a sample of followers of the three travel companies' Instagram profiles. The aim was to analyze the degree of intentionality and nature of the reception of the message on part of the specialist and consumer, respectively. Due to time constraints and the dissertation' s major focus on data analysis for Linguistics studies, however, this kind of marketing research was not carried out. In future research, the inclusion of a marketing section to confirm or

reject the linguistic and multimodal results should be taken into consideration, also by exploring the connections between visuo-linguistic choices and the perceptual and cognitive processes of AIDA from a neurolinguistic or psycholinguistic perspective.

- The inter-coder reliability of the tagging scheme for the annotation of the visual corpora revealed the presence of tags which did not prove to be objective or entirely accurate; future research might include the testing and inter-annotation of the same tagging model or a new version on the same set of images. This would confer a higher degree of reproducibility to the tagging procedure. The annotation process might also be repeated on a new set of images pertaining to different countries; this would ensure some degree of replicability of the current study.
- Linguistic resources were annotated systematically mainly through the POS tagging tool offered by Sketch Engine, which provided automatically lists of the most frequent and key terms in the collected corpora. For this reason, only the most frequent and key resources were annotated with a data-driven and exploratory, yet consistent approach that needs to be tested, also through inter-coder reliability procedures. These procedures may be performed on software for manual annotation such as WebAnno or INCEpTION[13]. Future work, therefore, would include ideally a manual annotation of linguistic corpora with the same level of systematicity and degree of reliability of the visual corpora.
- The intersemiotic analysis was conducted without a systematic classification and annotation of the *relationships* between modes involved in each multimodal artifact, as suggested by newest lines of research (Stöckl et al. 2019; Pflaeging et al. 2021). This limitation was due to the absence of software tools that allowed for such analysis. Although results show a consistent presence of trends in terms of relationship between and role of modes across channels, future research might include the annotation and inter-annotation of such relationships, possibly on *The Multimodal Annotation Software Tool* (MAST), a new software developed by Cardoso and Cohn (2022).

Future directions of this research also include the application of the current methodology to socially relevant issues such as the promotion of sustainable behaviour in eco-tourism communication (Fletcher 2008). Indeed, while efforts have been made to investigate the role of discourse in the promotion of sustainable tourist experiences and in raising awareness of environmental protection (Fletcher 2008; Stamou 2004; Lamb 2019; Torkington 2018), literature adopting a Systemic Functional Linguistics or an empirical, socio-semiotic approach is particularly scarce in this field (Trčková 2017; Pratiwi 2017; Isti'anah 2021).

In particular, future work might include the systematic development and analysis of discourse on sustainability in multimodal tourism narratives, by applying the research design of the current dissertation and by implementing both its theoretical and methodological framework for the quantification and measurement of effective multimodal tourism strategies. Indeed, such research might prove crucial to demonstrating the role linguistic and multimodal analysis may play in providing the critical tools and empirical methods for an informed understanding of and resistance to contemporary ideologically based narratives. As also mentioned in the introduction and throughout this dissertation, this kind of data-driven, multimodal literacy may support individuals in their attempts to question the 'legitimacy' of established views, opinions, and contribute to the construction of 'counternarratives' (Ahearn 2001; Plant 1992).

APPENDIX

(1) Overview of tagging system with dependencies and reliability values
(2) Reading scheme
(3) Exclusion list
(4) Kappa and Kappa strict
(5) Absolute counts used for advanced statistics
(6) Descriptive for chi-square (threshold 0.6)
(7) Keyword analysis: frequency rate and keyness score
(8) Appraisal analysis: categorization of multi-unit keywords
(9) Absolute frequencies of each visual strategy across channels and agencies

(1) Overview of tagging system with dependencies and reliability values[1]

Tourism Photography ()
- Representation of the world (0.089)
  - Direct Presence of Living Beings (0.705)
    - x Process of Action (0.866)
      - x Subject of Action (-0.003)
        - x Animal Life (A) (0.909)
          - x Marsupials (A) (0.609)
          - x Marine Wildlife (A) (0.609)
          - x Forest Wildlife (A) (0.609)
          - x Livestock (A) (0.609)
          - x Other (A) (0.609)
        - x Humans (A) (0.909)
      - x Type of Action (-0.003)
        - x x Transactional Action (0.565)
        - x x Non-transactional Action (0.565)
    - x Process of Reaction (0.866)
      - x Subject of Reaction (0.000)
        - x Animal Life (R) (0.953)
          - x Marsupials (R) (0.847)
          - x Marine Wildlife (R) (0.847)
          - x Forest Wildlife (R) (0.847)
          - x Livestock (R) (0.847)
          - x Other (R) (0.847)
        - x Humans (R) (0.953)
      - x Type of Reaction (0.000)
        - x x Transactional Reaction (0.842)
        - x x Non-transactional Reaction (0.842)
    - Mood (0.705)
      - Time of the Day (0.176)
        - x Sunrise (0.708)
        - x Sunset (0.708)
        - x Day (0.708)

[1] Please refer to Chapter Five for an understanding of the hierarchical structure of the tagging system and for an explanation of each reliability value.

- x Night (0.708)
- Weather (0.176)
- x Sunny (0.749)
- x Cloudy (0.749)
- x Stormy (0.749)
- x Foggy (0.749)
- x Snowy (0.749)

- Setting (0.705)
- Natural ()
- Desert/Shrubs (0.600)
- Mountains (0.600)
- Plain (0.600)
- Forest (0.600)
- Marine Environment (0.600)
- Artificial (0.682)
- City (0.924)
- Town/Village (0.924)
- Cultural (0.682)
- Historical (0.682)
- Gastronomic (0.682)
- Analytical (0.682)
- x Map (1.000)
- x Icon/Logo (1.000)
- Inscription (0.682)
- Accommodation (0.682)

- Activities (0.705)
- x Sport Activities (0.731)
- x x Water sports (0.970)
- x x Snow sports (0.970)
- x x Hiking (0.970)
- x x Camping/Trekking (0.970)
- x x Other Sport Activities (0.970)
- x Transportation (0.731)
- x x Car Driving (1.000)
- x x Other Means of Transportation (1.000)
- x Recreational Activities (0.731)
- x x Painting (1.000)
- x x Playing Music (1.000)
- x x Speaking (1.000)
- x x Walking (1.000)
- x x Other Recreational Activities (1.000)
- x Entertainment (0.731)
- x x Festivals (1.000)
- x x Concerts (1.000)
- x x Movies (1.000)
- x x Other Entertainment Activities (1.000)
- x Other Activities (0.731)

Relationship with the Audience (0.089)

- Direction of Gaze (0.482)
- x Towards the Represented Participant(s) (0.919)
- x Towards the Interactive Participant (0.919)

- Camera Shot (0.482)
- x Close (0.666)
- x Medium (0.666)
- x Long (0.666)

- x Very Long (0.666)
- Camera Angle (0.482)
  - Betw. Interactive and Represented Participant(s) ()
  - x Subjective Image (0.806)
  - x Vertical Angle (-0.009)
  - x x Low (0.697)
  - x x Eye-level (0.697)
  - x x High (0.697)
  - x x Very High (0.697)
  - x Horizontal Angle (-0.009)
  - x x Frontal (0.270)
  - x x Oblique (0.270)
  - x Objective Image (0.806)
  - x x Direct Frontal Angle (1.000)
  - x x Perpendicular Top - Down Angle (1.000)
- Perspective Techniques (0.482)
  - Absence of Background (0.356)
  - Blurred Background/Selective Focus (0.356)
  - Less Detailed/Colored Background (0.356)
  - Element in the Foreground (0.356)
  - Overlap (0.356)
  - Converging Lines - Vanishing Point(s) (0.356)

Composition (0.089)
- Space Distribution (0.268)
  - Rule of Thirds (0.423)
    - One Point (0.348)
    - More Points (0.348)
    - Lines (0.348)
      - Horizontal (0.762)
        - Horizontal High (0.507)
        - Horizontal Low (0.507)
      - Vertical (0.762)
        - Vertical Left (0.107)
        - Vertical Right (0.107)
    - Negative Space (0.348)
      - Sky (0.719)
      - Water (0.719)
      - Land (0.719)
      - Other (0.719)
    - Underwater Effect (0.348)
  - Centric (0.423)
  - Symmetry (0.423)
  - Polarization (0.423)
- Visual Flow (0.268)
  - Leading line(s) (0.634)
    - One (1.000)
    - More (1.000)
  - Connecting Dots (0.634)
  - Framework (0.634)
- Visual Weight (0.268)
  - Sizes (Relevance) (0.423)
  - x Represented Living Participant (0.973)
  - x Landscape Element (0.973)
  - x Object (0.973)
  - Reflection (0.423)

- Juxtaposition (0.423)
- Sharpness of Focus (0.268)

Tourism Strategies (0.089)
- Indexical Reference (0.583)
  - Exploration (0.765)
    - Camping Equipment (0.718)
    - Backpack (0.718)
    - Luggage (0.718)
    - Camera (0.718)
    - Cap (0.718)
  - Relax/Leisure (0.765)
    - Hat (0.805)
    - Sunglasses (0.805)
    - Swimwear (0.805)
    - Towel (0.805)
    - Bag (0.805)
    - Dress (0.805)
    - Meals (0.805)
      - Food (0.703)
      - Beverage (0.703)
      - Alcoholic Drink (0.703)
    - Sportswear ()
    - Warm Clothes/Soft Cloths (0.805)
- Tropes (0.583)
  - Authenticity (0.350)
    - Natural (A) (0.632)
    - Traditional/Typical (0.632)
    - Gastronomic (A) (0.632)
  - Extraordinariness (0.350)
    - Purification (0.000)
    - Pilgrimage (0.000)
  - Strangerhood (0.350)
    - Unspoilt (0.136)
    - Untamed (0.136)
    - Primitive (0.136)
    - Exotic (0.136)
    - Enchanted (0.136)
    - Adventurous (0.136)
  - Play (0.350)
  - Conflict (0.350)
    - Stereotype ()
    - Opposition ()
  - Tense/Magic (0.350)
    - Past (0.687)
    - Future (0.687)
    - Denial of Time (0.687)
    - Timelessness (0.687)
  - Social Tropes (0.350)
    - Single (0.912)
    - Couple (0.912)
    - Family (0.912)
    - Friends (0.912)
  - Youth (0.350)
  - Beauty (0.350)
- Visual Clichés (0.583)

Gate ()
Taboos Infractions (0.583)
Sexual Inhibition ()
Moral Inhibition ()

JSON coding features processed.
21 exclusive options
75 non-exclusive options

(2) tourism photography – reading scheme

TAGS	READING SCHEME/TABLE	COMMENTS
Representation of the world		
Action – Reaction Processes:	Select them if there are any processes present, performed by either humans or animals.	Transactional Processes: The Goal/Phenomenon is present and can be clearly distinguished by the viewer of the photograph. Try always to select either action or reaction process (**taking a picture: action process**, because it is not observation/contemplation) and put the other action/reaction in the activities.
Mood	Time of the day + Weather	Clear weather = sunny. If you are not sure whether it is sunny or cloudy: put nothing WITH SUNRISE, SUNSET, you should put nothing in "weather".
Settings	Miscellaneous	More ore than one setting can be selected for each picture. * Gastronomic setting = a winery, a pub, a cafeteria → gastronomic trope as well. If food/drinks are not present, however, you cannot select "food/beverage" in the indexical reference section.
Activities	Miscellaneous	Looking at the phone, eating, cuddling → "other recreational activities". Entertainment Activities: Group Activities. If there is no action process → no activities, usually. No play perspective as well, which involves humans and a special activity. For the "no time

		constraints" trope → Denial of Time/Adventurous.
Relationship with the audience		
Gaze	Gaze means offer or demand: select offer if the gaze is directed towards a represented participant REPRESENTED IN THE PICTURE (either naturalistic or human); select demand if the gaze is directed towards the viewer. Select nothing if there is no living participant or if the participant is looking at another direction, "outside the picture".	
Shot	**Close**: the human/animal/object is the subject (a broader "intimacy" level) or the main element, layer in the foreground, often used with the technique "blurred background" = symbol of intimacy with the person. Not all parts of the subjects are visible. **Medium**: almost all the body/the entire body/object is visible, with a lot of details and where humans or a specific object are clearly the main subject = direct engagement with the viewer; social distance, which also makes you are a potential participant in the picture. The surrounding environment is visible. **Long**: people can be distinguished/not too panoramic landscape but are clearly not the main subject of the picture = impersonal relationship **Very Long:** all the landscape, feeling of awe, usually absence of humans; if there are, they cannot be distinguished. Contemplation, detached view. Human subjects are not important and not the subject = no intimacy or relationship	Co-dependencies/co-occurrences: Shot with Visual Weight, Perspective, Angle. The meaning changes according to the subject of the photograph (in particular medium ph.). The realization of the eye-level can vary.
Angle	**Subjective or objective.** **Subjective: horizontal and vertical** **Vertical:** **Eye-level =** take human subject as main point of reference with medium shots.	Eye-level and horizontal: similar to direct frontal angle but not quite "straight" frontal, more difficult when living subjects are involved. Rarely employed in natural photographs (and clear when employed with a central leading

	If natural subject, and photographer seems elevated → either eye-level or high, depending on the distance. **Low**: the main participant of the picture is in a higher position compared to the photographer's. **High**: the main participant is in a lower position compared to the photographer's/privileged view over someone or something. **When there is an evident main human participant**, (close/medium shot) take into consideration the relationship between **photographer (viewer) and human**. Example: promontory position. **When natural + human participants are equally important** (medium or long shot) and one is higher or eye-level, the other is in a lower position = **eye-level.** **When there's a long shot and human is not the main participant or is absent** (nature and/without human) and the natural element (i.e. mountain) is right in front of you (you're elevated) = **eye-level.** **Horizontal (frontal or oblique):** With clear, symmetric leading line which is also a converging line; when the main subject (close-medium shots) is perfectly frontal but the vertical angle varies (high, for example).	line/perspective with one vanishing, central point). Eye-level and oblique: most of pictures (where participants are turned).
Perspective Techniques	Absence of Background: flat picture (almost frontal or top-down pics). If absence of background, no negative space. Less detailed/colored Background Element in the Foreground is not a layer. Overlap: different "layers" of elements, which give an idea of what is far and what is near. Converging lines: lines converging in one or two points in the picture or outside the picture.	No need to always select a strategy; the photographer might not have used any strategies.

Color		
Hue	Miscellaneous	
Harmony	Analogous: Complementary: Triad: https://www.tigercolor.com/color-lab/color-theory/color-harmonies.htm (Last visit: 20/05/2022)	Either choose analogous, complementary, both or nothing. Choose the main one.
Contrast	The degree of shades is strong and artificial.	
Saturation	From dull colors to too strong/unnatural colors.	
Brightness	Select low/high when you notice too much unnatural darkness/ brightness.	
Tint	It is a filter that changes the picture and provides it with an artificial atmosphere/mood (e.g.: a pink sky).	
Vignette Effect	The borders of the picture are black, focusing on a specific area of the image.	
Composition		
Space distribution	**Rule of Thirds** **Centric** **Symmetry** **Polarization** **Negative Space**: a major portion of the picture (or the entire picture) is dedicated to either land/water/other or the sky. The division must be clear. The idea is to attach greater importance to one element of the landscape by means of framing it with space.	**The *rule of thirds*** is a compositional strategy usually adopted in professional photography: the image is imaginatively divided into 9 equal squares and the subject of the picture (or other elements) usually fill the space represented by the intersection formed by the dividing lines. Through this technique, the subject of the picture appears decentralized. With the **symmetry** technique, instead, the top half and the bottom half are made specular. With the **polarization** technique, 1) a line or a section divides the image into two clear/homogeneous halves. The line is approximately located in the center of the image. When this strategy is employed, the Rule of Thirds (horizontal lines) and the negative space strategies are usually not employed. 2) meaning: clear opposition

		between human subject and landscape element. Rarely: color makes a striking and homogeneous opposition/polarization and Co-occurrences = Centric + Polarization + Rule of Thirds.
Visual Flow	Leading Line(s): a road or path which invites the viewer to further explore the image. Connecting Dots: a series of distinct elements is dispersed in the image . Framework: the exit of a cave, an opened window that frame the picture	
Visual Weight	Size of the participants (landscape elements/living beings) Reflection (water) Juxtaposition of people that gives more importance to them in the image.	
Sharpness of Focus	How detailed the image is.	
Tourism Strategies		
Indexical Reference	The *indexical reference* is a tourism promotional strategy realized through the visual depiction of objects which are not themselves subjects of promotion but which indirectly symbolize the condition pictured and "sold" (the idea of adventure, leisure, extraordinariness, inhibition, authenticity) also through the presence of a human subject of the picture. Human beings, in fact, embody this condition and prompt the viewers to identify with them in order to have a similar experience, which has been made desirable through the triggering of positive emotions and imagination. The *tropes* are recurring, typical themes in tourism promotional communication.	
Authenticity	Natural: natural landscapes Traditional/typical: typical of the destination (culture, history, customs) or animals or activities Gastronomic: food, beverage	

Extraordinariness	Pilgrimage: idea of long walk/hike (but only with action processes, like the play perspective) Purification: usually people immersed in water (in particular singular subjects/women).	
Strangerhood	Unspoilt Untamed Primitive Exotic: hotness, white beaches Enchanted Adventurous	
Play	Activities	
Conflict	Stereotype: a stereotyped/famous version of the culture/people of that destination is provided Opposition: both foreigners and local people are represented.	Stereotype: if very clear or considered inferior (Indians, indigenous, rural people).
Tense/Magic	Past: Historical/mysterious sites (castles, old villages) Future: futuristic/industrialized settings (cities) Denial of Time: No schedule, activities, improvisation Timelessness: Unspoilt/untamed/bucolic, past	
Social Tropes	Miscellaneous	
Youth/Beauty	Good-looking/young people are depicted	
Visual Clichès	Gate: an exit, an entrance, a passage.	
Taboos Infractions	Moral (alcohol, abundance of food) or sexual (swimwear, almost naked subjects)	

(3) Exclusion list

Exclusion list
Tourism Photography
Representation of the world
Direct Presence of Living Beings
Process of Action
Subject of Action
Other (A)
Type of Action
Process of Reaction
Subject of Reaction
Other (R)
Type of Reaction
Mood
Time of the Day

Weather
Setting
Inscription
Accommodation
Activities
Sport Activities
Transportation
Recreational Activities
Entertainment
Relationship with the Audience
Direction of Gaze
Camera Shot
Camera Angle
Betw. Interactive and Represented Participant(s)
Subjective Image
Objective Image
Perspective Techniques
Absence of Background
Blurred Background/Selective Focus
Less Detailed/Colored Background
Element in the Foreground
Overlap
Converging Lines - Vanishing Point(s)
Color
Color Hue/Value(s)
Red
Light Red
Orange
Light Brown
Brown
Violet
Yellow
Green
Blue
Light Blue (Cyan)
White
Gray
Black
Color Harmony
Analogous
Complementary
Triad
Color Contrast
Color Saturation/Vibrance
Too High Degree of Saturation/Vibrance
Medium/High Degree of Saturation/Vibrance
Low Degree of Saturation/Vibrance
Brightness
Too High Degree of Brightness
Medium/High Degree of Brightness
Low Degree of Brightness
Tint

Vignette Effect
Composition
Space Distribution
Horizontal High
Horizontal Low
Vertical Left
Vertical Right
Underwater Effect
Visual Flow
Connecting Dots
Framework
Visual Weight
Sizes (Relevance)
Reflection
Juxtaposition
Sharpness of Focus
Tourism Strategies
Indexical Reference
Exploration
Relax/Leisure
Tropes
Authenticity
Extraordinariness
Purification
Pilgrimage
Conflict
Stereotype
Opposition
Tense/Magic
Social Tropes
Youth
Beauty
Visual Clichés
Gate
Taboos Infractions
Sexual Inhibition
Moral Inhibition

(4) Reliability scores (multiple choice tags)

Feature set	Feature	Kappa	Kappa (strict)	p-value
Direct Presence of Living Beings, Mood, Setting, Activities	Activities	0.642	0.641	0.000
Direct Presence of Living Beings, Mood, Setting, Activities	Direct Presence of Living Beings	0.944	0.944	0.000
Direct Presence of Living Beings, Mood, Setting, Activities	Mood	0.693	0.681	0.000
Animal Life (A), Humans (A)	Animal Life (A)	0.771	0.932	0.000
Animal Life (A), Humans (A)	Humans (A)	0.559	0.926	0.000

Marsupials (A), Marine Wildlife (A), Forest Wildlife (A), Livestock (A), Other (A)	Livestock (A)	0.755	0.727	0.005
Marsupials (A), Marine Wildlife (A), Forest Wildlife (A), Livestock (A), Other (A)	Marine Wildlife (A)	0.843	0.769	0.002
Animal Life (R), Humans (R)	Animal Life (R)	0.874	1.000	0.000
Animal Life (R), Humans (R)	Humans (R)	0.601	0.925	0.000
Marsupials (R), Marine Wildlife (R), Forest Wildlife (R), Livestock (R), Other (R)	Forest Wildlife (R)	0.600	0.769	0.038
Marsupials (R), Marine Wildlife (R), Forest Wildlife (R), Livestock (R), Other (R)	Livestock (R)	1.000	1.000	0.002
Marsupials (R), Marine Wildlife (R), Forest Wildlife (R), Livestock (R), Other (R)	Marsupials (R)	1.000	1.000	0.002
Time of the Day, Weather	Weather	0.285	0.240	0.000
Natural , Artificial, Cultural, Historical, Gastronomic, Analytical, Inscription, Accommodation	Analytical	0.894	0.944	0.000
Natural , Artificial, Cultural, Historical, Gastronomic, Analytical, Inscription, Accommodation	Artificial	0.738	0.736	0.000
Natural , Artificial, Cultural, Historical, Gastronomic, Analytical, Inscription, Accommodation	Cultural	0.523	0.521	0.000
Natural , Artificial, Cultural, Historical, Gastronomic, Analytical, Inscription, Accommodation	Gastronomic	0.761	0.760	0.000
Natural , Artificial, Cultural, Historical, Gastronomic, Analytical, Inscription, Accommodation	Historical	0.887	0.887	0.000
Natural , Artificial, Cultural, Historical, Gastronomic, Analytical, Inscription, Accommodation	Natural	0.830	0.852	0.000
Desert/Shrubs, Mountains, Plain, Forest, Marine Environment	Desert/Shrubs	0.723	0.757	0.000
Desert/Shrubs, Mountains, Plain, Forest, Marine Environment	Forest	0.549	0.593	0.000
Desert/Shrubs, Mountains, Plain, Forest, Marine Environment	Marine Environment	0.759	0.813	0.000
Desert/Shrubs, Mountains, Plain, Forest, Marine Environment	Mountains	0.468	0.493	0.000
Desert/Shrubs, Mountains, Plain, Forest, Marine Environment	Plain	0.736	0.816	0.000
City, Town/Village	City	0.745	0.923	0.000
City, Town/Village	Town/Village	0.363	0.923	0.019
Direction of Gaze, Camera Shot, Camera Angle, Perspective Techniques	Direction of Gaze	0.663	0.662	0.000

Absence of Background, Blurred Background/Selective Focus, Less Detailed/Colored Background, Element in the Foreground, Overlap, Converging Lines - Vanishing Point(s)	Absence of Background	0.347	0.743	0.000
Absence of Background, Blurred Background/Selective Focus, Less Detailed/Colored Background, Element in the Foreground, Overlap, Converging Lines - Vanishing Point(s)	Blurred Background/Selective Focus	0.800	0.791	0.000
Absence of Background, Blurred Background/Selective Focus, Less Detailed/Colored Background, Element in the Foreground, Overlap, Converging Lines - Vanishing Point(s)	Converging Lines - Vanishing Point(s)	0.442	0.460	0.000
Absence of Background, Blurred Background/Selective Focus, Less Detailed/Colored Background, Element in the Foreground, Overlap, Converging Lines - Vanishing Point(s)	Element in the Foreground	0.123	0.155	0.104
Absence of Background, Blurred Background/Selective Focus, Less Detailed/Colored Background, Element in the Foreground, Overlap, Converging Lines - Vanishing Point(s)	Less Detailed/Colored Background	0.468	0.469	0.000
Space Distribution, Visual Flow, Visual Weight, Sharpness of Focus	Visual Flow	0.325	0.321	0.000
Space Distribution, Visual Flow, Visual Weight, Sharpness of Focus	Visual Weight	0.316	0.306	0.000
Rule of Thirds, Centric, Symmetry, Polarization	Centric	0.575	0.615	0.000
Rule of Thirds, Centric, Symmetry, Polarization	Polarization	0.328	0.360	0.000
Rule of Thirds, Centric, Symmetry, Polarization	Rule of Thirds	0.350	0.391	0.000
Rule of Thirds, Centric, Symmetry, Polarization	Symmetry	0.383	0.381	0.000
One Point, More Points, Lines, Negative Space, Underwater Effect	Lines	0.198	0.301	0.010
One Point, More Points, Lines, Negative Space, Underwater Effect	More Points	0.229	0.268	0.004
One Point, More Points, Lines, Negative Space, Underwater Effect	Negative Space	0.469	0.463	0.000
One Point, More Points, Lines, Negative Space, Underwater Effect	One Point	0.294	0.417	0.000
Sky, Water, Land, Other	Land	0.250	0.716	0.006
Sky, Water, Land, Other	Sky	0.641	0.900	0.000
Sky, Water, Land, Other	Water	0.680	0.871	0.000

Leading line(s), Connecting Dots, Framework	Leading line(s)	0.418	0.591	0.000
One, More	More	0.248	1.000	0.036
One, More	One	0.059	1.000	0.627
Sizes (Relevance), Reflection, Juxtaposition	Juxtaposition	0.185	0.136	0.027
Sizes (Relevance), Reflection, Juxtaposition	Reflection	0.848	0.912	0.000
Indexical Reference, Tropes, Visual Clich√©s, Taboos Infractions	Indexical Reference	0.738	0.742	0.000
Indexical Reference, Tropes, Visual Clich√©s, Taboos Infractions	Visual Clichés	0.200	0.198	0.000
Exploration, Relax/Leisure	Exploration	0.647	0.894	0.000
Exploration, Relax/Leisure	Relax/Leisure	0.361	0.665	0.004
Camping Equipment, Backpack, Luggage, Camera, Cap	Backpack	0.615	0.636	0.004
Camping Equipment, Backpack, Luggage, Camera, Cap	Camera	0.611	0.750	0.005
Camping Equipment, Backpack, Luggage, Camera, Cap	Cap	0.236	0.625	0.241
Camping Equipment, Backpack, Luggage, Camera, Cap	Luggage	1.000	1.000	0.000
Hat, Sunglasses, Swimwear, Towel, Bag, Dress, Meals, Sportswear , Warm Clothes/Soft Cloths	Bag	0.295	0.466	0.027
Hat, Sunglasses, Swimwear, Towel, Bag, Dress, Meals, Sportswear , Warm Clothes/Soft Cloths	Dress	0.777	0.870	0.000
Hat, Sunglasses, Swimwear, Towel, Bag, Dress, Meals, Sportswear , Warm Clothes/Soft Cloths	Hat	0.890	1.000	0.000
Hat, Sunglasses, Swimwear, Towel, Bag, Dress, Meals, Sportswear , Warm Clothes/Soft Cloths	Meals	0.818	0.852	0.000
Hat, Sunglasses, Swimwear, Towel, Bag, Dress, Meals, Sportswear , Warm Clothes/Soft Cloths	Sportswear	0.292	0.716	0.040
Hat, Sunglasses, Swimwear, Towel, Bag, Dress, Meals, Sportswear , Warm Clothes/Soft Cloths	Sunglasses	0.479	1.000	0.001
Hat, Sunglasses, Swimwear, Towel, Bag, Dress, Meals, Sportswear , Warm Clothes/Soft Cloths	Swimwear	0.729	1.000	0.000
Hat, Sunglasses, Swimwear, Towel, Bag, Dress, Meals, Sportswear , Warm Clothes/Soft Cloths	Towel	0.790	0.783	0.000
Hat, Sunglasses, Swimwear, Towel, Bag, Dress, Meals, Sportswear , Warm Clothes/Soft Cloths	Warm Clothes/Soft Cloths	0.596	0.817	0.000
Food, Beverage, Alcoholic Drink	Alcoholic Drink	0.792	0.769	0.007
Food, Beverage, Alcoholic Drink	Beverage	0.607	0.769	0.044
Food, Beverage, Alcoholic Drink	Food	0.645	0.769	0.022

Authenticity, Extraordinariness, Strangerhood, Play, Conflict, Tense/Magic, Social Tropes, Youth, Beauty	Authenticity	0.491	0.626	0.000
Authenticity, Extraordinariness, Strangerhood, Play, Conflict, Tense/Magic, Social Tropes, Youth, Beauty	Beauty	0.477	0.472	0.000
Authenticity, Extraordinariness, Strangerhood, Play, Conflict, Tense/Magic, Social Tropes, Youth, Beauty	Extraordinariness	0.305	0.300	0.000
Authenticity, Extraordinariness, Strangerhood, Play, Conflict, Tense/Magic, Social Tropes, Youth, Beauty	Play	0.313	0.325	0.000
Authenticity, Extraordinariness, Strangerhood, Play, Conflict, Tense/Magic, Social Tropes, Youth, Beauty	Social Tropes	0.775	0.765	0.000
Authenticity, Extraordinariness, Strangerhood, Play, Conflict, Tense/Magic, Social Tropes, Youth, Beauty	Strangerhood	0.613	0.679	0.000
Authenticity, Extraordinariness, Strangerhood, Play, Conflict, Tense/Magic, Social Tropes, Youth, Beauty	Tense/Magic	0.328	0.264	0.000
Authenticity, Extraordinariness, Strangerhood, Play, Conflict, Tense/Magic, Social Tropes, Youth, Beauty	Youth	0.701	0.696	0.000
Natural (A), Traditional/Typical, Gastronomic (A)	Gastronomic (A)	0.702	0.699	0.000
Natural (A), Traditional/Typical, Gastronomic (A)	Natural (A)	0.777	0.924	0.000
Natural (A), Traditional/Typical, Gastronomic (A)	Traditional/Typical	0.330	0.535	0.000
Unspoilt, Untamed, Primitive, Exotic, Enchanted, Adventurous	Adventurous	0.349	0.483	0.000
Unspoilt, Untamed, Primitive, Exotic, Enchanted, Adventurous	Enchanted	0.302	0.388	0.000
Unspoilt, Untamed, Primitive, Exotic, Enchanted, Adventurous	Exotic	0.387	0.400	0.000
Unspoilt, Untamed, Primitive, Exotic, Enchanted, Adventurous	Primitive	0.223	0.285	0.001
Unspoilt, Untamed, Primitive, Exotic, Enchanted, Adventurous	Unspoilt	0.248	0.073	0.001
Unspoilt, Untamed, Primitive, Exotic, Enchanted, Adventurous	Untamed	0.229	0.197	0.001
Past, Future, Denial of Time, Timelessness	Denial of Time	0.478	0.730	0.000
Past, Future, Denial of Time, Timelessness	Future	0.797	1.000	0.000

Past, Future, Denial of Time, Timelessness	Past	0.622	0.771	0.000
Past, Future, Denial of Time, Timelessness	Timelessness	0.378	0.633	0.000
Single, Couple, Family, Friends	Couple	0.837	0.921	0.000
Single, Couple, Family, Friends	Family	0.648	1.000	0.000
Single, Couple, Family, Friends	Friends	0.508	1.000	0.000
Single, Couple, Family, Friends	Single	0.615	0.890	0.000

(5) Absolute counts of visual strategies across agencies and channels

Tag	TI_IG	EC_IG	WA_IG	TI_WS	EC_WS	WA_WS	Metafunction (+ tourism discourse)
Direct Presence of Living Beings	42	110	95	114	104	89	1
Process of Action	21	58	42	86	82	61	1
Subject of Action	21	58	42	86	82	61	1
Animal Life (A)	12	11	20	10	8	12	1
Humans (A)	11	50	26	80	75	51	1
Type of Action	21	58	42	84	80	60	1
Transactional Action	13	39	13	46	48	22	1
Non-transactional Action	8	20	29	40	34	38	1
Process of Reaction	24	55	54	33	25	28	1
Subject of Reaction	24	55	54	33	25	28	1
Animal Life (R)	12	17	11	5	4	3	1
Humans (R)	12	39	45	29	20	25	1
Type of Reaction	23	55	52	33	24	28	1
Transactional Reaction	6	27	28	21	10	15	1
Non-transactional Reaction	17	29	24	13	14	14	1
Mood	122	169	172	170	125	137	1
Sunrise	15	17	25	11	5	9	1
Sunset	11	34	35	36	12	21	1
Day	89	105	102	111	87	101	1
Night	3	14	11	13	18	6	1
Weather	89	75	76	107	64	77	1
Sunny	38	26	63	49	34	68	1
Cloudy	43	24	11	58	28	8	1
Stormy	15	8	1	6	1	2	1
Setting	126	179	175	199	158	157	1
Natural	121	143	168	129	78	123	1
Desert/Shrubs	0	0	45	0	0	24	1
Mountains	73	62	59	72	32	23	1
Plain	41	8	11	28	12	18	1
Forest	35	53	13	9	19	13	1
Marine Environment	74	75	119	98	47	72	1
Artificial	19	67	33	56	48	33	1
City	0	18	16	16	18	12	1
Town/Village	12	13	2	6	6	0	1
Cultural	32	35	15	67	35	21	1
Historical	41	17	4	51	17	3	1

Gastronomic	0	2	1	14	14	16	1
Analytical	0	0	2	22	24	6	1
Activities	19	72	51	88	83	55	1
Sport Activities	12	20	14	29	23	17	1
Transportation	2	12	14	25	18	17	1
Recreational Activities	6	41	28	38	42	32	1
Direction of Gaze	26	69	49	69	61	50	2
Towards the Represented Participant(s)	18	55	37	61	49	40	2
Towards the Interactive Participant	9	14	13	10	16	10	2
Camera Shot	126	180	178	187	142	153	2
Close	1	30	23	28	44	40	2
Medium	18	60	34	83	56	67	2
Long	58	66	62	57	24	19	2
Very Long	49	24	59	31	18	27	2
Camera Angle	126	180	177	198	160	156	2
Subjective Image	125	176	165	185	137	145	2
Vertical Angle	125	176	165	181	137	143	2
Low	23	42	22	45	31	24	2
Eye-level	47	79	57	93	65	89	2
High	32	37	46	45	35	19	2
Very High	23	18	40	5	6	11	2
Horizontal Angle	125	175	163	185	136	145	2
Frontal	11	26	18	21	15	18	2
Oblique	114	149	145	167	121	127	2
Objective Image	1	5	13	13	24	11	2
Direct Frontal Angle	1	1	2	8	6	1	2
Perpendicular Top - Down Angle	0	3	11	5	18	10	2
Perspective Techniques	125	175	161	178	137	143	2
Absence of Background	6	5	9	5	3	10	2
Blurred Background/Selective Focus	7	35	22	32	39	28	2
Less Detailed/Colored Background	51	47	38	59	26	26	2
Element in the Foreground	23	46	43	64	44	40	2
Converging Lines - Vanishing Point(s)	89	118	96	93	72	80	2
Space Distribution	126	177	174	195	145	153	3
Rule of Thirds	102	151	143	154	97	114	3
One Point	31	42	26	54	40	29	3
More Points	11	23	18	30	13	23	3
Lines	22	39	31	18	5	25	3
Horizontal	16	19	27	8	3	11	3
Horizontal High	13	9	23	6	1	6	3
Horizontal Low	4	11	7	3	2	5	3
Vertical	6	21	3	12	2	14	3
Vertical Left	4	9	3	7	1	9	3
Vertical Right	4	19	2	10	2	8	3
Negative Space	83	110	115	86	54	71	3

Sky	3	10	9	10	11	5	3
Water	36	38	62	50	17	36	3
Land	78	73	95	65	33	50	3
Other	12	38	13	18	13	17	3
Centric	48	74	60	54	62	52	3
Symmetry	12	15	14	8	5	5	3
Polarization	34	29	48	48	34	42	3
Visual Flow	59	88	95	73	58	54	3
Leading line(s)	40	48	59	30	23	25	3
Framework	9	17	9	4	1	5	3
Visual Weight	57	129	99	96	84	80	3
Sizes (Relevance)	50	121	93	90	81	73	3
Represented Living Participant	6	43	31	52	55	37	3
Landscape Element	42	80	59	33	22	27	3
Object	2	7	4	12	18	16	3
Indexical Reference	12	58	46	71	63	55	4
Exploration	3	11	14	24	17	21	4
Backpack	3	5	4	9	2	5	4
Camera	0	2	0	7	2	8	4
Relax/Leisure	8	49	38	55	51	44	4
Hat	4	16	7	7	7	12	4
Sunglasses	0	1	2	5	9	8	4
Swimwear	0	3	20	0	1	6	4
Towel	0	3	1	1	0	2	4
Dress	0	2	5	4	5	7	4
Meals	0	7	5	12	14	7	4
Food	0	2	4	9	9	5	4
Beverage	0	5	0	2	4	4	4
Alcoholic Drink	0	0	2	5	6	2	4
Sportswear	2	16	4	17	15	9	4
Warm Clothes/Soft Cloths	4	13	2	9	4	1	4
Tropes	126	179	178	199	160	157	4
Authenticity	121	155	168	168	131	150	4
Natural (A)	116	136	166	119	72	124	4
Traditional/Typical	55	50	27	84	68	32	4
Gastronomic (A)	0	5	1	14	13	17	4
Strangerhood	120	150	165	144	105	126	4
Unspoilt	118	127	158	116	68	113	4
Untamed	64	66	111	58	29	39	4
Exotic	1	4	110	1	0	66	4
Enchanted	36	47	36	27	6	8	4
Adventurous	15	36	40	62	61	41	4
Play	4	16	8	28	28	21	4
Tense/Magic	104	122	137	155	107	110	4
Past	49	13	8	41	11	2	4
Future	0	14	16	4	14	8	4
Denial of Time	19	82	68	102	84	83	4
Timelessness	83	58	89	59	19	25	4
Social Tropes	16	58	55	70	60	57	4
Single	13	35	33	9	7	12	4

Couple	1	11	10	32	14	28	4
Family	0	2	1	2	2	3	4
Friends	1	2	4	10	16	0	4
Youth	8	29	43	35	35	32	4
Beauty	1	11	27	18	19	26	4

(6) Chi-square descriptive statistics (0.6 reliability threshold)

	Df	Deviance	Resid. Df	Resid. Dev
NULL			1001	1387.91
`Direct Presence of Living Beings`	1	6.867	1000	1381.05
`Process of Action`	1	35.626	999	1345.42
`Animal Life (A)`	1	22.570	998	1322.85
`Marsupials (A)`	1	3.265	997	1319.59
`Marine Wildlife (A)`	1	0.132	996	1319.45
`Forest Wildlife (A)`	1	1.787	995	1317.67
`Livestock (A)`	1	6.585	994	1311.08
`Other (A)`	1	0.382	993	1310.70
`Humans (A)`	1	0.297	992	1310.40
`Process of Reaction`	1	0.040	991	1310.36
`Animal Life (R)`	1	9.229	990	1301.13
`Marsupials (R)`	1	0.564	989	1300.57
`Marine Wildlife (R)`	0	0.000	989	1300.57
`Forest Wildlife (R)`	1	1.653	988	1298.92
`Livestock (R)`	1	1.512	987	1297.40
`Other (R)`	0	0.000	987	1297.40
`Humans (R)`	1	0.665	986	1296.74
`Transactional Reaction`	1	0.006	985	1296.73
`Non-transactional Reaction`	1	2.951	984	1293.78
Mood	1	52.210	983	1241.57
Sunrise	1	6.940	982	1234.63
Sunset	1	0.394	981	1234.24
Day	1	0.406	980	1233.83
Night	1	0.084	979	1233.75
Sunny	1	3.414	978	1230.33
Cloudy	1	9.267	977	1221.07
Stormy	1	8.481	976	1212.59
Foggy	1	1.544	975	1211.04
Snowy	1	24.548	974	1186.49
Setting	1	0.023	973	1186.47
`Desert/Shrubs`	1	4.457	972	1182.01
Mountains	1	20.401	971	1161.61
Plain	1	0.376	970	1161.24
Forest	1	18.972	969	1142.26

`Marine Environment`	1	7.083	968	1135.18
Artificial	1	8.989	967	1126.19
City	1	1.689	966	1124.50
`Town/Village`	1	7.682	965	1116.82
Cultural	1	0.011	964	1116.81
Historical	1	0.028	963	1116.78
Gastronomic	1	10.956	962	1105.83
Analytical	1	22.778	961	1083.05
Map	1	2.258	960	1080.79
`Icon/Logo`	0	0.000	960	1080.79
Inscription	1	2.932	959	1077.86
Accommodation	1	0.493	958	1077.36
Activities	1	1.539	957	1075.83
`Sport Activities`	1	0.067	956	1075.76
`Water sports`	1	0.861	955	1074.90
`Snow sports`	1	1.000	954	1073.90
Hiking	1	2.681	953	1071.22
`Camping/Trekking`	1	2.087	952	1069.13
`Other Sport Activities`	1	0.028	951	1069.10
Transportation	1	14.961	950	1054.14
`Car Driving`	1	0.000	949	1054.14
`Other Means of Transportation`	0	0.000	949	1054.14
`Recreational Activities`	1	0.919	948	1053.22
Painting	0	0.000	948	1053.22
`Playing Music`	1	2.228	947	1050.99
Speaking	1	5.115	946	1045.88
Walking	1	2.519	945	1043.36
`Other Recreational Activities`	1	2.272	944	1041.09
Entertainment	1	0.478	943	1040.61
Festivals	1	0.505	942	1040.10
Concerts	1	2.649	941	1037.45
Movies	0	0.000	941	1037.45
`Other Entertainment Activities`	1	0.749	940	1036.70
`Other Activities`	1	0.013	939	1036.69
`Towards the Represented Participant(s)`	1	1.037	938	1035.65
`Towards the Interactive Participant`	1	6.167	937	1029.49
`Subjective Image`	1	0.434	936	1029.05
Low	1	0.114	935	1028.94
`Eye-level`	1	23.821	934	1005.12
High	1	10.977	933	994.14
`Very High`	1	6.291	932	987.85
`Objective Image`	1	0.236	931	987.61
`Direct Frontal Angle`	1	4.679	930	982.93
`Perpendicular Top - Down Angle`	1	1.360	929	981.57
Horizontal	1	16.717	928	964.86
Vertical	1	0.026	927	964.83
Sky	1	0.917	926	963.91
Water	1	0.054	925	963.86
Land	1	8.331	924	955.53
Other	1	6.119	923	949.41
`Leading line(s)`	1	19.531	922	929.88
One	1	0.713	921	929.16
More	1	4.778	920	924.39
`Connecting Dots`	1	0.156	919	924.23
Framework	1	14.434	918	909.80
`Landscape Element`	1	42.261	917	867.54
Object	1	0.027	916	867.51
Exploration	1	2.110	915	865.40
`Camping Equipment`	1	0.311	914	865.09
Backpack	1	0.530	913	864.56
Luggage	1	0.208	912	864.35
Camera	1	4.079	911	860.27
Cap	1	0.352	910	859.92
`Relax/Leisure`	1	0.303	909	859.62
Hat	1	0.069	908	859.55
Sunglasses	1	0.439	907	859.11
Swimwear	1	7.134	906	851.97
Towel	1	0.015	905	851.96
Bag	1	0.002	904	851.96
Dress	1	1.089	903	850.87
Meals	1	0.003	902	850.86
Food	1	0.605	901	850.26

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Beverage                        1    0.513       900     849.75
`Alcoholic Drink`               1    0.578       899     849.17
`Warm Clothes/Soft Cloths`      1    0.685       898     848.48
`Natural (A)`                   1    0.177       897     848.31
`Traditional/Typical`           1    3.113       896     845.19
`Gastronomic (A)`               1    1.632       895     843.56
Past                            1    4.862       894     838.70
Future                          1    1.304       893     837.40
`Denial of Time`                1    0.763       892     836.63
Timelessness                    1   21.966       891     814.67
Single                          1   23.384       890     791.28
Couple                          1    3.338       889     787.94
Family                          1    0.871       888     787.07
Friends                         1    9.361       887     777.71
                               Pr(>Chi)
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(7) List of keywords and keyness score

KEYWORDS	**INSTAGRAM CORPUS**				
Item	Frequency (focus)	Frequency (reference)	Relative frequency (focus)	Relative frequency (reference)	Score
turquoise	14	96850	332.55737	2.15371	105.767
ochre	7	26428	166.27869	0.58769	105.360
quokka	4	2075	95.01639	0.04614	91.781
Mesmerise	6	26593	142.52458	0.59136	90.190
Frolick	5	14774	118.77048	0.32854	90.152
getaway	18	170311	427.57376	3.78730	89.523
snowshoe	8	54930	190.03278	1.22151	85.992
skywalk	4	7148	95.01639	0.15895	82.847
icefield	4	7574	95.01639	0.16843	82.176
jaw-dropping	5	27384	118.77048	0.60895	74.440
igloofest	3	140	71.26229	0.00311	72.038
cityscape	5	31541	118.77048	0.70139	70.395
maligne	3	1652	71.26229	0.03674	69.702
lightkeeper	3	1982	71.26229	0.04407	69.212
iceberg	10	111719	237.54097	2.48436	68.461
greenery	7	65876	166.27869	1.46492	67.864
towering	10	115716	237.54097	2.57324	66.758
kaleidoscope	5	36157	118.77048	0.80404	66.390
stroll	22	315130	522.59015	7.00772	65.386
rockies	9	104092	213.78688	2.31475	64.797
photog	3	5286	71.26229	0.11755	64.661
colourful	16	220933	380.06555	4.91301	64.445
picturesque	17	241109	403.81967	5.36167	63.634
outback	7	73977	166.27869	1.64507	63.242
bushwalking	3	6691	71.26229	0.14879	62.903
paradise	34	542465	807.63934	12.06309	61.903
serenity	10	135948	237.54	3.02	
Secluded	8	100888	190.03	2.24	
Gorge	15	229420	356.31	5.10	
Coastline	15	237455	356.31	5.28	

Keyword	Website Corpus				
Item	**Frequency (focus)**	**Frequency (reference)**	**Relative frequency (focus)**	**Relative frequency (reference)**	**Score**
distillery	294	115106	248.08138	2.55967	69.973
foodie	146	39020	123.19688	0.86771	66.497
craic	67	6787	56.53555	0.15093	49.991
geopark	65	8274	54.84792	0.18399	47.169
lighthouse	387	276984	326.55609	6.15944	45.752
walled	143	75643	120.66543	1.68211	45.362
whiskey	253	176479	213.48500	3.92446	43.555
westeros	60	8639	50.62885	0.19211	43.309
icewine	53	2806	44.72215	0.06240	43.037
tripadvisor	90	36095	75.94328	0.80266	42.683
gaol	95	41285	80.16235	0.91808	42.314
guesthouse	109	56163	91.97575	1.24893	41.342
guinness	157	102402	132.47884	2.27717	40.730
seafood	388	322653	327.39990	7.17501	40.171
tours	259	202329	218.54788	4.49930	39.923
irish	1784	1669269	1505.36450	37.12044	39.516
Dubliner	53	11423	44.72	0.25	
cliff	666	660841	561.98029	14.69548	35.869
chowder	63	23434	53.16029	0.52111	35.606
coastline	254	237455	214.32881	5.28042	34.286
snowshoe	88	54930	74.25565	1.22151	33.876
kayaking	132	107118	111.38348	2.38204	33.229
lobster	200	185051	168.76285	4.11508	33.189
must-see	76	43559	64.12988	0.96865	33.084
pub	785	873804	662.39417	19.43125	32.470
must-visit	44	8433	37.12783	0.18753	32.107
bistro	109	86230	91.98	1.92	
castle	1337	1554626	1128.18	34.57	
craggy	53	19930	44.72	0.44	
poutine	43	8164	36.28	0.18	

(8) Categorization of multi-unit keywords across channels

Instagram corpus

N.	Item	Frequency (focus)	Relative frequency (focus)	**POS**	**Affect: emotion**	**Appreciation (ADJ)**	**Graduation**
1	lovely photo	19	451.32785	JJ + NN	satisfaction	reaction	Play
2	gorgeous photo*	16	380.06555	JJ + NN	satisfaction	reaction	Play
3	amazing photo*	14	332.55737	JJ + NN	satisfaction	reaction	Play
4	great photo	15	356.31146	JJ + NN	satisfaction	reaction	Play
5	beautiful photo*	8	190.03278	JJ + NN	satisfaction	reaction	Play
6	white sand	13	308.80328	JJ + NN	Primarily experiential /evoked Satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (Nature) Strangerhood (Pure/exotic)
7	island paradise*	5	118.77048	NN + NN	satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (Nature) Strangerhood (Pure/Exotic) timelessness
8	great snap	4	95.01639	JJ + NN	satisfaction	reaction	Play
9	bucket list	6	142.52458	NN + NN	satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Tense (Denial of time)
10	small bar	4	95.01639	JJ + NN	Primarily experiential /evoked Satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (Gastronomic) Tense (Denial of time)
11	scenic drive*	4	95.01639	JJ + NN	satisfaction	Reaction	Tense (Denial of time)
12	stunning snap*	3	71.26229	JJ + NN	satisfaction	reaction	Play
13	iconic spot	3	71.26229	JJ + NN	satisfaction	valuation	Authenticity
14	incredible destination*	3	71.26229	JJ + NN	satisfaction	valuation	
15	ancient landscape	3	71.26229	JJ + NN	satisfaction	valuation	Tense (past) Authenticity (nature)
16	tasty lunch	3	71.26229	JJ + NN	satisfaction	valuation	Authenticity (gastronomic) Tense (denial of time)

17	glass floor	3	71.26229	NN + NN	Primarily experiential /evoked Satisfaction	Evoked valuation	---
18	scenic flight*	3	71.26229	JJ + NN	satisfaction	Reaction	Tense (denial of time)
19	beaten track	4	95.01639	VB N + NN	Primarily experiential /evoked Satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Play authenticity
20	turquoise water	3	71.26229	JJ + NN	Primarily experiential /evoked Satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (nature)
21	perfect getaway*	3	71.26229	JJ + NN	Satisfaction	valuation	Tense (denial of time)
22	leisurely stroll	3	71.26229	RB + NN	Satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Play
23	night sky	7	166.2786 9	NN + NN	Primarily experiential /evoked Satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (Natural)
24	red rock	3	71.26229	JJ + NN	Primarily experiential /evoked Satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (Natural)
25	lush greenery	3	71.26229	JJ + NN	Primarily experiential /evoked Satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (Natural)
26	sea breeze	3	71.26229		Primarily experiential /evoked Satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (Natural)
27	ideal spot	3	71.26229	JJ + NN	satisfaction	valuation	---
28	romantic getaway	3	71.26229	JJ + NN	Happiness	valuation	Tense (Denial of time)
29	historic site	5	118.7704 8	JJ + NN	satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Tense (past)

Website corpus

N.	Item	Frequency (focus)	Relative frequency (focus)	POS	Affect	Appreciation	Graduation
1	traditional music	104	87.75668	JJ + NN	Security	Valuation	Authenticity (cultural/traditional)
2	food scene	69	58.22318	NN + NN	Primarily experiential /evoked Satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (gastronomic/traditional)
3	local produce	97	81.84998	JJ + NN	security	valuation	Authenticity (gatronomic/traditional)
4	historic site	110	92.81956	JJ + NN	Primarily experiential /evoked Satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (cultural/traditional) Tense (past)
5	lonely planet	69	58.22318	JJ + NN	security	Evoked valuation	Tense (Denial of time)
6	craft beer	98	82.69379	NN	security	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (gatronomic/traditional)
7	irish music	67	56.53555	JJ + NN	security	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (cultural/traditional)
8	traditional irish music	50	42.19071	JJ + JJ + NN	security	valuation	Authenticity (cultural/traditional)
9	irish whiskey	49	41.34690	JJ + NN	security	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (gatronomic/traditional)
10	walled city	51	43.03452	VBN + NN	Primarily experiential /evoked Satisfaction	Composition /evoked valuation	Tense (past)
11	outdoor adventure	53	44.72215	JJ + NN	satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Tense (Denial of time)
12	monastic site	37	31.22113	JJ + NN	Primarily experiential /evoked Satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Tense (past)
13	festival time	36	30.37731	NN + NN	satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Tense (Denial of time)
14	family run	63	53.16029	NN + NN	satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Tense (Denial of time)
15	trad music	34	28.68968	JJ + NN	security	valuation	Authenticity (cultural/traditional)
16	seafood chowder	33	27.84587	NN + NN	satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (gastronomic)

17	round tower	35	29.53350	JJ + NN	Primarily experiential /evoked Satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Tense (past)
18	live music	149	125.72832	JJ + NN	satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (cultural/traditional)
19	fine dining	66	55.69174	JJ + VBG	Satisfaction	Valuation?	Authenticity (gastronomic)
20	kitsch theme	30	25.31443	JJ + NN	security	valuation	
21	music session	30	25.31443	NN + NN	satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (cultural/traditional)
22	natural beauty	98	82.69379	JJ + NN	satisfaction	valuation	Authenticity (Natural)
23	irish food	30	25.31443	JJ + NN	security	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (gastronomic)
24	afternoon tea	55	46.40978	NN + NN	satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (cultural/gastronomic)
25	polar bear	46	38.81545	JJ + NN	Primarily experiential /evoked Satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (Natural)
26	country house	48	40.50308	NN	Primarily experiential /evoked Satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Authenticity (Natural)
27	bucket list	43	36.28401	NN	satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Tense (Denial of time)
28	warm welcome	60	50.62885	JJ + NN	security	valuation	
29	perfect place*	86	72.56802	JJ + NN	satisfaction	valuation	
30	walking tour	49	41.34690	VBG + NN	satisfaction	Evoked valuation	Play

(9) Frequency rates of variables from the three main Macro-Category (absolute percentages) + Tourism Strategies

REPRESENTATION OF REALITY							
		IG (%)			WS (%)		
Macro-variable	**Variable (Tag)**	**Ireland**	**Canada**	**Australia**	**Ireland**	**Canada**	**Australia**
Subjects	Direct Presence of Living Beings	33.3	61.1	53.4	57	65	56.3
	Animal Life (A)	9.5	6.1	11.2	5	5	7.6
	Animal Life (R)	9.5	9.4	6.2	2.5	2.5	1.9

	Humans (A)	8.7	27.8	14.6	40	46.9	32.3
	Humans (R)	9.5	21.7	25.3	14.5	12.5	15.8
Processes	Process of Action	16.7	32.2	23.6	43	51.3	38.6
	Process of Reaction	19	30.6	30.3	16.5	15.6	17.7
	Transactional Action	10.3	21.7	7.3	23	30	13.9
	Transactional Reaction	4.8	15	15.7	10.5	6.3	9.5
	Non-transactional Action	6.3	11.1	16.3	20	21.3	24.1
	Non-transactional Reaction	13.5	16.1	13.5	6.5	8.8	8.9
Mood	Mood	96.8	93.9	96.6	85	78.1	86.7
	Sunrise	11.9	9.4	14	5.5	3.1	5.7
	Sunset	8.7	18.9	19.7	18	7.5	13.3
	Weather	70.6	41.7	42.7	53.5	40	48.7
	Sunny	30.2	14.4	35.4	24.5	21.3	43
	Stormy	11.9	4.4	0.6	3	0.6	1.3
	Cloudy	34.1	13.3	6.2	29	17.5	5.1
	Foggy	8.7	0.6	0	1.5	0.6	0.6
	Snowy	0.8	12.8	0	0	1.3	0
Setting	Natural	96	79.4	94.4	64.5	48.8	77.8
	Plain	32.5	4.4	6.2	14	7.5	11.4
	Forest	27.8	29.4	7.3	4.5	11.9	8.2
	Marine Environment	58.7	41.7	66.9	49	29.4	45.6
	Mountains	57.9	34.4	33.1	36	20	14.6
	Artificial	15.1	37.2	18.5	28	30	20.9
	City	0	10	9	8	11.3	7.6
	Town/Village	9.5	7.2	1.1	3	3.8	0
	Cultural	25.4	19.4	8.4	33.5	21.9	13.3
	Gastronomic	0	1.1	0.6	7	8.8	10.1
	Historical	32.5	9.4	2.2	25.5	10.6	1.9
	Analytical	0	0	1.1	11	15	3.8
	Inscription	0.8	2.2	0.6	9.5	4.4	3.2
	Map	0	0	0	1	13.8	2.5
	Icon/Logo	0	0	1.1	10	1.3	1.3
	Accommodation	0	7.2	1.1	2.5	1.9	3.8
Activities	Activities	15.1	40	28.7	44	51.9	34.8
	Sport Activities	9.5	11.1	7.9	14.5	14.4	10.8

	Snow sports	0	3.9	0	0	1.3	0
	Other Sport Activities	0.8	1.1	0	5	5.6	1.3
	Transportation	1.6	6.7	7.9	12.5	11.3	10.8
	Car Driving	0	0	2.8	4.5	1.3	1.3
	Other Means of Transportation	1.6	6.7	5.1	8	10	9.5
	Entertainment	0	3.9	1.1	5	9.4	1.9
	Recreational Activities	4.8	22.8	15.7	19	26.3	20.3
	Speaking	0	1.7	0	7.5	6.3	2.5

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE AUDIENCE							
		IG (%)			WS (%)		
Macro-variable	**Variable (Tag)**	**Ireland**	**Canada**	**Australia**	**Ireland**	**Canada**	**Australia**
Direction of Gaze	Towards the Interactive Participant	7.1	7.8	7.3	5	10	6.3
	Towards the Represented Participant(s)	14.3	30.6	20.8	30.5	30.6	25.3
Camera Shot	Close	0.8	16.7	12.9	14	27.5	25.3
	Medium	14.3	33.3	19.1	41.5	35	42.4
	Long	46	36.7	34.8	28.5	15	12
	Very Long	38.9	13.3	33.1	15.5	11.3	17.1
Camera Angle (Perspective)	Subjective Image	99.2	97.8	92.7	92.5	85.6	91.8
	Vertical Angle	99.2	97.8	92.7	90.5	85.6	90.5
	Low	18.3	23.3	12.4	22.5	19.4	15.2
	Eye-level	37.3	43.9	32	46.5	40.6	56.3
	High	25.4	20.6	25.8	22.5	21.9	12
	Very High	18.3	10	22.5	2.5	3.8	7
	Horizontal Angle	99.2	97.2	91.6	92.5	85	91.8
	Frontal	8.7	14.4	10.1	10.5	9.4	11.4
	Oblique	90.5	82.8	81.5	83.5	75.6	80.4
	Objective Image	0.8	2.8	7.3	6.5	15	7
	Direct Frontal Angle	0.8	0.6	1.1	4	3.8	0.6

	Perpendicular Top - Down Angle	0	1.7	6.2	2.5	11.3	6.3
Depth (Technique)	Converging Lines - Vanishing Point(s)	70.6	65.6	53.9	46.5	45	50.6
	Blurred Background/Selective Focus	5.6	19.4	12.4	16	24.4	17.7
	Element in the Foreground	18.3	25.6	24.2	32	27.5	25.3
	Overlap	16.7	9.4	7.3	14	8.1	6.3
	Less Detailed/ Coloured Background	40.5	26.1	21.3	29.5	16.3	16.5

COMPOSITION							
		IG (%)			WS (%)		
Macro-variable	**Variable (Tag)**	**Ireland**	**Canada**	**Australia**	**Ireland**	**Canada**	**Australia**
Space Distribution	Rule of Thirds	81	83.9	80.3	77	60.6	72.2
	Scenic Rule of Thirds	65.9	61.1	64.6	43	33.8	44.9
	One Point (RoT)	24.6	23.3	14.6	27	25	18.4
	More Points (RoT)	8.7	12.8	10.1	15	8.1	14.6
	Lines (RoT)	17.5	21.7	17.4	9	3.1	15.8
	Horizontal (RoT)	12.7	10.6	15.2	4	1.9	7
	Horizontal High (RoT)	10.3	5	12.9	3	0.6	3.8
	Vertical (RoT)	4.8	11.7	1.7	6	1.3	8.9
	Water (Neg. Space)	28.6	21.1	34.8	25	10.6	22.8
	Land (Neg. Space)	61.9	40.6	53.4	32.5	20.6	31.6
	Sky (Neg. Space)	2.4	5.6	5.1	5	6.9	3.2
	Other (Neg. Space)	9.5	21.1	7.3	9	8.1	10.8
	Centric	38.1	41.1	33.7	27	38.8	32.9
	Polarization	27	16.1	27	24	21.3	26.6
	Symmetry	9.5	8.3	7.9	4	3.1	3.2

Visual Flow	Leading line(s)	31.7	26.7	33.1	15	14.4	15.8
	Connecting Dots	15.9	25.6	22.5	24.5	28.8	19
	Framework	7.1	9.4	5.1	2	0.6	3.2
Visual Weight	Landscape Element	33.3	44.4	33.1	16.5	13.8	17.1
	Represented Living Participant	4.8	23.9	17.4	26	34.4	23.4
	Object	1.6	3.9	2.2	6	11.3	10.1
Other	Reflection	5.6	7.8	5.1	3	1.9	1.3
	Sharpness of Focus	92.1	89.4	97.2	24	23.8	34.2

TOURISM STRATEGIES							
		IG /%)			WS (%)		
Macro-variable	**Variable (Tag)**	**Ireland**	**Canada**	**Australia**	**Ireland**	**Canada**	**Australia**
Indexical Reference	Indexical Reference	9.5	32.2	25.8	35.5	39.4	34.8
	Exploration	2.4	6.1	7.9	12	10.6	13.3
	Backpack	2.4	2.8	2.2	4.5	1.3	3.2
	Cap	0.8	1.1	4.5	0.5	5.6	3.8
	Luggage	0	0	0	2.5	0.6	0
	Camera	0	1.1	0	3.5	1.3	5.1
	Relax/Leisure	6.3	27.2	21.3	27.5	31.9	27.8
	Food	0	1.1	2.2	4.5	5.6	3.2
	Meals	0	3.9	2.8	6	8.8	4.4
	Sunglasses	0	0.6	1.1	2.5	5.6	5.1
	Hat	3.2	8.9	3.9	3.5	4.4	7.6
	Sportswear	1.6	8.9	2.2	8.5	9.4	5.7
	Swimwear	0	1.7	11.2	0	0.6	3.8
	Towel	0	1.7	0.6	0.5	0	1.3
	Bag	0	2.2	0.6	2.5	1.9	2.5
	Dress	0	1.1	2.8	2	3.1	4.4
	Warm Clothes/Soft Cloths	3.2	7.2	1.1	4.5	2.5	0.6
Authenticity	Authenticity	96	86.1	94.4	84	81.9	94.9
	Natural (A)	92.1	75.6	93.3	59.5	45	78.5
	Traditional/Typical	43.7	27.8	15.2	42	42.5	20.3

	Gastronomic (A)	0	2.8	0.6	7	8.1	10.8
Extraordinariness	Extraordinariness	7.1	5.6	22.5	6.5	3.1	7.6
	Pilgrimage	4	2.8	7.9	5	1.3	2.5
	Purification	3.2	2.8	15.2	1.5	1.9	5.1
Strangerhood	Strangerhood	95.2	83.3	92.7	72	65.6	79.7
	Unspoilt	93.7	70.6	88.8	58	42.5	71.5
	Untamed	50.8	36.7	62.4	29	18.1	24.7
	Primitive	7.9	2.8	19.1	5.5	1.9	3.8
	Exotic	0.8	2.2	61.8	0.5	0	41.8
	Enchanted	28.6	26.1	20.2	13.5	3.8	5.1
	Adventurous	11.9	20	22.5	31	38.1	25.9
Play	Play	3.2	8.9	4.5	14	17.5	13.3
Conflict	Conflict	1.6	5.6	1.7	2.5	7.5	3.2
	Stereotype	1.6	2.2	0.6	1.5	4.4	1.9
	Opposition	0	3.3	1.1	1	3.1	1.3
Tense/Magic	Tense/Magic	82.5	67.8	77	77.5	66.9	69.6
	Past	38.9	7.2	4.5	20.5	6.9	1.3
	Future	0	7.8	9	2	8.8	5.1
	Denial of Time	15.1	45.6	38.2	51	52.5	52.5
	Timelessness	65.9	32.2	50	29.5	11.9	15.8
Social Tropes	Social Tropes	12.7	32.2	30.9	35	37.5	36.1
	Single	10.3	19.4	18.5	4.5	4.4	7.6
	Couple	0.8	6.1	5.6	16	8.8	17.7
	Family	0	1.1	0.6	1	1.3	1.9
	Friends	0.8	1.1	2.2	5	10	0
Taboos Infractions	Taboos Infractions	0	2.8	14	2.5	6.3	7
	Moral Inhibition	0	0	0.6	1.5	3.8	1.3
	Sexual Inhibition	0	2.8	13.5	1	3.1	6.3
Visual Clichés	Gate	6.3	9.4	6.2	3.5	3.8	6.3
Other	Youth	6.3	16.1	24.2	17.5	21.9	20.3
	Beauty	0.8	6.1	15.2	9	11.9	16.5

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