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# The Promotion of the Veneto Territory in Times of Crisis

## A Discourse Analysis of a Tourist Board Website during the Covid-19 Pandemic

**Abstract**

*The study investigates the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on institutional tourism communication. In view of the necessary changes occurred in the tourism field since the start of the pandemic, a comparison will be made with the results of a previous study on the English and the Italian versions of the seven tourism board websites corresponding to the seven "provinces" in the Veneto region (Cesiri 2019). The present study analyses the changes in the communicative strategies used by the tourist board website of the Veneto Region, that collects all the websites of the provinces, examining how the territory is presented to prospective visitors as well as how the website informs prospective visitors about the pandemic and the regulations in place to prevent contagion. The Italian and the English versions of the website are investigated using Fairclough's (2003) approach to discourse analysis. Particularly relevant is the notion of 'presupposition,' namely any kind of background assumption that is present in a text. Levels of presupposition are investigated considering not only the territorial description and promotion but also elements of specialized communication about the pandemic, its outcomes, and the corresponding restrictions and regulations that are in place at the moment of writing and that will presumably still be in place in the near future. Results show that some territories do not provide any mention to restrictions, while others provide only superficial mentions to safety measures or external links to the website of the Italian Ministry of Health.*

**Keywords:** *the language of tourism, discourse analysis, presupposition, Veneto tourism promotion, Covid-19 tourism*

## 1. Introduction

The dramatic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on any human activity has been tragic in some sectors. According to the Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR), "the global recession will be long lasting, with no country escaping its impact regardless of their mitigation

strategy" (Chudik et al. 2020, online). Lockdowns, business closures, social distance are the main factors disrupting the countries' economy.

Eurostat—the statistical office of the European Union—has investigated the effects of the Covid-19 economic crisis and its consequences on the labor market, concluding that the unemployment rate has reached around 30% on average in the EU member states.[1] According to a report by the European Parliament (bold type as in the original):

> Large parts of the digital industry have performed well, and so has the healthcare industry. Enabling industries like chemicals, construction, and the food and drinks sector are likely to experience a V-shaped recovery. Despite the initial shocks, automotive and textile industries appear to be on a recovery path since the first lockdowns. **Sectors that are dependent on human contact and interaction, such as the cultural and creative industries and the aerospace industry** (due to the decrease in mobility and tourism activities), have experienced substantial hits by the crisis, and they are likely to suffer for extended periods from these unprecedented shocks. (De Vet et al. 2021, 65)

The travel, tourism, and hospitality industry—being substantially based on human contact and interaction—has been, and still is, one of the most affected industries. Persistent lockdowns in some countries, border closures or access restrictions in others, as well as quarantine measures in most countries in the world, severely affect travel conditions of perspective tourists. A recent study by Škare, Soriano and Porada-Rochón (2021) has compared the effects of coronavirus on the tourism industry with previous pandemics. Results show that

> the impact of COVID-19 on the travel tourism industry will be incomparable to the consequence of the previous pandemic episodes. Depending on the dynamics of future pandemics (from April 2020), the best-case scenario (scenario 1) shows that the travel tourism industry worldwide will drop on average from -2.93 percentage points to -7.82 in the total GDP contribution. Jobs in the travel tourism industry will decrease by -2.44 percentage points to -6.55. The estimated lost inbound tourist spending ranges from -25.0 percentage points to -35.0. Total capital investments that fall due to pandemics varies from -25.0 percentage points to -31.0. (Škare, Soriano and Porada-Rochón 2021, 2)

On a similar note, Abbas et al. (2021) suggest that the crisis that has affected the tourism and leisure industry can be overcome—despite the ongoing effect of the coronavirus and its variants in most countries of the world—only if the ways in which experts, professionals, and scholars in the field work on innovative projects that would ensure that facilities are kept open notwithstanding possible future restrictions. In particular, Abbas et al. suggest that

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[1] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Employment_-_quarterly_statistics. Last visited 22/06/2021.

the tourism industry should consider starting renovations of hotels, improving staff quality, simplifying the sale of tour groups and customer registration, and moving to digital technology. Particular attention should be paid to family entertainment: special programs for children and adolescents, the development of appropriate menus, entertainment systems, etc. Future pandemics are likely to recover fully, so tourism must first provide high-quality sanitation measures. (Abbas et al. 2021, 9)

The studies cited so far show a tragic scenario for the tourism field, which can survive the long effects of the coronavirus-induced crisis only if it can adapt its offer to the global changed circumstances. Moreover, these changes entail the use of different communicative strategies through which destinations promote safety measures to tourists.

Being Italy one of the main destinations for international tourism, the present study draws on a qualitative analysis to investigate the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on institutional tourism communication. In view of the above-mentioned necessary changes occurring in tourism communication, a comparison will be made with the results of a previous study on the English and the Italian versions of the tourism board website promoting the seven 'provinces' in the Veneto region to national and international visitors (Cesiri 2019).

In particular, changes in the communicative strategies used by the tourist board website occurred since the 2019 study will be considered, examining how each territory is presented to prospective visitors as well as how visitors are informed about the pandemic and the regulations in place to prevent contagion. The Italian and the English versions of the website will be investigated using Fairclough's (2003) approach to discourse analysis. Particularly relevant will be the notion of 'presupposition,' namely any kind of background assumption that is present in a text. Levels of presupposition will be investigated considering the level of specific communication about the pandemic, its outcome, and the corresponding restrictions and regulations that are in place at the moment of writing and that will presumably still be in place in the near future.

The paper is structured as follows: Section Two summarizes the results of a previous study which examined destinations in the Veneto Region before the pandemic outbroke, while Section Three provides an account of the pandemic in Italy and, in particular, in Veneto. Section Four introduces the reader to the concept of presupposition and the framework of analysis adopted in the study. Moreover, the section presents an overview of the data (websites, their sections, etc.) used in the analysis together with an overview of the method of analysis employed to examine the data, especially in terms of the concept of presupposition. Section Five looks at how domain-specific contents are transmitted to both Italian and foreign tourists, making specialized communication accessible to visitors, while it also looks at the levels of

presuppositions/assumptions present in the texts in English vs. the texts in Italian. Finally, Section Seven offers some general remarks and conclusions on the study.

## 2. The promotion of the Veneto territory before Covid-19

A previous study conducted before the coronavirus pandemic (Cesiri 2019) investigated the linguistic strategies used by local tourist boards in the websites of the seven provinces in the Italian region of Veneto to promote their territories in English and in Italian. Corpus linguistics methods of analysis were used to investigate the verbal component of the websites, identifying recurrent patterns occurring in the texts that could reveal how each territory selected its symbolic markers, i.e., elements typical of a destination that provide an iconic, but also stereotypical, image of a destination (Dann 1996). Data from the texts in English were contrasted to data from the texts in Italian to see whether local institutions decided to promote the same aspects regardless of the national culture of the visitors, or if they preferred to adapt the promotional message to the presumed expectations of foreign visitors.

The quantitative and the qualitative analyses conducted in the study revealed that the promotional texts, both in English and in Italian, used a language that was complex and specialized. The qualitative analysis, in particular, confirmed that the terminology used was not as promotional as one would expect from tourism websites. Emphatic language, typical of promotion in tourism (Dann 1996), was not frequently used. The texts also showed a consistent recurrence to nominalization (one of the features of specialized texts, see Gotti 2011) with nouns taken from the specialized fields of the history of the arts, architecture, and geography and whose meaning and implications, with no other explanation or definition provided, were opaque for the average tourist.

The 2019 study also highlighted that the seven Veneto provinces tried to provide prospective visitors with a specific image of their territory, first, by presenting specific pictures in the websites and then, constructing the promotion of the landmarks through the recurrent use of specific keywords. However, the visual and the verbal symbolic markers did not always coincide, so the pictures present in the websites did not correspond to the keywords used in the texts. Thus, the websites appeared to be more informative than promotional, and the presentation of the territories was sometimes confused with no specific mental image that could be created because of the lack of consistency between images and verbal descriptions.

## 3. The pandemic in Italy and in the Veneto Region

The first news about exceptional cases of severe pneumonia reached the World Health Organization (WHO) at the end of December 2019. By mid-January 2020 scientists identify the new virus belonging to the coronavirus type, just like SARS and the common flu.[2] However, in this case, the virus severely affected humans causing pulmonary problems even in healthy young adults. By the end of January, Wuhan—the city in China where it all started—entered the first full lockdown, soon followed by many countries in the world where the virus had already been spread by travelers (tourists, businesspersons, etc.).

At the end of January, the then Italian Prime Minister, Giuseppe Conte, confirmed the first two cases of contagion involving two Chinese tourists in Italy. The Prime Minister declared the state of sanitary emergency. February 2020 is the month when general lockdowns were put in place in Italy (as in most countries in the world), including the cancellation of events where people were expected to gather in large or small numbers. This was immediately followed by the cancellation of in-person lessons at school and university, that moved their activities online. In March 2020 a full lockdown was declared, people's movements were allowed outside their house only for special circumstances. Police, *carabinieri*, and the army patrolled the streets of Italian cities to enforce the Government's measures. By now, however, the virus had infected more than 220,000 people with mild to severe symptoms, while the death toll had reached thousands (Ciminelli and Garcia-Mandicó 2020). In the subsequent months, the Government alternated restrictions or openings following the pandemic trend. Despite political unrest and Government crises, by the end of 2020, the Italian Government signed agreements to buy the new Covid-19 vaccine and implements new regulations, such as the three colors (red, orange, yellow, white) based on the number of contagions and which are associated to Regions, indicating a decrease or an increase in the restrictions to people's movements (from red to white).[3]

At the moment of writing (July 2021), all Regions in Italy are labelled with color white, indicating minimum restrictions, while vaccinations are proceeding at frantic pace to cover most of the population and to avert a new wave of contagions (and new restrictions) because of a feared new variant of the virus.[4]

The general measures issued by the Government and bills passed by the Parliament at national levels were implemented by local regulations issued by single Regions. Of the twenty Regions in which Italy is divided, the Veneto Region is one of those that are indicated as a model because

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[2] www.who.int. Last visited 22/06/2021.
[3] lab24.ilsole24ore.com/storia-coronavirus/. Last visited 22/06/2021.
[4] lab24.ilsole24ore.com/storia-coronavirus/. Last visited 22/06/2021.

of the way in which it managed the pandemic when it first outbroke. According to Mugnai and Bilato (2020, 161), "the Veneto region adopted the so-called 'territorial' or 'out-of-hospital' model of management, which significantly slowed down the curve of infections."

Despite the virtuous model provided by the Veneto Region, the number of contagions and deaths—locally, nationally, and internationally—prevented the re-openings of commercial activities, landmarks, historical buildings, and any other kind of tourist destination that would imply gatherings and, thus, favor contagion. The tourism industry in the Veneto Region heavily suffered from the situation to the extent that—according to official data communicated by the Regional Chamber of Commerce—the sectors suffered a loss of -65% of visitors in 2020. However, since the measures against coronavirus were eased in late Spring-early Summer 2021, destinations in Veneto are witnessing an increase in the so-called 'proximity tourism,' namely tourism that involved visitors from the same region, or short distances and neighboring countries such as Austria and Switzerland.[5]

## 4. Data and methodology

A conceptual framework more than a method, Norman Fairclough's approach to discourse analysis aims at

> systematically explor[ing] often opaque relationships of casuality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and culture structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and text arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony. (Fairclough 2003, 135)

This approach, then, particularly focuses its attention to the 'critical' aspects in society that influence the construction of discourse. Indeed, "discursive practices may have major ideological effects: that is, they can help to produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people" (Fairclough and Wodak 1997, 258). Fairclough (1989; 1995) has developed a three-dimensional model to explore the connections existing between discourse, ideology, and power. The model, which Fairclough (2003, 136) himself defines a "framework," sees each communicative event constructed around three dimensions, which allow participants to correctly interpret and construe a specific

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[5] www.regione.veneto.it/article-detail?articleId=11045375. Last visited 22/06/2021.

communicative event: text (namely, any written or spoken communicative event), discourse practices ("involving the production and interpretation of text"), and social practices.

The present study applies this framework to the websites of institutional tourist boards in the Veneto Region. In this communicative situation, the institution detains the 'social power' in that they are the source of knowledge from which the promotion of the territory proceeds towards the prospective visitors who receive the knowledge by accessing the websites. This particularly applies to the transmission of information about regulations put in place to avoid contagion in times when the pandemic is still ongoing. This aspect is here examined with a focus on the discursive choices that the institutions make in the websites in order to reinforce their 'power.' To do so, a specific strategy is investigated, namely presupposition, which is commonly employed to refer to "any kind of background assumption against which an action, theory, expression or utterance makes sense or is rational" (Levinson 1983, 168). Presupposition entails the implicit meaning of a word or a statement, rather than its explicit semantic connotation. Thus, presuppositions (a.k.a. 'assumptions,' Fairclough 2003) in a text imply a certain agreed mediation of connotation between the sender of the message and the receiver; for this reason they are difficult to detect. However, Fairclough (2003, 55-56) has identified three kinds of presupposition, namely:

> Existential assumptions: assumptions about what exists. Propositional assumptions: assumptions about what is or can be or will be the case. Value assumptions: assumptions about what is good or desirable. Each of these may be marked or 'triggered' (Levinson 1983) by linguistic features of a text, though not all assumptions are 'triggered.' For example, existential assumptions are triggered by markers of definite reference such as definite articles and demonstratives (the, this, that, these, those). Factual assumptions are triggered by certain verbs ('factive verbs')—for instance 'I realized (forgot, remembered) that managers have to be flexible' assumes that managers have to be flexible. Value assumptions can also be triggered by certain verbs—for instance, 'help' (e.g., 'a good training programme can help develop flexibility') assumes that developing flexibility is desirable.

The present study considers the group of websites collected for Cesiri (2019). After carefully reading the texts, they were analyzed for instances of presupposition. The parts that contain instances of presupposition are examined in the next section. The previous study investigated the visual and verbal features of the following list of websites, that represented the seven provinces in the Veneto Region:

- www.infodolomiti.it
- www.polesineterratraduefiumi.it
- www.turismopadova.it

- www.turismovenezia.it
- www.tourism.verona.it
- www.vicenzae.org
- www.visittreviso.it

The next Section analyzes the ways in which the Veneto Region and its territories promote themselves to prospective tourists in view of the changes due to the pandemic. Moreover, it also investigates how institutions communicate local and national restrictions or safety measures to foreign tourists who might not be familiar with the language of Italian administration, as well as to Italian tourists who might not be aware of local measures.

## 5. Covid-19-communication to tourists[6]

This section analyses the institutional websites indicated in Table 1, investigating the communicative strategies employed by both the Veneto Region and the Italian Ministry of Health to communicate safety measures and regulations to foreign as well as Italian tourists. The Italian Ministry of Health was chosen because it is the source of information recommended to Italian and foreign tourists in the section dedicated to Cortina d'Ampezzo and to the city of Verona.

In the present study, however, the analysis of assumptions/presuppositions is conducted on a smaller sample. Since 2019, in fact, most of the above-listed websites have become sections of the main website entitled '*Promozione Turistica del Veneto*[7] *– The Land of Venice.*'[8] Moreover, Covid-19-related information can be found in the pages of only some of the destinations, which do not correspond to the provinces but to cities or other significant places in the territory. Here, only some sections provide information either in English or in Italian, more rarely in both languages. Table 1 summarizes the distribution of Covid-19-related information in either or both languages.

| Section/Destination | Info. in English | Info. In Italian |
|---|---|---|
| Cavallino Treporti | | ✓ |

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[6] The texts in Italian are provided with their English translation in a footnote. The translations are purposely kept as close as possible to the original text so readers might appreciate the way in which information is provided.

[7]  Eng. Veneto's Tourism Promotion.

[8]  www.veneto.eu. Last visited 22/06/2021.

| | | |
|---|:---:|:---:|
| Beaches in Veneto | | ✓ |
| Conegliano | ✓ | ✓ |
| Cortina d'Ampezzo | ✓ | ✓ |
| Christmas in Veneto | | ✓ |
| Venice | ✓ | |
| Vicenza | ✓ | ✓ |
| Verona | ✓ | ✓[9] |

**Tab. 1:** Distribution of Covid-19-related information in the sections of www.veneto.eu

Table 1 shows that some destinations chose to provide information either in English or in Italian but not in both languages. This choice can be hypothesized with either the need for the section to be updated or with the target public that the specific destinations expect to be attracted. For instance, the section dedicated to 'beaches' in the Veneto Region is only in Italian since it might be of interest to proximity tourists from neighboring Italian Regions, who might not know about the safety measures implemented by each seaside destination as well as by the local beach clubs/resorts. On the contrary, the section dedicated to Venice provides Covid-19-related information only in English. This might be justified by the international resonance of the city itself. Thus, it was probably considered more important to inform international tourists coming from countries which might regulate tourism during the pandemic in a different way, while Italian tourists are considered already informed about national and local regulations and safety measures.

### 5.1 The Veneto Region website

One of the destinations that provide information on safety measures to prospective tourists is Cavallino Treporti (Venice), a small town in the territory of Venice that occupies a small peninsula between the Venetian Lagoon and the Adriatic Sea. The destination is thus a destination that attracts national and international tourists visiting Venice and who become interested in its public beaches. However, in this case the website does not provide information in English but only in Italian. The paragraph containing reference to safety measures, however, does not explicitly mention the pandemic, thus containing a high level of assumptions. Example 1 (bold type as in the original) reads as follows:

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[9]  External link to the Italian Ministry of Health's website.

(1)  *Il distretto europeo per le vacanze all'aria aperta, con la più alta concentrazione di campeggi, si prepara a far vivere una **vacanza in completa sicurezza e assoluto relax** ai suoi ospiti.*

*Totale la cura di ogni dettaglio, a partire dalla **spiaggia**, dove la superficie per ogni singolo ombrellone sarà di molto superiore al protocollo dei dieci metri quadrati, grazie a **spazi che varieranno dai 16 ai 50 metri quadrati.** Massima anche l'attenzione all'interno delle strutture ricettive, dove nulla sarà lasciato al caso e per metà giugno la quasi totalità dei campeggi e villaggi sarà aperta.*

*In questo periodo il modello di vacanza di Cavallino Treporti ha come punto di forza l'essere all'aria aperta, a **contatto diretto con la natura** e poter contare su grandi spazi. La spiaggia è molto ampia e le misure di sicurezza sono quelle classiche, come il distanziamento sociale e l'igienizzazione delle mani, nulla di più*[10].

As we can see from the text, the pandemic is never mentioned but reference is made to '*protocolli*' (protocols) which reminds tourists of the national laws in enforcement because of the pandemic. Thus, the author of the text assumes that tourists already know about the protocols or know where to find such information. Another interesting assumption present in the text lies in the sentence "*le misure di sicurezza sono quelle classiche,*" in which the author implies that the safety measures for the pandemic are now a steady part of any social gathering, instead of being just emergency measures.

The second destination that provides some Covid-19-related information in Italian is the section dedicated to the beaches in the Veneto Region (*Beaches in Veneto*). In this case, the only reference lies in example 2:

(2)  nell'epoca post emergenza Covid -19, per garantire e comunicare ai turisti gli alti standard di sicurezza e affidabilità delle località venete è stata realizzata la **WEBAPP "VeniceSands" (https://venicesands.veneto.eu/)**. Si tratta di un utilissimo strumento che consente di verificare le linee guida sanitarie applicate negli stabilimenti, prenotare on line l'ombrellone e avere in tempo reale tutte le indicazioni

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[10]  The European district for open-air holidays, with the highest number of camping sites, is preparing itself to offer its guests a **holiday in total safety and relax.** Attention to even the smaller detail, starting from the beach, where the space for every single sunshade will be far greater than the 10 mq established by protocols, thanks to **spaces that will vary from 16 to 50 mq**. Maximum attention is also paid inside the facilities, where nothing will be left to chance and, by mid-June, almost all the camping sites and resorts will be open. In times like these, Cavallino Treporti provides a model of holiday whose strength is being in open air, in **direct contact with nature** as well as the possibility to have large spaces and the safety measures are the traditional ones, such as social distancing, hand cleansing, nothing more.

utili per trascorrere le vacanze nella tranquillità e sicurezza necessaria fino alle previsioni meteo.[11]

In this case, the first sentence contains the assumption that the safety measures offered by the resorts are an extra service offered by the territory, as is the application suggested. Even though this is not eventually the case, and safety measures are still obligatory as established by national laws and regional regulations, tourists are left with the assumption that the pandemic is now no longer an emergency.

The group of sections that provide information in both English and Italian includes destinations such as Conegliano (Treviso), Cortina d'Ampezzo (Belluno), the cities of Venice, Verona and Vicenza, as well as a section that promotes events in Veneto during the Christmas holidays.

As regards Conegliano, it is a town in the territory of Treviso, at the centre of the vineyards producing the internationally famous Prosecco wine. The territory attracts proximity as well as national and international tourists, so we find information in English and in Italian. In the case of Conegliano, the information provided in Italian concerns the cancellation of the events because of the pandemic (as in example 3 below), while the information in English is considerably shorter (see below in red as in the original):

(3) *A causa dell'emergenza sanitaria Covid-19,* **gli eventi della Primavera del Prosecco sono stati rimandati al 2021***: il comitato organizzatore ha però voluto lanciare dei "virtual tour" con video e contenuti multimediali che verranno costantemente pubblicati sulla pagina Facebook Primavera del Prosecco.*[12]

<span style="color:red">**Emergency COVID-19 – the events of Primavera del Prosecco Superiore are cancelled.**</span>

In the text in Italian, assumptions are not as implicit as in previous texts, since it openly acknowledges the fact that the pandemic is still ongoing. The same applies to the sentence in English but, in this case, no reference is given to the Facebook page, so one might assume that

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[11] In the post-Covid-19 emergency era, in order to guarantee and communicate to tourists the highest safety and reliability standards of destinations in Veneto the **WEBAPP "VeniceSand"** […] has been created. It is an extremely useful tool that allows you to check the safety sanitary guidelines in place in the beach resorts, to rent your beach umbrella, and to read in real time all the useful instruction to spend your holiday in total safety and peace of mind up to the weather forecasts.

[12] Because of the Covid-19 sanitary emergency, **the events for the Prosecco Spring are postponed to 2021**: the organizing committee, however, has launched some "virtual tours" with video and multimedia contents that will be uploaded constantly in the Facebook page Primavera del Prosecco.

the Facebook page will not be updated in English but only in Italian. In actual fact, the page contains posts in Italian and live events of award ceremonies and similar events that are held in Italian for an Italian public since they refer to other producers or to *pro loco* members, as explicitly indicated in the posts themselves.

The renowned mountain destination, Cortina d'Ampezzo, lies in the territory of Belluno and offers tourists activities that can be performed during the winter as well as during the summer. Moreover, like Conegliano, it attracts proximity, national and international visitors. As regards information about safety measures, the section promoting Cortina is the one that provides more thorough details than the other destinations. Measures are described in both English and Italian, including emergency numbers and addresses where visitors can get their Covid swab. However, the links to the websites of the *Regione Veneto* and to the Italian Ministry of Health are also provided for further information.

(4)    LA TUA VACANZA SICURA

Cortina d'Ampezzo è pronta ad accogliervi in sicurezza, offrendo la possibilità di provare attività indimenticabili e non solo. Desideriamo ospitarvi al più presto per farvi ammirare le bellezze paesaggistiche del nostro territorio e permettervi di vivere al meglio il vostro soggiorno a Cortina. Di seguito troverete alcune informazioni che vi possono aiutare per capire meglio la situazione attuale a Cortina d'Ampezzo.

LE MISURE DA RISPETTARE

Le misure di sicurezza da adottare sono le seguenti: indossare la mascherina nei luoghi al chiuso e nei luoghi all'aperto quando non è possibile garantire il distanziamento; mantenere una distanza di sicurezza interpersonale di almeno un metro; igienizzarsi le mani con apposite lozioni disinfettanti o tramite lavaggio frequente.

QUANDO POSSO VENIRE A CORTINA?

Gli spostamenti tra regioni sono disciplinati a seconda del colore della regione di provenienza e di arrivo, le norme dedicate si possono trovare sul sito del Ministero della Salute.

SCOPRI LE STRUTTURE APERTE

Sul nostro sito troverai le strutture aperte pronte ad accoglierti, per farti vivere un soggiorno indimenticabile in sicurezza. Scopri, inoltre, le attività enogastronomiche di Cortina, alcune di esse offrono anche il servizio delivery.

COSA POSSO FARE A CORTINA?

Venite a riscoprire le bellezze che il nostro territorio ha da offrire, tra le varie opportunità vi sono le escursioni con le ciaspole in mezzo alla natura, shopping nelle boutique più rinomate del centro storico e tante altre imperdibili esperienze.

I MEZZI DI TRASPORTO LOCALI

É obbligatorio indossare la mascherina all'interno dei mezzi pubblici, tenere la distanza di sicurezza di almeno un metro, e igienizzarsi le mani non appena possibile. Si informa, inoltre, che l'ingresso frontale degli autobus è adibito a sola entrata, mentre quello

posteriore a sola uscita, in modo da evitare il più possibile contatti tra persone. Non è possibile acquistare i biglietti a bordo, ma solo presso la biglietteria o nelle rivendite autorizzate.[13]

As we can see from example 4, the first few sentences are typical of the promotional language of tourism adapted to the pandemic, but the language in the remaining of the text is formal, a kind of bureaucratese typical of public offices that communicate regulations to the public. As for the text in English, example 5 below clearly shows that the text is not a translation of the Italian one:

(5)    YOUR SAFE HOLIDAY IN CORTINA
       Cortina d'Ampezzo is ready to welcome you safely, offering several unforgettable activities in its UNESCO World Heritage landscapes. Here you can find some information to help you understand the current situation in Cortina and in Italy.
       CURRENT REGULATIONS
       In Italy, it is mandatory to wear a face mask in public places indoors and outdoors, to maintain the safe distance of at least one metre from other people and it is recommended to wash your hands frequently and/or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
       TRAVELLING TO CORTINA
       Travel to Italy is possible from a number of countries: click here to see the list and what needs to be done to enter Italy safely.
       The Italian Government has introduced a classification of the Regions based on colour. Each colour corresponds to specific measures, regulating the movement within the

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[13] YOUR SAFE HOLIDAY. Cortina d'Ampezzo is ready to welcome you safely, offering the possibility to try unforgettable activities and much more. We would like to host you as soon as possible so you can enjoy the beauty of the landscape in our territory and to allow you to live your stay in Cortina at your best. You will find below some information that might help you understand the current situation in Cortina d'Ampezzo. MEASURES TO ABIDE. The safety measures to abide are the following ones: **wear a mask** indoors and outdoors when social distancing is not possible; keep a **safety interpersonal distance** of at least 1mt; **hygienize your hands** with the specific gel or by frequently washing them. WHEN CAN I COME TO CORTINA? Travel between regions is regulated on the basis of the color assigned to the region of departure or arrival, the dedicated norms can be found on the website of the Ministry of Health. DISCOVER THE OPEN FACILITIES. In our website you will find the facilities that are already open and ready to welcome you, and make you experience a safe and unforgettable stay. WHAT CAN I DO IN CORTINA? Come and discover the beauties that our territory can offer, among the various possibilities there are excursions with *ciaspole* immersed in the nature, shopping in the most renowned *boutiques* of the city centre and many more experiences that cannot be missed. LOCAL TRANSPORTATION. Wearing a mask on public transports is obligatory, keep the safety distance of at least 1mt, and hygienize your hands as often as possible. You are also informed that you can get on buses only through the front door, so as to avoid contact with other people. It is not possible to buy tickets on board but only from the ticket office or from authorized shops.

region, movement between regions, rules for businesses, restaurants and activities. For more information click here.
OUR ACCOMMODATION OFFER
Here you can find the open accommodation options for your stay in Cortina, while here is the list of Cortina's restaurants and eateries, some of which offer delivery and take-away services.
OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES
Several sports can be practiced in Cortina respecting all current regulations and experiencing the beauty of the Ampezzo Valley, click here to find the right one for you!
LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT
It is mandatory to wear a face mask in public places indoors and outdoors, to maintain the safe distance of at least one metre from other people and it is recommended to wash your hands frequently and/or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers. It is not possible to buy tickets on board, but you can buy them at the ticket office.

The text in English in example 5 provides almost the same information as the text in Italian, adding some other information, such as the Accommodation offer and how to sanitise hands, thus assuming that the Italian visitor might already know where to find such information.
A case in point is the section dedicated to the city of Venice, where safety measures are described only in English (example 6). In the Italian versions, we neither find any mention of the measures nor any reference to restrictions and regulations. This might be interpreted as the assumption of the basis of the page administration, which takes for granted that Italian visitors already know what to do and how to behave during the pandemic.

(6)     COVID-19 emergency Vela Spa informs you that considering the situation of sanitary emergency and the restriction measures designed to contain the COVID-19 infection, office activities of Public Relations Office are suspended or strongly reduced. It will be our appointment to answer to you as soon as possible.

Example 6 shows the text in English where some general reference is given to 'restriction measures' but with no other detail provided, so the author here might have presumed that prospective tourists can find the missing information elsewhere.
As for the other main cities, both Verona and Vicenza offer some Covid-19-related information and provide it both in English and Italian. The former gives details in Italian (example 7) and just indicates the Ministry of Health's website for information in English (example 8):

(7)     **Info Covid**
        **VENETO ZONA BIANCA**
        **Coprifuoco**

- dal 19 maggio entra in vigore dalle ore 23 alle ore 5 del giorno successivo
- dal 7 al 20 giugno, in zona gialla, ha inizio alle ore 24 e termina alle ore 5 del giorno successivo
- dal 21 giugno in zona gialla cessa di essere in vigore

**non si applica alle zone bianche**

**Attività dei servizi di ristorazione**

Dal 1° giugno, in zona gialla, le attività dei servizi di ristorazione, svolte da qualsiasi esercizio, sono consentite, anche al chiuso.

**Attività commerciali all'interno di mercati e centri commerciali**

Dal 22 maggio, in zona gialla, le attività degli esercizi commerciali presenti all'interno dei mercati e dei centri commerciali, gallerie commerciali, parchi commerciali e altre strutture ad essi assimilabili possono svolgersi anche nei giorni festivi e prefestivi.

**Palestre, piscine, centri natatori e centri benessere**

 - dal 24 maggio, in zona gialla, le attività di palestre sono consentite in conformità ai protocolli
- dal 1° luglio, in zona gialla, sono consentite le attività di centri benessere, piscine e centri natatori anche in impianti coperti in conformità ai protocolli

**Eventi sportivi aperti al pubblico**

Dal 1° giugno all'aperto e dal 1° luglio anche al chiuso, in zona gialla, e' consentita la presenza di pubblico esclusivamente con posti a sedere preassegnati e a condizione che sia assicurato il rispetto della distanza interpersonale di almeno un metro sia per gli spettatori che non siano abitualmente conviventi, sia per il personale. La capienza consentita non può essere superiore al 25 per cento di quella massima autorizzata e, comunque, il numero massimo di spettatori non può essere superiore a 1.000 per impianti all'aperto e a 500 per impianti al chiuso.

**Attività di sale giochi, sale scommesse, sale bingo e casinò**

Dal 1° luglio, in zona gialla, sono consentite le attività di sale giochi, sale scommesse, sale bingo e casinò.

**Parchi tematici e di divertimento**

Dal 15 giugno, in zona gialla, sono consentite le attività dei parchi tematici e di divertimento.

**Centri culturali, centri sociali e ricreativi, feste e cerimonie**

Dal 15 giugno, in zona gialla, sono consentite le feste conseguenti alle cerimonie civili o religiose, anche al chiuso, nel rispetto dei protocolli.

Dal 1° luglio, in zona gialla, sono consentite le attività dei centri culturali, centri sociali e centri ricreativi, nel rispetto dei protocolli.

**Musei e altri istituti e luoghi della cultura**

In zona gialla, è assicurato il servizio di apertura al pubblico dei musei e degli altri istituti e luoghi della cultura, a condizione che garantiscano modalità di fruizione contingentata o comunque tali da evitare assembramenti di persone.[14]

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[14] Veneto Yellow Area. Curfew - from 19th May starts at 23:00 until 05:00 of the next day - from 7th to the 20th May, with yellow area, will start at midnight and end at 05:00 of the next day - from 21st June it is not applied in yellow areas. It is not applied to yellow areas. Restaurants Since 1st June, with yellow area, restaurant activities are allowed indoors and outdoors.

(8)    Info Covid
       To verify the latest Covid-19 measures in force in Italy, please visit the Official
       Government Page.

The text in Italian in example 7 reports sentences from the national regulation, assuming that
the readers are already familiar with the formal and bureaucratic language, despite their level
of education, while the text in English in example 8 redirects to the Italian Government's official
website where, again, the information provided is quite domain-specific and formal.

In the case of Vicenza, the text is far less detailed than that of the previous city, with regard to
both the English and the Italian versions:

(9)    INFORMAZIONI UTILI:
       Le visite si svolgono in lingua italiana, con un numero contigentato [sic] di posti nel
       rispetto della normativa anticovid.
       Le gratuità sono riservate a ragazzi under 12, sempre previa prenotazione.
       Per permetterti di partecipare al tour in sicurezza, abbiamo bisogno di ricevere questo
       modulo compilato → scaricalo e consegnacelo al tuo arrivo, ci permetterà di accorciare
       i tempi di attesa. È necessario un modulo a partecipante.

(10)    USEFUL INFORMATION:
       The visits are held in Italian, with a limited number of places in compliance with the
       anticovid legislation.
       The free tickets are reserved for children under 12, always by reservation.
       To allow you to participate in the tour safely, we need to receive this completed form →
       download it and give it to us upon your arrival, it will allow us to shorten waiting times.
       One participant form is required.

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Commercial activities inside markets and malls Since 22nd May, with yellow area, the activities
inside markets, malls and similar facilities can take place both during working days and
holidays. Gyms, swimming pools and spas—from 24th May, with yellow area, the activities of
gyms are allowed following protocols—from 1st July in yellow area, activities in spas, swimming
pools are allowed indoors following protocols. Sport Events open to the public from 1st June
outdoors and from 1st July indoors, in yellow area, public is admitted exclusively with booked
seats and provided that social and interpersonal distance of at least 1mt is ensured both for the
public who normally live together and for the staff. The allowed capacity cannot be more than
25% if the maximum capacity normally authorised and, in any case, the number of public cannot
be more than 1000 for outdoor facilities and 500 for indoor facilities. Arcades, betting agencies,
bingos, casinos from 1st July, in yellow area, activities are allowed theme parks from 15th, in
yellow area, activities are allowed Museums and other cultural destinations. In yellow areas,
museums and other cultural destinations are open to the public provided that they guarantee
limited access or avoid people's gatherings.

Examples 9 and 10 above clearly show that the text in English is an almost literal translation of the text in Italian, both provide extremely limited information about the restrictions in place perhaps assuming that the Italian public is already informed about them, while foreign visitors will find this kind of information elsewhere.

Finally, the last section of www.veneto.eu that contains information about coronavirus restrictions is a page dedicated to the promotion of cities in Veneto during the Christmas holidays. The information is provided only in Italian and is no exception to the previous pages analyzed in this Section. Except for general mentions to the values of Christmas, the section refers in quite general terms to the pandemic:

(11)    Per questo **Natale** così diverso il **Veneto non rinuncia a vestire di luce le sue città** per regalare a tutti una calda e magica atmosfera, il tutto in sicurezza e nel rispetto delle norme per il contenimento del contagio. In programma spettacoli di **video mapping**, eventi in **diretta streaming** e tante, tantissime **luminarie e installazioni digitali.**[15]

Example 11 clearly shows that the text assumes that the readers will know what the measures are and is reassuring visitors that they will be implemented even during Christmas with specific events and multimedia initiatives. The lack of a text in English might indicate that the author was aware of the global restrictions still in place worldwide, so they are assuming that no foreign visitors might be interested in the programme. However, most of the events were held online so the lack of a page in English did not allow these visitors to read about the events, unless the author was assuming that foreign visitors who do not speak Italian might use some automatic form of translation.
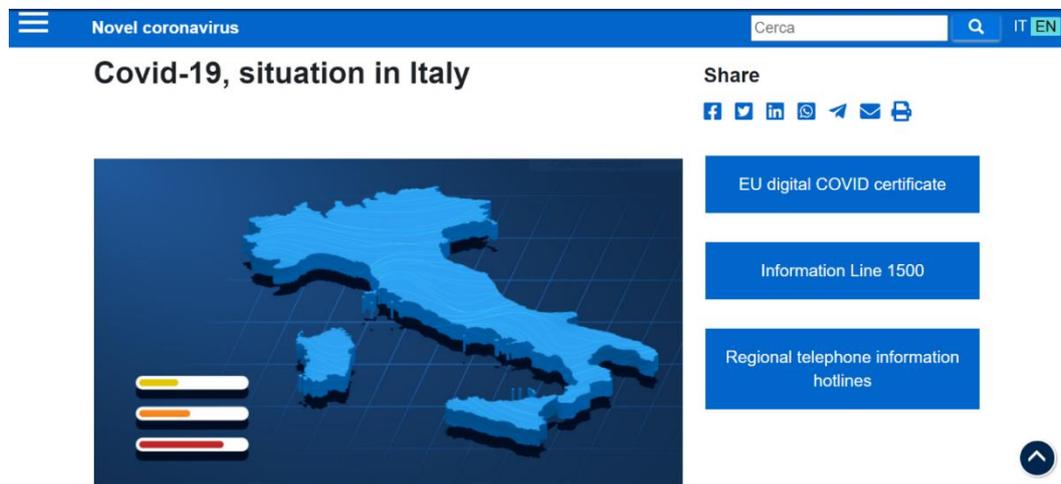
### 5.2 The Italian Ministry of Health website

Two of the destinations analyzed in the previous Section (Cortina d'Ampezzo and Verona) redirect tourists to a page in English, in the Italian Ministry of Health's website, purposely dedicated to providing practical information about the anti-coronavirus measures in place in Italy.

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[15] For this Christmas, which is so different, Veneto does not renounce dressing its cities of light to offer everyone a warm and magic atmosphere, everything in safety and abiding by the norms to prevent contagion. The programme includes video mapping shows, live streaming events and many, many Christmas lights and digital installations.

The website in English reflects the same contents of the website in Italian, including mortality reports, decrees and laws, and information about regional monitoring with links to social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) and messaging systems (WhatsApp, Telegram), so users can keep themselves updated (Figure 1).



**Fig. 1:** Homepage in English of the Italian Ministry of Health's website

However, the page to which the destination redirects tourists is a F.A.Qs. page in English where the Ministry explains foreigners visiting Italy what to do once arrived. The questions are organized in a list on the basis of topics that might be of interest to prospective visitors (Figure 2).



**Fig. 2:** F.A.Qs. in English of the Italian Ministry of Health's website

At the moment of writing, the section is being updated following new national and European measures but, accessing the June version of the website through *Web Archive*, we can see that the Ministry, and by extension the Italian Government, provides practical information to tourists. In this Section the topic 'Travel and Movement' is analyzed since it is the section to which destinations refer but also because it is likely to be the first section which a tourists might consult before moving on to the other topics.

The questions in the list focus on practical information such as recommendations to travelers, precautions, what to do in case a traveler tests Covid-19 positive while traveling or after they return home, the areas in the world most affected by contagion. The information provided are essential and they often redirect tourists to other websites such as the WHO's website or to links to documents such as Italian laws and decrees.

The first question is illustrated in example 12. Most of the text redirects users to other websites or documents, so there is no real information that is given in this paragraph, which is important since it deals with the certification that is essential to travel around Europe.

**Travelling to and from abroad**

The Ordinance of April 2, 2021 provided for some reclassifications on the lists of countries in Annex 20 of the Dpcm of March 2, 2021.

To learn about the information for travelling to and from abroad, please visit the:

- Travellers page

From **1 July**, the COVID-19 Green Certificate will be valid as an ***EU digital COVID certificate*** and will make it easier to travel to and from all EU and Schengen countries. For all information, go to the website www.dgc.gov.it or call the Immuni App toll-free number (+39) 800.91.24.91, available daily from 8 am to 8 pm.

**Useful numbers from the Ministry of Health**

- from Italy: 1500 (free toll number) Covid-19 information line 1500
- from abroad: +39 0232008345 - +39 0283905385

**For further information please refer to:**

- Select your destination at: Re-open.europa.eu/en
- Focus: Italian citizens returning from abroad and foreign citizens in Italy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
- FAQ on the Council of Ministers website
- website www.viaggiaresicuri.it (*safe travelling*)
- What are you interested in? (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

(12)

The opposite can be said for the second F.A.Q. about the precautions necessary to travel safety in and around Italy (example 13).

> **What precautions are advised if I have to travel?**　　　　　　∧
>
> Travellers must follow strict hygiene measures, wash their hands with soap and water regularly and/or use alcohol-based hand disinfectants. Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands, avoid contact with sick people, especially those with respiratory symptoms and fever.
>
> It should be emphasised that older people and people with chronic basic illnesses must take these precautionary measures very seriously.
>
> Travellers who develop symptoms during or after the trip must self-isolate; those who develop acute respiratory symptoms within 14 days after their return to Italy must immediately contact their doctor by telephone.

(13)

In this case, details are provided about safety measures that travelers must adopt. The information ranges from hygiene measures to social distancing and contact with sick people. Here, the underlying assumption to be noticed is in the specification of basic hygiene measures that should be in place in most countries of the world. However, the Ministry is probably not taking any chances and repeats the information to make sure that travelers from any country follow these measures.

The third and fourth F.A.Qs. (example 14) deal with instructions on what travelers can do if they test Covid-19 positive during their stay in Italy or if they had close contacts with a Covid-19 positive, but they have already returned home.

> **What happens if a passenger is COVID-19 positive? What is contact tracing?**　　∧
>
> The Ministry of Health has the task of tracing all the close contacts of a Covid-19 case present on a means of transport (air, train, ferry), collecting the data and transmitting them to the Regions, to activate the quarantine measure.
>
> **Contact tracing-(CT)** consists in making a timely and accurate search of all persons (close contacts) who may have been exposed to the COVID-19 case during the period of infection, and who could in turn develop the infection, become contagious and thus fuel the transmission. The CT is a key public health tool to break the transmission chains of Covid-19 cases.
>
> **If a close contact has returned to his/her home country, what are the actions envisaged by the Ministry of Health?**　　∧
>
> The Ministry will send a report via Early Warning and Response System of the European Union (EWRS). The EWRS is a web-based platform with restricted access, that allows EU countries to report events with a potential impact on the EU at an early stage, share information and coordinate their response.
>
> For non-EU countries, a report is sent via National Focal Point (NFP).
>
> Similarly, EWRS and National Focal Points receive reports of contacts to our country, which are forwarded to the Regions.

(14)

However, in the texts of the two answers no practical information is actually provided to tourists. Instead, the two answers detail the procedure that authorities apply when the either

situation occcurs. Moreover, in the second text some domain-specific expressions are used with their corresponding acronyms, but neither other information is provided, nor links are used so that a traveler might directly access the source of information. Here, we have what we might call a 'bi-directional assumption' in that the Ministry assumes that either travelers already know about the procedure and the systems mentioned in the two texts or they will search for further information autonomously. Then, when reading these texts prospective travelers assume that they do not have to do anything in case they are involved in either or both situations since the authorities mentioned in the texts will deal with it. In both 'directions' of the assumption, however, instructions are not explicit, as so much is left to the travelers' interpretation.

Finally, the fifth F.A.Q. (example 15) deals with information on the areas that are most affected by coronavirus. The assumption in the title is that readers expect to find information on the most affected areas in Italy.

**Where are the COVID-19 cases happening?**

On March 11th, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that the international outbreak of the new coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 infection can be considered a pandemic.

The epidemiological situation is constantly evolving. Every day the WHO publishes the epidemiological update of the disease on the page *Coronavirus disease (COVID-2019) situation reports*.

Learn more about the New Coronavirus on the following website pages:

- Covid-19, situation in the world
- Covid-19, Situation in Italy

(15)

As we can see from the answer, the Ministry's intention is to consider the global situation in the world, so the prospective travelers' assumption is contradicted by the Ministry's answer, creating a short circuit in the institution-user communication. Moreover, no real data is provided in the text but only some general information and links to other websites. In this case, then—as in example 12—communication is not very effective and prospective travelers might be lost in the number of external websites provided by the Ministry.

## 6. General remarks and conclusions

The study has investigated the strategies that are applied by local institutions in the Italian region of Veneto to communicate Covid-19-related information to prospective tourists who wish

to visit their territories. The analysis has revealed that, as far as the promotion of these territories is concerned, nothing has changed in terms of the verbal promotion of the destinations after the beginning of the pandemic. In actual fact, very few of them mention safety measures implemented in the region or in the country because of the still ongoing pandemic. Those destinations that mention measures or restrictions provide only general information or use domain-specific expressions that are not simplified in any way.  Different strategies are applied depending on the language of the text, that is if the text targets Italian or foreign tourists. In the case of texts in Italian, the domain-specific expressions pertaining to the legal/administrative field are neither simplified nor explained, while the texts in English provide extremely essential information, redirecting prospective travelers to the specific page of the Italian Ministry of Health's website.

These different communicative choices entail specific assumptions/presuppositions present in the texts. In the case of the texts in Italian, the authors assume that readers might already be familiar with the specific language or know how to simplify it, while in the case of texts in English the main source of information is left in the hands of the national Government. In this regard, the analysis of the F.A.Qs. section in English of the Ministry of Health's website has revealed that communication to foreign travelers appears to be overall ineffective. The practical information provided is scanty, while numerous are the links to external websites that should provide further details but, in fact, they might be confusing for the prospective traveler.

Finally, we might conclude by arguing that the underlying assumptions in all the texts investigated are the same. Both in the texts in Italian by destinations in Veneto and in the texts in English by the Ministry much is left to the users in terms of interpreting the specific language of Italian administration and of finding clear information about traveling conditions during the coronavirus pandemic. A clearer communication should thus be employed by local and national institutions to increase awareness of safety and hygienic measures in foreign tourists from countries with different rules, which might ultimately lead to safer traveling conditions as well as contributing to reducing contagions and favoring security and safety checks in critical situations.

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