

Sara Corrizzato and Silvia Cavalieri

# “Visit our Ancient Factories and Book your Tour”

## Analysing the Online Promotional Discourse of Italian Enogastronomic Tours

### Abstract

*Enogastronomic tourism refers to clients' specific enthusiasm for visiting the area in which a product is made so that they can taste and buy at the source. This form of tourism has indeed become highly popular in Italy too, developing in several branches of the agri-food sector. As a result, a considerable number of Italian wine, vinegar and/or cheese producers are offering their (prospective) foreign clients special tours aimed at tempting them into booking a stay, encouraging them to discover the picturesque natural locations and eventually to buy their top-quality products.*

*With this purpose, the promotional discourse on Italian websites offering such tours must aim “to persuade, lure, woo and seduce” (Dann 1996, 2) visitors, convincing them to discover the Italian countryside and products. Since (re)presenting places and its people is not guided by a “value-free” (Pritchard and Morgan 2001, 177) perspective, but rather by the deliberate intention to promote such destinations, comprehending how discourse is moulded to influence readers' perception of the local context would seem relevant. This paper aims at investigating the linguistic strategies used in the digital environment to promote enogastronomic tours across Italy by mainly considering how phraseology and units of meaning extend participation framework and open the way for new communicative contexts.*

*Basing the investigation on both quantitative and qualitative methods, the English versions of a corpus of Italian wine, vinegar, beer, pasta, olive oil and cheese websites (around 100) will be taken into consideration in order to analyse how online narrative contributes to promoting this form of tourism as well as to understand how clients' experience positively coexists with the promotion of local/regional products (Meluzzi and Balsamo 2021).*

**Keywords:** *Italian enogastronomic tours, promotional discourse, corpus linguistics, Made in Italy, linguistic strategies*

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The concept of Made in Italy has received substantial scholarly attention on account of the ever-growing popularity that the idea has gained in the last decades in different fields, in particular politics and business. Nowadays, the expression also permeates less specialized contexts, as it can easily be found in magazines and newspapers as well as on TV shows (Bucci, Codeluppi and Ferraresi 2011). Although it does not seem possible to establish the origins of the concept with certainty, Bucci, Codeluppi and Ferraresi (2011) suggest that the archetype of Made in Italy appears in the 50s with the success that the Italian fashion was gaining both in the peninsula and in Europe. From that moment onwards, the heart of Made in Italy has developed and expanded to the extent that it is now an integral part of most of the Italian business sectors, such as fashion, home furniture, traditional mechanics and food (Quadrio Curzio and Fortis 2012). Over the past 40 years, the growth in global trade and the development of international markets has contributed to making the concept even more important, given the fact that customers’ perception of Italy and of the Italian features do not only involve Italian people, but also (prospective) foreign clients.

In terms of internationalization, the image that Italy developed during the second part of the twentieth century has received greater attention from marketing professionals, since the impact of the made-in label has been recognized as a crucial factor when convincing customers to choose and buy the product (Bertoli and Resciniti 2013). What has been theorized as the country-of-origin effect is included by Al-Sulaiti and Baker (1998, 150) among the factors “which are believed to impact upon international competitiveness,” as it is seen as an intangible barrier to enter new markets and become familiar with foreign customers (Wang and Lamb 1983).

The idea at the very basis of this concept for all those customers who buy this type of product is that they are created and/or produced in Italy. In this sense, the provenance of the products, therefore of the brand itself, becomes synonymous with a series of characteristics that link the product with the idea that people have of the country of origin. An in-depth exploration of the properties generally associated to the Made in Italy demonstrate that “quality, craftsmanship and technical prowess” (Potvin 2017, 87) together with “creativity, aesthetics, [...] and sophistication” (Temperini, Gregori and Palanga 2016, 93) are the main features that describe the concept, as it “expresses the culture and characteristics of the Italian spirit well, and its products represent significant symbols of Italian image” (Mazzoli et al. 2019, 41). In addition to that, the representation of the Italian small and medium enterprises in an international context

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<sup>1</sup> The article has been jointly planned by the two authors: Sara Corrizzato has dealt with sections 1, 2 (2.1; 2.3), while Silvia Cavalieri with sections 2 (2.2; 2.4) and 3.

reveals that the family ties and their rural traditions act as catalysts for the production of unique, top-quality products (Corrizzato 2019; 2018). In this sense, the choice of portraying the Italian peninsula as “a pastoral land representing a longing for escape from chaotic city life [...] where individuals can spend their time in relaxing and picturesque natural locations” (Corrizzato 2018, 149-150) contributes to describing Italian products as something irreplaceable.

And it is precisely within this agricultural framework that our study finds its origin: it has been shown indeed that local food production and tourists’ destination choice are indissolubly linked (Bessièrè and Tibere 2013; Kivela and Crofts 2006; Cohen and Avieli 2004; Quan and Wang 2004; Hjalager and Richards 2002; Bessièrè 1998), since visiting a destination in depth can also mean paying special attention to its typical products and to the traditional local gastronomy. The present work aims to investigate how and to what extent the promotional discourse included in the illustrative passages describing enogastronomic tours in a corpus of about 50 Italian small- and medium-sized companies contributes to reinforcing the uniqueness of the product, that is not offered by the characteristics of the product per se, but by the idea that customers have of the place in which the product has been produced. In Bertoli and Resciniti’s words (2013, ix), “the traditional and narrow view of place as simply a “location” has given way in our times to considering it as a socially constructed experience.” In our corpus, such a concept is developed through the use of specific linguistic strategies aiming at confirming that agri-food products are part of the Italian culture, as well as providing a point of connection between tourists and the territory. Italian wine, vinegar, cheese, cured meat, olive oil and other typical products are expressions of the local place and of its people and at the same time they are elements of identification and differentiation.

## **2. The language of enogastronomic tourism**

### ***2.1 Theoretical framework***

At the end of the 21st century, in his volume “The Language of Tourism” (1996, 2) Dann theorised that “tourism operates along similar lines; that tourism, in the act of promotion, as well as in the account of its practitioners and clients, has a discourse in its own.” In line with this ground-breaking hypothesis, four major theoretical approaches were recognised, which can significantly contribute towards an understanding of contemporary tourism and “are based on the perspectives of authenticity, strangerhood, play and conflict. Their respective sociolinguistic correlates are authentication, differentiation, recreation and appropriation” (Dann 1996, 6). In this regard, the four perspectives help contextualise the relationship the tourists have with the

place they visit: according to the first category, that of authenticity, tourism is a structurally ritualized break in routine that allows tourists to go away physically from the place in which they live and their everyday life. The second perspective, called strangerhood, describes tourists as people attracted by novelty and diversity, and for this reason they choose holidays that fulfil their desire for adventure and discovery. The third area, identified as the play perspective, includes tourists who experience their holiday as a game, a spectacle, i.e. a special event out of the ordinary; the conflict approach exemplifies those journeys which undermine tourists' standards and beliefs from a social, ethical and ideological point of view.

Looking at enogastronomic tourism through the lens of Dann's perspectives, it is reasonable to suggest that the type of tours included on the websites is part of the first two perspectives, i.e. the authenticity and the strangerhood approaches. On the one hand, the authenticity perspective (Dann 1996, 7-11) is related to the work of MacCannel (1989), who argues that the main tourist motivation is the search for authenticity, and he states that the language of tourism fosters the feeling of authenticity in travellers' minds through abundant explicit expressions such as “the typical native house, the original manuscript, the authentic road.” On the other hand, the strangerhood perspective emphasizes that a driving motivation for travelling is the search for strangeness and new experiences (Dann 1996, 12-17). Tourists are attracted by new and exotic places or experiences and this search is reflected in the language of tourism, mainly in descriptions of places and people. One example is represented by tourism promoting materials which, in Cohen's words (1984), are rich in qualifying adjectives that refer to language of differentiation: “untouched by civilization, remote and unspoilt, colourful, picturesque, almost unknown, newly discovered, etc.” Therefore, “the travel industry has moved its theatre of operations to the countryside where there are beautiful landscapes and interesting old cultures” (Dann 1996, 102), but at the same time, visitors are asked to break away from their usual routines and experience something new.

Through the experience of agri-food tours offered within the Italian producers' websites, guests are taken on a journey that allows them to taste the familiar and traditional atmosphere of the product, while bringing them into a world, which is far removed from their own habits.

Since many of the foregoing reflections have been/are obtained by an accurate analysis of the language used while portraying or promoting a tourist destination, it is legitimate to maintain that tourism is based on the discourse, and the way(s) the message is built through language. The present analysis aims at investigating how and to what extent linguistic strategies used in the corpus can contribute to making tourists perceive the culture of the place, which represents the essence of its inhabitants. In addition to that, special attention has also been paid to the

way in which the country-of-origin effect is reinforced by the promotional discourse for foreign customers as well as the way in which the characteristics of Made in Italy are (in)directly included.

## ***2.2 Corpus and methodology***

The EnoGaTour (Enogastronomic Tour) Corpus was compiled collecting all the descriptive sections of guided tours, from the section named “visit us” of 100 websites promoting Italian small- and medium-sized companies producing beer, dairy products, olive oil, pasta, vinegar, and wine. The selected agri-food companies are located in different Italian regions from northern to southern Italy, giving this study a national perspective rather than a regional/local angle. Nine regions, in fact, were involved: Lombardy, Piedmont, Veneto, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Umbria, Lazio, Campania and Puglia.

This small corpus, that counts 68,322 tokens, is an offspring of the Agri-Food-Pro Corpus which consists of 269,546 tokens and includes the descriptive sections related to producers’ identities, with the companies from a wider range of products including not only wine, vinegar, and cheese but also beer, coffee, fruit, groceries, meat, olive oil, pasta, and sweets.

The selection of the products to include in the EnoGaTour corpus was guided by the “Report on Gastronomy Tourism 2020” (Garibaldi 2020) that is the most important study on the sector, offering a complete and rigorous picture of the state of the art of the food tourism industry in Italy. It is a reference document for institutions and operators at national, regional and local level and provides information to support tourism policy decisions and develop proposals that meet the needs of today's tourists. According to this document, international enogastronomic tourism “is no longer limited exclusively to buying local products or eating typical dishes; it has expanded to include visits to places of production especially wine and vinegar estates, breweries, oil mills, dairies, pasta factories [...]” (Garibaldi 2020, 14).

Drawing on Corpus Linguistics and Discourse Analysis, the study adopted a mixed methods approach, the data being investigated both from a quantitative and a qualitative perspective. In the first phase of the investigation, the corpus tool SketchEngine (Kilgarriff et al. 2014) was used to automatically calculate single-word and multiple-word keywords. Amongst the numerous reference corpora available on Sketch Engine, the English Web 2013 (enTenTen13) was selected as a reference corpus, since it is a text corpus collected from the Web. The resulting keywords were then filtered for noise, and terms not pertaining to the purpose of the present study were excluded from the final list; in other words product and farm names, as well as names of the local areas of production (e.g., towns, villages, etc.) alongside words that only

occurred in a single website. This first quantitative analysis focused on the identification of the most frequent lexical keywords (adjectives, nouns, and verbs) related to enogastronomic tours in the data. The selected keywords were then grouped according to themes based on Dann’s four main theoretical perspectives on tourism discourse (1996, 11-25). This enabled us to pinpoint the predominant themes for the subsequent qualitative analysis of discourse.

Two macro-themes were identified that were consistent, as expected, with Dann’s authenticity and strangerhood perspectives: tradition/originality and quality. As shown by the predominance of these themes, during agri-food tours guests are taken on a journey that allows them to taste the familiar and traditional atmosphere of the product (authenticity perspective), but at the same time brings them into a world far from their own habits (strangerhood perspective).

The last step of the analysis concerned the category of verbs which were classified and analysed in terms of tense to see their functions in building an immersive tour experience and in creating the dimensions of authenticity and strangerhood highlighted above.

### ***2.3 Authenticity and strangerhood: do nouns and adjectives play a central role?***

According to Cappelli (2008, 6), “the importance of keywords is one of the most interesting phenomena for linguists and translators,” as “they are essential for tourism promoters who need to be aware of the issues involved in promoting a location in different languages” (Maci, Sala and Godnič Vičič 2018, 1) and they inevitably influence the prospective tourist who visits the website and reads the descriptive passage concerning the tour. In other words, the promotional discourse of the websites contributes to shaping the representation of the advertised locations as well as to seduce readers, who should believe that that specific place is perfect for their needs. On the basis of such observations, it is worth asking what axes the language of tourism operates on, investigating how discourse construction negotiates the idealization of the Italian locations and the prospective foreign tourists’ perception of them.

#### ***2.3.1 Tradition and family inheritance***

The EnoGaTour corpus gives prominence to an extensive use of the language of authentication. Promotional discourse is significantly marked by words which recall an agricultural and bucolic context that has the power to refresh the human soul as well as highlight the key concepts of the Made in Italy movement. Thus, the lemmas related to the Made in Italy appear frequently in the corpus: *family/families/familiar* is included 235 times, *generation/generations* appears 58 times and *tradition/traditions/traditional* occurs 123 times.

As shown by the following examples<sup>2</sup> (1-6), a search for collocations relating to these keywords suggests that during agri-food tours guests are indeed invited to take a journey that allows them to taste the typical traditional atmosphere, whose pillars are the concept of family, which plays a key role in the social, cultural and economic life of the country, and the collective identity, that has its roots in the past.

- (1) Three **generations** ago, in the lee of the castle, the **family** jealously guarded their priceless inheritance. (VCSLT)<sup>3</sup>
- (2) The **tradition** of the Acetaia in our **family** was and still is a lifestyle, like a gene which is transmitted **from generation to generation**, it keeps in its barrels all the charme and seduction of ancient rites. (VDGRT)
- (3) In our showroom you can follow an historical way, made of old pictures and old tools used by the pasta makers of ‘800, **guardians** of precious secrets, today use by us with great passion. (PMSCT)

A very common suggestion, as in the three examples, is that producers transmit their production secrets from generation to generation, always keeping in mind the importance of the traditions of the past on the present. These sentences also contribute to conveying a fairy-tale image of the specific places, where castles, mills, bridges, ancient rites and old tools are mentioned. Embedded in the illustrative passages are other references to the Italian architectural and historical landscape, which serve as a backdrop for enchanted stories in a magical past.

- (4) Tour Historic Acetaia It is a unique experience - our Historic Acetaia is located inside the XVI Century **tower**. This place keeps safe our oldest barrels with treasured Balsamic Vinegar. (VLVCT)
- (5) That is why the building is full of **gargoyles**, flared **medallions** with drops, gigantic **pilasters** and **shells**, all inspired by the naturalism and Classicism of the age. (BPRTT)
- (6) Giada, Anna or Susy will accompany you throughout your excursion, wandering amongst the ancient olive trees on our **estate** they will tell you all about the history & the tradition of producing olive oil. (OGRGT)

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<sup>2</sup> Although the examples may include some grammatical incongruences, the authors of the present article have preferred to maintain the original version, so as not to alter the data analysed.

<sup>3</sup> The Italian companies selected were coded specifying the products sold (W for wine, V for vinegar, B for beer, P for pasta, O for olive oil and D for dairy products) and the first three consonants of the name of the companies themselves. The final “T” stands for “Tour.”

The contents of the message also adhere to the iconic representation of the peninsula, where producers cast a distinct spotlight on the natural beauties of the area, seen both as fundamental resources for the production of the agri-food product and as essential ingredient to slow down the stressful rhythms of everyday life and find peace through nature.

- (7) Would you like to find out how Parmigiano-Reggiano is made and spend a day **immersed in nature**, discovering the flavours and traditions of Parma? (DSLCT)
- (8) This magical location, situated on one of the loveliest **hills** of the Valcalepio range, exudes an atmosphere of time gone by where traditions emerge from every single corner and each careful and precise gesture. (VTNTT)
- (9) Right in the heart of the Umbrian **valley**, among the green **hills** of Gualdo Cattaneo, you will find the innovative craft brewery of M.B.U. (BMBRT)
- (10) On arrival you'll be welcomed in a fresh, bright **courtyard** with the **olive grove** on one side and a flowery balcony on the other, overlooking the **lake**. (OMNTT)

In the examples, the relation between producers' families and the transmission of knowledge from generation to generation, i.e. from ancestors to present-day individuals, helps constantly maintain an invisible connection with the past, reinforced by the presence of unspoilt places, like castles and towers where nature reigns supreme. The tourist who thirsts for authenticity is therefore fully satisfied, as they can experience authentic local lifestyles, customs and culture and they can see what is perceived as “normal” at the destinations they travel to, that is the producers' way of living and the place in which they live.

### ***2.3.2 Uniqueness and originality***

In addition to this, the quantitative analysis of the corpus demonstrates that a second strategy is adopted, which is used to reinforce the originality of the journey through Dann's strangerhood perspective. In line with the concepts spread with the Made in Italy, originality goes hand in hand with the previous thematic area, i.e. authenticity. The typical Italian characteristics linked to the traditions of the producers' families and the territory where the products are produced make up their originality. The high frequency of words within the corpus concerning the language of differentiation, such as *unique* (42 times), *different* (38 times), *natural* (33 times), *simple* (18), *original* (12), *rare* (11 times), *primitive* (9 times), *remote* (8 times), *timeless* (7 times), *unchanged* (7 times), and *unspoilt* (5 times) in fact demonstrates an emphasis on diversity, opposed to everyday life.



As the following examples show, such components not only shape the uniqueness of the product but also that of the journey.

- (11) Book your guided tour at our Acetaia to experience a **unique** experience in **tranquillity**. Each of you can experience the same emotions as an inspired sommelier: just one drop to be catapulted into the symphony of a real aroma microcosm. (VDCRT)
- (12) The guided visits representing a **unique** experience, a **nice and relaxing** way to be guided to the discovery of a unique and rare product, who belongs to an ancient culture, a universe of ancient flavors but more than ever contemporary. (VMLPH)
- (13) The S.A. estate offers the chance to stay overnight in the historic foresteria, redesigned to contain eight apartments which are decorated in the traditional style of country gentefolk: an **oasis of peace** in which to take a leisurely dip into the archive of the noble family of the Counts S.A. in the Valpolicella. (WMSAT)

As demonstrated by the three examples (11-13), tourists are invited to take a break from their daily routine to dive into an agricultural environment, which allows them to reconnect with a restorative past. People can spend a night in the Italian “unspoilt countryside” (WBTST), going “through a cultural path very different from a conventional sightseeing tour” (VVLBT), discovering “the secrets of this [pasta factory] little paradise (PMRTT), letting their “spirit drift into the timeless past” (VCSLT).

The connection between the valorisation of the territory and typical agri-food products is very close and it is emphasized in enogastronomic tourism. Motivating the journey of the tourist means in fact reinforcing their desire to taste local foods and wines as well as to know the production areas. In order to make this experiential journey, capable of satisfying the senses in their totality, the enogastronomic tourists are therefore required to travel longer distances than in the past, not limiting themselves to look for entertainment destinations, but places that involve a complete integration in the local/regional context.

### ***2.3.3 Quality and excellence***

Such a narrative development also includes a third thematic area, which seems to be the perfect component to describe the uniqueness of the journey. Both this experience and the agri-food products offered to the international tourists are of the richest or finest quality: they stem from an ancient tradition and a shared passion for art, style and craftsmanship, handed down from generation to generation. During the stay, foreigners can understand how Italian producers concentrate on work, taking care of every single production detail. As illustrated in the following

examples, the enogastronomic tours always include the visit to the wine estates, mills, breweries or pasta factories, where the whole production processes are shown to testify the extremely high quality of the products:

- (14) The ideal also for all those who pass quickly through Modena or want to stop their journey with a tasty and quick break to discover an **excellence** that only here is possible to produce. (VMLPT)
- (15) Our family is pleased to welcome you to our company, where you can taste and touch the **genuine** flavors and traditions of Umbrian olive growing (ORNCT)
- (16) If you have in mind a tour to find out more about the amazing food, wine and cultural **treasures** of the provinces of Mantua, Modena and Reggio Emilia, book a guided tour by filling out the form below. (DFRZT)

As suggested in the previous paragraph, the excellence of the products is inextricably linked with the timeless elegance of the places.

- (17) Cellar tour and wine tasting Explore the **charm** of Villa Sartori: the colors of the nature and the story of a Family will walk you through the winery visit. (WSRTT)
- (18) Step into the **fascinating** wine-making process, explore the areas dedicated to drying, fermentation, ageing and bottling. (WCMGT)

The enogastronomic tours are presented as authentic, unique and priceless experiences based on the use of a set of collocates which positions them in an international context. The aforementioned linguistic strategies serve several purposes, which are linked to the concept of Made in Italy and to the strengthening of the country-of-origin image. Such an image contributes to portraying producers' factories and the Italian territory as fascinating places where foreign customers have the possibility to connect with nature.

#### ***2.4 Authenticity and strangerhood: how do verbs contribute to shaping the two concepts?***

A first quantitative examination of the verbal patterns was carried out by means of the Corpus Query Language (CQL) option in SketchEngine to extract all the POS tagged occurrences of verbs in the EnoGaTour corpus. From a first overview of tense distribution, the present tense of the indicative mood was revealed as the most widely used in enogastronomic tours representing 60% of all the verbs in the texts. By resorting to this tense, the owners of wineries,

breweries, dairies etc. describe the tour experience to the potential guests so that they get a first taste of what they will see with their visits as if the action takes place right in front of them while they are reading or that they are a witness to what is going to happen (Jacobi 1999, 67).

#### ***2.4.1 The use of present tense***

The verbs in the present tense contribute to an immersive narrative experience for tourists. The following examples show how the tour experience is depicted by using the present simple associated to verbs indicating the actions related to the enogastronomic tour:

- (19) Here tourists **visit** the vineyards and the Ancient Acetaia, accompanied by expert guides (VSTDT)
- (20) Balsamic Tasting Every tour **concludes** with the guided tasting of 5 different Balsamic Vinegars (VADCT)

In addition to that, since the present tense is generally defined as the tense expressing facts that are always true, it also fulfils another important function in the corpus; indeed, the present tense is used to describe special features of products identified as symbols of authenticity and tradition that has remained unchanged and unspoilt since the dawn of time, from generation to generation. As shown by the following examples the present tense is often associated with verbs describing the phases of production that the tourists can experience in their visit (21) or to highlight special qualities of the product (22).

- (21) The milk slowly and naturally **coagulates** with the addition of rennet and a whey starter, rich in starter cultures, from the previous day's processing. The curd which forms **is** then **broken** down by the master cheese-maker into minuscule granules using a traditional tool called “spino.” (DPMTT)
- (22) Its thick Balsamic Vinegars, in their full aroma, taste and color **are** the product of a passion, of a total devotion which **follows** the natural rhythms of the land and season cycles, a product from the past which reveals all its surprising fragrance in the present. (VSCGT)

#### ***2.4.2 The role of past tenses***

Moving on to the second most frequent tense in the corpus (25% of the total number of verbs), the simple past shares its focus on the traditional qualities of products with the present tense

transporting tourists back in time to the ancient places, such as castles and towers, or to the roots of traditional families in which the Italian excellences were born (see example 23).

- (23) In 1598, when Modena **became** the capital of the Estensi dukedom, the dukes **brought** their vinegars from Ferrara and their integration with the typical recipes of the local noble families **was** so successful that the dukes **took** possession of the condiment. Probably the merging of these traditions **gave** birth to a balsamic vinegar whose characteristics and production methods **were** very similar to the present ones. (VSBTT)
- (24) Giuseppe **bought** most of the vineyards from his brothers and **continued** his course with the goal of creating high quality products. This **was** how the current company gradually **came** into being and when the historic cellar **was built**, where still today the traditional Valpolicella red wines are aged (WCMGT)

As shown by the examples, the past tense is often associated with terms such as *noble*, *tradition*, *traditional* and *historic* thus again underlining the importance of family traditions that are preserved until now, particularly with regard to production (“production methods very similar to the present ones” VSBTT) and aging methods (“where still today the traditional Valpolicella red wines are aged WCMGT). Past references become symbols of the high quality that the tourist will experience during the enogastronomic tour.

However, given the new trends towards increasingly organic and environmentally friendly agriculture, the high-quality standards of traditional methods should be extended with an additional dimension following modern production specifications (e.g. the use of modern technologies and sustainability). Producers focus on this need to create a bridge between tradition and present time by making use of the present perfect tense (5% of the total number of verbs in the corpus) in their descriptions for prospective tourists. Example 25, for instance, represents a clear attempt to relate the preservation of past traditional methods but at the same time showing an environmentally conscious attitude:

- (25) To preserve the venerable values of our predecessors, we **have opted** for exclusively organic farming methods, embracing the natural development of our grapes (WTDNT)

In (26), the producers define their production method as being in line with their predecessors’ method that is described as something sacred (“venerable”) and that also respects the need for a sustainable agriculture (“exclusively organic farming method”).

### 2.4.3 *The presence of future tense*

Equally represented in the corpus (5% of the verbs) is the future tense that performs a similar function to the present tense since it is often used to detail the tour experience and the possible options available to the prospective tourists. The future tense is often realized through the auxiliary *will* as it is possible to observe in (26) and (27):

- (26) During the brewery tour we **will reveal** the secrets of producing our beer. We **will show** the tools and equipment currently in use to brew. (BBDDT)
- (27) Thanks to this tour, you **will have** the great chance to see all the process to make this product: first phase of soft drying process; press to pug and draw the pasta both long and short cuts; drying on loom. (PPSDT)

The use of the future tense in the language of enogastronomic tourism creates in the reader a sense of anticipation and desire for what they will be able to see and experience. Interestingly, this expectation of something mysterious and new for the tourist is realized linguistically with two different strategies. On the one hand, the producers are involved in first person (“we”) as holders of product secrets that will be revealed to participants (“we will reveal the secrets” BBDDT). On the other hand, the prospective tourists are directly involved through the use of the pronoun “you” as in the second example to highlight how the tour is a “great chance” for that specific person, to discover something new or unknown to them, something original that they can take back home with them as a souvenir whenever they taste Italian traditional products.

### 2.4.4 *The imperative*

The last category of verbs consists of the imperative form, which is scarcely (4% of the total number of verbs) represented in the EnogaTour corpus. This verbal form is used as both an appeal for the prospective tourists to perform an action and as a device to immerse the reader in the narrative and increase the desire to try the experience first-hand.

- (28) **Come visit** us for a taste of our unique product (OISTT)
- (29) **Let yourself be welcomed** by the captivating aroma of Aceto Balsamico (VAGMT)

Both in (28) and (29), the prospective guest is called to explore the uniqueness of the products thus reinforcing the strangerhood perspective. Indeed, they are asked to take action (“Come”

OISTT), or to let themselves be carried away (“Let yourself be welcomed” VAGMT) in a new experience outside the boundaries of their ordinary lives.

### 3. Conclusions

Already at the beginning of the new millennium Pritchard and Morgan (2001, 168) pointed out that “tourism representations do not exist in isolation but are inexorably intertwined in a circuit of culture whereby representations utilise and reflect identity;” in other words, they shed light on the fact that the promotional construction of places and spaces is always linked to the socio-cultural panorama of the area in which they are. As demonstrated by the present analysis, tourist destinations are indeed not “value-free” (Pritchard and Morgan 2001, 177) representations of Italian locations, but are precious summaries of a series of typically Italian characteristics, which contribute to reinforcing the country-of-origin image that foreign clients have when they think of Italy. The central role of the family members in individuals’ every-day life, the nostalgia for an idealised past, the passion of craftsmanship and the connection with nature are the most frequent themes included in the descriptive passages taken into consideration. In addition to that, the main traits of the Made in Italy are also included, such as authenticity, quality/luxury and tradition, through a frequent use of specific terms related to these fields. Thanks to this choice, linguistic strategies guide (un)aware readers to get closer to Italian producers, who describe their products and tour experiences focusing on their strengths, relying on the language of strangerhood and authenticity to bring guests into a pastoral context that leaves that helps them to leave their chaotic every-day life behind.

In the same way, the description of actions through a variety of tenses contributes to creating an immersive enogastronomic experience pulling guests into a unique tour in which they have the opportunity to personally meet producers and experience a couple of days in the place where products are produced. Indeed, the use of different verb tenses allows prospective tourists to switch from the authenticity perspective, thus offering a travel into tradition, to the strangerhood one, that allows them to live a new experience distant from their ordinary lives. In addition to that, the use of the future tense contributes to encapsulating the writers’ promise to offer the tourist a wonderful journey in the Italian agricultural peaceful world.

In conclusion, the success of Italian enogastronomic tourism is likely due to “Italy’s ability to leverage basic elements of distinction, which in turn has promoted the Italian style as a key element” (Benini 2018, 146) around the world.

Future research in this field could further explore the content conveyed by multimodal elements on the producers’ websites, as visual components seem to contribute to build a closer

relationship with prospective visitors.

**Sara Corrizzato** is a temporary assistant professor in English Language and Translation at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures of the University of Verona. Her research focuses on corpus linguistics and Digital Humanities, ESP, audiovisual language and audiovisual translation. Her volume “Spike Lee’s *Bamboozled*: A Contrastive analysis of Compliments and Insults from English into Italian” was released in 2015. She is currently working on the InterDiplo project, which focuses on the language used in spoken interactions by diplomats, ambassadors, and international relations.

**Silvia Cavalieri** holds a Ph.D in Comparative Languages and Cultures from the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (UNIMORE). She is currently a temporary assistant professor (RTD-B) at the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures of the University of Verona. Her areas of research and publication include ESP, legal language, courtroom discourse, academic discourse, and medical discourse with a focus on corpus linguistics and digital humanities. She is currently working on the InterDiplo project, which focuses on the language used in spoken interactions by diplomats, ambassadors, and international relations.

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