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Verónica González-Araujo,
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Ethics in Business Communication

New Challenges in the Digital World

PETER LANG

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La creation de nouvelles activités, de nouveaux modes de production et de consommation, de nouveaux biens et services, de nouveaux marchés, de nouveaux emplois, etc. repose aussi bien sur l'action héroïque des entrepreneurs que sur la stratégie des grandes entreprises qui se déploient sur une échelle mondiale. L'innovation et les affaires sont intrinséquement liées. Trois grandes thématiques seront particuliérement privilégiées : Entrepreneuriat, entreprise, innovation et développement durable ; Innovation et réseaux ; L'Innovation dans un contexte global. Les rapports synergiques entre entrepreneuriat innovant, stratégies des firmes et politiques d'innovation est un axe majeur dans le changement des paradigmes technologiques et la modification des structures économiques et sociales des pays riches et moins riches. Dans la collection sont publiés en francais ou en anglais des ouvrages d'économie, de management et de sociologie de l'innovation, du changement et de l'entrepreneur dans une perspective locale, nationale et internationale. La collection bénéficie de l'appui du Réseau de Recherche sur l'Innovation.

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Editors' Preface

The extraordinary technological developments of the last thirty years, among them the Internet, new communications media and massive information exchange, have led to major ethical dilemmas. If the appearance on the scene of traditional media like radio and television meant the root-and-branch transformation of the options available for transmitting messages (and manipulating audiences), the popularization of digital media has extended those options exponentially. Phenomena like "fake news", a recent buzz-word, are clear cases of how technology can serve spurious interests. Of course, there is nothing new about message manipulation or tall stories that run counter to the facts. One need not be an expert historian to identify cases of that craving to use communication as a tool at the service of power. The images we still store in our minds today of great Roman emperors like Nero, Commodus, Caligula and Trajan were forged, for better or worse, by the partial accounts of the chroniclers, who made no bones about flattering the powerful at the expense of historiographic rigour. Once the young Isabel of Castile set her sights on the throne, she had no qualms about launching a defamatory campaign against her stepbrother, the king and his daughter, whom she accused, in flat contradiction of the evidence, of being the issue of an illegitimate relationship. At the origins of the sadly notorious "final solution" and other genocides like those in the former Yugoslavia or Rwanda which have bled the soul of the twentieth century, communication always played a key role.

Together with politics, business is perhaps the field of human activity where communication and ethics come into most frequent collision. The achievement of corporate goals and economic profit usually depend to a lesser or greater extent on a business's capacity to build a solid international reputation and to transmit to stakeholders a particular view of reality, be they potential consumers of its product, prospective investors, or employees it wishes to recruit onto a business project. At the same time, decisions taken in the business environment, including those taken about communication, have significant ethical repercussions which can often impact on the lives of a broad spectrum of human groupings.

This volume intends to bring together different perspectives about ethics in business and communication, with special emphasis on the new challenges deriving from the digital world. From a variety of disciplinary perspectives (discourse analysis, communication studies, linguistics, rhetoric, semiotics, business and management studies), the contributors explore the production and interpretation of texts and interactions from an ethical perspective, as well as the use (and abuse) of communicative strategies and tactics of persuasion. The papers selected have been organized around four major topics, which correspond to each of the sections in the book.

Section I deals with the importance of ethics for entrepreneurship and business management. In the first chapter, José Santiago Fernández Vázquez and Ángel Sancho Rodríguez study the persuasive force of ethical appeals in entrepreneurial pitches through a reality TV corpus, which tries to reproduce business decision-making processes. As is shown in this study, the use of ethical references in the entrepreneurial pitch may contribute to the persuasive force of discourse, but only if these references are supported by economic and financial arguments. Ethical appeals, the authors claim, do not possess persuasive force on their own. Dennis Davy and Peter Daly also deal with videotaped entrepreneurial pitches, but they adopt a different approach, focusing on the analysis of linguistic mistakes by non-native speakers and how these mistakes affect venture capitalists. The third essay in this section, by María-Teresa Gallo Rivera and Rubén Garrido Yserte, moves away from entrepreneurship towards the world of business management. In this insightful paper, the authors discuss how working attitudes and the notion of ethical leadership are affected by technological and generational changes, opening new scenarios and creating new challenges for business managers.

The second section is concerned with gender as an ethical concern. Once again, digital media play an important role. Samira Allani and Silvia Molina study how women's entrepreneur identities are constructed in specialized web pages. To do so, they develop a detailed analysis of thirty websites through a multimodal and rhetorical framework. Their findings show that women use a great diversity of discursive strategies in order to build rapport with their audiences and to associate themselves with entrepreneurial values. Of particular interest is women's attempt to strengthen bonds of commitment within the community and to encourage other women to form part of entrepreneurial networks. In the next chapter, Mónica Sánchez Torres focuses on the use of sexist language in multilingual working spaces. She discusses the expression of gender in English, Finnish and Spanish, and gives useful advice on some strategies to eradicate linguistic sexism in working environments.

Tourism is one of the areas in which business communication is more closely associated with ethics. Visiting other regions and countries, we always discover that the realities and values that we take for granted in our everyday life are not necessarily shared by others. Communicating with people who are different from us, and yet at the same time so surprisingly similar, problematizes the whole notion of "otherness". In the third section of this volume, Isabel Turci Domingo deals with the concept of otherness in the tourist world by means of a semiotic analysis of promotional discourse. Then, Carmen Cortés Zaborras examines how brand image is affected by terrorism in two important tourist areas in France: Paris and the Côte d'Azur. The strategies deployed in these two regions are good examples of how to respond to potential reputational damage in business contexts.

Although several of the essays in this volume deal with digital environments, we thought it necessary to devote a specific section to the ethical implications of digital media. Section IV presents several case studies which illustrate the ethical challenges and opportunities which these new media create. Stephanie Swartz breaks ground by raising some ethical concerns about the use of collaborative platforms in educational contexts. Exchanging personal information and achieving inclusiveness, regardless of personal, intercultural and linguistic differences, are among the challenges that must be considered when using these platforms. At the same time, as she points out, the use of digital media provides a good opportunity to remove physical and emotional barriers for students with social awkwardness or with disabilities that inhibit social communication and social interaction. In the next chapter, Jolanta Łącka-Badura presents the results of a compelling pilot study comparing employee perceptions of the ethical work climates reflected in two types of electronic word of mouth (eWOM): online employee reviews and testimonials. By examining two large corpora, she is able to demonstrate that ethical climates are not considered explicitly as significant criteria of employer attractiveness in these digital texts, even if references to ethical climates may appear in more implicit terms. A more detailed examination of the linguistic expression used in the testimonials and the reviews also throws light on the types of ethical climates that come out more recurrently in each discursive variety. In the paper that closes this volume, Judith Ainsworth examines a corporate narrative document (Wells Fargo CEO's email to employees) using a critical discourse analysis approach. By analysing the linguistic and discursive strategies used in this document, she is able to show how management tries to determine stakeholders' impressions of organizational legitimacy.

This volume forms part of an interdisciplinary research project supported by the Ministry of Science and Technology in Spain under Grant FFI2013 47792-C2-2-P: "Emotion and language 'at work': The Discursive Emotive/Evaluative Function in Different Texts and Contexts within Corporate and Institutional Work: Project Persuasion". Some of the papers that we have selected were presented, in a shortened version, at the "2018 Europe, Africa and Middle East Regional Conference" of the Association for Business Communication (ABC), which was attended by more than eighty scholars and which was sponsored by Banco Santander. The editors would like to thank the contributors for their excellent scholarship and to express their gratitude to Banco Santander and the Fundación General de la Universidad de Alcalá (FGUA) for their assistance.

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List of Contributors

Judith Ainsworth
Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Samira Allani
Universidad Politécnica de Madrid

Carmen Cortés-Zaborras
University of Málaga

Peter Daly
EDHEC Business School

Dennis Davy
EDHEC Business School

José-Santiago Fernández-Vázquez
University of Alcalá

María-Teresa Gallo-Rivera
Institute for Economic and Social Analysis
Universidad de Alcalá

Rubén Garrido-Yserte
Institute for Economic and Social Analysis
Universidad de Alcalá

Jolanta Łącka-Badura
University of Economics in Katowice

Susan Luck
Pfeiffer University, North Carolina, USA

Silvia Molina
Universidad Politécnica de Madrid

Ángel Sancho-Rodríguez
University of Alcalá

Mónica Sánchez-Torres
University of Alcalá and Tampere University

Stephanie Swartz
University of Applied Sciences Mainz, Germany

Isabel Turci-Domingo
University of Málaga

Ethics in Entrepreneurship and Business Management

José-Santiago Fernández-Vázquez and Ángel Sancho-Rodríguez

Ethical Appeals and Persuasion in the Entrepreneurial Pitch

Abstract: This chapter aims to determine the persuasive efficacy of the use of ethical appeals in the entrepreneurial pitch by examining the discursive interaction that takes place in a televised corpus, taken from the Spanish TV program *Tu Oportunidad* ("Your Chance"), the counterpart of the British *Dragon's Den* and the American *Shark Tank*. Using information gathered in the discursive analysis of the corpus, we address how the use of ethical appeals may influence the decisions taken by the investors. The results show that ethical appeals are useful for attracting investors' attention and passing an initial screening of the business venture, but that in the end they must always be accompanied by economic and financial arguments for the pitch to be successful. Ethical appeals do not possess persuasive force on their own.

Keywords: persuasion, entrepreneurial pitch, entrepreneurial ethics

Introduction

In a globalized world like today's where the flow of information is almost instantaneous, ethical issues have risen to prominence among business organizations and actors. (On the concept of business ethics, including a synthetic definition, see Lewis 1985.) Recent scandals such as the so-called Dieselgate fraud, involving contaminating motor-vehicle emissions, which hit the Volkswagen group in 2015, or the suit against Bayer for using carcinogenic herbicides in 2019, are clear cases of how failure to fulfil ethical and legal obligations may have a negative impact on profit-and-loss accounts. Not for nothing are factors relating to reputation a key part of an organization's goodwill, and that implies a certain correlation between economic profits and good standing in terms of ethics and social utility. The 2018 "Global Intangible Finance Tracker" study, for instance, showed that a 5 per cent improvement in a company's reputation entailed a 6.4 per cent increase in intention to purchase (p. 5). Similarly, Verschoor (1998) and Fan (2005) point to the importance of ethical issues in brand definition and, thence, to financial profits. In view of this correlation, when setting up a company or developing a business project it seems a good idea, whenever possible, to attend to ethical issues as a means of maximizing chances of success and profits. This is the underlying rationale of what is known as "social enterprise", whose business plans prioritize the achievement of a collective benefit that contributes to improving people's living conditions (Dees, 2011, pp. 24–5; Martin & Osberg, 2007, p. 35; Peredo & McLean, 2006, p. 64). The "pro-social" stance adopted by this type of enterprise need not militate against other more utilitarian motivations such as a craving for personal gains or a vocation for innovation (Douglas & Prentice, 2019). As Douglas observes, in social entrepreneurship "it is the sum of the part-worths that is determining, not any particular attitude, salient-outcome, or part-worth, since that attitude, salient outcome, or part-worth may easily be outweighed by the combined effect of the others" (2013, p. 638). Of course, balancing utilitarian motivations with a pro-social stance is not tension-free and may in turn spark significant ethical dilemmas (Zahra et al., 2019).

The growth of social enterprise is one of the reasons why experts have turned their attention to the relationship between ethics and enterprise. Entrepreneurship scholars pay increasing attention to the ethical aspects of the field, as Vallaster et al. (2019) have demonstrated in their bibliometric study in which they analyze 719 contributions in business and economics research, including the 30 most influential publications in the field. By reviewing these articles, Vallaster et al. were able to identify three main "clusters" which articulate the discussion on business and ethics. The first cluster tries to determine to what extent the characteristics of ethic entrepreneurs differ from those of non-entrepreneurs. The second cluster stresses the importance of ethics at an organizational level and the third one explores the societal contexts of ethics and entrepreneurship, including the position of stakeholders and social change. If we look at the most recurrent keywords in studies on ethics and entrepreneurship, we will find issues related to performance, management, corporate social responsibility, innovation, sustainability and decision-making, among others (Vallaster et al., 2019, p. 228). In this paper we intend to concentrate on one of these issues: the relationship between ethical concerns and decision-making. Most scholars have dealt with this topic from the perspective of the entrepreneur, in order to explain how entrepreneurs' choices are conditioned by their adherence to certain ethical values and by the tension this creates with their intention to obtain economic profit. Humphreys et al. (1993), for example, provided structured scenarios to determine how ethical or unethical the entrepreneurs thought a particular situation. Smith and Oakley (1994) argued that the size of the business community was a determining factor in the ethical decision-making process. Bucar and Hisrich (2001) compared the attitudes of entrepreneurs with those of business managers and found that the former are more prone to hold ethical attitudes. Payne and Joyner (2006) studied some of the ethical choices made by founding entrepreneurs during the creation and development of their ventures as a way of identifying the major categories of ethical values held by entrepreneurs. Colewaert and Fassin (2013) examined the impact of perceived unethical behavior as a source of conflict for entrepreneurs in their dealings with angel investors and venture capitalists. Baron, Zhao and Miao (2015) claimed that entrepreneurs' motivations for financial gain are positively related to moral disengagement (disengaging self-regulatory processes), which in turns leads them to adopt unethical decisions.

Objectives and Methodology

Our approach is somewhat different. Rather than focusing on how entrepreneurs' choices are conditioned by ethical values, we intend to analyse how the appeal to ethical concerns on the part of entrepreneurs may affect the possibilities of them receiving funding from investors. In other words, our intention is to determine to what extent the use of ethical references in the presentation of entrepreneurial projects has a positive effect from the perspective of persuasion. Following Pullman (2013, p. xx) we understand persuasion as "any process that creates a new belief or changes your level of commitment to an existing one" (2013, p. xx). To examine the persuasive force of ethical appeals in entrepreneurial contexts, we concentrate on the analysis of the "entrepreneurial pitch": an oral presentation which provides "a brief description of the value proposition of an idea" to "potential business angels or venture capitalists" (Wheatcroft, 2016, p. 26). Entrepreneurial pitches build successively on a series of communicative functions, each of which is associated with particular linguistic structures (Daly & Davy, 2016, p. 125). As for persuasive strategies, Clark has divided them into purely financial aspects, aspects relating to human capital and issues of social competence (2008, pp. 258–9). For their part, Maxwell, Jeffrey and Lévesque (2011), have put persuasive strategies into eight categories, all linked to the financial aspects or the quality of the business plan as pitched, except for the description of the entrepreneurs' own experience. They further suggest that in the first instance investors tend to reject projects which fail to pass muster under some or other of those criteria, and that one aspect's quality cannot make up for another's deficiency. Daly and Davy have applied a rhetorical framework to help distinguish between argumentative elements, elements relating to the speaker's credibility and emotional factors (2016, p. 127). In none of these studies are ethical references considered on their own.

Our research investigates the presence of ethical appeals and their persuasive efficacy in a corpus of televised entrepreneurial pitches. These pitches have been subjected to a detailed analysis of the discursive interventions and exchanges on the part of the entrepreneurs and their conversational counterparts, according to content analysis methodology (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Mayring, 2014) and pragma-linguistic argumentative theories (Toulmin, 2003; van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004). Each pitch contains a monologue, where the entrepreneurs expose their arguments, a dialogical interaction, which adopts a question–answer form, and a final intervention on the part of the investors, where they explain their reasons for supporting or discarding the project. To conduct our analysis, we first identified the presence of ethical appeals in the entrepreneurs' monologues, following the persuasive taxonomy developed by Fernández-Vázquez and Álvarez-Delgado (2019a). Then, to determine the persuasive efficacy of ethical appeals, we paid attention to the way in which investors reacted to the ethical references that the entrepreneurs introduced in their pitches, as seen in the interactive section. Finally, we considered the motivations that the investors gave to justify their decisions to finance or not finance the entrepreneurial projects. The analysis of the interactive section and the final arguments raised by the investors enabled us to determine to what extent ethical appeals were favorably considered by the investors (i. e. they were mentioned as a reason to finance the entrepreneurial project) or if, by contrast, they were ignored or even deemed detrimental for the business venture.

The corpus that we will be using was selected as part of an interdisciplinary research project: "Emotion and language 'at work': The Discursive Emotive/Evaluative Function in Different Texts and Contexts within Corporate and Institutional Work: Project Persuasion".[1] In this project, the members of the research team selected ten pitches from the British TV programme *Dragon's Den* and ten from its counterpart in Spain, *Tu Oportunidad* (Your Chance). Partial results for this project have been presented in García-Gómez (2018), Díez-Prados (2019) and Fernández-Vázquez & Álvarez Delgado (2019a; 2019b). To avoid possible cultural distortions, which may be particularly significant in the case of ethical values, in this paper we limit our research to the Spanish TV corpus. Ethical references were mentioned by the entrepreneurs in seven of the pitches that were analyzed. In the next section we discuss some of the most significant examples from these pitches, which enable us to assess the persuasive force of ethical appeals in entrepreneurial decision-making contexts. For each pitch we analyse the general strategies used by the entrepreneur from the point of view of persuasion, before focusing specifically on ethical argumentation.

1 The research that we present here was supported by the Ministry of Science and Technology in Spain under Grant FFI2013 47792-C2-2-P.

Discussion and Results

In the first video (Vertical Ecosystem) the ethical appeals were related to the subject of environmental sustainability. The entrepreneur introduced a small family business devoted to fabricating and commercializing plant covering for buildings, apparently for interiors – it was not clear whether this kind of product could also be used for exterior walls or roofing. The goal pursued was to obtain funding for the company's international expansion, although, apart from a brief reference to Mexico, no clear definition was provided of the geographical regions in which it was intended to commercialize the product.

The pitcher began his speech by introducing himself (name, origin, age) and explaining the goal of his address. This was to secure an investment of 100,000 Euros for the company's international expansion in exchange for a 10 per cent stake. This way of starting is characteristic of the "elevator pitch", a mode of discourse which is expected to be brief and to the point and where digressions, circumlocutions and beating around the bush are better avoided. That said, it is quite likely that this start to the speech was not especially due to the pitcher's communicative skills or any preconceived decision as to the "rules" of the television programme and its producers' instructions – or that is the deduction reached after viewing all the episodes in the series and observing how all began in a similar fashion.

After this formulaic introduction, the pitcher proceeded to explain his product, again in compliance with the program's unwritten rules. However, this was done somewhat chaotically: there was no clear definition of the product's features or the advantages it meant for consumers. Nor was there any explanation of how investors who committed to the company would benefit: "It's a tableau, but what it really, what it really . . . What Vertical is is a maker of vertical ecosystems."[2] The lack of any brief, instantly comprehensible explanation of the nature of the product is fatal in terms of persuasion, for it conveys a sensation of imprecision (the message lacks orientation), or even of chaos and confusion, as the investors underlined in their later communicative exchange (Investor 4, for example, referred to "the level of disorder in the company" and spoke of "chaos"). Far from generating confidence in the project and in himself as an entrepreneur, which is what one expects from a speech of this kind (entrepreneurial pitch), the pitcher threw an obstacle of uncertainty and mistrust in the path between

2 The quotations have been transcribed and translated by the authors.

himself and the investors. This, then, is the first mistake from the point of view of persuasion: the failure to explain clearly and concisely the nature or goals of the project for which external backing is sought.

A second, and very elementary, error in terms of persuasive strategies and communication is to overlook the characteristics of the target audience. Pitchers are addressing businessmen who know nothing of the product and, in this case, presumably had no prior experience with plant coverings. That is why this pitcher should have been a teacher of a sort, explaining simply what the plant coverings he sold actually were. As we mentioned above, any such explanation was conspicuous by its absence, except for the brief remark (more aesthetic than anything else) that it was a "tableau" and a passing reference to the broader concept of "vertical ecosystem", which was left unexplained. What is more, when addressing an audience of businessmen it is essential to emphasize data and rational arguments of a financial kind, which give them the impression that what they are dealing with is a sound business proposition, economically viable and solidly built in terms of corporate organization – an impression which is vital even if the project to be developed is one of social enterprise. Surprisingly, the pitcher provided no financial data, which meant it was the investors who had to enquire about economic and business issues, thereby taking the initiative in the communicative exchange. The absence of any financial/business information in the initial presentation added to the sensation of "chaos" and of the project's lack of definition, and this was perhaps the aspect that did most damage to the pitcher's pitch.

Thirdly, also highly conspicuous by their absence were any arguments in the pitch. The pitcher was asking for 100,000 Euros but offered no reason or argument as to why anyone should wish to invest money in his company. Only at the very end of the pitch did he mention the fact that "what we make really are systems capable of bringing nature to the building process itself". As we shall see shortly, the entrepreneur was attempting to insert his product in an ethical conceptual frame of social responsibility (care for the environment), but he did it so clumsily that his audience failed to understand what he was talking about. By "bringing nature to the building process" did he mean that the consumer might be prepared to purchase his product in order to be more "in tune" with the natural world? Or that this kind of covering would help the building process to benefit in terms of its construction or energy sustainability? Or that it improved the decoration? These questions cannot be answered, since the phrase that begs them has no argumentative force in itself, for all that the concept of "bringing nature to the building process" might sound appealing in terms of marketing or as an advertising slogan.

The communicative exchange between the pitcher and the investors only spelled out the deficiencies of the monologue: (1) the lack of any explanation about the nature of the product and insufficient arguments about its competitive advantages; (2) the absence of any clear definition of the intended business goals; and (3) the lack of any information about economic viability or the company's organizational set-up. In this section of the programme the pitcher did manage to palliate some of these shortcomings, but only in part, without mustering any cogent argument, and he was always at the beck and call of the investors, who found themselves having to squeeze the necessary explanations out of him. As stated, it would have been far wiser in terms of persuasive strategy for him to have been proactive in the formulation of arguments and presentation of data in a way that would have enhanced the perception of the business.

It is almost exclusively in relation to the explanation of the product's competitive advantages that the pitcher actually did develop any arguments, and these were related to a context of social enterprise. In answer to Investor 1, who asked about the problems the product was intended to solve, the pitcher stressed two advantages of the plant coverings he sold:

- Energy savings: "We are increasing the thermal coefficient like thermal insulating in the building itself, right? What we do is that, obviously, the building consumes les in energy terms."
- Positive contribution to the environment: "and then the building itself is working like a lung in the city".

These two features clearly form part of an ethical argument based on the idea of social responsibility and the appeal to the audience member's self-image as someone committed to the environment. One of the investors was quick to reach an interpretation in those terms: "I can see the benefit for others very well." However, she missed any argument based on financial considerations, which would not necessarily have been incompatible with the ethical appeals and which would have lent persuasive force to the pitcher's arguments: "but what's the maintenance cost?" The suggestion underlying that question was that it's all very well to contribute to environmental sustainability, but that it would be even better if that helped me save money. The pitcher answered that maintenance costs were very low and that therefore the economic investment required to install the plant covering would be amortized over a certain period through energy savings. That being the case, it would have been more useful in terms of persuasive efficacy to have adopted an economic approach from the very beginning, arguing that buying the product was in fact an investment, not an expense, given that the cost of installation would be recouped in energy bill savings. Once an economic conceptual frame had been established, the pitcher could then have highlighted the aspects related to environmental commitment to complement the economic arguments. By not following that path, he earned the almost unanimous rejection of the investors, who criticized him for a lack of financial information and summed up the business project as “chaos”: “I think it’s a great product, I really do, but the rest is simple chaos . . .” We may therefore infer that the presence of ethical appeals in entrepreneurial pitches is ineffective in persuasive terms if unaccompanied by other arguments of a financial or business kind. Investors may warm to ethical appeals, but only insofar as they are compatible with achieving economic profits. Our analyses of other examples led to similar conclusions.

A case in point was the pitch for an easy-open lock for the disabled, called “Easy Key” in the video. As in the previous case (Vertical Ecosystem), in his opening monologue the entrepreneur asked for funding (here, for a patent) in very vague terms, which indicated almost non-existent business training and all but complete ignorance of the world of innovation and enterprise. In the pitcher–investors exchange, this impression was confirmed when the pitcher admitted that “I lack training as a businessman”, admitted that the company was still at a “very early” stage, and agreed with one of the investors that even if finance were secured the business project as pitched would still be only “half-cocked”. As before, in order to palliate these deficiencies the entrepreneur tried to emphasize the product’s competitive advantages by repeating the argument from the initial presentation regarding its benefits for the disabled. This argument captured the investors’ attention, and they promised to recommend the lock to some of their acquaintances. One of them was even ready to provide funding so long as he took charge of the business project and the pitcher took a back seat as a mere employee. Thus, while ethical appeals achieve their goal of attracting investors’ attention, the business proposition as pitched is finally assessed in terms of economic and financial considerations, as was apparent here from the investors’ final interventions.

The same was true for the third video (“R+D”), in which the entrepreneur pitched an entirely Spanish electronic tablet, which, so he claimed, could help generate a social benefit: “It’s all ‘made-in-Spain’. The company was set up . . . to generate wealth in the local environment.” The investors paid due attention to this argument concerning social benefit, but promptly subordinated it to thoughts of an economic nature: tablets made in Asian countries are cheaper, and therefore more competitive for consumers. Once again, the ethical arguments proved to be weak when set against financial and business logic.

This conclusion (the shortfall in persuasive terms of solely ethical appeals) was confirmed by another of the pitches, which merits close scrutiny: "Suproma". The video was a pitch for a pressotherapeutic band for immobilizing the breast prostheses of cancer patients who have undergone breast removal. The product's design was based on one of the pitcher's own personal experience, and the aim of the pitch was to convince the investors to provide funding of 60,000 Euros in exchange for a 15 per cent stake in the company. During the monologue, the pitchers' discourse was based, firstly, on an emotional appeal with a view to generating sympathy and confidence among the investors, much like the "captatio benevolentiae" of classical rhetoric. This was clear to see from the references both pitchers made to their previous traumatic personal experiences: breast cancer in the case of one, a job dismissal in the case of the other. The emotional appeal was strengthened by allusions to family and to "unbearable pain" after breast removal, by the affectionate gestures deployed by both contestants (hugs, laughter and tears), and by the notion that they formed a match made in heaven: "the thing is, we were the perfect team". To judge from the investors' reactions, even on the plane of gestures (including the glances they exchanged) this deployment of emotional resources achieved its purpose of predisposing the audience favorably: Investor 1, for example, had no qualms about admitting that she thought it was a "lovely" project, while Investor 5 praised it for being "a project with a heart".

Setting to one side the emotional discourse, in the monologue section the entrepreneurs presented two rational arguments in justification of the investment they were seeking: the pitched product satisfied a real consumer need, and it was markedly different from other products insofar as it was a band whose "exclusive" design enhanced patients' comfort and well-being. The exclusivity of the product, which set it apart from those manufactured by competitors, suggested that it could be marketed successfully and would bring profits to the company. The product's exclusive or distinctive nature was suitably illustrated with simple and concise explanations backed up visually by a model and the gestures of one of the persuaders: the special armhole, the strengthened edges, the lack of pressure to the armpit ... This combination of ethical references with business issues went down well with the investors, who re-emphasized their interest in contributing to the project's success in the interactive section. Investor 3, to be more specific, was interested in the persuaders' plans to devote part of the profits to charitable ends, a pledge they made to her with some skill: "We want to make a commitment on this show that part of our profits ... well, to do our bit towards cancer research." Thus, it can be seen how emotional appeals are by no means harmful in persuasive terms when it comes to attracting investor attention and passing through the filter of an initial appraisal of the project. However, as stated above, ethical allusions have no persuasive force unless accompanied by complementary economic and business arguments, as this case also demonstrated.

At the start of the interactive section, the pitchers were clever enough to temporarily steer clear of ethical motivations and to focus on highlighting the business-related aspects which might ensure the venture's viability:

- The existence of scientific endorsement, which is essential for a product of this kind, intended for people with some medical condition or other. The entrepreneurs confirmed that they had consulted doctors before marketing the product and that some of them were already prescribing its use.
- The product's presence in the appropriate supply chain: the product was already on sale in specialized outlets (orthopaedic and corsetry outlets, and chemists).
- The innovative nature of the product: in response to one investor who was concerned that there were other similar products on the market, the pitchers repeated their original argument about the product's exclusivity: "This model is exclusive, because no other has this anatomical shape or . . . these hooks which adjust to the post-op bra."
- The existence of a sufficient profit margin: Pitcher 1 admitted that the margin was still small since there were no economies of scale, but she pointed out that the price was "within the market" and countered effectively that the investment they were seeking would allow them to improve their trading margins by increasing the number of units produced, thereby permitting a reduction in price and enhancing the product's competitiveness.

It is interesting to note that, unlike their counterparts in the other videos in our corpus, the pitchers were fully aware that their presentation was taking place in a business context and that they should therefore employ arguments and chains of reasoning with a business logic. Thus, one of the entrepreneurs began her answer to the questions of Investor 4 with the suggestion that the goal of the company she and her partner had created was not to make a profit, only then to change tack rapidly and qualify her comments by adding that while they were not looking for exorbitant profits the business was nonetheless conceived to secure sufficient profit margins: "we don't want to make money . . . I mean, we don't want . . . We want the company to do well, to have results, but we don't want to become millionaires." At one point, however, as we also saw in the videos analyzed previously, the pitchers stepped outside the economic/business frame to focus on solely ethical appeals, as if the mere existence of a social benefit were enough to justify abandoning the project's sound economic sense. Once again, this decision had dire consequences for the pitch's persuasive efficacy.

This was apparent when Investor 5 showed his concern that the competition might replicate the persuaders' product even though it was patented. Instead of offering assurances that the product was adequately protected, the pitchers admitted that the patent did not provide complete cover, but attached little importance to the issue and claimed that if another company improved the product "it will be good for the patient". This error of strategy undermined the relatively sound and businesslike arguments proffered earlier, by putting ethical motivations before profit. Investor 2 reacted by declaring that the project "owed more to the heart" than "to the head, to business sense", and that he could not therefore give it his backing, in which he was followed by the other investors.

To end our discussion, we would like to give attention to one final example in which ethical appeals are successfully combined with economic and financial arguments: the video called "Matarrania". This video includes a pitch for cosmetic products made with natural ingredients in the province of Teruel (a sparsely inhabited area of Spain with a lower per capita income than elsewhere). In this case the persuader was trying to secure funding of 29,000 Euros in exchange for an 8 per cent share in the company. In her initial presentation, the contestant explained the main feature of the product she wished to market and highlighted its distinguishing marks, which would ensure it a strong market position (competitive advantage): quality (an "efficient" cosmetic, "with excellent properties: skin regenerators and protectors", "sumptuous" textures); and the use of natural ingredients ("bio" products) ("it contains extra virgin olive oil" and has "delicate sylvan aromas"). Her first argument, then, was the existence of a market niche calling for products of this kind, products which, as the persuader herself acknowledged, targeted a minority of consumers: "I think it will go down really well with people looking for something really natural, genuine and made in Spain." This, then, was a rational, commercial argument situated within a business cognitive frame: consumers existed who called for the product it was hoped to market. It was complemented with an additional explanation of an ethical nature: manufacturing the product improved the lifestyle of members of the rural community where it was produced: "As far as possible we use local raw materials and kilometer zero ingredients, I mean, ingredients produced less than 100 kilometers away, because we think that's important if you want to support the rural economy." In this context, the ethical appeal did not prove counterproductive insofar as the persuader prioritized and gave particular weight to the financial aspects, employing ethical appeals only as a complement to the main argument.

In fact, the subsequent communicative exchange with the investors was marked by the latter's eagerness to learn more details about the business venture, which indicated the persuader's success at grabbing their attention by situating the initial pitch in the appropriate conceptual framework (arguments of an economic and business nature supported by ethical concerns). In the second part, the persuader looked confident and self-assured, and replied directly and clearly to the investors' queries about the initial investment, the product's selling price, the company's turnover and its current workforce. The entrepreneur's aplomb when explaining the financial aspects of the business generated confidence among the investors and enhanced her credibility as a potentially reliable partner. As a result, she finally received various offers from the investors and was able to choose which suited her best.

Conclusions

Although the size of the research corpus is limited (7 out of the 10 videos that we have selected contain ethical appeals), a detailed analysis of the entrepreneurs' pitches, and of their communicative exchanges with the investors, allows us to draw some provisional conclusions about the persuasive efficacy of the use of ethical arguments in entrepreneurial discourse. The results obtained show that the investors valued the use of ethical references in positive terms, but only insofar as these references were used to support other arguments, of a financial and economic kind. In other words, ethical appeals do not possess persuasive force on their own. They are useful in attracting investors' attention and passing an initial screening of the business venture, but they must always be accompanied by economic and financial details for the pitch to be successful. These results are coherent with those of previous studies on the same corpus that we have developed as part of our research project (see in particular Fernández-Vázquez & Álvarez-Delgado, 2019b).

We believe that these conclusions are relevant to scientific debate on the use of persuasive strategies in business contexts. At the same time, from a practical point of view the results may be useful for entrepreneurs who need to attract financing by pitching their projects. To establish the generalizability of the findings, however, future research should verify and expand the results through comprehensive analysis of a larger sample which includes real discursive utterances, and not merely televised pitches.

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Dennis Davy and Peter Daly

French Entrepreneurial Pitches in English: Analysis of Linguistic Errors and Perceptions of Error Gravity

Abstract: This chapter examines the different types of English-language errors made in entrepreneurial pitches by native speakers of French and the effect they have on venture capitalists, ranging from more or less positive impressions to near-breakdowns in communication with potentially dire consequences for investor decisions. A data set of 20 videotaped two-minute pitches in English by French entrepreneurs was first analysed by two bilingual linguists/educators and then evaluated by native French speaker teachers of English (with at least level C1 in English on the Common European Framework) and native English speakers (teachers and non-teachers), who were asked to give their subjective reactions to and perceptions of the relative gravity of the errors they identified in the entrepreneurial discourse. The results of this empirically-based study can be extended to pitchers with other language backgrounds, and provide insights which can help educators train entrepreneurs and business students to deliver more accurate, successful and persuasive entrepreneurial pitches in English.

Keywords: entrepreneurial pitch, linguistic errors, error gravity, French speakers, English errors.

Introduction

Mastering the two-minute entrepreneurial pitch is a key skill required of everyone who wants to successfully "sell" an innovative product or service to a venture capitalist or business angel. This is no easy task in your native language, and all the more challenging when you have to use a foreign language to persuade investors to buy into your idea. While recent research has looked at the structural, linguistic and rhetorical features of the entrepreneurial pitch (Daly & Davy, 2016a, 2016b), at verbal and non-verbal engagement devices (Diez-Prados, 2019) and at persuasion in pitches on reality TV (García-Gómez, 2018), no research to our mind has looked at the linguistic errors made by entrepreneurs and the perception of the gravity of these errors.

As part of an empirically-based research project, 20 two-minute English pitches made by French entrepreneurs were video-recorded. The entrepreneurs were following a short course at a French Business School entitled "Successful Pitching" prior to a week-long Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Leadership programme at the Centre for Professional Development at Stanford University. All the entrepreneurs were *appreneurs* (a portmanteau term from *ap*plication + entre*preneurs*), who were working on new applications for business. The entrepreneurs ranged in age from 25 to 56, with an average age of 35. Seventeen were male and three female. The pitches were anonymized because of the sensitive data some of them contained, and then transcribed and cross-checked, using a broad orthographic system, by the two researchers, both of whom are linguists and educators, and native speakers of English who are fluent in French. Extra phonological detail (related to individual phonemes and word-stress) was added to the transcripts whenever this was relevant.

Error Analysis

Error Analysis documents the errors in learner language, establishes whether these errors are systematic and attempts to explain the cause of these errors. Native speakers make performance errors (slips of the tongue and of the pen) occasionally, whereas second language learners also make errors that no native speaker of that language would make. Error Analysis, then, focuses on the systematic violations of correct language patterns and tells us something about the learner's inter-language (Selinker, 1972; Pit Corder, 1981), that is, the underlying developing knowledge of the language being learnt. In the literature, many frameworks and taxonomies have been developed in the field of Error Analysis (Bartram & Walton, 1991; Edge, 1989; Norrish, 1983; Pit Corder, 1967, 1981; Richards, 1975).

Richards (1975) identifies two major stages in error analysis: error identification and error explanation. When identifying the error, the error must be reconstructed depending on the intended message and also bearing in mind that the language utterance being analysed may involve errors at many levels: phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical, pragmatic, etc. In this stage, the researcher must also ascertain how systematic the error is and whether we are dealing with a systematic or a performance error. In error explanation, the researcher seeks to explain why these errors occurred. There are many explanations, such as a language learner following a rule or pattern in their own native language (native language transfer), or following a rule from another language (other language transfer) or one based on developmental errors typical of the learning of that particular language (Selinker, 1972). Swan & Smith (1987), in their landmark study *Learner English: A Teacher's Guide to Interference and Other Problems*, identified the typical language errors made by non-native speakers of English, with a chapter by Walter (pp. 42–57) focusing on the typical errors of francophone learners. In the next section, we analyse the types of errors identified in the English pitches delivered by French entrepreneurs, prior to studying the perceptions of the relative gravity of the errors identified.

Types of Errors Identified

The errors identified were divided into ten categories, namely: aspect and tense; verb and noun morphology; verb complementation; prepositions; articles, determiners and quantifiers; relative pronouns; numbers; vocabulary; pronunciation; and register and style. In many cases, ill-formed utterances contained errors of several types. In the following section, incorrect utterances from the corpus are preceded by an asterisk (*), infelicitous forms are preceded by a question mark (?) and incorrect/stylistically inappropriate words are printed in *italics*. The pitches in which the errors occurred are identified as P1 (pitch 1), P2, and so forth.

1. *Aspect and tense.* Most French pitchers had trouble with progressive and simple verb forms, often accompanied by inappropriate aspectual forms indicating finished and unfinished (perfect and non-perfect) actions and events. The present progressive was often used instead of the present simple, and vice versa:

*“When you watch a PowerPoint, 95 % of what you see *is going* to the clouds” P15, rather than “. . . 95 % of what you see goes to the clouds”.
*“The whole world *goes* digital” P1, instead of “. . . is going digital”.

Moreover, the present simple sometimes occurred instead of the present perfect progressive, for events which began in the past and continue into the present: *“We *use* this program since the year 2000” P15, rather than “We have been using this program since the year 2000”.

The present perfect also appeared instead of the past simple, when referring to a precise point in the past: *“We *have* founded our company three years ago” P2, rather than “We founded our company three years ago”.

There was also a tendency to use present simple forms instead of future forms with “will” or its contracted form, and vice versa:

*“Now *I let* [name of co-pitcher] talk about our business model” P11, rather than “Now I’ll let . . .” or “I will let . . .”
*“If you want to share profit with us, *we share* 20 % of our equity” P1, instead of “. . .we’ll share . . .” or “. . . we will share . . .”
*“We will . . . reach out indirectly when they *will* need us” P3, in place of “. . . when they need us”.

2. *Verb and noun morphology.* The data set included numerous instances of incorrect singular and plural agreements with nouns:

*"Two *type* of retailers" P7, in place of "Two types . . ."
*"Three *kind* of business models" P14, instead of "Three kinds . . ."

Intrusive plural "s" on the first element of noun/noun compounds: *"A *toys* trader like Toys R Us" P12, instead of "A toy trader . . .".

There were many errors involving the demonstrative adjectives "this" and "these", but it is difficult to know whether these should be classified as incorrect singular/plural agreements or pronunciation issues linked to the short and long phonemes /ɪ/ and /iː/, as in the minimal pairs "ship" and "sheep": *"One hundred of /zi:z/ application of /zi:z/ brands" (P4). Does the pitcher mean "this application" or "these applications", "this brand" or "these brands"?

As regards verbs, there were frequent issues with present simple third person forms:

*"Companies *doesn't* want to wait so long" P11, instead of "Companies don't want . . ."
*"*That's mean* everybody who *have* . . ." P14, rather than "That means everybody who has . . ."

3. *Verb complementation.* A very complex area of English syntax concerns the constructions used when two verbs co-occur. Is the first verb followed by an infinitive (with or without "to") or by a gerund (-ing form)? What about direct and indirect objects, and prepositions?:

*"Our *tool permits to* farmers to *have* the best decision" P6, instead of "Our application/program enables/allows farmers to make/take the best decision".
*"Stop *to waste* your dollars and *lose* your customers" P12, rather than "Stop wasting your dollars and losing . . ."
*"You must avoid *to give* a negative image of your company" P2, in place of ". . . avoid giving . . ."
*"How many *reach to find* a reliable answer?" P11, instead of "How many manage to find/succeed in finding a reliable answer?"

4. *Prepositions.* The most common mistakes regarding prepositions concerned "for" and "since" when referring to periods of time and points in time, for example. *"*since* two months" (in place of "for two months"), and the replacement of "in" and "at" by "to" with verbs of movement, for example *"We came *in* Paris five months ago" P2, rather than "We came to Paris . . .".

Pitchers often had trouble with word order and prepositions when using verbs followed by a direct and indirect object, where the tendency was to omit prepositions totally:

*"We provide *retailers software*" P2, instead of "We provide software to retailers" or "We provide retailers with software".
*"Let me introduce you [name of product]" P14, in place of "Let me introduce [name of product] to you" or, less likely, "Let me introduce you to [name of product]".

Another systematic error involved the preposition after the verb "participate", wrongly followed by "to" instead of "in": *"We participated *to* many conferences" P10, instead of ". . . participated in many conferences".

5. *Articles, determiners and quantifiers.* One interesting error in article use involved the word "internet", which French pitchers used without the definite article: *"We use internet all the time" P13.

Other incorrect uses of articles included *"*a* amazing tool" P5, and *"You are *lucky guy*" P14, instead of "an amazing tool" and "You are a lucky guy", or perhaps "You are lucky guys".

Many errors involved the use of quantifiers like "each", "every" and "all" with singular and plural forms:

*"This app integrates *every details* which users enter" P4, instead of ". . . all the details . . ." or ". . . every detail . . ."
*"To illustrate *every ideas*" P15, in place of ". . . each/every idea" or "all (the) ideas".

6. *Relative pronouns.* French pitchers often confused "who", "which" and "that", over-using "who", resulting in ill-formed utterances such as: *"We have produced a device *who* will make your job easier" P4, instead of ". . . that/which will make . . .".
7. *Numbers.* The most characteristic problem with numbers involved the word "million", incorrectly used in the plural and followed by the preposition "of": *"There *is* twenty *millions o*f people using Skype in France every day" P11, instead of "There are twenty million people . . ."

There were also ambiguous pronunciations of numbers like "thirteen" and "thirty", and even confusion between "thirty" and "forty".

The year 2006 was pronounced as *"two *hundred* and six" by one French entrepreneur (P15), rather than as "two thousand (and) six" or "twenty oh six".

8. *Vocabulary.* Lexical errors can be divided into two main sub-categories:

   (a) *Collocations.* *"Our start-up wants to *win* a lot of money" P3, rather than ". . . to earn (or make) a lot of money". Pitchers 11 and 12 used the anomalous form *"to make business", in place of "to do business".
   (b) *False friends*:

*"We use it to animate . . . big and small meetings" P15, rather than "We use it to run . . . meetings".
*"Do you want to cook like a *chief*?" P13, instead of ". . . cook like a chef?"
*"*Actually*, we are operating in five cities" P5, in place of "Currently, we are operating . . .".
*"We need a new *support* for everyday meetings" P15, where the context indicates that the word "support" refers to "medium" or "format", rather than "assistance".

In many instances, lexical errors of the above type are "covert" rather than "overt", insofar as they often remain hidden and can lead to confusion, misunderstandings and/or unexpected humour.

9. *Pronunciation.* Pronunciation-related errors fell into three main sub-categories:
   (a) *Issues with individual phonemes (/h/, /θ/ and /ð/) and certain diphthongs (/aɪ/ and /əʊ/).* Omission of aitch: *"*Ello*, my name is . . ." for "Hello . . .", which may sound amusing to native speakers, especially as the opening utterance of a pitch.
      (i) *Use of intrusive/parasitical aitch with or without aitch-dropping*: *"*Hi ham 'ere* today . . ." instead of "I am here today . . .".
      (ii) *Systematic replacement of the voiced /θ/ and unvoiced /ð/ realizations of the digraph <th> by /s/ and /z/*:

*"*Sank* you for your attention", P2 in place of "Thank you for . . .".
*"I don't want to *buzzer* you" P7, instead of ". . . bother you".

Problems with the unvoiced /ð/ also co-occurred with problems of vowel length distinctions in words such as "this" and "these", as mentioned above in section 2. Words containing the letters <i>, <o> and <u> also gave rise to pronunciation errors, with "client" /ˈklaɪənt/ pronounced with the phoneme /i:/ rather than the diphthong /aɪ /, and "focus" /'fəʊkəs/ pronounced /fʊ'ku:s/, embarrassingly close to a particular taboo expression.

   (b) *Supra-segmental features.* While no specific issues with intonation and sentence-stress were identified, apart from a rather flat and monotonous delivery in some cases, inappropriate word-stress was very marked. For instance, the words "study" and "determine" were wrongly stressed on the final syllable: *"*stu*DY", rather than "STUdy", *"*deterMINE*" instead of "deTERmine".
   (c) *Non-phonological pronunciation issues*. Many pitchers spoke too quickly, whether because of nerves or due to a desperate need to cram as much information as possible into a short time-span. Consequently, crucial

information such as the names of pitchers, their company/brand and their product or service was often mumbled and almost inaudible or incomprehensible. Pitchers also over-used hesitation-markers or fillers, which affected the fluidity and clarity of their diction.

10. *Register and style.* Though there is evidence that native speaker pitchers sometimes use rather colloquial language (cf. Daly & Davy's study of pitches from the BBC reality TV series *Dragons' Den*, 2016a and 2016b), informal register and style from non-natives can sound inappropriate.

French pitchers who began their presentation to older native speaker "catchers" with "*Hey guys*! We have a *cool* idea" should probably have opted for a stylistically less risky "Hello/Good morning. We have an interesting idea."

Differing Perceptions of Error Gravity

It was decided to explore whether different kinds of "catchers" identified the same mistakes in the pitches and how important or unimportant they judged the various types of mistakes to be. Adapting procedures from the field of Error Gravity Perception, three types of "judges" or raters were chosen (native speaker English instructors, French English instructors and non-teaching business people), and for each category two people were selected. See James (1977), Hughes & Lascaratou (1982), Khalil (1985), Sheorey (1986), Sionis (1993), Rifkin & Roberts (1995), Hyland & Enan (2006) and Jenkins (2000, 2007, 2009).

Six of the twenty pitches were selected as providing a representative selection in terms of the range and number of errors they exemplified. The judges were asked to watch and listen to the video-recorded pitches individually once only (to replicate the situation of business angels who can only listen to a pitch once) and to note down the mistakes they identified. Later, they were invited to grade the mistakes from 1 to 4 according to the relative "gravity" of the mistake, 1 representing the least serious and 4 the most serious. They were also asked to categorize the mistakes and to provide adjectives of their own choice to show their emotional/subjective reaction to each mistake. Moreover, they were asked to write a brief comment on the linguistic and communicative quality of each of the six pitches and to provide advice to each pitcher on how they could improve the linguistic accuracy of their pitch.

Fig. 1: *Errors identified (types and tokens)*

English Instructors (native speakers)	**English Instructors (native French speakers)**	**Business Professionals (native English speakers, non-teachers, non-French speakers)**
Pronunciation 26	Pronunciation 36	Pronunciation 29
Accent 9	Agreement 13	Grammar 19
Plurals 6	Vocabulary 10	Clarity 9
Grammar 4	Tenses 7	Enunciation 5
Intonation 3	Grammar 6	Idioms and plurals (4 instances of each)
Prepositions 3	Prepositions, word order and meaning (5 instances of each)	Prepositions 3
Tenses3	Syntax and articles (3 of each)	Numbers 2
Stuttering 2	Pronouns 2	
Fillers, conjugation, agreement, missing word, article, misplacement, relative pronoun, numbers, expression, sentence structure (1 instance of each)	Adjectives, passive, logic (1 instance of each)	Delaying, jargon, tenses, appropriacy, repetition, direct translation, false friend, incorrect word (1 instance of each)
Total: 66	Total: 98	Total: 79

Findings

Types of Errors Identified

As Figure 1 shows, all the judges identified pronunciation as the most frequent general source of mistakes, but also noted numerous specific instances of mistakes with prepositions, numbers, vocabulary and verb tenses. The French teachers of English identified the largest number of individual mistakes and the native-speaker teachers the fewest. Many of the errors identified by the business professionals were classified by less specific labels, such as “clarity”, “enunciation”, “delaying” and “repetition”, as against more precise labels used by the language teaching professionals.

Least Serious and Most Serious Mistakes

Figures 2 and 3 show the errors which the three types of judges perceived to be least serious (i.e. errors to which they awarded a 1) and those which they

Fig. 2: *Errors perceived as least serious (level 1 errors)*

English Instructors (native speakers)	**English Instructors (native French speakers)**	**Business Professionals (native English speakers, non-teachers, non-French speakers)**
Aitch-dropping: (h)elp Mispronunciation: expertise	Aitch-dropping/insertion: (h)i everybody, (h)ear Hask (for "ask") Mispronunciation of "decide", "the" and "clients"	Aitch-dropping: (h)ave Confusion of funds/founds
Every ideas	On one hand	
s-dropping/insertion (plurals and 3rd person): That's mean		
More clear (for "clearer")	More clear, more fair	
Incorrect word stress: Inevitable	Incorrect word-stress: ineviTABLE, deveLOPing caPABility, mesSAGE	Incorrect word-stress: caPABility
How much does it cost *to* us?	95 procent	95 procent
Omission of definite or indefinite article: To become leader	Omission of definite or indefinite article: To become leader	

Fig. 3: *Errors perceived as most serious (level 4 errors)*

English Instructors (native speakers)	**English Instructors (native French speakers)**	**Business Professionals (native English speakers, non-teachers, non-French speakers)**
Unclear website name (x2)	Meaning breakdown, lack of clarity	Unclear website name, company name, brand name
2006: two hundred and six	2006: two hundred and six	Jargon
Stuttering	They won't came up	Make the different
Pronunciation: focus, viral, client, clothes		Pronunciation of clothes

considered the most serious (i.e. errors to which they awarded a 4). While the teachers noted many examples of faulty tense/aspect usage, incorrect singular/plural agreements and dropped third person present tense endings, the business professionals focussed more on clarity, enunciation and diction. Overall, all judges were relatively lenient about mistakes linked to the pronunciation of <th> and <h>, and about most instances of incorrect word stress, but were less indulgent regarding numbers, certain mispronounced words (i.e. "clothes", "clients", "viral" and "focus"), the speed of the pitch-delivery, the over-use of fillers like "eh" and "um", and the mumbling of important proper names.

Adjectives Chosen to Describe Personal Reaction to Mistakes

When we analyse the adjectives used to indicate the judges' affective reaction to particular errors, pitches and pitchers or to show how they felt as catchers, we find an extremely wide range of 33 adjectives and expressions, as shown in Figure 4. The native-speaker teachers used the widest range of adjectives, the business professionals the smallest number of adjectives. Unfortunately, however, with some adjectives like "indifferent", "understandable" and "lost", it is unclear whether: the judge felt indifferent about the error or whether the pitcher sounded indifferent; whether the meaning of an incorrect word could be understood or whether the rater understood the reason for the error; and whether the pitcher sounded lost or whether the catcher felt lost.

The adjectives chosen most frequently by the language instructors were "frustrating" and the ambiguous "indifferent", but "annoying", "lost", "upsetting", "irritating", "careless" and "puzzling" were also common. The word "annoying" was used twice as often by the French native teachers as by the native English teachers. The most popular adjectives used by the business people were "irritating" and "annoying", with a few cases of "frustrating" and "exasperating". All the judges occasionally described particular mistakes as "funny", "amusing", and even "cute".

Judges' General Comments on Particular Pitches

The general comments written by the judges on the linguistic quality of the six pitches that they watched/listened to are also revealing and often extremely different, indicating extensive inter-rater variability. Figure 5 presents the comments written by one judge from each of the three different groups.

The language teachers focused on the over-use of fillers, with the French native commenting on the marked French accent, whereas the business professional

Fig. 4: *Adjectives chosen by judges to show their subjective reactions to errors (types and tokens)*

English Instructors (native speakers)	**English Instructors (native French speakers)**	**Business Professionals (native English speakers, non-teachers, non-French speakers)**
Frustrating 10	Indifferent 27	Irritating; annoying (29 instances of each)
Lost 8	Annoying 21	Frustrating 6
Typically French 4	Frustrating 9	Exasperating 5
Confusing 3	Amusing 6	
Annoying, insignificant, careless, almost incomprehensible; strangely funny (2 instances of each)	Made me doubt, think, wonder (total of 5 instances)	Distracting, amusing, understandable (1 instance of each)
Acceptable, understandable, crucial, serious, awkward, danger zone, should know that, cringe, cute, unnatural, unpleasant, not important, could be misunderstood (1 instance of each)	Upsetting 4	
	Irritating 2	
	Made me smile 2	
	Puzzling 2	
	My heart is bleeding, Confusing (1 instance of each)	
Total of types: 22	**Total of types: 13**	**Total of types: 7**
Total of tokens: 48	**Total of tokens: 80**	**Total of tokens:72**
Grand Total of types: 33		
Grand Total of tokens: 200		

concentrated on the speed of delivery and the monotonous intonation, which made the pitcher/pitch dull.

Advice to a Pitcher on How to Improve His Pitch

In their advice to Pitcher 3 (Figure 6) on what he should do to improve the quality of his pitch, all three judges agreed on the need for him to speak more slowly, with the native English teacher warning about the over-use of fillers and the

Fig. 5: *General comments on linguistic quality of pitch 3*

English Instructor (native speaker)	English Instructor (native French speaker)	Business Professional (native English speaker, non-teacher, non-French speaker)
He tried to use some key business terms and phrases but often misused them. Actually, maybe he only made a few mistakes but I had the impression there were more. Too many "uhhs" and "umms".	Quite hard to follow due to the many hesitations (French-style "euh") and to the very marked French pronunciation. Little risk taken with the vocabulary and structures used.	Too rushed, so stumbled over many words. Delivery OK but little intonation, which came across as dull.

Fig. 6: *Advice to pitcher 3 on how to improve the linguistic quality of his pitch*

English Instructor (native speaker)	English Instructor (native French speaker)	Business Professional (native English speaker, non-teacher, non-French speaker)
If you have a strong accent, you should slow down to be better understood. Get those key terms and expressions down pat! No more fillers, please. Replace "umm" with a pause/silence.	Work on the pronunciation of individual words. Speak more slowly. Work on the different uses of "who" and "which"/"that".	Speak more slowly. Check idioms are correct. If using abbreviations, explain what these stand for. Pick out some sentences to emphasise so not as monotone.

need to rehearse key words and expressions. The French teacher of English also advised the pitcher to focus on pronouncing individual words correctly and to revise his relative pronouns. As for the business professional, they recommended checking idiomatic expressions, explaining abbreviations in full and working on the intonation of particular utterances so as not to sound monotonous.

Main Contributions of this Research

This empirical, data-driven study confirms the huge variation in the way people identify mistakes and subjectively judge how major or minor they are, demonstrating the extent of inter-rater and intra-rater variability. It also corroborates findings from Error Gravity Perception research that non-native teachers are generally more severe in their judgements than native teachers, and that native speaker teachers and business professionals are more lenient, tending to focus much more on meaning than on form. Moreover, its findings dovetail with those of Jenkins' research (e.g. 2000, 2007 and 2009) in the field of World Englishes, English as an International Language (EIL) and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), that non-native users of English should not strive for a perfect native speaker model but should aim at being "comfortably intelligible", with an acceptable command of phonology, lexis and grammar, all the while remaining aware of the "irritation factor", in other words, that particular errors can have a negative effect on native and non-native interlocutors.

Very few error gravity studies, with the notable exception of Sionis (1993), have focused on French speakers of English, and our research is unique insofar as it used both analytical (discrete-point) and impressionistic (global) evaluation methods and in that its pitchers were not a homogeneous group in a school or university class but were professionals from different backgrounds and ages, who all shared an entrepreneurial spirit. Furthermore, while most previous Error Gravity studies concentrated on written language (often decontextualized) or transcripts of spoken output, this study focused on authentic spoken discourse, with the added value of the visual aspect, which would also allow an analysis of non-verbal communication, gestures and body language.

Deliverables

This theoretical research leads naturally into practical suggestions for trainers, entrepreneurs and business students. Its findings can be used for the development of relevant training materials for executive education purposes and can help to sensitize pitchers, whatever their native language background, to the key errors that may be perceived as incomprehensible, irritating, annoying or amusing by their interlocutors, and that may contribute to the failure of a pitch to convince venture capitalists to invest in the product or service.

The main advice to pitchers is that they should plan their pitches carefully, and speak slowly and clearly, paying particular attention to the clear enunciation of proper names and websites, and make sure that their message is comfortably intelligible. And secondly, they should endeavour to avoid pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar mistakes and the over-use of hesitation markers that are known to irritate the different kinds of people who will evaluate their pitch.

Trainers and trainees could record pitches and listen carefully to linguistic imperfections which could interfere with clear conveyance of a message, or cause misunderstandings and unintended humour which might divert attention from the pitcher's message and have dire consequences for his or her credibility.

Pitchers should be (made) aware of words and expressions to avoid if they risk pronouncing them in a humorous or confusing way, especially at the beginning of the pitch. For example, they might begin their pitch with “Good morning” instead of “Hello” and use words like “emphasize” or “stress” instead of “focus”.

The findings of this research have already fed into the pedagogical development of the innovative Pitch Academy at a French Business School. Nine hundred and fifty Master 1 students are asked to work on a problem faced by one of the school’s corporate partners and to pitch their solution. Students must watch five short online learning modules on: (1) verbal pitch communication; (2) non-verbal pitch communication; (3) selling your idea; (4) critical thinking; and (5) avoiding typical language errors in pitching. Students must then complete a multiple choice quiz on the modules. They then must prepare a pitch and upload it for appraisal by one of their peers (all students are matched randomly with another student for peer evaluation purposes). Then students pitch in front of a jury of two people (a language professional and a coach) and receive face-to-face feedback on their pitch. On the basis of peer and professional feedback, they then alter their pitch for the final pitch exercise one month later. Once again they receive feedback from the language professional/coach pair. The best pitches are then selected to go forward for the final pitch to the corporate partners. The Pitch Academy takes a full semester, and has been well-evaluated by students since it was first developed three years ago.

Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research

This exploratory study used a relatively small data set, composed of around two hundred minutes of video-recorded entrepreneurial discourse, and used a mainly qualitative rather than quantitative approach, with just six judges. Future research should increase the number of pitchers and the number of judges to include other categories, such as instructors (native and non-native speakers of English) from other disciplines apart from languages and real business angels (both native and non-native). It would also be useful to use the same research protocol with pitchers from different language backgrounds, to see to what extent the errors identified (and judges’ reactions to them) are similar to and different from those in the present study. More in-depth research could also be carried out on cultural value orientations, for example how French speakers pitching to Americans in English differ from French speakers pitching to other English native speakers.

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María-Teresa Gallo-Rivera and Rubén Garrido-Yserte

Beyond Knowledge: Toward Ethical Leadership in Business Management

Abstract: Technological advances and digitalization, along with generational changes in the population, are drastically altering work environments. Differences in expectations, aptitudes and values related to work between young workers and generations of previous workers is evident. Younger workers pursue a better balance between work life and leisure time, value flexibility, seek different values in organizations where they want to work and have different skills, personalities and points of view, and are true digital natives, who use and feel comfortable with technology and social networks, etc. This scenario represents a challenge for the managers of the organizations that must attract and retain this generation of workers, who are increasingly incorporated into the labour market; and they must design talent management strategies different from those already established, linked more exclusively to command and control schemes, salary bonuses or career plans. But it is also a challenge for educational system and institutions to facilitate the teaching-learning not only of knowledge and technical skills, but also of the so-called soft social/cultural skills increasingly valued in work environments. This chapter analyses some trends that are transforming work environments and the relationship between employers and workers, the importance of ethical leadership in talent management, and how organizations should address these aspects in order to face business changes and future work.

Keywords: ethical leadership, business ethics, job satisfaction, talent, organizational commitment, CRS.

Introduction

The onward march of technology in all aspects of life has been unstoppable in recent years. The development of smart terminals has led to the emergence of a powerful new sector, and the disappearance of many businesses and sectors. At the very least, it has radically changed business models. This is not only true in the field of engineering and technology. The mobile application industry has changed the ground rules in sectors including retail, the press, medicine and tourism, among others.

The apps market is growing at a furious pace. It was estimated to have a turnover of 8,000 million dollars in 2001, which had increased to 25,000 million dollars in 2014 and 46,000 million dollars in 2016. Users worldwide spent 81,000 million dollars in 2017 and around 110,000 million dollars in 2018, and the apps market is expected to amount to 189,000 million dollars by 2020 (Ditrendia, 2018; Merca 2.0, 2018).

Video games are the applications that generate the most revenue in this market. The business model is based on payments per download, "Pro" services and purchases within the applications themselves. Although Fortnite is the most extensively played video game, the Candy Crush series, which includes Candy Crush Saga and others, continues to generate more revenue than Fortnite, and in 2018 generated 1.5 billion dollars in micropayments from its players, according to estimates by Sensor Tower.

The emergence of the Apps market shows how: (i) new economic sectors have appeared; (ii) other sectors (such as video game consoles, tourism, information, etc.) have had difficulties as a result; (iii) new business models such as Freemium are emerging,[1] which separate the client from the funder; and (iv) there is a demand for new skills and competencies (big data experts and data scientists are some of the digital professions which are currently subject to the most demand).

Undoubtedly, there is today, and in the near future there will be, a demand for goods and services that are as yet unknown to us; 65 % of today's children will work in jobs that do not yet exist (World Economic Forum, 2016), and young Americans will change jobs around fifteen times on average before their fortieth birthday (US Department of Labor, Bureau Labor of Statistics, 2017). This new world needs new methods and ways of doing things in organizations and on the part of workers. Change and continuous reinvention is probably the only aspect that will remain constant. This scenario is what the Millennials generation and Generation Z (also known as Centennials) are experiencing.[2]

Studies show that this generation has a greater desire to maintain a balance between work life and leisure time and a stronger tendency toward individualism, tends to place more value on support from supervisors, and is committed to work, although its members may exhibit narcissistic tendencies and be less interested in other people; they are motivated by extrinsic rather than intrinsic rewards, are highly sensitive to financial compensation, expect to be well paid

1 The Freemium model is a business model in which most services are offered free (freemium), although there is a small package of payment services (premium) for customers who want this.

2 The Millennials generation includes those born between 1982 and 1990 (Anderson et al., 2017), while other studies also include the periods 1980–1995 and 1990–2000. Meanwhile, Generation Z, or the Centennial generation, includes those born between 1995 and 2005, or alternatively those born after 1997 or since the beginning of the new millennium.

and promoted quickly, have a greater sense of justice, and value social control and feedback from their supervisors (Anderson et al., 2017; Dinh et al., 2014).

Some characteristics, such as increasing individualism, the central role of work and extrinsic rewards for workers can diminish the social consensus as to what constitutes ethical norms and behaviours. This gives workers different perceptions of moral intensity in the same situation, and makes them less likely to seek ethical guidance from ethical leaders (Anderson et al., 2017).

This type of generational shift in the profile of the workforce is a greater challenge than ever for managers of organizations, whose task is to attract, motivate and retain talent on the basis of the needs and profiles of these workers. At the same time as organizations adopt technology, and become automated, digitized and robotized, they therefore acknowledge that jobs must change to take advantage of technology, as they become more digital, more multi-disciplinary and increasingly influenced by data and information (Deloitte Insights, 2019). Indeed, the redesign of jobs in organizations entails considering the human dimension of work (Deloitte Insights, 2019) – "superjobs" which combine traditional tasks with new roles that are included thanks to technology, which provides improvements in productivity and gains in efficiency.

Leadership is another important aspect in this era of continuous reinvention. Leaders are needed who can combine the focus on traditional business objectives with approaches that take the context in which those objectives must be achieved into account, on the basis of acquiring new competencies that are essential for achieving those objectives such as leadership through change and management of ambiguity and uncertainty, and an understanding of digital and cognitive technologies and artificial intelligence.

Moreover, leadership to promote and manage talent is one of the major challenges for organizations, since it is crucial for their adaptation, transformation and innovation. Organizations have continuous access to talent, not only through new recruitment but also by mobilizing internal resources, and strategically by means of the gains in productivity resulting from the application of technology in the processes involved in seeking and recruiting workers. The management of talent is a competitive advantage for organizations, which is reflected not only in the decline in the turnover of their workforce, but also in enhanced productivity, in efficiency gains, and therefore in business profits. This scenario leads to the emergence of a culture of continuous learning, and the provision of incentives, so that workers take advantage of training opportunities to help them identify needs and acquire new skills.

In view of these trends in business and working environments, the purpose of this paper is twofold. First, it offers some thoughts based on the literature on the role of leadership in organizations, in terms of the challenges arising from changes in business and working environments. Second, it offers guidance on how technological and generational changes are impacting on organizations, and on their workers' expectations in terms of work and careers.

Ethical Leadership in Organizations – A Highly Valued Asset

In view of recent ethical scandals of enormous proportions in all types of organizations, the importance of the ethical dimension of leadership is undeniable (Brown & Treviño, 2006). The literature shows that processes of moral disengagement in ethical decision-making are influenced by empathy, moral identity, a tendency toward cynicism, and the degree to which the ability to control the results is perceived (Detter et al., 2008).

Ethical leadership is defined as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement and decision-making" (Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Treviño, 2006). Ethical leadership is an important aspect in organizations, as it influences the management of talent and workers' development of better skills and behaviours. The specialized literature on leadership theories and ethical leadership in organizations has therefore increased over the last fifteen years (Anderson et al., 2017; Dinh et al., 2014).

When examining the origins or causes of ethical leadership, the literature suggests that it is constructed on the basis of three pillars: being an ethical person, treating people fairly and being able to actively manage moral issues within the organization (Brown et al., 2005). The first two are part of the individual's moral component or identity, while the third is associated with the moral component of managers of organizations.

The ethical leader's personal characteristics include being honest and trustworthy, being a fair manager with principles who cares about people and society, and being someone who behaves ethically in both his or her personal and professional life. These are all part of an individual's moral component within the definition of ethical leadership.

Meanwhile, the moral component of managers within the definition of ethical leadership encompasses proactive efforts by managers to encourage normative behaviours by discouraging unethical behaviour among their subordinates, through communication about the importance of ethical aspects, and establishment of a system of rewards and penalties for ethical and unethical behaviours (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Mayer et al., 2012).

Along these lines, the concept of embedded ethics "created by complex combinations of events, actors, actions, situations, systems, cultures, regimes, organizations, organizational objectives and routines that direct individuals towards actions and/or un(ethical) results without a deliberate intention" (Key et al., 2019) provides a differentiated perspective for an analysis of business ethics, focusing on how complex systems and structures produce (un)ethical results.[3] The literature on entrepreneurship is also increasingly focusing on issues related to ethical aspects, such as the entrepreneur's socio-cultural background, including their personal characteristics and traits and the organizational and social context that influences the identity and ethical behaviour of entrepreneurs (Vallaster et al., 2019).

It is as important to understand both the origins and the consequences of ethical leadership. Taking the theory of social learning into account, when leaders behave ethically, while striving to convey the importance of ethics in an organization, and use a system of rewards and penalties to foster ethical behaviours, they encourage the construction of and adherence to group norms that regulate socially acceptable behaviour, meaning that workers are less likely to engage in unethical behaviours. In other words, ethical leaders are seen as sources of inspiration due to their appeal and credibility as role models. With their power and status, but also due to their care and concern for and fair treatment of others, they positively influence followers, obtaining positive results.

Ethical leadership also improves interpersonal relationships in workplaces, by encouraging workers to be more willing to allow colleagues to express their opinions, to avoid conflicts and personal attacks between colleagues, and to show respect and consideration for the needs of others. It is also influential in terms of lower levels of personnel turnover, and fosters greater commitment to the organization, as workers prefer organizations that encourage ethical aspects. Ethical codes and programmes are related to the increased corporate social responsibility and activities (CSR) perceived in organizations. CSR as perceived by workers acts as a mediator for organizations' ethical codes and programmes and personal job satisfaction (Valentin and Fleischman, 2008). CSR

3 This is in addition to the perspectives of analysis based on ethical norms more focused on individual actions, which include: (i) the *teleological or consequentialist* perspective, according to which ethics must be understood and attained primarily in terms of results; (ii) the *deontological or duty* perspective, which argues that ethics must be understood and attained in terms of adherence to sets of codes or rules; and (iii) *virtue*, according to which ethics must be understood and attained in terms of character traits such as generosity, kindness, empathy and sincerity (Key et al., 2019).

is an extension of ethics in organizations, and aims to provide a response to the demands of a series of internal and external agents, with a particular interest in social aspects and challenges.

Ethical leadership improves exchanges and social relationships between supervisors and employees, self-efficacy and an individual's self-perception of their ability to perform a task, and the sense of belonging to an organization. Improving three factors in turn improves workers' performance (Walumbwa et al., 2011).

The training that future managers of organizations receive has undergone major changes in the light of this evidence, in order to incorporate content and methodologies based on values, such as social responsibility, business ethics and environmental sustainability (Reffico et al., 2019). These changes highlight the significant role of higher education institutions in allowing students to address these new challenges, and ultimately to become better managers when faced with ethical, social and environmental problems (Benito-Olalla & Merino, 2019; Varma, 2019).

Ethical Decision-Making and Challenges for Organizations in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous World

The US Naval War College outlined four characteristics of this new global environment in which companies and businesses operate. These characteristics are known by their acronym of VUCA: volatile (V), unpredictable (U), complex (C) and ambiguous (A) (Johansen, 2009).

Volatility is related to the nature, speed, scope and magnitude of the changes that are currently taking place. In business, it means that the competitive advantage of products and services is eroded quickly, and profits quickly evaporate. The things that many companies sell (products or services) are very quickly replaced by others that are newer, better and cheaper, or which perform new functions. Volatility is not only apparent in each sector or industry. Some industries are also a constant threat to others.

Digitization has literally changed and volatilized entire companies. An example is the recorded music industry, where digital music has completely taken over from physical recordings. The sector invoiced more than 19,000 million Euros worldwide in 2018, and 47 % of this sum came from streaming. In 2001, the Spanish record industry invoiced 626 million Euros, of which only 22 million Euros came from digital media. The turnover in 2014 is estimated at 58 million Euros, of which 26 million come from digital sources. The sector has become much smaller. The same is true of its costs (especially in manufacturing and physical distribution), and it has possibly become more concentrated (there are fewer companies). However, digital music has expanded, and is doing so at a faster rate in other countries. In 2018, the Spanish music market invoiced 237 million Euros, 71.2 % of this sum being for digital formats (IFPI, 2016, 2018). Its business model has been volatilized: it has made a transition from being based on having a copy of the music (vinyl or CD) to charging for access to music (streaming), using models which companies attempt to finance with advertising and subscriptions. In 2016, 68 million fans worldwide were *premium* subscribers (paying a monthly fee) to the platforms of Spotify, Deezer, Napster or Apple Music, while there were 41 million in 2014, and only 8 million users in 2010.

The "U" in the acronym VUCA refers to *uncertainty* – in other words, to the fact that it is impossible to foresee future phenomena or events. Nicolas Taleb (2007) used the term "black swans" to define phenomena that have three characteristics: they are outliers beyond the normal range of expectations because nothing in the past could point to them being likely to happen. Second, when they happen they have a major impact. Third, despite their being unusual, human nature leads us to invent explanations for their presence after the fact, making them seem explainable and predictable.

The 9/11 attacks in 2001 and the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers in 2008 followed by the onset of the financial crisis were examples of Black Swans. Nobody expected those events to happen, although all of us, including economists, now have explanations for them.

Making predictions is indeed difficult, and we quite often confuse risk (which involves a certain probability of occurrence) with uncertainty. Indeed, some people say that an economist who makes predictions is like a cross-eyed javelin thrower: they are rarely successful, but they retain people's attention.

Uncertainty means that the past is a bad predictor. The impacts of our strategic decisions in all areas, including business management, are difficult to quantify. Kant said that someone's intelligence can be measured by the quantity of uncertainties that he can bear. And if we extend this to include organizations, intelligent organizations are those that minimize the negative impacts of uncertainty, and take advantage of its potential benefits. It is not a question of being immune or resilient to change, but rather of seeing change as a source of opportunities. The author of *The Black Swan* describes these people and organizations as antifragile (Taleb, 2013).

Complexity is the third characteristic of the contemporary world. Many factors and elements contribute to only a partial understanding of the causes of phenomena and the nature of today's problems. Together with the rapid, frequent changes that are difficult to predict, this complexity is a factor making decision-making extremely difficult, and often leads to confusion and a lack of clarity.

This lack of clarity is the final characteristic of the VUCA acronym: *ambiguity*. This is the difficulty involved in determining the underlying causes behind phenomena.

These factors mean that organizations and their workers must continually consider the need to change. In an environment like the present one, organizations therefore must: (i) constantly question what they are doing; (ii) ask themselves what their value propositions are, and which business models can be implemented for each one; (iii) acknowledge that all their current and future clients will be able to live without them, sooner or later; and (iv) be aware that their competitors may come from other industries.

Attitudes and Behaviours of the Twenty-First-Century Leaders of Organizations

The way to manage *volatility* is to have a vision. The leaders of change will be those with a clear vision of their own aspirations and those of the organization, who can make them compatible. When a company is focusing in the wrong direction the last thing it needs is to be more efficient. Workers and managers of organizations therefore not only need to be reliable from a technical point of view, but they must also be able to formulate, contribute to and model the vision of the company.

Understanding is the solution to *uncertainty*. An empathy map is very useful in this respect. This involves stopping and thinking about what is really important to stakeholders (clients, colleagues, suppliers), and consistency between thought, talk and action, as well as an attitude of active listening.

If one thing will characterize the successful organizations of the future, it is collaboration. A first-rate manager surrounds themselves with first-rate people, and a second-rate manager surrounds themselves with third-rate people to appear first-rate. Working in a team and collaboratively is today more prevalent than ever, as is actively listening to colleagues, employees and clients.

This way of working and managing in organizations provides insight that provides more clarity for taking decisions in this *complex* world and, above all, provides more flexibility, as a counterweight to the *ambiguity* described above. In a changing world like the present one, a capacity for transformation, adaptation, reaction and innovation is much more valuable than strategic planning. We are expected to be able to change, to fail and to do so quickly, and with costs that are as low as possible.

According to the *Global Talent Trends 2019* (LinkedIn Talent Solutions, 2019) four factors are changing work environments: soft skills, job flexibility, the movement against harassment, and transparency in wages. As regards the first two, 80 % of professionals say that soft skills are fundamental to the success of organizations (Figure 1). They also point out that together with technical skills, these soft skills are important when attracting talent to organizations (62 %) – in fact, soft skills are more important than technical skills (30 % versus 8 %). Furthermore, similar proportions argue that talent management processes lack mechanisms for identifying and appropriately assessing soft skills (45 %) and soft skills with technical skills (44 %). This is consistent with the 41 % of professionals who say that their organizations do not have mechanisms to assess soft skills adequately, and the 57 % who say that their organizations make efforts to value them properly.

Technology has transformed the conception of work, taking it beyond traditional workplaces and endless office hours. In the search to reconcile work and free time, workers are demanding greater flexibility from organizations. This is becoming another norm, based on the understanding that what is good for the worker is good for the organization. The challenge is to determine how quickly organizations can guarantee this.

Agreements on flexibility at work are very important when considering a job offer for a sizeable percentage of workers (36 % of women and 29 % of men). The clearest benefit of flexibility they mention is that it improves the balance between work and professional life; it fosters the retention of talent, attracts candidates, increases productivity and expands the pool of talent available in the organization (Figure 1). Equally importantly, today's organizations are now called upon to understand how the professional values and objectives of workers in general have changed, those of the younger generation of workers in particular (Figure 2).

In its surveys of university students, Universum (2018) found that the desire to maintain a balance between work and personal life is the goal most desired by students. However, "balance" appears to mean different things. For younger workers, the balance is less closely related to flexibility, and more about finding a purpose and meaning in life and work – in short, satisfaction.

Security and stability at work is the second most valued objective among the students. The objectives of leadership and having an international career profile are apparent among the business students, while the aim of becoming a

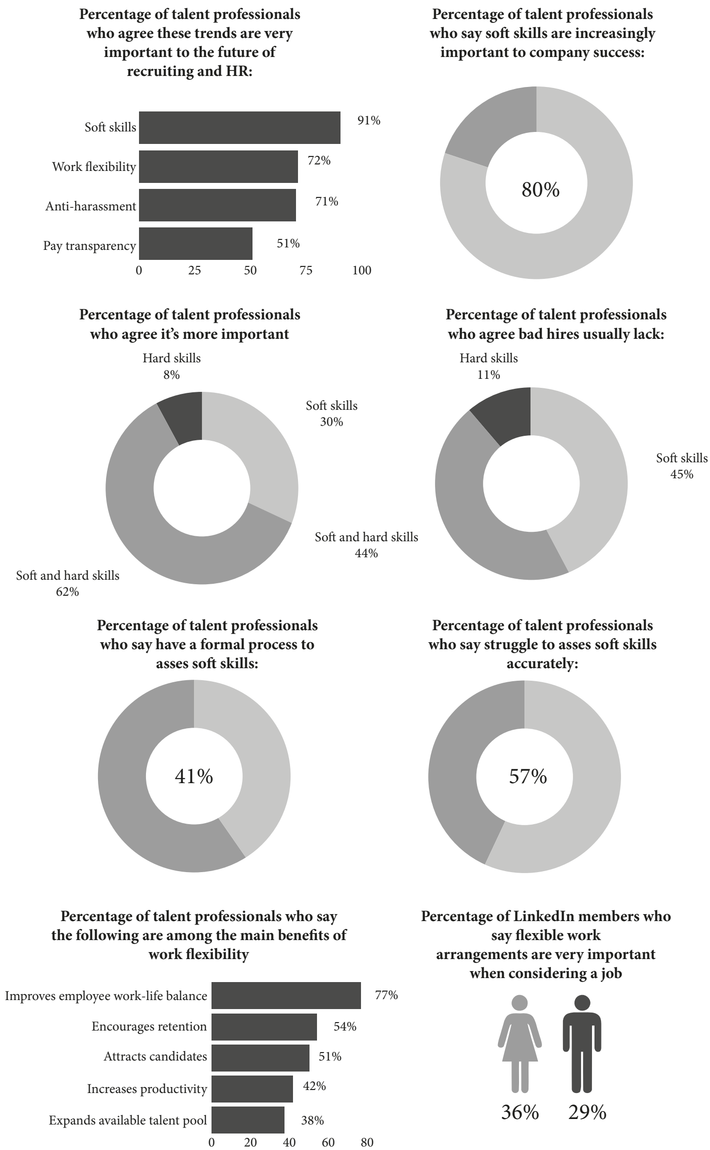
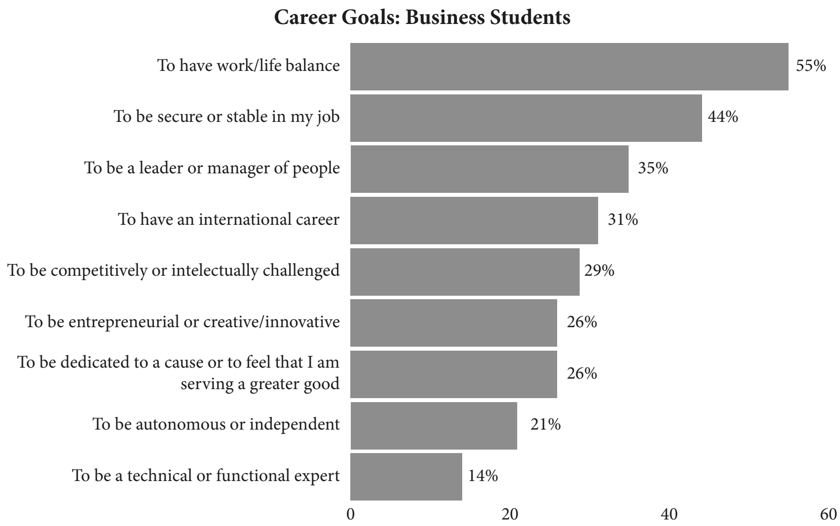


Fig. 1: *Main trends transforming the workplaces.*
Source: Global Talent Trends 2019 (LinkedIn Talent Solutions, 2019)



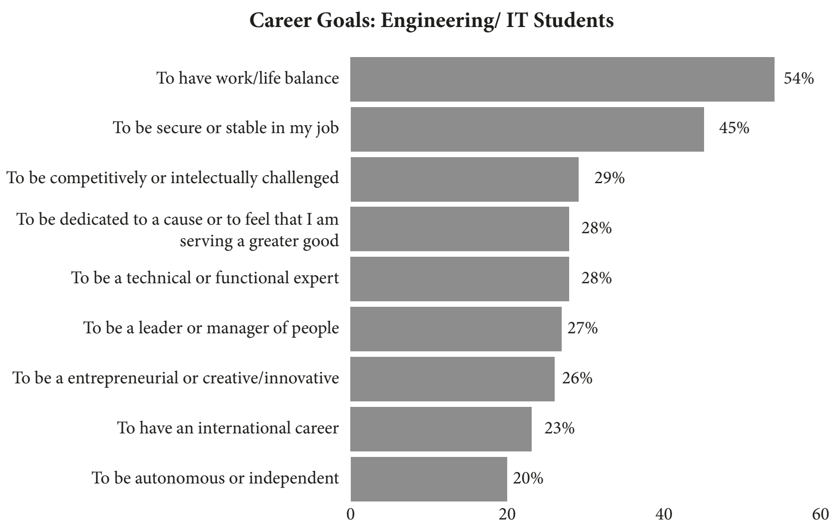


Fig. 2: *Career goals of Business and Engineering/IT Students (WMAE, 2018). Source: World's Most Attractive Employers, 2018 (Universum)*

Fig. 3: *Top Employer Brand Attitudes*

Business Students	Engineering/IT Students
1. High future earnings	1. High future earnings
2. Professional training and development	2. Innovation
3. Leaders who will support my development	3. Professional training and development
4. A creative and dynamic work environment	4. A creative and dynamic work environment
5. A friendly work environment	5. A friendly work environment
6. Good reference for future career	6. Good reference for future career
7. Respect for its people	7. Leaders who will support my development
8. Secure employment	8. Secure employment
9. Leadership opportunities	9. Competitive base salary
10. Market success	10. Respect for its people

Source: World's Most Attractive Employers, 2018 (Universum).

technical expert and being dedicated or feeling that one is working for a higher cause is ranked higher among engineering students and those studying technical degrees.

There is considerable diversity between the students' preferences according to the discipline studied, in terms of the most highly rated attributes for an employer (Figure 3). The ability to generate higher future income, training and professional development, innovation, and having leaders providing guidance and support for professional development occupy the highest-ranking positions. Organizations able to create a dynamic, creative and friendly working environment are also highly rated, as are those providing good references for a professional future career, showing respect for their workers and fostering leadership opportunities. Job security, success in the market and a competitive base salary are desirable attributes, but are rated less highly.

Organizations therefore clearly have new leadership needs. According to Deloitte Insights (2019), 80 % of professionals say that leaders in the twenty-first century have unique attributes and qualities that are very important for the success of organizations (Figure 4). Aspects such as leadership, inclusion, justice, social responsibility, automation and networking are among the requirements most in demand as regards leaders' ability to cope with changes in their organizations.

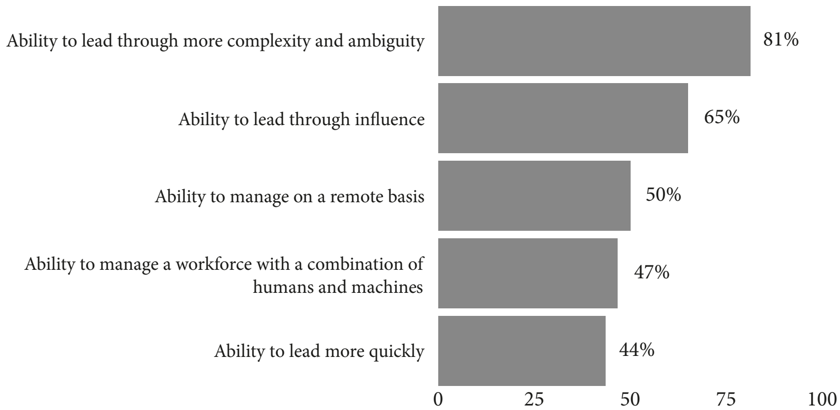


Fig. 4: *Requirements of twenty-first-century leaders. Source: Deloitte Insights (2019)*

Final Thoughts

The crisis that we appear to be emerging from has not been just an economic crisis. Constraints on liquidity and financing are not the reason for poor economic results. A genuine lack of ethics lies at the heart of the problem. Subprime mortgages and their securitization and the behaviour of those involved led to the appearance of the real estate bubble. They are all manifestations not merely of a technical problem, but of a mistaken ethical vision of the economy.

Until recently, there seemed to have been an almost perfect equivalence between economic growth and goodness, between business results and success. Growth undoubtedly usually leads to more jobs, more money and more security. But we forget that inequality is the unpleasant side of the same coin. It is the cause and sometimes also the effect of differences at work, and of the existence of fewer resources, and of poorer access to basic services, which creates more insecurity.

Hence the increasing talk of the need to examine the quality of growth: growth is positive if it provides greater satisfaction for more people, if it is inclusive, if achieving it does not leave future generations indebted, and if it makes us more human and happier than before. With the passage of time, the fact that the economy is for people has to some extent been neglected. We have moved from its etymological definition of "household management" to the study of markets and prices: chrematistics.

Adam Smith is known as the father of the capitalist economy due to his 1776 book *The Wealth of Nations*, in which he argued that the wealth of a nation should not be measured in gold, but instead in terms of the real goods and services that are available to its people. Together with freedom and competition, productivity through specialization or the division of labour were the most important sources of progress. However, we often forget that Smith himself was the author who had published the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* seventeen years earlier. In it, he highlighted sympathy as being the attribute which enables us to care about the well-being of others, and the attitude that acts as a counterweight to the search for profit and self-interest.

Far from being a throwback to the past, the search for a balance between one's own benefit and its impact on others – clients, shareholders, the general public – is a subject of unprecedented relevance and topicality, because without it it is impossible to undertake a path of transformation and change and intelligent and innovative organizations cannot be built. In business terms, growth is still something positive – it is a pattern of success. But no organization is too big to fail. Long-term survival is therefore not dependent on size. At least, size is not the only factor.

The competitiveness of companies today lies not only in technology, which is increasingly easy to copy, assimilate and improve, but in the talent of the people in the organization, in the organization's ability to attract, create and retain talent. And talent is not attracted and retained with salary alone: there will always be someone who pays more. It is attracted and retained even less with coercion (the fear of being fired). Both motivations are extrinsic to the individual.

Talent draws on inspiration, from knowing that a task is relevant for an end that is considered good, because it transcends its own benefits and has a positive impact on the satisfaction of others: our clients, our employees and society in general. Talent is developed and retained as a result of a commitment, and with the commitment of those around us. And commitments lie not so much in what we know how to do, but in the sphere of how we do it. Seidman (2011), the bestselling author of *How: "Why How We Do Anything Means Everything"* discusses leadership at all levels of the company, which he describes as inspiring.

In short, the most difficult task of management in the future will be to inspire other people: colleagues, subordinates and supervisors. And to do this we must build relationships and teams with the same philosophy, based on exemplariness and transparency: listening and enabling everyone to make a contribution to achievements, and making everyone responsible for losses and mistakes.

There can be no innovation without an environment of trust and commitment. Innovation is not a process that can be calculated. It requires technique and knowledge, but also engagement. The carrot-and-sticks method is no use in building creative, innovative and committed teams. Feeling that one is serving a cause, sharing the company's mission and giving it meaning is a primary source of competitiveness.

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Gender as an Ethical Concern in Business Communication

Samira Allani and Silvia Molina

Websites for Women Entrepreneurs: A Multimodal Rhetorical Analysis

Abstract: This chapter examines thirty women entrepreneur websites from both a multimodal and a rhetorical perspective, offering new ways of analyzing their content and effective communicative strategies. The questions addressed in this study deal with how collective women entrepreneur identities – claims surrounding women entrepreneur organizations and market opportunities that define who they are and what they do – are constructed in these websites by means of different modes. We focus on how the interplay of different modes (visual, textual, typographic, etc.) can be handled analytically and how interpersonal and ideational realizations are rhetorically construed. The final purpose of this chapter is not only to understand the semiotic construction of these websites, but to know how their meaning-making practices attempt to change the perception and ethical appeal of women entrepreneurs at large.

Keywords: women entrepreneurs, multimodal rhetorical analysis, website discourse.

Introduction

This study presents a critical overview of the rhetorical construction of entrepreneurship in women entrepreneurs' websites. Research on women entrepreneurship has pointed to the looming challenges women face compared to men in their entrepreneurial experience. The European Commission describes the entrepreneurial potential of women as under-exploited, as women represent only 30 per cent of start-up entrepreneurs in Europe (European Commission, 2019). Even though the gender gap is perceived to be closing in recent years (Brush et. al., 2017), there is certainly much to fix in a social context that is based on hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Fortunately, the growing number of organizations supporting and promoting entrepreneurship has increased the chance for women to overcome the hurdles and achieve their goals. Whether created by government organisms or private institutions, the entrepreneurial organization has become vital for start-ups that seek guidance and mentorship and aspire, through networking, to seize funding opportunities and strengthen their business endeavors.

With the rapid evolution of the new media, the entrepreneurial organizations' websites have become the main tool for networking activities and a virtual space for entrepreneurs to exchange valuable information on opportunities and strategies in the most expeditious ways. Through the website, a platform created to communicate the organization's goals and enhance its reach, participants shape their identities using a variety of discursive modes. The present study seeks to examine how entrepreneurial organizations catering for women rhetorically construct entrepreneurship in their websites, and, more particularly, how the different semiotic resources interact to create meaning and shape identities in the most visible part of the organizations' home pages.

The focus of this paper is primarily on demonstrating, through multimodal rhetorical analysis, how meaning is shaped across a sequence of images and text, such as those found in the middle section of women entrepreneur home pages ("*hero*" for website designers). In particular, we examine how women entrepreneurs' social identities, roles and relationships are represented through the multimodal co-deployment of visual–textual displays in the hero section (the main visual frame) of the home pages. We are interested in what gets "seen", what women entrepreneurs make visible of their experience as professionals, trying to get recognition in a social agency practice.

The paper is structured as follows. The section headed "Women in the world of entrepreneurship" outlines the main proposals in the existing literature on women entrepreneurship and the problems surrounding its discursive representation. The section on the social semiotic approach to the analysis of multimodal rhetoric describes the theoretical frameworks informing the study, social semiotics and multimodality and the relevant concepts for our rhetorical analysis. The methodological section summarizes the research procedures, ranging from data collection to coding to the analytical tools employed to identify how the different modes and rhetorical strategies help to construct women entrepreneur identities. The next section reports and discusses the research findings, while the last section attempts to draw conclusions and lend support to the choice of multimodality as a theoretical framework with which to describe and explain how women entrepreneur websites try to persuade women in entrepreneurship.

Women in the World of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a slippery concept, viewed as a socially dependent phenomenon (Achtenhagen & Welter, 2011), and there is no consensus as to what "entrepreneurship" actually is. Generally speaking, it is valued positively and involves turning a new idea into a successful innovation using skills, vision, creativity, persistence and exposure to risk (Shane and Venkatram, 2000). Successful entrepreneurship is all about seizing opportunities and introducing innovations. Innovation entails "creative destruction", a concept coined by Schumpeter (1942) to refer to the process of generating innovative products or services that destroy those previously established in the market. The identification of opportunities does not necessarily mean that the entrepreneur generates change, but that she or he is able to exploit the opportunities that the change provides and to take substantial risks (Knight, 2005). For this, the entrepreneur needs to possess several key qualities such as technical knowledge and training, a dynamic and creative spirit oriented towards the continuous search for business opportunity, and solid networking skills to connect with resourceful people and gain financing (Koellinger, 2008). Surely, a relevant question here is whether the outlooks on entrepreneurial qualities are valid for women, or whether there are added variables to the practices of female entrepreneurship.

Most research studies on the discursive representations of women entrepreneurs in various social settings point to the problems with the recognition and construction of the female entrepreneurial character (Ahl, 2002; Bruni, Gherardi & Poggio, 2004; Marlow, Hicks & Treanor, 2019). Even though the gender gap between entrepreneurs around the world continues to narrow, as affirmed by the Global Report GEM 2018/19 (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor), women are still perceived as occupying a secondary position and successful female entrepreneurs are considered an exception (Ahl, 2002, p. 144). Marlow & McAdam (2013) point to the bias in the entrepreneurial research discourse on women entrepreneurs' performance and the extended association of femininity with deficit. Whether in the field of business or in academia, the discursive construction of women´s entrepreneurship has been so far rather negative.

Women entrepreneur associations are now challenging these simplistic views and bringing attention to what they think entrepreneurship for women is or should be. Most of these initiatives are promoted by institutions such as the European Commission through its Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan or the Global Entrepreneurs Monitor. The Proliferation of associations promoting women entrepreneurships fosters discourses of legitimatization, and attempts to change and challenge the construction of concepts such as business organization and administration or leadership (Calás & Smircich, 1996, p. 245). In order to encourage start-ups, women entrepreneur associations may enact certain scripts for women entrepreneurs, presenting success stories and role models women in business may look up to.

The information conveyed in the entrepreneur websites is based on a variety of semiotic systems such as images, sometimes combined with sound (videos). The ubiquity and deployment of these different modes (Tseronis & Forceville, 2017, p. 1) is essential, in this particular case to convey ideas, opinions and information on what it means to be a woman entrepreneur. The discursive practices of this genre, entrepreneurial discourse online, include epistemological assumptions and values which see men and women as different. This binary thinking is reflected on some websites in our study. The female entrepreneur tends to be defined as something other than the male, the standard to be measured against. Hence, departing from a multimodal understanding of woman entrepreneur discourse, this paper examines how the female entrepreneur identities are enacted in female entrepreneur websites. Pioneering studies and tools for the multimodal analysis of websites have been introduced by Adami (2015), Djonov (2007), Baldry & Thibault (2006) and Pauwels (2012), among others. Organizations' websites reflect ways of thinking about their owners that construct them as such. These websites structure what discourse producers hold as true and what they act upon.

The Social Semiotic Approach to the Analysis of Multimodal Rhetoric

Multimodality has attracted many scholars interested in communication and semiosis, and there is now a substantial body of scholarly work focusing on the multimodal dimensions of discourse as a social practice (Hodge & Kress, 1988; Jewitt, et al., 2016; Norris & Maier, 2014). Multimodal discourse analysis, with its various approaches, draws on Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics (SFL) with a social semiotics emphasis. Multimodal discourse analysis looks at the "diverse range of modes involved in producing meaning and experience" and hence understands the "world as multimodal" (Prini, 2017, p. 1). Kress and van Leeuwen focused on the potentiality of images in *Reading Images* (1996/2006), a work which was later developed in *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Communication* (2001). One important concern of multimodality is studying how language is nested in other modes, as Jewitt, Bezemer and O'Halloran explain (2016, pp. 17–18): "Multimodality aims to unveil the relationships and combinations between different modes (i.e. photos, text, typography, color, etc. in webpage design), and how these are culturally and socially shaped to communicate, and to make meaning." Multimodality underscores the need to understand that "modes work together to produce a greater meaning than either mode could on its own" (Rowsell, 2013, p. 147).

The present study is based on the analytical tools proposed by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) to examine the interpersonal discursive construction of meaning in the websites for women entrepreneurs. Kress and van Leeuwen's work is set within the theoretical framework of social semiotics and offers a systematic and comprehensive account of the grammar of visual design. We mainly draw on the notions of *contact*, *social distance* and *mood* as systems that construct relations between represented and interactive participants in a given visual design (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006, p. 149). First, contact refers to how entities represented in images relate to viewers. Visual contact on a home page determines the type of relation between the viewer and the website designer and may be determined examining gaze, which is a socially organized way of viewing and experiencing the world (Urry 2002). There are two kinds of contact based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) model that we study in these websites: demand, and offer. A demand picture is one in which the people or entities represented look at the viewers, hence asking the viewer for attention or for a reaction. In the offer picture, the represented entity looks off-frame and comes across as an object of contemplation. Second, *social distance* refers to how women entrepreneurs are presented to the audience by checking the different sizes of their photos (frames). Third, *mood* is another multimodal concept; it means how bold and saturated colors may communicate emotional intensity (interpersonal function). In addition, we also pay attention to the particular process types (whether women entrepreneurs are presented with active or passive discourse roles) and the constructed dynamic identities of women pertaining to entrepreneur networks as institutional actors with their discursive practices, that is, how the adopted presentational styles reflect women entrepreneurs' sociocultural values.

Research on the multimodal rhetoric of discourse has grown in the last decade or so (Bezemer & Kress, 2008; Buehl, 2016; Kjeldsen, 2015), calling for a verbal and visual integrated approach to the study of the effect of multimodal discourse constructions on the audience. Rhetoric, nonetheless, is an ancient discipline concerned with "the ability, in each (particular) case, to see the available means of persuasion" (Aristotle, 2007, p. 37). It is an exercise of justification that focuses on the relationship between arguments and audiences (Zarefsky, 2014, p. xvi), and hence, on the interpersonal level of discourse. Roland Barthes defines rhetoric as "a manual of recipes, inspired by a practical goal, and a code, a body of ethical prescriptions whose role is to supervise (i.e. to permit and to limit) the 'deviations' of emotive language" (Barthes 1994, p. 14). He also contends that rhetoric is a privilege, "a social practice that permits the ruling classes to gain ownership of speech" (Barthes, 1994, p. 13). More research in multimodal rhetoric has been carried out in recent years (Tseronis & Forceville, 2017). Oakley (2017) focuses on the multimodal dimension of political speeches' rhetoric; Hawreliak (2019) studies the multimodal configurations in video games and their effect on the player´s experience and their interactive decisions. As information systems and technologies have yielded new possibilities for communication and the circulation of arguments that draw on a vast array of semiotic resources, a multimodal approach to discourse analysis has become inevitable.

The analytical tools used in the study of multimodal rhetoric in women entrepreneurs' websites are related to two important areas of rhetoric: the branches of oratory and invention (*Silva Rhetoricae*). The branches of oratory are basically the areas of communication under which speech or any other mode of discourse falls. In classical rhetoric, the social situations where persuasion is important may be divided into three categories (or branches): judicial, deliberative and epideictic. Judicial oratory is oriented around the purpose of defending or accusing; the deliberative is concerned with policy and the advantages or disadvantages of given decisions; and the epideictic, also known as ceremonial oratory, is concerned with ceremonies such as inaugural addresses, or funerals, where praise or blame are relevant. In contemporary contexts, the branches are referred to as rhetorical functions.

Invention is one of the five canons of rhetoric and is concerned with "a system or method for finding arguments" (Corbett & Connors, 1998, p. 23). LeFevre defines invention as "the process of actively creating as well as finding what comes to be known and said in the discourse of any discipline" (1986, p. 33). In this system which describes the persuasive core of rhetoric, certain common categories of thought became conventional to use (*Silva Rhetoricae*). These categories, known as "topics of invention", common topics or, more commonly, "*topoi*" (a Greek term, sing. *topos*), delineate the basic relationship among ideas. Corbett & and Connors (1998) describe five major *topoi*: definition (genius), comparison (analogy), circumstance (consequence), relationship (contraries) and testimony (authority, law, example, etc.). Rubinelli (2006) explains that the term *topos* is used with reference to a subject-matter that orators might take into consideration for pleading their cases and argues that the concept is highly relevant to modern theories of argumentation (2006, pp. 253–4). Both the oratory type categorization and the analysis of *topoi* give hints to the persuasive appeals realized in discourse. Among the three types of appeals, logos, pathos and ethos, the present study focuses on the last, ethos, which is the persuasive appeal of one's character (*Silva Rhetoricae*), and attempts to examine how women entrepreneurs' websites establish relations with their viewers through the construction of their credibility and trust.

The rhetorical analysis serves our aim of uncovering the interpersonal meaning constructions of the multimodal discourse under study. Indeed, while rhetoric uses the principle of invention to search for material to develop texts or to locate their subject-matter (Lauer, 2004, p. 3), the ideational function in SFL does the same. Generating or inventing ideas and lines of arguments is in itself an exercise that fulfils both the ideational and the interpersonal functions of discourse. Likewise, the audience forms an integral part of this exercise and is devised along with the ideas and arguments. This probably explains why the art of persuasion has always been at the heart of any rhetorical inquiry. The synergy between the ideational and the interpersonal construction of meaning in discourse is rhetorically interpreted using tools from invention to identify the way in which the discourse for women entrepreneurs is invented and determine the functions and effects they have on the audience.

The Multimodal Rhetorical Analysis of the Discourse of Women Entrepreneurs

The study of the multimodal discourse of websites for women entrepreneurs combines analytical tools from the framework proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) for the interpretation of the interpersonal meaning in visual texts with tools from the theories of classical and contemporary rhetoric (Aristotle, 2007; Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969). The analysis aims to determine the underlying persuasive strategies used by multimodal discourse producers, and to see how this social group constructs a discourse targeting women entrepreneurs. The analysis focuses on the home pages as primary entry points to the websites and as main sources revealing the web structure along with the principle objectives for the creation of the website as a platform for business communication.

The Data

We focus on the organizations or associations aimed at supporting women entrepreneurs and serving some national or international entrepreneurship development strategies. The data are mainly retrieved from WEgate, an e-platform launched by the European Commission to support women entrepreneurs across Europe. WEgate provides on its website an extended list with access to the websites of organizations (more than two hundred) targeting women entrepreneurs around the world (Europe, USA, etc.), retrieved for the purposes of analysis in May–June 2019. Thirty websites were randomly selected from WEgate. We estimated that this sample size is adequate and that it probably allows us to see patterns in some aspects of the discursive practices of this particular social group.

We take the websites' home pages as the object of analysis and narrow down our focus to the lowest level of interactivity in the data. A home page, as a kind of web page, is visually dynamic and, as Bateman et al. (2017) argues, requires different levels of interactivity from users. Bateman et al. identify three levels of interactivity: the lowest as the initial exploration, the middle, where the viewer proceeds with the manipulation of slides or menu, and the highest level, when the viewer exercises a choice over one of the elements (Bateman et al., 2017, p. 305). We take this principle into consideration and limit our focus to the lowest level of interactivity, and examine the clusters made salient independently from any affordance made available to users at higher levels of interactivity. The website producers choose to foreground certain features in the home page, namely a slideshow, or banner, images, video, news stories columns, the color palette, menu bars, or a mixture of some of these, in order to fulfil some rhetorical purpose. We hence examine the main features thus made salient, and attempt to uncover how the message is rhetorically constructed or "invented".

The Analytical Tools

This study attempts to unveil the strategies that have been used in the creation of the multimodal discourse in the websites for women entrepreneurs. The thirty websites were examined on the basis of the social semiotic approach proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). The semiotic resources displayed in the main cluster of the home pages were categorized and coded using a mix of a priori and grounded approaches. A priori coding takes its categories from two sources: (1) the social semiotic framework, precisely those related to the construction of interpersonal meaning in images, namely *mood*, *gaze* and *social distance*; and (2) the topics of invention in rhetoric, which are the basic categories of relationships among ideas. In the grounded coding, we allow patterns to emerge from the multimodal composition of the visual item, such as the interplay between image and words and the interpretation of their rhetorical functions and appeals.

The data are diagnosed at two levels. The first level is concerned with the analysis of the various semiotic resources available in the main cluster of each home page. We take a close look at the different modes such as image, writing, typography and color, which work together to shape the interpersonal meanings. The second level inspects the discourse rhetorical functions, also known as the oratory type or genre that the web owners adopt, and the means employed in the multimodal discursive construction. Here, the various discourse modes put together and made salient in the home page are categorized according to whether they contemplate a deliberative, judicial or epideictic (demonstrative) leverage. We further account for the *topoi* (or schemes) on which the discourse arguments stand. The type of *topoi* indicates how the verbal and visual content is conceived or invented and may fall under one of the following categories: definitions, division, comparison, relationship, circumstances and testimony (*Silva Rhetoricae*: topics of invention). Finally, we look at the ways of appealing ethically in our corpus and how credibility is constructed by the discourse producers attempting to attract the viewers' trust.

Findings and Discussion

The rhetorical analysis of the multimodal discourse of the home pages' front sections yielded insightful results. The layout of women entrepreneur web pages is strongly connected to the process of building a public image of women entrepreneurs. Their design reveals their thinking in "visual format". The initial inspection of the home pages aimed to scan the layout and determine how different multimodal resources were arranged into clusters and different units of meaning. Notably, these websites employ pioneering web design techniques, certainly supported by highly effective web design agencies. This may be discernible from the selection of the trendiest and most impactful production of photography, video and typography. For example, the minimalist logo from WEgate shown in Figure 1 makes the logo look clean and simple but still impressive, highlighting women by bolding the trendy initial 'W' letter in different shades of green in a big font, "shouting" its relevance. Green has an overall positive message, as it is a color for growth, harmony and freshness (Van Leeuwen, 2005).

Fig. 1: *Logo design by WEgate*

Almost half of the home pages use slideshows or videos and choose to entertain their web visitors/users by offering them a rich variety of visual resources. The diversity of women entrepreneurs, as well as their activities, not only reflects their daily lives at work, but also proves the diverse cultural backgrounds and vitality of women entrepreneurs. Even more significant, however, is the fact that almost all the home pages display images of women and combine large size image with short text in the central position (Figure 2).

The fact that around 95 per cent of the home pages display photography of real women is very revealing. Gender identity is present in these entrepreneurial organizations' websites. The images used, which may at first glance indexically denote women, probably connote the women entrepreneurs' vigorous immersion

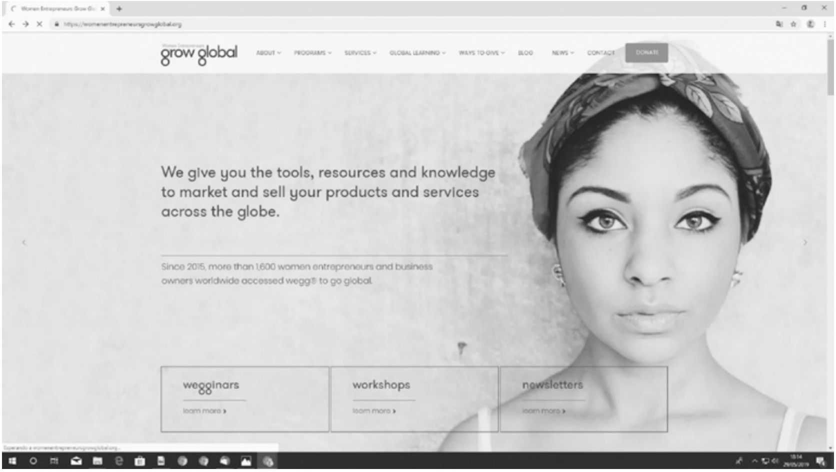

Fig. 2: *Hero section from Women Entrepreneurs grow global*

in a multimodal construction of femininity, necessary to position itself within the world of entrepreneurship in modern times.

The Social Semiotic Analysis of the Main Cluster in the Home Pages

The most salient clusters were multimodally analyzed to identify the nature of the interplay of image and text and the construction of the visual interpersonal meaning. Over 85 per cent of these clusters contain a large-size banner displaying high-resolution photography (Figure 3), while in the remaining home pages the cluster is split into several sections, maintaining a unity of meaning but dividing the viewer's attention along various sub-elements. Additionally, those home pages with large-image banners usually go with inventive, short verbal texts that act as motto or slogan. This option gives more strength to the inter-semiotic relation of the modes of writing and image and reinforces their textual cohesion, while adding power to the message. The text elaborates, extends and enhances the meaning of an image (Salway, 2010, p. 58). In the large-size banners, 62 per cent contain single static images and text, nearly 35 per cent display multiple slides with image/text (known as sliders or slideshow, as in Figure 4) and only 12 per cent opt for using videos. The preferences for static images over sliders show congruity with the latest trends in web design, which recommend avoiding

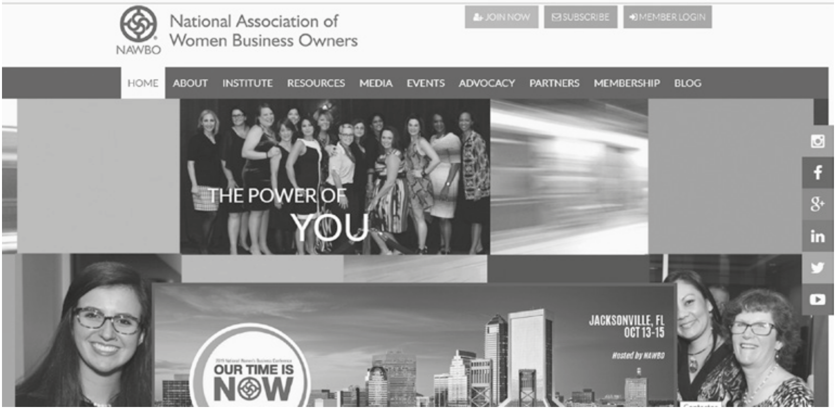

Fig. 3: *Main cluster large banner in the NAWBO web page*

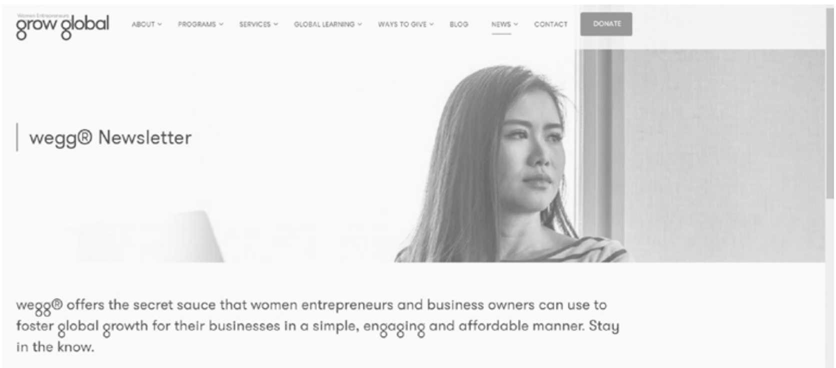

Fig. 4: *Ethical appeal in the main banner from Wegg*

sliders, on the basis of interaction and eye-tracking research warning that they are distractors and have very low click-through rates among users (Bowen, 2016).

Women entrepreneurs' website producers use a variety of discursive strategies that attempt to create a bond with the audience and hence establish a favorable ethos with them. The texts complementing the images in the banners mostly affirm both the knowledge and the benevolence of the women organization in question. In the main cluster of Women Entrepreneurs Go Global (Wegg) (Figure 4), for instance, the statement of the organization mission lists the achievements it is capable of and allows viewers to visualize this acclaimed expertise through the use of a familiar metaphor. The text in Figure 4 reads as follows: "wegg® offers the secret sauce that women entrepreneurs and business owners can use to foster global growth for their businesses in a simple, engaging and affordable manner. Stay in the know." A cooking term, sauce, is used metaphorically in business media discourse to enhance the communicative impact (Koller, 2004). The use of the familiar concept sauce lends meaning to the more complex concept of business strategies and expertise. This strategy allows viewers to capture more easily the inspiring confidence that the organization intends to project. Efficiently demonstrating one's capabilities is a core element in the process of "credibility building" (Lowry, Wilson & Haig, 2014), which the websites for women entrepreneurs seem to care about.

A similar strategy that aims to build the organization is using key people's photographs along with their advice statements, hence establishing a direct link between the verbal and visual content, as shown in Figure 5, from Wegg. This strategy is often used to describe specific positions within the entrepreneur organization, but, more importantly, also features role models offering practical tips for women entrepreneurs on relevant issues, such as self-confidence (Cathy

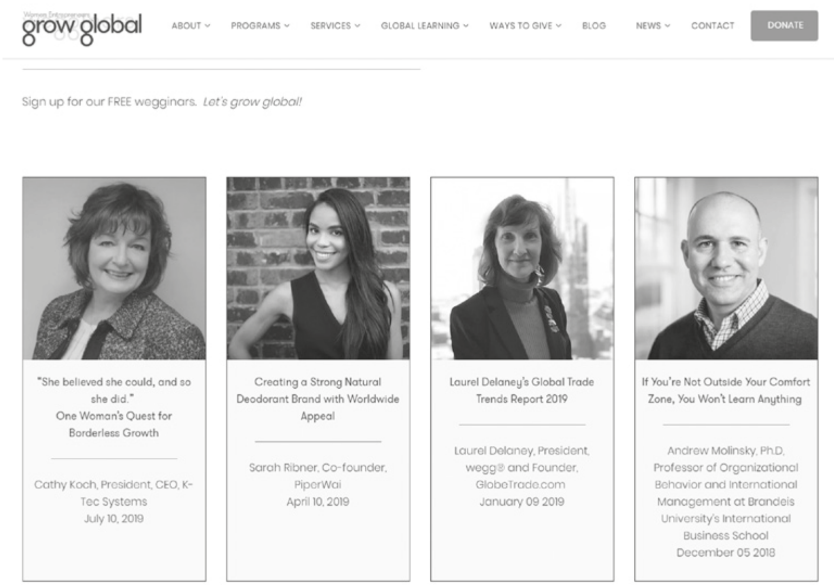

Fig. 5: *Integration of photographs with quotes from Wegg*

Koch) or how to create a brand with international appeal (Sarah Ribner). This cluster gives the impression of a real-life direct encounter with the role models and makes the advice provided more appealing and more credible by making its authorship closer and more visible.

As for the notions of contact, social distance and the effect of the image–text interplay, there is barely any significant difference in the kinds of relation women establish with their viewers, as the corpus is equally divided into "demand" and "offer" images. In 57 per cent of the home pages, the woman demands that the viewer "enters into some kind of imaginary relation with her" (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 118). This is realized through direct gaze and smile, where the woman entrepreneur seems to openly invite and persuade the audience to engage with her community. Women entrepreneurs are shown in close shot, in which heads and shoulders are included. Some hero sections include women entrepreneurs in medium-close, from waist up. In medium shot, entrepreneurs are displayed from knee up. In medium-long we can see the whole figure, and in long shot the whole figure with the space around can be seen (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). Figure 6 is a fine example, showing that websites often tend to use "demand" pictures. We see Julie Pierce from *Enterprising Women* with an inviting smile encouraging viewers to engage with her proposals for joining her community. It is a stylized picture indexing the real world "out there" (Machin & Jaworski, 2006, p. 347).

In the other kind of images, where the participants are represented as objects of contemplation, the woman either enacts material kinds of processes, actions like working (on a computer) through which their professionalism is shaped,

Fig. 6: *Julie Pearce from Enterprising Women*

or verbal processes such as talking, explaining, chatting, and therefore profiling their most valued social skills, namely networking, mentoring and coaching. The latter is made prominent through the written mode in mission statements and in similar "who we are"-type introductory statements anchoring the meaning of the multimodal message. Among them we have: "We give you the tools, resources and knowledge to market and sell your products and services across the globe" (womenentrepreneursgrowglobal.org); and "We have one mission: *to help you build a wildly successful business*" (femaleentrepreneurassociation.com). Interestingly, the latter uses light pink throughout the website and a soft palette. Pink websites are often directed at women, as pink is generally known as a feminine color, at least in Western culture. The soft, sweet baby pink color is used in the navigation, the call-to-action buttons ("Find out more here", "Become a member"), the links and select photography, while still maintaining balance. By breaking up the pink with photos of smiling women, the websites help to create a contrast, ultimately drawing your eye back up to their navigation and any sweet spot that holds images of their mission statement: *help women build a wildly successful business*, written with capital letters and italics (Figure 7).

The multimodal analysis of home pages highlights the fact that in most women entrepreneurs' hero sections in our sample website designers tend to use frontal close-up shots of women entrepreneurs at eye level, stressing "an equal relationship with the viewer", as Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p. 12)

Fig. 7: *"Offer" image from The Female Entrepreneur Association*

Fig. 8: *Medium shots from enterprising-women.org*

suggest. Web designers also frequently resort to close or medium-long shots, showing the full figure of women entrepreneurs involved in everyday activities, capturing their performance and their surroundings (Figure 8). This photograph attracts the viewer's attention (ostensive communication), conveying relevant information and attitudes of women entrepreneurs (e.g. they exchange ideas together) and thus makes a positive effect on the women entrepreneur audience.

The image in Figure 8 also provides typical versions of the world of women entrepreneurs which we take to be "real" in the specific frame of entrepreneurship (Machin & Jaworski, 2006. p. 363). These pictures are highly contextualized and appear in a specific time and place. The audience recognizes that they belong to the website genre and effortlessly interprets the multimodal entrepreneur message (Forceville, 2006). Finally, the meaning of these pictures is established through discursive and interpretive conventions which exist outside the picture – conventions about women entrepreneurs which are socially and institutionally constructed.

In terms of intermodal relations, the visual mode has a definable influence on the linguistic mode in these websites. The written text provides relevant information for women entrepreneurs. One observes that the structure and visual appearance of the content may be determined by women entrepreneur website designers and follows a clear, neat layout, which organizes the pictures and written text visually into easy reader-friendly units. These units do not necessarily follow the traditional linear organization of the printed page. Viewers may hop backwards and forwards, inducing an open, uneven reading strategy called "cluster hopping" (Baldry & Thibault, 2006, p. 26).

Finally, a general motif is the footer on home pages, which typically includes social network icons for social media sharing, Twitter, Facebook, etc. These icons facilitate direct communication with women entrepreneurs, and the women entrepreneurs organizations can monitor the number of times a piece of information is shared, providing feedback about the popularity of an item in the website.

Rhetorical Functions and *Topoi* in the Home Pages

The rhetorical analysis of the home pages revealed a clear inclination towards reinforcing women entrepreneurs' values and identities over bringing them to take actions, such as participating in events or subscribing for membership. Results from the analysis of the visual communication of salient clusters show that around 60 per cent of the stances adopted in the home pages are epideictic, a function centered on eulogizing female entrepreneurship, while 40 per cent of the data are deliberative and are based on urging viewers to make some decision. We find it surprising to see in our data sample more praise-oriented stances and fewer cases of deliberative stances, since actions and decision-making are central in the entrepreneurial mindset and hence one might expect them to be reflected more in the data (Figure 9).

The Epideictic Function in Home Pages

The home pages categorized as epideictic or ceremonial draw the audience's attention to the merits of women entrepreneurs by focusing their main clusters on constructing the values of women entrepreneurs and reinforcing their sense of community through praise and patronage. By adopting this rhetorical position, the website owners engage in honoring women for their courage in starting up their own businesses despite the hegemonic masculinity of entrepreneurship. This is realized multimodally in the home-page banners using eulogizing and cheering messages for women entrepreneurs. The analysis allowed us to identify which values are discursively constructed through these rhetorical functions and which common *topoi* are employed in the realization of these particular constructions.

The home pages adopting an epideictic stance rely more particularly on the dual semiosis of image and words to communicate brief and powerful messages full of values. In contemporary public communication, notable members of a given community deliver epideictic oratory to commemorate the community's basic ideals and shared values. While some of the constructions evoke universal entrepreneurial core values, such as independence, creativity, ambition and daring (Kirkley, 2016), the majority, however, place special emphasis on the notion of power, which is probably perceived as the most crucial value for women to develop. Women entrepreneurs aim to free themselves from the social and psychological barriers which may restrict their professional success. Power is constructed in the sample under study by combining close-up images of smiling and encouraging women with titles such as "The power of you", "A powerful community of peers", "Enabling women to flourish" and "Empowering women to realize sustainable development goals". This implies that women entrepreneurs need to focus on their inner power when starting up business, which they can derive from a community of inspiring women. Through their discursive construction of female power, these organizations targeting women entrepreneurs attempt to shape an invincible community for whom achievement and professional actualizations are the only options.

The multimodal analysis revealed that the home pages functioning as epideictic are based on either the *topos* of definition or that of testimony. A highly significant number of these epideictic constructions, around 72 per cent, are rhetorically realized using definition. One of the rhetorical uses of

Fig. 9: *Annotation of multimodal and rhetorical meaning in women entrepreneurs' home pages*

Organization	**salient cluster**	**Visual interpersonal meaning**			**R. Function**	***Topoi***	**Figure/trope/ appeal**
		Contact	**Distance**	**Text effect**			
WBII	Banner Image – No text	Demand	Close-up	None	Epideictic	Testimony	Ethos *Systrophe* (listing)
WEStart Eu	Banner slideshow slogan	Offer	Medium	Anchoring /Power	Epideictic	Definition	Pathos Parallelism
FCEM	Banner slideshow– No text	Demand	Variety	None	Epideictic	Definition	*Enargia* vivid description
Prowess	Four-section cluster images/columns	Offer	Close-up	Anchoring	Deliberative	Consequence	Parallelism
WBC UK	Banner image left text right	Offer	Medium	Complementary	Epideictic	Definition	Ethos (Pluralism)
Female Founders	Banner large image +text on top+ video	Offer	Long	Dominant	Epideictic	Definition	Ethos/authority and credibility
Everywoman	Banner image+ text +CTA icon	Demand	Close-up	Foregrounded	Deliberative	Consequence	Appeal to emotions
W in Business	Banner slideshow text W space text	Offer	Close-up inviting	Anchoring	Deliberative	Consequence	Pathos Metaphor (s. hero)
WEConnect Int.	Video – top image slider woman text	Demand	Close-up	Complementary	Epideictic	Definition	Ethos Individualism/ pluralism
W in Sustainability text on top	Banner image group –	Demand	Close-up inclusive	Anchoring	Epideictic	Definition	Pathos (inclusive image)
Forward Ladies	Banner Image text 2 typo sizes	Demand	Close-up smiling	Anchoring	Deliberative	Consequence	Self-Identification/ Ethos

Driven W	Banner cartoon – text	Offer	Long shot	Anchoring	Epideictic	Definition	Ethical appeal (solidarity)
ABWA	Banner image text – logo	Demand	Medium	Anchoring	Deliberative	Consequence	Metaphor (multimodal)
FEDEPE	Banner slideshow 10/info on events	Offer	Medium–long	complementary	Epideictic	Testimony	Ethical appeal (source of info)
EBW 2020	Banner image – text	Demand	Long	Anchoring	Deliberative	Consequence	Ethos (self-identification)
WEGG	Banner slideshow text on left	mix	Close-up inviting	Independent	Deliberative	Consequence	Ethos (showing capabilities)
W 2.0	Banner slideshow column headlines	Mix	Close-up inviting	Anchoring	Deliberative	Consequence	Visual metaphor
IAW	2cluser slideshow 4+ text right	Demand	Close-up smiling	Complementary	Deliberative	Consequence	Multi-ethnic pluralism
YWE Club	Banner no image – text centre	N/A	N/A	Directive explicit	Deliberative	Consequence	Pathos (colour palette)
WINGS	Banner text left – video digital right	N/A	N/A	Directive	Deliberative	Consequence	Ethos (self-identification)
Female EA	Banner image – text on top	Offer	Close-up inclusive	Complementary	Epideictic	Definition	Ethos (showing capabilities)
Enterprising Women	3 cluster – slider news – images	Mix	Close-ups	Anchoring	Deliberative	Consequence	Ethos (focus on achievements)
ASBW	Banner image text lower left	Demand	Long shot	Complementary	Epideictic	Definition	Ethos (long commitment)

(*continued on next page*)

Fig. 9: Continued

Organization	salient cluster	Visual interpersonal meaning			R. Function	*Topoi*	Figure/trope/ appeal
Network Ireland	Banner Image text on top	Demand	Medium smiling	Complementary	Epideictic	Definition	Ethos (focus on capabilities)
Women Forum	Banner Image text on top	Offer	Medium	Complementary	Epideictic	Testimony	Ethos (expertise)
NAWBO	Banner split 4 images text slogan	Demand	Close-up	Complementary	Epideictic	Definition	Pathos (empowering statements)
Business PW	2 cluster horiz. split group image text	Demand	Medium	Complementary	Epideictic	Definition	Ethos (solidarity power)
Forum W.E. Canada	2 clusters image event – text right	Offer	Long	Anchoring	Epideictic	Testimony	Ethos (self-identification)
Women Entrepreneurs	Banner split horiz. Image – text	Demand	Close-up	Anchoring	Epideictic	Testimony	Ethos (credibility testimonials)
C200	Banner slideshow – image – slogan	Offer	Close-up inclusive	Anchoring/power	Epideictic	Definition	Ethos (trust power/ capabilities)

this *topos* is to ascertain the specific issue to be discussed, which in the case of our data sample focuses on characterizing women as entrepreneurs and their position in the business world. Corbett and Connors argue that we "may find it necessary to define the key terms in our thematic proposition so that our audience will clearly understand what we are talking about" (1998, p. 98). A banner displaying the photograph of a large group of women at a business event with a title reading "Supporting women in business since 1995" explicitly states the role of the institution in question (The Association of Scottish Business Women) in promoting business alliances and creating opportunities for women through fruitful encounters, which the happy and smiling women in the photo confirm. Correspondingly, the website owners multimodally construct their identity by defining their organization's raison d'être in the most salient cluster of this home page. The *topos* of definition here serves the purpose of self-identification and the celebration of solidarity as a commonly shared value in the community of women entrepreneurs. Definition equally fulfils the aim of building credibility and gaining the trust of women aspiring to start their own business and looking for the most efficient guidance and mentorship.

The remaining instances of home pages (28 per cent) embracing epideictic or ceremonial stances count on the *topos* of testimony. Unlike other topics which derive their material from the nature of the question under discussion, "testimony derives its material from external sources" (Corbett & Connors, 1998, p. 125). From and within the community of women entrepreneurs, the arguments are construed through the voice and figure of role models, those women who pioneered and set the stage for entrepreneurship. Whether this has been the most salient stance or not, role modelling in our data sample is a widely used strategy and an apparent appeal to ethos. The power in the witnesses' voice gives more credit to any projection of women success. A significant example is found on the home page of *Women Entrepreneurs*. The home-page banner displays the image of a woman, Melissa Butler, who became famous after being rejected on the TV show *Shark Tank*, a program giving aspiring entrepreneurs the opportunity to present their ideas to investors, who then choose to invest or not in their proposed projects. Ms Butler managed to grow her business and achieve success despite the initial rejection. Her testimony acts as a symbol for women's determination and perseverance in a competitive entrepreneurial world. Testimony personifies these values and injects into them a lively character by means of real stories and narratives. Through the use of this *topos*, as an ethical appeal, the website producers prompt their audience's faith in them by providing them with authority and witnesses' evidence of their claims.

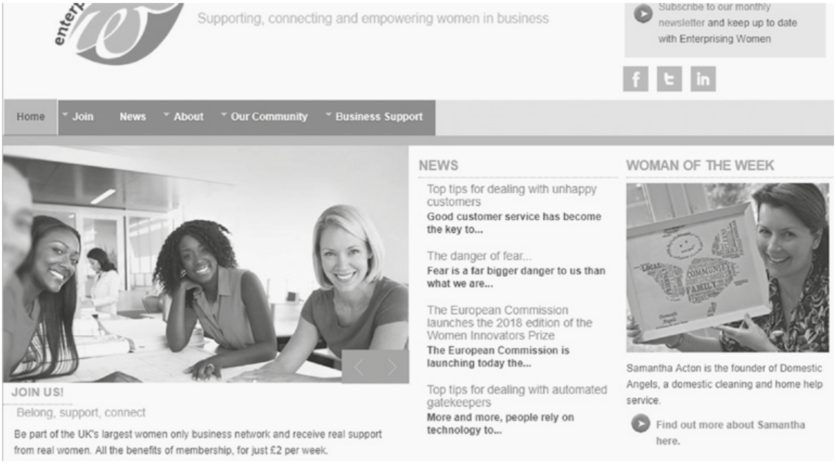

Fig. 10: *The multimodal call to action in the Enterprising Women's home page*

The Deliberative Function

The home pages that accommodate meaning around deliberative oratory gear the viewer towards making some sort of decision. Indeed, most of the home pages falling under this category invite and encourage the audience to take action. Urging to act is constructed in our data sample by means of the *topos* of consequence. This *topos* creates a causal relation within the statements constituting the message, which involves a situation of consequentiality between the reason advanced and the standpoint defended (van Eemeren, 2018, p. 46). These constructions are realized by means of directive speech acts, such commands and requests using the imperative and interrogative moods. Figure 10, for instance, represents a message soliciting action by combining the imperatives "Join us, belong, support, and connect" with a close-up image of women smiling for viewers and engaging them to make a move and join the organization for women entrepreneurs and enjoy the benefits it offers.

The message formed by the directive speech act "Join us" may be reconstructed as based on the implicit premise "joining will give you benefits" and exteriorized through the imperative "Join us", which acts as a conclusion to the argument. The rhetorical analysis, along with the reconstruction of the messages, allowed us to find that the *topos* of consequence is the unique *topos* employed in our data sample in the discourses constructed as deliberative.

The websites endorsing a deliberative stance draw on the positive trait of the *topos* of consequence. We found two types of topical consequence constructions in the data; the first is concerned with the community of women entrepreneurs and the second draws on envisioning a future situation full of success. By taking action and joining the organization, the targeted audience will become part of a supportive and inspiring community of women entrepreneurs, who seem to pay attention not only to action, strategy and efficiency, but also to emotions. In more than 90 per cent of these discourse types the visual semiotic resources consist of images anchored with call-to-action captions in which women are represented as cheerful and approachable. These very semiotic choices characterize entrepreneurship in these websites as friendly and warm-hearted, and somehow remote from traditional representations of the formal world of business. The second type of consequence *topos* attempts to profile the future situation of the women invited to become members. The decision the audience is urged to make is multimodally constructed as advantageous and as leading to an ideal situation. Statements such as "Be the hero of your life" accompanied by an image of a woman wearing a red cape (American Business Women Association) attempt to boost women entrepreneurs' leadership by inviting them to act as heroines using the visual and the verbal versions of a compelling trope (the hero metaphor). Again, the imperative may be constructed here as the conclusion to draw from the premise "if you join the community, you will learn/we will help you to become a leader". The decision to join the community of women entrepreneurs is conducive to positive results and rewards constructed by means of the *topos* of consequence.

The analysis reveals that despite the inherent difference between the epideictic and the deliberative discourses, they have much in common in the discursive constructions of the websites for women entrepreneurs. Whether immersed in eulogizing women entrepreneurs or in appealing to their active participation in entrepreneurial networking activities, the home pages seem to have a common vision, which is concerned with constructing the female entrepreneurship status. One can notice that throughout the data sample the entrepreneurial character creates its appropriate networking style. Indeed, the various semiotic resources drawn upon, ranging from images to words, typography and color, indicate a discursive construction of communities of entrepreneurs characterized by being exclusively tailored for women, hence introducing new values and probably setting the stage for new standards and expectations. In this line of thought, more research is needed to contrast the production of women entrepreneurial digital discourse with that of the network organizations, which presumably target a wider, mostly male-dominated audience.

Social networking provides entrepreneurs with the fora for encounter and exchange in order for them to grow and thrive. Through the platform of their websites, the organizations for women entrepreneurs bring into play their networking skills to create social circles, which provide safety and support for women and not for men entrepreneurs. Their endeavor is paired with a strong sense of homophily, the tendency of individuals to associate and bond with similar others, therefore bonding women entrepreneurs together (Kadushin, 2012).

Concluding Remarks

As mentioned in the introductory section, the objective of this study was to examine women's portrayal of their entrepreneurial identities in their websites through a multimodal rhetorical approach. We selected thirty websites for women entrepreneurs for our empirical research when analyzing this contemporary phenomenon in different real-life contexts (UK, USA, etc.). We focused on the websites' home pages, and more particularly on the main and most salient clusters, to examine the interpersonal multimodal construction of meaning. The analysis of the data sample has shown that many of the assumptions made by websites for women entrepreneurs involve certain ways of representing the business world for women, especially constructions of their social identities through the interplay of different modes. These website designers deploy cleverly attractive layout and visual means to convey the complex situations women entrepreneurs face (Machin & Niblock, 2006, p. 25).

While the multimodal construction of values within the epideictic discourse on women entrepreneurs aims at strengthening bonds of commitment within the community and "increasing the intensity of adherence to values held in common by the audience and the speaker" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, p. 49), the urge to join the community in the deliberative discourse cases fulfils the purpose of nurturing efficient entrepreneurial networks that would provide fruitful opportunities for its participants. Both rhetorical functions pointed to the web producers' attempt to build credibility through their ethical appeal and the reinforcement of entrepreneurial values, which they attempt to redefine for their communities of women in their own terms.

The massive presence of women in the website brings about a gender-based identity intertwined with both the construction of values and decisions. Websites inspire and enlighten women entrepreneurs with an informative and compelling content coupled with a smart design and a voice that multimodally addresses female viewers. This probably suggests that women entrepreneurs aim at gaining ground in the world of entrepreneurship, and that through their websites they would reconstruct a brighter future and more pioneering achievements. More importantly, however, their discursive reconstruction of their identities would very probably set the stage for a different outlook in the world of entrepreneurship in general, which we hope future research will show.

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Acknowledgments

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Appendix 1. Data Corpus Women Entrepreneurs Websites

1 Women's Business Initiative International https://www.womensbusinessinitiative.net/
2 We Start Europe westarteurope.org
3 Femmes Chefs d Entreprises Mondiales https://www.fcem.org/

4 Prowess women in business https://www.prowess.org.uk/
5 Women's Business Council https://www.womensbusinesscouncil.co.uk/
6 Female Founders https://www.femalefounders.global/
7 Everywoman https://www.everywoman.com/
8 Women in Business https://www.wibn.co.uk/
9 WEConnect International https://weconnectinternational.org/en/
10 Women in sustainability https://womeninsustainability.net/
11 Forward Ladies https://forwardladies.com/
12 Driven Woman https://www.driven-woman.com/
13 American business Women Association https://www.abwa.org/
14 Mujeres Directivas FEDEPE https://mujeresdirectivas.es/
15 EBW 2020 https://ebw2020.com/
16 Women Entrepreneurs Go global https://womenentrepreneursgrowglobal.org/
17 W2.0 https://ebw2020.com/
18 International Association of Women https://www.iawomen.com
19 Young Women Entrepreneurs Club http://yweclub.com/
20 Wings http://wings-network.eu/es
21 Female Entrepreneur Association https://femaleentrepreneurassociation.com/
22 Enterprising Women http://www.enterprising-women.org/
23 Association of Scottish Business Women https://www.asb-scotland.org/
24 Network Ireland https://www.womensirishnetwork.com/
25 Women's Forum http://www.womens-forum.com/
26 National Association of Women Business Owners https://www.nawbo.org/
27 Business Professional Women https://www.bpw-international.org/
28 Forum for Women Entrepreneurs http://www.fwe.ca/
29 Women Entrepreneurs https://www.entrepreneur.com/women
30 C 200 organization https://www.c200.org/

Mónica Sánchez-Torres

Non-Sexist Language in Multilingual Working Spaces: The Case of Finnish, English and Spanish

Abstract: Recent events such as the rise of the fourth wave of feminism have brought back into the spotlight the importance of not using sexist language. The discussion over sexist language has largely taken place within individual language communities. However, in the world, where people work increasingly in multilingual contexts using languages other than their mother tongue, the debate cannot remain isolated. One of the main challenges multilingual people face is that there is no universal strategy that can be applied in all languages, even if the features that are deemed as sexist are similar. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the debate over sexist language and the implementation of non-sexist language strategies are not at the same stage in all languages: while in some languages the linguistic reform is considered completed, in some others the debate has just begun. Also, the type of strategy depends on the morphological characteristics of each language, which means that what works in one language may not work in another. Finally, the success of each strategy is determined by the preference of the community. In order to draw a more detailed picture of the issue, the present chapter reviews the guidelines for non-sexist language published by UNESCO and the European Parliament (2008 and 2018) in languages with three different gender systems, English, Finnish and Spanish. It aims at describing the morphological characteristics of each language, and how these relate to the production of gender, the perception of sexist language, the proposals for non-sexist language and the success of these proposals in each language.

Keywords: sexist language, feminist language reform, linguistic sexism, non-sexist language

Introduction

The notion of sexism in language was introduced in the 1970s with the second wave of feminism. Mills (1995, p. 89) defines it as "that language use, conscious or unconscious on the part of the speaker, which alienates females (and males), and which may lead to the establishment of an environment which is not conducive to communication and effective social interactions". Some linguists and language users believe that languages "codify an androcentric worldview", and believe that gender equality will not be achieved unless sexist language is eliminated (Hellinger & Bußmann, 2001, p. 18). This need to change the language is based on the idea that thinking and languages are closely related. For instance, UNESCO's guidelines (1999a, p. 4) state that language use should be changed because "language does not merely reflect the way we think: it also shapes our thinking. If words and expressions that imply that women are inferior to men are constantly used, that assumption of inferiority tends to become part of our mindset; hence the need to adjust our language when our ideas evolve."

It was during the third wave of feminism that the first guidelines for non-sexist language were published. In 1999, UNESCO became one of the international organizations to publish its own guidelines. Firstly, they were written in English and French, followed by Spanish later on, after Canadian and Nordic representatives raised the importance of using non-sexist language in a conference that took place in 1987 (UNESCO, 1999b, p. 3). The European Parliament published its own guidelines in all the working languages in 2008 and the revised versions in 2018. In this regard, it was the first international organization to publish and adopt multilingual guidelines on sexist language. These were published in all the working languages in the European Parliament to be used in parliamentary publications and communication. Like most guidelines, these are not mandatory but rather advisory in nature. Their aim is to "to encourage the administrative services to give due consideration to the issue of gender sensitivity in language whenever writing, translating or interpreting" (European Commission, 2008, p. 4).

During the third wave of feminism, the study of linguistic sexism was abandoned in languages such as English, and shifted towards the study of sexism in more "subtle and hence more insidious discriminatory and exclusionary discourses that abound" (Toolan, 1992, p. 4); in this case, the study of sexism was tackled through discourse analysis, because of the belief that feminist language reforms have largely been adopted and have succeeded in making language users aware of the most obvious discriminatory features of language (Mills, 2008, p. 6).

In recent years, thanks to the rising fourth wave of feminism, the debate over sexist language was brought into the spotlight, with the aim of redefining it as the language that not only discriminates against women but also against men, as well as non-binary and gender-fluid people (Cameron, 2016). Moreover, in languages such as Spanish or French, the debate over sexist language is still very lively, while in other languages such as Finnish it has just started (Coady, 2018; Engelberg, 2018).

The ethical implications of using sexist language are several. Sexist language is perceived not only as discriminatory and demeaning, but also as a subtle form of sexism (Swim, Mallett & Stangor, 2004). Mills (1995) argues that using sexist language creates confusion as to who is being addressed, a feeling of alienation and, to some extent, stereotyped gender assumptions about what the roles of men and women are. On the other hand, using non-sexist language "is a conscious choice by speakers to assure readers and listeners that they do not view the world as the male domain that it may appear", and it also "does not simply give information; rather it signals a certain orientation and attitude which is critical of stereotypical views of the roles of the sexes" (Mills, 1995, p. 95). In other words, it demonstrates inclusive attitudes and open-mindedness and helps to build the credibility of the speaker.

However, using non-sexist language is not random, nor is it done spontaneously. As with any language reform, there are several factors that language users need to be aware of: the type of language, the awareness of sexist language among language users, and their preference regarding the proposals.

Representations of Gender in Language

Using non-sexist language, especially in multilingual working environments, is perceived as challenging because "the principle of gender neutrality cannot be applied in the same way in all languages. Some expressions may be acceptable in one language but controversial in another" (European Commission, 2008, p. 3). For example, in Spanish, feminine forms (e.g. *editora* "female editor", *ministra* "female minister") are often used to avoid masculine generic forms and give visibility to women, but there are other languages such as Finnish or English in which expressing gender when it is unnecessary can be perceived as sexist and irrelevant. Consequently, adopting the same strategies for non-sexist language in all languages can have the opposite of the desired effect and frequently prevents effective communication: thus the need to make language users, especially those who work with several languages, fully aware of the features that are deemed sexist and the strategies that are used to avoid them in each language.

The strategies that are used depend on the morphological structure of languages and the way they express gender. In this regard, languages can be grouped into three categories: grammatical gender languages, natural gender languages and genderless languages (Stahlberg et al., 2007). In grammatical gender languages, such as Spanish or French, gender is an inflectional category found in nouns, adjectives, articles and demonstratives. Natural gender languages, such as English or Swedish, lack grammatical gender except for the pronoun system (e.g. *he/she/it*), and genderless languages such as Finnish or Turkish have no gender inflection in their pronouns or in any other words. Yet the lack of grammatical gender does not imply that gender is not expressed. As Hellinger & Bußmann (2001, p. 6) indicate, gender languages and genderless languages "can resort to a variety of linguistic means to construct gender-related messages". For instance, they can use lexical gender, such as *puhemies* ("spokesman") in Finnish, or formal markers, such as *female* or *male* in front of neutral nouns, such as *female doctor* in English, to specify gender.

In general, languages with grammatical gender use visualization strategies while languages without grammatical gender use neutralization strategies (Pauwels, 1998, pp. 109, 116). Gender feminization or visualization strategies aim at "achieving equal treatment of the sexes in language by making the invisible sex (in most cases, women) visible in the language through the systematic and symmetrical making of gender" (Pauwels, 1998, p. 112). In other words, they involve the creation of female or male forms of words that only exist in one gender, and this usually takes places in languages with grammatical gender such as Spanish (European Commission, 2008, p. 6). On the other hand, gender neutralization strategies involve the elimination of gender and propose the use of one form to designate either gender. These are generally used in languages with natural gender, such as English, and genderless languages, such as Finnish (Pauwels, 1998, p. 109).

Since these languages express gender differently, their sexist features and the strategies used to avoid sexism are also different. In the following section, I compare the production of gender in three languages, English, Finnish and Spanish, each from one of the aforementioned categories.

Gender in English

English is a natural gender language, which means that grammatical gender is not an inflectional category, and as a result most nouns are genderless (e.g. *neighbor*, *friend*, etc.). The only remnant of grammatical gender is found in the third person pronoun he/she. Despite the lack of grammatical gender, gender can be expressed through lexical procedures. Most lexically gendered words in English relate to family (e.g. *mother/father*) and farming terms (e.g. *duck/drake*). Additionally, lexical gender can be expressed through compounding (e.g. *policeman/policewoman*) and derivation (e.g. *actor/actress*). Forming masculine compounds adding *-man* (plural *-men*) is traced back to Old English (Marchand, 1969, p. 64). Nowadays, most compounds ending in -man are used to create occupational titles which traditionally were only taken by men (e.g. *fireman* and *policeman*), to express the expertness of a man in a particular field (e.g. *sportsman* and *cowman*), a particular characteristic of this person (e.g. *freeman* and *superman*), and in certain cases nationality, as in *Englishman* and *Chinaman*. The most common way of feminizing male compounds is by replacing *-man* (plural *-men*) with *-woman* (plural *-women*), as in *congresswoman* (masc.

congressman) or *chairwoman* (masc. *chairman*). Another morphological process for expressing gender is derivation. There are a great number of female suffixes, but they have never been very productive or popular. Female suffixes are *-ster* (e.g. *spinster*), *-ine* (e.g. *heroine*), *-ix* (e.g. *dominatrix*), *-ette* (e. g. *suffragette*), and *-ess* (e.g. *princess*). Most of these have been short-lived because they carry negative connotations (i.e. smallness, triviality and/or imitation), not only when the referent is a woman, but also when referring to objects (Hellinger, 2001, p. 109). Moreover, using these suffixes may induce to lexical asymmetries; the resulting female nouns, when compared to their masculine counterparts, tend to be derogatory, and trivialize women's position in our society. For example, masculine nouns that relate to titles or positions of high prestige for men, such as *author*, *master*, *host*, *governor*, *adventurer* and *mister*, turn into nouns that designate women who are amateur in their profession (*poetess*, *authoress*), relegated to lower prestigious positions (*hostess*, *governess*), and/or subordinated or at the sexual service of men (*mistress*, *adventuress*, *dominatrix*, etc.) (Mills, 1995, p. 110).

Gender in Finnish

Finnish lacks grammatical gender even in the personal pronoun system, which means that most words are genderless (e.g. *naapuri* "neighbor"), but gender can still be expressed in nouns through lexical gender (e.g. *isä* "father", *aiti* "mother"), through derivation (e.g. *espanjatar* "Spanish woman"), and through compounding (e.g. *palomies* "fireman") (Braun, 1995, p. 11). The most common nouns with lexical gender are *mies* "man", *nainen* "woman" and *tyttö* "girl", which are etymologically related to "daughter" (*tytär/tyttö*) and *poika* for both "son" and "boy" (Engelberg, 2018, p. 113).

As in most Finno-Ugric languages, compounding is one of the most productive processes for forming words. Most nouns in Finnish are genderless and are used to refer to both men and women (e.g. *opettaja* "teacher"). However, there are terms that can be formed by adding *-nainen* "woman" or *-mies* "man", such as in *palomies* "fireman" and *liikenainen* "business woman" (Hasselblat, 2015, p. 133). Occupational titles ending in *-mies* "man" are commonly used to refer to people regardless of their gender because they are perceived as generic or neutral, which could explain the constant growth in numbers of these forms (Engelberg, 2018, p. 82, 83). Compound nouns formed with the morph *nainen* (e.g. *tiedenainen* "scientist", *lakinainen* "lawyer"), are, on the contrary, restricted to women, as are most female forms in Finnish. An increasingly common way of feminizing occupational terms is by adding *-emäntä* "mistress/hostess". It has become a productive way of marking gender in professions that are low-prestige and/or consist of tasks that include serving, caring or entertaining other people, while compounds with *-isäntä*, the masculine counterpart of *-emäntä*, have remained the same throughout the decades (Engelberg, 2018, p. 86).

Derivation can be used to express gender as well, although it is not as productive as compounding. There are six female suffixes to mark the gender of the referent: -tAr (*laulajatar*), -kkO (*karjakko*), -skA (*professorska*) -nnA (*tsaarinna*) *-ienne* (*komedienne*) and -UkkA (*hempukka*). Like English, Finnish has no masculine suffixes.[1] The most commonly used is the suffix -tAr, which first appeared in the Eastern varieties of Finnish in the late nineteenth century. This suffix was originally used to mark women's relationships with their fathers (e.g. *Holopatar*, meaning "the daughter of Holopainen"). Nowadays, it is still used in occupational titles, for instance, *näyttelijätär* "actress", *ompelijatar* "seamstress", *kuningatar* "queen", *herttuatar* "duchess". It is also used for denoting people from certain places: *pariisitar* "Parisian woman", *espanjatar* "Spanish woman". Yet, this suffix conveys negative connotations when used in traditionally male jobs (e.g. *kirjailija* → *kirjailijatar* "writer") and high-prestige titles, such as *kenraali* → *kenraalitar* "female general" and *vuorineuvos* → *vuorineuvoksetar* "female mining counsellor", as it adds an air of amateurism, inexperience or lack of maturity (Endelberg 2018, p. 59).[2]

The remaining suffixes are not as productive as -tAr in marking gender in Finnish. The suffix *-ienne* remains in only two words: *komedienne* "comedienne" and *tragedienne* "tragedienne". The use of the suffix -kkO is more widespread in the formation of genderless profession titles, *päällikkö* "chief", *poliitikko* "politician", *karjakko* "milkmaid", *meijerikkö* "person who works at a dairy factory", and other types of nouns such as *sammakko* "frog" and *lammikko* "pond" (Engelberg, 2018, p. 61; Kyrölä, 1990). The suffix -UkkA is used to create derogatory female terms, such as *hempukka* "coquette", *letukka* "hussy", *heitukka* "promiscuous woman/chippy", *huitukka* "lady of the night" and *typykkä* "chick/lass", while -skA and -InnA express the relationship of women with their husbands (e.g. *apteekarska* "pharmacist's wife", "*Aaltoska* "Aalto's wife" and *pormestarinna* "the mayor's wife") (Engelberg, 2018, p. 61; Hasselblat, 2015, p. 132; Kyrölä, 1990).

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1 The realisation of A, O and U can be ä/a, ö/o or u/y depending on the vowel harmony principle.

2 *Vuorineuvos* is an honorary title given by the government. According to the translation service of the Finnish prime minister's office, Finnish honorary titles such as *vuorineuvos* should not be translated (Prime Minister's Office, 2017, p. 12).

The decreased used of female suffixes in Finnish is explained by Engelberg as follows:

> In the 1950s directory of Finnish occupations, different types of feminine derivational nouns . . . were still common; there were over 80 of them, or 60 per cent of the titles referring to female employees. The majority were derivational nouns using -tar/tär in various occupational nouns such as *hoitajatar*. By 1970, nouns using the derivational suffix -tar/-tär were almost completely excluded from the directory, while derivational nouns using -kko/kkö, as in *karjakko* ja *sisäkkö*, have remained longer, and appear in the 2005 directory in dozens. Since the suffix kko/kkö is also used to form genderless occupational nouns, as in *karjakko*, it may appear less feminine and has become more acceptable than the -tar/-tär- and therefore has stayed in use longer. (Engelberg, 2018, p. 83)[3]

As a result, female suffixes have almost disappeared from everyday language, especially in oral speech, in favor of female compound nouns.

Gender in Spanish

In Spanish, gender is a morphological category with two forms, feminine and masculine, present in nouns, adjectives and determiners. Pronouns in Spanish have gendered forms in the third person singular (*él* "he" and *ella* "she") and the plural forms (*nosotros*$_{masc}$/*nosotras*$_{fem}$ "we", *vosotros*$_{masc}$/*vosotras*$_{fem}$ plural "you", *ellos*$_{masc}$/*ellas*$_{fem}$ "they"). Articles and determiners have two gender forms: masculine (e.g. *el* "the", *los* plural "the", and *este* "this", *estos* "these") and feminine (*la* "the", *las* plural "the", *esta* "this" and *estas* "these"). These agree with the noun they precede, and sometimes are used to mark gender when nouns they precede are epicene (e.g. *el/la persona*), or have a common gender (e.g. *esta/este estudiante*).

Nouns that refer to living beings have a specific form of the feminine and masculine which relates to referential gender (e.g. *secretario*$_{masc}$/*secretaria*$_{fem}$ "secretary", *traductor*$_{masc}$/*traductora*$_{fem}$ "translator"), although there are countless exceptions to this rule. In most cases, nouns that refer to people are inflected to form the masculine and the feminine (e.g. *maestro*$_{masc}$/*maestra*$_{fem}$ "teacher", *zar*$_{masc}$/*zarina*$_{fem}$ "tsar/tsarina"). The general rule is that nouns ending in *-o*, and sometimes *-e*, are masculine (e.g. *amigo* "friend" and *héroe* "hero") while those containing the suffix *-a*, *-esa*, *-isa*, y *-triz* are feminine (e.g. *amiga* "female friend", *actriz* "actress", *princesa* "princess", *poetisa* "poetess"). There are many nouns that do not obey this rule (e.g. *mapa*$_{\mathrm{masc}}$ "map", *mano*$_{fem}$ "hand", etc.).

3 Translations by the author, unless otherwise stated.

According to La Real Academia de la Lengua Española (RAE), the institution charged with safeguarding the correct use of the Spanish language, nouns that have a unique gendered form can be grouped into three categories (Real Academia Española & Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española, 2005, pp. 159–60): (1) epicene nouns; (2) ambiguous nouns, "common gender substantives"; and (3) *sustantivos comunes en cuanto al género*, "common gender nouns". Epicene nouns are those which designate a living being and only have one grammatical form regardless of the gender of the person or animal they refer to. In this case, the grammatical gender is independent of the gender of the referent. These can be masculine (e.g. *personaje*$_{\text{masc}}$ "character", *vástago*$_{\text{masc}}$ "offspring") or feminine (e.g. *persona* $_{\text{masc}}$ "person", *víctima* $_{\text{masc}}$ "victim"). As mentioned, the agreement between the words is established according to the gender of the noun, and not the gender of the referent (e.g. *Pedro* $_{masc}$ *es una persona* $_{fem}$ *muy activa* $_{\text{fem}}$, "Pedro is a very active person"). Ambiguous nouns are substantives that usually refer to inanimate objects and admit both genders without changing their meaning: *el/la* mar "sea", *el/la calor* "heat". Common gender nouns are those which designate living beings and have a unique form for both grammatical genders. In this case, the gender is marked by the determiners and adjectives: *el/la guía* "guide", *el/la testigo* "witness", *el/la estudiante* "student", *el/la profeta* "prophet", *el/la mártir* "martyr", *el/la cantante* "singer". These nouns are usually the target of feminist language reform (see Non-sexist language proposals in Spanish).

Adjectives, like nouns, can also have a unique gender form. These can be grouped according to their ending: (1) adjectives ending in *-e*, as in *estudiante* "student", *independiente* "independent", *pobre* "poor"; (2) adjectives ending in consonants *l*, *s* and *z* (e.g. *feliz* "happy", *ágil* "agile", *pueril* "childish"), and some irregular superlatives ending in *-r* (e.g. *mejor* "better", *peor* "worse", *mayor* "largest", *menor* "smallest", *superior* "superior", *inferior* "inferior"); and (3) adjectives ending in *-a*, as in *suicida* "suicidal", *comunista* "communist", *artista* "artist" and some demonyms ending in *-a*, *-í* and *-ú* (e.g. *maya* "Maya", *celta* "Celtic", *iraní* "Iranian", *hindú* "Hindú"). These adjectives also function as nouns (UNESCO, 1999b).

However, the majority of adjectives in Spanish have two gender forms. These can be grouped into two sub-categories: (1) Adjectives whose masculine forms end in, *-o*, *-ete* and *-ote* and make their feminine form by changing their last vowel for -a (e.g. *regordete/regordeta* "chubby", *bueno/buena* "good", *tranquilo/tranquila* "calm"); and (2) adjectives whose masculine form ends in a consonant and become feminine by adding *-a* (e.g. *chillón/chillona* "screamer", *holgazán/holgazana* "idle"). Within this sub-group, there are some demonyms ending in a consonant that also add *-a* in their feminine forms (e.g. *inglés/inglesa* "English", *andaluz/andaluza* "Andalusian", *francés/francesa* "French", *catalán/catalana* "Catalan").

Non-Sexist Language Proposals

The guidelines in English, Finnish and Spanish agree on the need for eliminating the so-called masculine generic forms, lexical asymmetries and sexist idioms (Figures 1, 2 and 3). Eliminating certain features can be as easy as not using sexist idioms or replacing them with other ones. For example, in English, *man-to-man* is the same as *face-to-face*, and in Finnish *jokaisenoikeudet* "everyone's right" would be more inclusive that the well-known *jokamiehenoikeudet* "every man's right". Yet this is rather an exception than a rule. Eradicating sexism in languages is a rather complicated task that cannot be done by applying the same strategy to all languages. As previously discussed, the strategies proposed to tackle these issues depend heavily on the morphological characteristics of each language. In general, languages without grammatical gender use neutralization strategies. Still, these differ greatly from language to language as well. On the other hand, languages with grammatical gender rely on visualization strategies because eradicating gender in these languages is simply impossible. This section contains a summary of the most common proposals and a discussion about the current position of sexist language in each language.

Non-Sexist Language Proposals in English

Sexist language in English was a broad discussion topic raised by the works of Dale Spender and Robin Lakoff (Lakoff, 1973; Spender, 1980). The main concerns of non-sexist-language guidelines are the so-called masculine generics, occupational terms, forms of address and lexical asymmetries between genders (European Commission, 2008). Masculine generics can be found in the lexicon and in the grammar. At the grammatical level, this affects the third-person pronoun *he* used when referential gender is unknown or unspecified, for example "Every staff member should send *his* CV by Monday". Non-sexist language guidelines, such as those published by the European Parliament (European Commission, 2008, 2018) or UNESCO (1999a, b), offer several proposals to avoid using *he* as the generic pronoun. An example (1) is using plural forms to avoid gender, as in "*workers* should bring *their* taxation cards" or "staff members should send *their* CV by Monday". In recent years, singular *they* has become widespread, especially to refer to non-binary and gender-fluid people. In fact, recent studies such as the one carried out by Lascotte (2016) have shown that its

Fig. 1: *Summary of the characteristics and sexist features of English*

Language type	Characteristics	Type of strategies	Sexist features
Natural gender	Gendered 3rd personal singular pronoun (e.g. *he/she*) Most nouns are genderless (e.g. *teacher*, *friend*). Exceptions:	Neutralization	Masculine generic forms: *man* used as *humanity* or *humankind*; masculine occupational titles used for all genders (e.g. *chairman*, *ombudsman*); *he/his/him* as generic pronouns when gender is unknown or irrelevant (e.g. "the customer should bring *his* receipt").
	lexical gendered nouns (e.g. *mother*); compounds (e.g. *chairman*); derivational nouns (e.g. *adventuress*).		Female suffixes: negative connotations (e.g. *-ine* as in *heroine*, *-trix* as in *dominatrix*, *-ess* as in *poetess*). Lexical asymmetries (e.g. *governor/governess*, *bachelor/spinster*, *sir/madam*, *courtier/courtesan*). Idioms and expressions (e.g. to *man up*, to *wear the pants*, *man to man*, to *fight like a girl*).

uses surpass those of the generic *he* and other non-sexist language strategies. It is used in sentences such as "Someone forgot to turn off the lights in *their* office", or "the client should be told how much *they* will be charged". Moreover, there have been several attempts to introduce a third person neutral pronoun, but none of them has been widely adopted.

Other strategies for avoiding the generic pronoun *he* include: (2) replacing masculine pronouns with *one*, *you* or *we*, as in "Send your CV by Monday", "Before *you* leave, remember to turn the lights off"; (3) deleting the pronouns *he*, *his* and *him* when possible (e.g. "the sales representative advises customers on new products"); (4) replacing them with the articles *the*, *a*, *an*, as in "the sales representative advises customers on *the* new products" and "every staff member should send *the* CV by Monday". (5) avoiding pronouns altogether using the passive voice (e.g. "Your CV should be sent by Monday") – however, passivation should be used carefully because it may affect the readability of the text; and (6) using *he or she* instead of *he* – this is probably the best-known strategy, but it is no longer recommended as it only visualizes women and men and excludes non-binary and gender-fluid people (e.g. "The worker should bring *his or her* CV by Monday"). Guidelines such as those of the European Parliament advise using it sparingly and never using the combined forms *he/she*, *s/he* as they look clumsy and are difficult to read (European Commission, 2008, 2018). Other guidelines may recommend alternating the use of *he* and *she*, or using only using female pronouns as generic forms, as in "a sales representative should know *her* clients before selling *his* products", but these create confusion and are distracting (Mills, 1995, pp. 96–8).

At the lexical level, masculine generics include forms such as *man*, as in "person, human being", *mankind* "humanity, humankind", and occupational nouns ending in *-man*. It has been argued that compounds ending in -man should be considered true generics, but research has shown that these are perceived as gender-specific (Sunderland, 1994). Early guidelines recommended replacing *-man* and *-woman* with *-person*, as in *chairperson*, but research has proven that these gender-neutral forms with -person have been corrupted and are only used to refer to low-status men and women, whereas masculine forms (i.e. as in *businessman* or *chairman*) are predominantly used for high-status men (Mills, 1995, p. 175). Current guidelines propose dropping *-man* altogether in compounds, as in *chair*, or replacing it with *worker*, as in *craftworker* or *signal worker*, or finding a synonym or a new term to use instead: *flight attendant*, *police officer*, *firefighter* (Miller & Swift, 1980, pp. 33–4).

When marking gender becomes necessary, guidelines advise on marking gender equally and using the same pair of modifiers or compounds: male/female, woman/man, etc. Sentences such as "*women* doctors work more than their *male* colleagues" should be rephrased to mark gender equally, as in "*female* doctors work more than their *male* colleagues". Guidelines have also strongly discouraged marking gender using *girl* or *lady*, in forms such as *newsgirl*, *cleaning lady* and *lady doctor*, because they do not have a male equivalent and they imply that the work done is inferior to men's (Mills, 1995 p. 112; Pauwels 1998, p. 111).

Non-Sexist Language Proposals in Finnish

In general, sexist language has not been a source of debate in Finland, and has received less attention in Finnish than in other languages due to the assumption that grammatically neutral languages are non-sexist in nature and that Finland is a country with gender equality (Braun, 1995, p. 284). However, researchers have indicated that genderless languages are not gender-neutral just because of the lack of gender:

> Having a language with a genderless grammar does not guarantee the gender-neutral use of the code. Furthermore, Finnish can be used in ways that can be regarded as sexist, unequal, and even misogynist. In addition, even if the work on gender equality in Finland has been vital and has had some success, it is in no way finished. (Tainio, 2006, p. 1)

Until very recently, there were no specific recommendations or guidelines on avoiding sexist language published by any national organization or institution besides the aforementioned ones from the EU (Engelberg, 2002, p. 127). The main target of these guidelines is mostly to be found in occupational nouns ending *-mies* "man" (e.g. *virkamies* "civil servant") (Aamulehti, 2017). Yet people believe these compound words have a gender-neutral meaning and tend to prefer them over the feminine or neutral forms (Engelberg, 1998, 2002). In fact, these masculine nouns are becoming more common in the language. In 2005, the Finnish directory of job titles registered 600 gendered forms, a hundred more than fifteen years earlier. Of these 600, around 80 per cent were male occupational nouns ending in *-mies*, such as *lakimies*, "lawyer" and *asiamies*, "delegate", while female forms, especially those containing female suffixes or *-nainen*, had declined in favor of compounds using *-emäntä* (Engelberg, 2018, pp. 82–3).

Due to the agglutinative nature of Finnish, creating morphologically neutral terms is perceived as fairly easy and natural compared with creating such terms in other languages. Language planning activists suggest replacing these gendered terms using three different mechanisms: (1) derivation; (2) compounding; and (3) borrowing. The most popular alternative is the use of the suffix *-jA* "agent", as in *siivooja* "cleaner", *näyttelijä* "actor" or *marjastaja* "berry picker". The formation of compounds with *-henkilö* "person" and *-tekijä* "doer" has been a productive strategy that has resulted in words such as *virkahenkilö* "civil servant" used instead of *virkamies*, and *tieteentekijä* "scientist" instead of *tiedemies*, although *tutkija* is also accepted. On the other hand, borrowing has not been as productive, even though there are some remarkable examples: *journalisti* "journalist" is used as a synonym for *lehtimies* (Engelberg, 2018, pp. 93–5).

Feminization has taken place in occupational titles as well. Despite some forms, such as *tiedenainen* "female scientist", being successfully adopted and used, *-nainen* compound words are fewer and "are never treated as 'gender neutral' terms like the masculine terms ending in *-mies*" (Tainio, 2006, p. 2). In fact, when men work in positions that were traditionally reserved for or performed by women, either they receive a different title or a new one is created. For example, when men started working as flight attendants they did not use the established feminine form *lentoemäntä* "stewardess" but *stuertti* "flight attendant". Moreover, professions such as *meijerikkö* and *karjakko*, which were traditionally women's jobs, became *meijeristi* and *karjanhoitaja* to designate men, and later also women (Engelberg, 2018 pp. 87–8).

Fig. 2: *Summary of the characteristics and sexist features of Finnish*

Language type	**Characteristics**	**Type of strategies**	**Sexist features**
Genderless	Genderless pronoun system Most nouns are genderless (e.g. *opettaja* "teacher", *asiakas* "costumer"). Exceptions: lexical gendered nouns (e.g. *isä* "father"); compounds (e.g. *lakimies* "lawyer"); derivational nouns (e.g. *kuningatar* "queen").	Neutralization	Masculine generic forms: *mies* "man" used as *humanity* or *humankind*; masculine occupational jobs used for all genders (e.g. *oikeusasiamies*, "ombudsman"). Female suffixes: used to mark the relationship of women with their father (e.g.*-tar* as in *Holopatar*, "the daughter of Holopainen") or their husbands (e.g. *-ska*, *tohtoriska* "doctor's wife"). Lexical asymmetries (e.g. *poikamiestyttö*, literally "boy-man-girl" meaning "single woman", *ämmä* "bitch"). Idioms and expressions (e.g. *miesmuistiin* "since it can be remembered", *miestä väkevämpää* "stronger than a man", jokamiehen oikeudet "every man's right").

Non-Sexist Language Proposals in Spanish

The debate over sexist language in Spanish dates back from the 1980s when the first guidelines became available. Applying non-sexist language in Spanish is perceived as more challenging than in genderless and natural gender languages, for two reasons. The first is that these proposals deal mostly with grammar. Grammatical changes, unlike lexical changes, require more time and wider consensus among speakers. Secondly, not all strategies can be used in all scenarios, which entails users knowing several strategies in case one or more do not work.

The main targets of non-sexist language guidelines in Spanish are masculine generic forms and the absence of feminine occupational nouns to designate female occupations that were traditionally reserved for men (Garcia Meseguer, 2002). In Spanish, masculine forms are generic, unmarked and/or inclusive, while feminine forms are marked, which means that two or more substantives with

Fig 3: *Summary of the characteristics and sexist features of Spanish*

Language type	Characteristics	Type of strategies	Sexist features
Grammatical gender	Two grammatical genders: masculine (often ending in *-o*) and feminine (often ending in *-a*). Gender is an inflectional category present in articles (*la*$_{fem}$/*le*$_{masc}$ "the"); determiners (este$_{masc}$/ esta$_{fem}$ "this"); pronouns (e.g. *él/ ella* "he/she"); nouns (*amigo*$_{masc}$/*amiga*$_{fem}$ "friend"); adjectives (*bonito*$_{masc}$/ *bonita*$_{fem}$ "beautiful").	Feminization	Masculine generic forms: *hombre* 'man' used as *humanity* or *humankind*. Masculine gender used as unmarked whereas feminine is marked. High-status professions tend to be masculine (e.g. *médico* 'doctor') and sometimes used for women (e.g. la$_{fem}$ médico$_{masc}$) while lower status professions tend to be feminine (e.g. *enfermera*, 'female nurse'; *chacha* 'maid'). Lexical asymmetries: (e.g. *gobernante/gobernanta* 'governor', 'house keeper', 'bossy woman'; *héroe/heroína* 'hero'/'heroine').
	Masculine gender is unmarked (e.g. *alumnos*$_{masc}$ 'students' and/or 'male students') and feminine marked (e.g. *alumnas*$_{fem}$ 'female students').		Idioms and expressions (e.g. *el hombre propone y dios dispone* 'man proposes but god disposes'; *echarle un par [de cojones]* "to be courageous" –lit. "to lay a pair [of testicles]"; *ser un coñazo* "to be boring" –lit. "to be a big pussy").

different grammatical genders form the plural of their adjectives and pronouns in the masculine plural form, even if the female substantives or female referents outnumber the masculine ones (e.g. *Marta*$_{fem}$, *Julia*$_{fem}$ *y Luis*$_{masc}$ *son chicos*$_{masc}$ *muy simpáticos*$_{masc}$ "Marta, Luis and Julia are very likeable kids"). For many linguists and language users, the generic masculine is a clear sign of an underlined sexism in Spanish, as it displays men over women, and at the same time makes women invisible in the language. From the point of view of the RAE, the use of the generic masculine only responds to the linguistic principle of economy and the syntactic characteristics of the Spanish language.[4]

4 "In Spanish, the masculine gender is unmarked, and the feminine gender is the marked one . . . 'Unmarkedness' refers to one of the binary members which may cover them

As has already been mentioned, eliminating sexist features like this one involves much more effort than in languages without grammatical gender (Stahlberg et al., 2007). In fact, guidelines do not offer a single answer, but several solutions which combined could effectively result in a more neutral language. The most widespread strategy for avoiding generic masculine is the use of both masculine and feminine forms (e.g. *el*$_{masc}$ *candidato*$_{masc}$ *o la*$_{fem}$ *candidata*$_{fem}$, *el/la candidata/candidato*, *el/la candidata/o* "the candidate"). However, using both genders, especially in official documents, can be perceived as tedious since it involves the duplication of all the articles, determiners, nouns and adjectives used (e.g. *el/la secretario/secretaria concienciado/concienciada viaja en transporte público* or *el/la secretario/a concienciado/a viaja en transporte público* "the conscientous secretary uses public transport"). This strategy is also ridiculed for being repetitive and difficult to articulate. In informal texts and social media, using @, as in *tod@s l@s interesad@s* "those who are interested", is occurring as a strategy for avoiding masculine generics and visualizing women, since the @ symbol is perceived as the representation of the morphemes *a* and *o* together. However, this strategy is avoided in formal texts. Other suggestions include using collective nouns (e.g. *el alumnado* instead of los *alumnos*, *el personal de direction* instead of los *directivos*), using *personas*, as in las *personas trabajadoras* instead of *trabajadores*, or using *pueblo* "people/nation", as in *el pueblo venezolano* instead of los *venezolanos* "venezolanos" (UNESCO, 1999b). In recent years, especially in the LGTB communities, it is has become common to replace *-a* and *-o* with *-e* (e.g. *amigues* "friends"), and *-x* (e.g. *latinx* "latino") to avoid marking gender, thereby being more gender-inclusive as regards those who do not define themselves as men or women. These new morphemes are used only in written colloquial text: especially *-x*, as it is impossible to pronounce. On the other hand, the morpheme *-e* is easier to pronounce but difficult to apply systematically, since it does not occur naturally in Spanish. According to Álvarez de Miranda, a member of the RAE, no language has ever adopted an invented morpheme, and therefore it is unlikely that this neutralization strategy will ever succeed in Spanish (2018).

The lack of visualization of women in the language in the lexicon has been the other major issue targeted. The feminization of masculine forms has successfully been done, without too much criticism, in nouns whose masculine form ends in

both. Therefore it is not necessary to make explicit reference to the marked gender. When referring to substantives that designate living beings, the masculine is not only used to refer to male individuals, but also all the individuals of the species, regardless of gender" (Real Academia Española, 2009, my translation).

-o, as in *abogada* "lawyer", *rectora* "dean", although there are still some forms that have not been feminized (e.g. *soldado* "soldier", *cabo* "corporal"). Other forms, however, have faced more resistance, for example occupational nouns that end in a consonant (e.g. *juez/jueza* "judge", *chofer/choferesa* "chauffeur"). Regarding adjectives, there are some that have been nominalized and end in *-e* (such as *estudiante* "student", *cliente* "client", *gerente* "manager", and *representante* "representative") which may be feminised and have been accepted to a major or lesser extent. For instance, nouns such as *presidenta* "president", *dependienta* "shop assistant", *curranta* "worker" are widely used, while some others, such as *gerenta* "manager" and *representanta* "representative", are scarcely used (Calero Fernández, 2004; UNESCO 1999b).

Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter has addressed the importance of using non-sexist language and the role that the morphological structure in each language plays in determining the sexist features of each language and the strategies designed to tackle them. Overall, applying non-sexist language is arduous and effortful regardless of the language. Lexical changes tend to encounter less opposition than grammatical changes: hence the belief that avoiding sexist language in languages with grammatical gender such as Spanish is more complicated than in other languages such as English or Finnish. Yet this does not imply that languages with grammatical gender are more sexist than those that lack it. As has been explained, languages such as Finnish can be used in sexist and misogynist ways, just like any other language. What distinguishes these three languages with regard to feminist language reforms is not only the type of gender but the awareness of the community. In English, feminist language reform is considered completed, which means that these proposals are considered common knowledge and are no longer discussed. On the other hand, in Spanish, the debate is very lively, especially after the feminist strikes on 8 March 2018 and 2019, while in Finland the debate has just begun.

The acceptance of the proposals among language users plays a major role in the adoption of non-sexist language strategies as well. For instance, in Spanish, there are some feminine forms that still face some resistance, and in English there have been several failed attempts at introducing a gender-neutral pronoun; but Swedish, also a natural gender language, has succeeded in adopting the genderless pronoun *hen* "third personal neutral pronoun". Moreover, the fourth wave of feminism has raised new issues, such as the representation and voice of non-binary people. Hence the need to redefine the concept of sexist language and the targets that feminist language reform addresses. This implies that non-sexist language is no longer focused on the systematic discrimination against women in the language, but on people who are discriminated against on the basis of their gender.

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Representing Intercultural Difference: The Ethics of Tourism

Isabel Turci-Domingo

The Semiosphere of Tourism: Creating the Event

Abstract: Our proposed theoretical areas assume an observation-based hypothesis that intends to account for the instrumentalization of promises for the sake of persuasion. We attempt to discern the promissory coating of promotional texts, or, in other words, the indirect mechanisms that materialize through promises. We start from a theoretical approximation to its genuine environment, the semiosphere of tourism, a semiotic field in which the signs, texts, objects and practices that constitute forms of life related to travelling and the tourist experience achieve meaning. This experience, understood as an encounter with otherness, constitutes the essential event of the semiosphere of tourism, which endorses social practices and appraisals. We focus on advertising as a manifestation of a form of promotional discourse and show an implementation of previous hypotheses, founded on certain phenomenological and semiotic essays, through the analysis of a print-media advertisement written in French.

Keywords: semiosphere of tourism, event, promise, promotional discourse, advertising

> "*. . . les promesses prodiguées dans l'attente à mon imagination.*"
>
> *Proust, À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs. Paris: Gallimard, 1954, p. 125.*

The textual products derived from promotional discursive practices, including advertising, have as a general goal the urging of other sociocultural practices, those of tourism. These would make no sense without destinations, the consumer goods around which the different sectors of the tourism industry revolve – destinations that effectively become territorial brands under the effects of marketing. From this point of view, a territorial brand entails an increase in value, an aura (Rastier, 2011) capable of sustaining the commitment of the territory's attractiveness with the image it conveys. The territorial brand concerns the actors involved, whether local or visiting, and its management – or in other words, the bringing of life to the brand – both integrates and transcends the tourism market. This notion of a territorial brand is recent, according to Jean Noël Kapferer (2011); however, "it was always natural in the sphere of tourism and the advertising communication that accompanies it".[1]

1 As in this case, all translations of quotations from French are my own.

It is noteworthy, Kapferer specifies, that while the French language uses just one word, “la *marque*”, English speakers differentiate between *trademark* as a legal concept and *Brand*: “this identity, nominal or symbolic, that carries a promise embodied by the products and services” – a promise that the discourse of tourism is able to operate and use as a generic trigger for travelling. Such is the case, for example, in this eloquent quotation from an article published in a travel magazine (*Air France*): “Names are what carry him who travels. They keep him occupied, awaiting arrival, like a promise to an impatient child of looking behind the curtain” (Outier, 2017, p. 152). Certainly, the toponym-turned-brand, as an effect of branding strategies, carries with it the promise held by the tourist object and a certain imaginary that makes us dream, awakens the desire for travel, the hope and eagerness of discovery. Promises that fill tourist promotional texts, that outline the brand’s specific values, that act as the tool of persuasion and seduction. Promises that surround and uphold the tourist experience, as the junction of the expectations that precede travelling, the attention that guides the eye to experience the destination, the incidence of axiological assessments derived from the clashing of the image projected by the tourist offer and the image perceived by the traveler, and, lastly, the oft-shared memories, a vehicle, perhaps, of promises for others.

The theoretical areas we propose assume the observation-based hypothesis that intends to account for the instrumentalization of promises for the sake of persuasion. Even if promissory formulations govern the discursive plane – and thus, influence the rhetoric of tourist promotional discourse – and the persuasive effect must culminate on the perlocutive plane, illocution and perlocution go hand in hand. In fact, from Sarfati (2008) we assume that the latter conditions the genesis of the former. From this point of view, we try to elucidate the indirect mechanisms adopted by the promise for its materialization within the texts. These texts are submerged in a promissory coating, unexplained by the traditional conception of the speech act that relates to promises. For this reason, we pose the need to articulate a theoretical construction that allows us to account for the promissory interpretation elicited by these texts, or, in other words, for the emergence of the promise and its specificity. For this purpose, we start from a theoretical approximation to its authentic environment, the semiosphere of tourism. In this semiosphere, as we shall see, the encounter between the tourist subject and object takes place. Promotional texts, particularly those of advertising, build this event, essential within the semiosphere of tourism, and imbue it with value for the sake of the differentiation and notoriety of the tourist brands.

Inside the Semiosphere: Destinations, Forms of Life and Tourist Imaginaries

The tourist industry feeds the urge to travel by enhancing multiple objects of desires for the destinations to later materialize. From a socio-economic perspective, the destination becomes a phenomenon of production and consumption that is exclusive to tourist activity. Its competitiveness against other destinations, according to a recent study by UNWTO, the World Tourism Organization (2019, p. 26), lies in

> the ability of the destination to use its natural, cultural, human, man-made and capital resources efficiently to develop and deliver quality, innovative, ethical and attractive tourism products and services in order to achieve a sustainable growth within its overall vision and strategic goals, increase the added value of the tourism sector, improve and diversify its market components and optimize its attractiveness and benefits both for visitors and the local community in a sustainable perspective.

This definition allows us to see that the destination is a complex, multi-dimensional system, that partakes of other, greater systems, the territorial system and the tourist sectorial system (Barrado Timón, 2004), legitimized by the ethical projection that UNWTO defends, ever since the agreement on the *Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*, approved in 1999 by the General Assembly of UNWTO and recognized, two years later, by the UN.

From a semiotic perspective, a territory, as stated by the geographer Claude Raffestin (1986, p. 177), "can be considered as a space informed by the semiosphere". Once transformed into a destination, it finds itself in the domains of the semiosphere of tourism, a specialized semiotic *continuum* whose network of meaning incorporates and transcends the territoriality of destinations. In fact, if we consider one of its facets, the geographical space it occupies, destinations are not always limited either spatially or analytically, and are inclined to "network to form larger destinations" (UNWTO, 2019, p. 14). The semiosphere of tourism allows the creation and transmission of meaning in both tourist production and consumption. Its semiotic space and, therefore, its area of influence have a much wider, less centralized reach. From the standpoint of consumption, it is known that the tourist experience is not limited merely to the time spent at the destination. It includes the preparation that precedes it, as well as the shared memories that follow it (Laplante, 1996). In fact, some years ago, Google identified five phases of travel for tourism professionals: dreaming, planning, booking, experiencing and sharing,[2] which offer a good account of this idea in the context of "tourism 2.0".

The idea of the semiosphere of tourism we are trying to approach is based on Lotman's (1999) theoretical construction. It conceives the semiosphere as the abstraction of the general semiotic space, thought of as a single organism that provides the necessary conditions for the creation of meaning, in such a way that the existence of semiosis removed from it is impossible. It is a space closed by a permeable frontier which casts away that which is foreign to it and which requires, in order to become real to this space, a translation into one of the languages of its internal space, as well as the semiotization of the non-semiotic, of non-texts. But this is not its only frontier. The space that circumscribes the semiosphere is segmented by internal frontiers which divide it into hierarchical levels and which "specialize its sectors from a semiotic standpoint" (Cáceres, 1996, p. 171). Thus are certain sub-semiospheres conformed, "whose internal space possesses its own semiotic identity, its own semiotic 'self' " (Lotman, 1999, p. 32) inside the general semiotic space. What we designate the semiosphere of tourism is configured like one of these sub-semiospheres, in which not only the formerly mentioned territory-linked sectors (political, economic, social, cultural), as long as they are relevant, achieve meaning, but also other factors just as crucial to a destination, which help in the determination of its tourist attractiveness. We refer to the "ensemble of properties or qualities inherent in discernible objects" (Landowski, 2004, p. 47), that is, to its physical, aesthetic and, moreover, symbolic characteristics. The semiosphere of tourism is then configured as the semiotic medium that hosts the network of meaning of a dynamic system, in which the outlines and evolution of tourist culture are established, given the diachronic depth of the semiosphere.

Ultimately, as Basso Fossali (2012) states, forms of life, an essential level in the management of meaning, are what breathe life into culture. As immediate constituents of the semiosphere, forms of life consist of "a semiosis between the syntagmatic form of a life's course (in the plane of expression) and the aggregate of congruent choices operated in axiological, modal, passional and metaphorical configurations (in the plane of content)" (Fontanille, 2015, pp. 257–68, para. 16).

They consist of "a concordance . . . on the ways of intelligibility, on the frameworks that set the interpretive horizon of reality" (Lorusso, 2017, para. 23) and find themselves, as a meaning library, at the mercy of the actors, who

2 *The 5 Stages of Travel. From Dreaming to Booking to Sharing* (2020).

are able to assume, refuse and modify them since "cultural praxis (the internal dynamics of the semiosphere) actualizes and realizes one form of life or virtualizes another" (Fontanille, 2015, pp. 243–48, para. 9). Due to its position in the most global and generic plane of the semiosphere,

> [f]orms of life are in themselves composed of signs, texts, objects, and practices; they carry guiding principles and values; they manifest through symbolic attitudes and expressions; influence our sensibilities, affective states, and enunciative positions. They call and determine the meaning of our lives and conducts, provide us with reasons for existing and acting in this world. (Fontanille, 2015, pp. 5–8, para. 7)

Contrasting with forms of life, available to all, lifestyles, a sociological concept operating in the fields of marketing and advertising communication, anchor those forms of life to social reality. These are usages that have been appropriated by social actors, behaviors, symbolic productions and the social interaction modes of an individual or group (Fontanille, 2015, pp. 257–68, para. 45).

The conglomerate of meaning born within the semiosphere of tourism, thanks to the repertoire of available forms of life, always subjected to variation, involves what from a sociological standpoint is known as the tourist imaginary (Amirou, 1995; Gravari-Barbas & Graburn, 2012; Hiernaux-Nicolas, 2002). Charaudeau defines the concept of the imaginary as a form of apprehension towards the world, born from social representations. It is the result of a process of symbolization of the world in an affective–rational order that, through human intersubjectivity, creates meanings out of the objects and phenomena of the world, as well as out of humans and their behaviors, and is deposited in the collective memory (Charaudeau 2007).

From the semiotic point of view, the imaginary requires an environment, a medium for the creation of meaning; it requires a specific semiosphere and its related forms of life. When treating tourist imaginaries, Maria Gravari-Barbas and Nelson Graburn effectively integrate them not only over locations, but also over actors and practices. They define them as "spatial imaginaries that refer to the potential of the place as a tourist destination" and introduce their function, quoting Bachelard, as "a way of relating to space and matter that create meaning without strictly determining behaviors and configurations" (2012, para. 3).

They are imaginaries constructed by marketing and advertising, produced and appropriated by tourists themselves (Gravari-Barbas & Graburn, 2012). Certain imaginaries linked to forms of life "perform" territories, turned into destinations (Boukhris, 2012), since "the imagined order is embedded in the material world" (Harari, 2018, p. 132). Surreptitiously, the imagined order is found "interwoven in the fabric of life", becoming objective reality (Harari, 2018, p. 132).

This order integrates the common-sense background that conforms that which is evident, social stereotypes, beliefs and intersubjective opinions, doxa. In the same way, if by common sense we understand common senses, common sensibilities, this can determine the possibility of meaning through the semiotization of world experiences (Sarfati, 2000). The imagined order shapes our desires (Harari, 2018, p. 134).

Promises in the Discourse of Tourism. Advertising of Destinations

For tourism, communication plays a role just as essential as that of other components, be they material or immaterial (Calvi, 2012), such as tourist resources, or goods and services. And so, discourse becomes one of its cornerstones (Balslev, Cortés & Johnsen, 2014). This could be qualified as a socio-discursive imaginary if we assume Charaudeau's (2007) hypothesis of speech being the symptom of the imaginary. Discursive Imaginaries are generated by the discourses that circulate social groups, create values and justify actions (Charaudeau, 2007).

In the environment of the semiosphere of tourism and the forms of life that energize it, imaginaries reveal themselves in the discourse in order to carry its promises: "[b]efore any tourist experience, there is a promise, which can come from a multitude of different sources: an advertisement for a destination, a journalist's article, an entry from a travel blogger, a post or picture shared by a friend on Facebook, a relative's story, an associate's testimony" (Chabry, 2017).

The sources mentioned by Chabry (2017), whose agency posits itself as a digital coach for Destination Management/Marketing Organization (DMO) directors, are made up of travelers' discourses, heterogeneous in their semiotic modality, written, visual, written–visual, oral. All of them transmit their lived experience and a subjective, potentially intersubjective, imaginary, filled with promises for others if the journey met their expectations, or with words of caution otherwise (Cortés Zaborras, 2014). These discourses stem from tourist consumption. So do those that derive from the professional activity of tourist influencers, journalists or bloggers, travelers themselves. Linked, to a greater or lesser extent, to the promoting of destinations as collaborators with tourism offices or private businesses, their texts are an alternative to the discursive productions born of the work of marketing and advertising (Turci Domingo, 2014). These are a vehicle for constructed imaginaries, with the goal of achieving a certain favorable positioning for tourist brands. Effectively, advertising and marketing are integrated into the sequence of activities that shape the tourism value chain, crucial from a strategic viewpoint, for the proper functioning of the sector (UNWTO, 2019).

The examples we have brought up provide a list in no way saturated with discourses prone to transmitting the promises of tourism. The linkage we have outlined relating to the social practices they stem from assumes François Rastier's theoretical position. This linguist and semiologist establishes a close correspondence between linguistic and social instances, so that "every type of social practice has a correspondent discourse divided into oral and written genres. All texts are included in a genre and, on the other hand, all text is the semiotic part, whether dominant or not, of a course of action" (Rastier, 2001, 2004). The concept of discourse that Rastier alludes to is associated with that of discursive formation as defined by Foucault,[3] of a wider meaning than that which is usually given in the area of discourse analysis; in other words, that which takes into consideration the text and its production and reception–interpretation conditions (Adam, 1999). However, the former is useful in order to locate the so-called discourse of tourism, in which numerous generic fields are integrated, including the genres linked to promotional practices, which have already been taken notice of by a number of linguists (Bugnot, 2009; Calvi, 2006, 2011; Mariottini, 2011). We shall focus on them now, shining the spotlight on tourist advertising in particular.

A first trait by which to group these genres is that of function: all of them incorporate, to some extent, both informative and persuasive components, with a high level of focus on the latter in the case of advertising. On the other hand, if we consider, with Adam (2015) and Maingueneau (2007), that genres are conventions governed by the principles of repetition and variation, the many promotional genres manage these principles in a particular manner. More specifically, advertising is found among those in which variation is predominant, as it generally does not allow the prediction of its composition, its stylistic wagers, or its interdiscursive incursions (Adam, 2015). In spite of this, in order to understand its way of establishing meaning it is necessary to uncover the constants that make it a specific genre (Adam & Bonhomme, 1997; Bonhomme, 2002; Charaudeau, 1994; López Díaz, 2006). The promise is not just a factor affected by the principle of repetition we alluded to, but, rather, one of the essential elements of the persuasive effect, a speech act matrix (Bonhomme, 2002).

3 This is the interpretation Jean-Michel Adam (1997, p. 671) gives to discourse as a term in the way Rastier uses it, on the basis of Foucault's definition of discourse as a "set of statements governed by the same system of historically determined rules". As it is understood in the analysis of discourse from the French tradition, discursive formation is the social and historically circumscribed set of rules on which the unity of a set of statements is established (Maingueneau, 1996).

The Promise in Discursive Materiality

According to the definition of promise established in the field of linguistic pragmatics from the works of the speech act theory philosophers Austin (1988) and Searle (1972, 1997), the promissory speech act has been thought of as that which makes the speaker commit to performing an action that they themselves must fulfil for the sake of the receiver of this promise, who, in turn, expects it to be fulfilled. Objective advertising promises, such as prices, promotions or services, conform to this definition since, when stated without any ambiguity (Jupille, 1998), they can be considered pre-contracts. But this is inefficient for most of the promissory formulations that appear in advertising texts. We could, perhaps, push forward the assumption that we are dealing with an elusive strategy, seeing how promising implies, from a traditional perspective, a commitment that would threaten the advertiser's image were it not to be fulfilled.

How do we explain the promissory coating surrounding these texts? How do we conceptualize it? Another understanding of the concept of promise is possible if we start from the indirect nature of persuasive discourse. This meaning, rooted in usage, can be found compiled in dictionaries, which, according to Sarfati (1994), provide a transfer of the evidences of common sense interpretable through topical competence. We refer to that which grants the ability to promise to the object: *Assurance ou espérance que semblent donner certaines choses, certains événements* [Assurance or hope that certain things and certain events seem to give][4] (*Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé*[5]), a definition that fits particularly well with Kapferer's previously evoked perspective in the field of marketing.

The philosopher Monique Dixsaut, in a 2014 conference, stated that this meaning implies the essential of a being: "The thing, the event are in themselves promises, or rather seem to be so for those who project expectations and hopes onto them." She explores this meaning from a philosophical standpoint: a meaning that, for her, implies discerning an appeal in the promise, something to be fulfilled.

4 The dictionary exemplifies this definition, among others, with the following, particularly revelatory quotation from Proust: "the strange appeal which I should never for a moment cease to hear, as the promise and proof that there existed something other, realisable no doubt by art, than the nullity that I had found in all my pleasures and in love itself . . . Proust, *The Captive.* 1922, p. 263" (*Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé*).

5 Henceforward "TLFi".

Lebas and Cadiot (2003) study, among other lexical elements, the noun and verb "promise" by adopting a phenomenological perspective of meaning and resorting to the qualities of the experience for the description of the lexicon. In relation to the meaning of promise that we address, they determine that the promising object, without reaching enunciator status, is infused with the meaning of promising, so that it establishes a quasi-legal relationship, in the sense given by Ducrot within the framework of his argumentation in language theory. In this case, a promise implies the qualitative constitution of the object that promises an intensity to live. With it, its defining traits become significantly enhanced.

This meaning can already be partially found in the Latin verb *promitto*, source of the present promise. As Maribel Fehlmann explains: "It could be thought that *promitto*, before returning to its legal meaning, was used in the sense of dazzling someone, making them imagine what was supposed to be specified in a promise" (2005, pp. 28–9). In translating this quotation, we have decided to use *dazzle* in place of the original *miroiter*. This verb was chosen as an approximation to the connotations of the French verb, whose metaphorical sense is as follows: "To make someone expect (an advantage or benefit, often non-existent) in order to win them over for a cause" (TLFi). Its relationship with the intention of persuading and the strategies to such an end seems evident.

Emergence of the Promise – Value Generation Devices

Our previously outlined approach may account for the transference, operated by and within the discourse, of the capacity to promise to the tourist object, with the subsequent defocalization of the enunciator. In this way, a carrier object for benefits is constructed, bearing specific promises for the sake of notoriety so as to generate a unique, distinguishable, brand image. The promise arises from the perception of certain properties or qualities elicited by specific textual configurations; in other words, it materializes due to a syntagmatic process through which the value of the object is created in the discourse.

One of the semiotic value generation devices capable of qualitatively creating the object and of instilling in it a positive value is narrativity. This narrativity is founded in what we consider its irreducible element, the event, in itself viewed from a phenomenological standpoint, which allows us to recognize its narrative potential (Audet 2006, 2007). It implies a tear in the fabric of our everyday life and an encounter with the otherness. This encounter constitutes the essential event of tourist culture, or rather, of the semiosphere of tourism that legitimizes practices, social appraisals and intersubjective beliefs. When applied to the field of tourism, the otherness forms the basis of tourist practices and involves different dimensions. It consists of

> the dynamic exploitation of a social or geographic identity difference through the relationship of an individual with other locations and peoples, in a process of mobility . . . It expresses every aspect of what is foreign . . . It applies to locations as well as to humans. A constituent of tourist practices, it implies an encounter with a different self, different locations, people, times . . . in favor of movement. In the field of tourism, foreign locations, that is, the geographical dimension of otherness, play an essential role in the imaginary and the compulsion to travel. (*Géoconfluences*, 2011)

The doxic contents created within the semiosphere of tourism articulate an opposition, contrasting, from an axiological point of view, two kinds of forms of life, the ordinary everyday life, depreciated, and the event of travelling and the forms of life it institutes. This contrast is made manifest in a large number of tourist advertisements through a wide array of procedures, ranging from presuppositions to outright direct allusions. In any case, the promise within the tourist object and the values it poses bring out lacks to remedy or excesses to reduce, whether explicitly or implicitly, quickly resolved in advertising by the joyous transformative event of travelling. And, all events imply a transformation, according to Maldiney (2014), at least for the duration of the journey and the subsequent encounter, an encounter that, in this philosopher's opinion, "consists in the emergence of the otherness whose acceptance results in one's own transformation" (as cited in Jacquet, 2014, p. 117).

Both a source and an event of high value, the encounter with the otherness displays its narrative potential. It frequently acts in a symbiotic manner with two other semiotic devices or frameworks, that of the aesthetic and the affective (Bertrand & Estay Stange, 2015). Although all of them shape the object's value and exist in a state of constant hybridization within discourse, the dominant role is ultimately played by narrativity, founded and treasured by the event.

We shall briefly mention its most remarkable characteristics by reference to the philosophers Claude Romano and Henri Maldiney. For the latter, the event is outside the scope of the project and beyond expectations; in other words, it always astounds (Maldiney, 2014). "The quintessential event", Maldiney writes, "is the encounter, very specifically the encounter with the other" (2014, p. 248). For his part, Romano (1999) states that the event "does not have a preceding reason, its reason lies within itself" (p. 59); it is "unpredictable in its radical novelty" (p. 60); "it irrevocably transcends the frame of causality" (p. 61); "it does not realize a preceding possibility but rather makes the possible attainable" (p. 61); "it is never realized in the present, it is never within a temporal scope, it opens a completely new horizon" (p. 65); "it means the advent of a new world for the one who experiences it" (p. 64). For Romano, "[t]he event of an encounter brings a different world into my own and as such transforms my world to its very core"; it therefore means "a metamorphosis of the world" (p. 66). "The meaning of the event is that of being the bearer of meaning" (Romano, 2012, p. 147).

Destination Advertising: Creating the Event

From this point on, we attempt to apply the formulated hypotheses, through the use of linguistic and visual discourse analysis. We present a destination advertisement retrieved from a corpus spanning the years 2000–2013, a time frame that allows for a wide view of the object of study: tourist brands' advertisements as included in the monthly French publication *Grands reportages*. This posits itself as "a magazine that incites travel" and that "provides the keys to escaping, to keeping yourself informed, to properly preparing your upcoming trips with practical guides unique among travel magazines and the newest *high tech* and multimedia developments inherent in the world of travelling" (MédiaObs). It is to be presumed, if we account for the concept of affinity, that both the journalistic work and the advertisements on this platform will work together in order to reach their target audience.[6]

The text is an institutional advertisement from the Israel Tourist Office (*Grands reportages* 374, Autumn 2012, p. 4), whose axis of communication is based on the antithetical values carried by the lack/excess pair, on one side, and the beneficial encounter with the otherness on the other. It incorporates a story, about one of the stages of a trip, its fourth day in particular, in the temporal process of subjective appropriation of the destination-space, as highlighted by the phrase "My Israel/Evening: spa with friends", a first-person statement. It is located on the upper-right part of the page as a title, topping the photograph taking up half of the page. This photograph, superposed with framing marks, displays an endless water surface in which may be seen a pair of big parasols and a number of swimmers, some on their own, some in small groups. The logo of the Israel brand and its slogan can be found on the lower-right part of the page, while the main body of the advertisement, which we transcribe and translate below, lies on the left side. As we will see, what we have here is a testimonial account that, as a genre, endorses its authenticity:

6 "Target audience: mixed, 25–49 years old, CSP [socio-professional category] +, wealthy, educated, high cultural level" (http://www.mediaobs.com/titre/grands_reportages).

> *My Israël, 4e jour*
> *Après-midi: spa entre amis*
> *Ici c'est tous les jours l'heure du bain, et il est toujours à température. Confortablement assis entre ciel et mer, je nage en pleine physique-alchimie, bercé par les lois d'Archimède. Porté par « la mer de sel », le corps ne pèse pas plus que l'âme. Loin du monde, hors du temps, lavé de tout, je m'abandonne aux mille bienfaits du plus vieux spa du monde. Demain, ce sera un nouveau bain, demain ce sera un autre voyage*. (*Grands reportages* 374, Autumn 2012, p. 4).
> [My Israel, day 4
> Evening: spa with friends
> Here, bathtime is every day and it's always at a nice temperature. Sitting comfortably between the sky and the sea, I swim in pure alchemy-physics, cradled by Archimedes' laws. Carried by the "Sea of Salt", the body weighs no more than the soul. Away from the world, away from time, cleaned of everything, I lose myself to the thousand benefits of the oldest spa in the world. There will be a new bath tomorrow, there will be a new journey.]

The aesthetic device is the most striking in the textual surface of this story, which accounts for the subject's encounter with the otherness through the experiences of the body, sensing, feeling, here, now. The object in this advertisement is the Sea of Salt, the usual Hebrew name for the Dead Sea, which exerts an action and an effect on the traveler, who lets himself go, devoted to the object, isolated from everything in time and space: "away from the world, away from time". The thus-evoked metaphor of the island leads us to the idea of the event, which for Maldiney "does not happen within the world; on the contrary, it is what opens up the world" (2014, p. 237). Its idea of rhythm, neither cadence nor measure, has the ability to generate its own space-time (as cited in Sauvanet, 2012, para. 7).

Unlike most other advertisements in which the appreciative modality acts extensively, in this there is only one, quantitative, occurrence to refer to the thousand benefits of this sea. In this case, the object's value is constructed through the aesthetic event. But this is not the only semiotic device for value generation. The positive valence of the tourist experience is shown as well, endowed with transformative energy thanks to the narrative device. It stands in opposition to a dysphoric ordinary life, then, with lacks or excesses presupposed in the advertisement, as it needs to be scrubbed, erased, forgotten in order to find a state of well-being, as the terminative phrase "cleaned of everything" leads one to presume, a state that the traveller arrives to thanks to their encounter with the object.

What is the function of the picture in this context? It represents the moment the picture was taken, outdated in relation to the event narrated by the writer. Common sense effectively makes it so that being in two separate places at the same time is impossible, but it also shows that the narration of the present event is a mirage, a ploy. Indeed, the event never occurs in the present; it cannot function in a temporal scope; it unveils a word that is interpreted from its future, in retrospective (Romano, 2012). This fact does not but reinforce the authenticity of the testimony given that the picture, a high-angle shot taken at a great distance from the photographed object, suggests it is an open-air space. This implies that, even though the Sea of Salt is a spa due to its properties, it is still a sea or, rather, a lake. The value of the object is guaranteed in its uniqueness.

The rhetorical and semiotic resources create an object that acquires value through the narrated retrospective event. In fact, the textual configuration founded on the event, and thus on narrativity, has constructed an actant, the Sea of Salt, whose defining traits have been noticeably enhanced to the point of being able to anticipate an intensity to live, with the potential to give place to a promissory interpretation.

The encounter relating traveller subject and tourist object, in which they are both "co-enunciators", creates meaning and value (Landowski, 2004, p. 28). Through its evocative power it triggers an affective–aesthetic imaginary linked to wellness, that "general feeling of fulfilment that provides the total satisfaction of the needs of the body and the mind" (TLFi). That would, in short, be the value of the tourist product offered by the advertiser, its promise of new feelings and sensations, revealed in the encounter with the otherness and, thus, in the event: a promise that is not anticipation but surprise, since it unveils a world whose novelty, Romano indicates, does not contradict the predictability of some events, "since there will always be some unpredictableness in them, even if it is just their unique qualitative imprint" (2012, p. x). This seems to be what is conveyed by the last words: "There will be a new bath tomorrow, there will be a new journey."

Will the recipients achieve the same transformative experience, to which they are bound, given common senses and sensibilities? At this point, intrigue, a "syntagmatic concept that therefore implies the experiencing of time" (Lotman, 1999, p. 56), is to be taken into account, for the promise of the object acts in a prospective manner (Fontanille, 2015).

On another note, with regard to this advertisement in which aesthesia, affect and narrativity act symbiotically to constitute the value of the object, we would like to point out an evocative connection between the individual and the collective established by the semiologist Jacques Fontanille. "In a way", he states, "the semiosphere reproduces on a collective scale what phenomenology and semiotics have described as the fundamental structure of all sentient experiences, on an individual scale; namely, the experience of exchanges between *le Moi* (the universe of internal emotions and impressions), *le Soi* (the symbolic frontier of the body), and *l'Autre* (the sensible world, including other bodies)" (2015, pp. 137–54, para. 3). It is an idea particularly fitting for the essential event of the semiosphere of tourism.

Conclusion

We wondered at the beginning how to elucidate the promissory coating that permeates promotional tourism texts, advertising ones in particular. The proposed route led us to attribute the emergence of promise to the perception of certain qualities or properties elicited by particular textual configurations, that is to say, to their crystallization according to a syntagmatic process by which the value of an object is created by and for the discourse: a discourse that, in order to be promissory and, ultimately, persuasive, makes sure that the narrative founded and treasured by the event is able to flourish. This event, in the shape of the encounter with the otherness, relates subject and object, co-enunciators of a relationship that unfailingly generates beneficial effects, powered by the aesthetic and affective dimensions. The appraisal of this event, fundamental within the semiosphere, and the consequent doxic line it creates favor the generation of value upon the tourist object. Its positive value is crucial to the eliciting of a promissory interpretation, since it is known that one of the conditions of a promise is that it must be beneficial to the receiver, who must interpret and accept it as such.

On the other hand, the semiosphere of tourism and its doxic contents, portrayed in the lifestyles that energize it, pre-dispose the target audience to be available for the encounter, and thus, the event. In fact, it is noteworthy that one of the advertisements pertaining to our corpus has used this idea as its slogan: *Être à la rencontre* (*Grands reportages* 350, January 2011, p. 116). This slogan is open to the encounter, the event of the encounter with the otherness, in the multiple dimensions propitiated by tourist practices, that is, in every facet of what the other is. In this context, the promise of the object is neither a project nor foresight, but the trace of happiness, renewed in each encounter, for each of them is, as we have seen, qualitatively unique. The event created and re-created by the discourse of tourism, and the promises it operates, do not exhaust desire.

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Carmen Cortés-Zaborras

No Novelties in Paradise: Terror and Destination Image

Abstract: Confronted with the uncertainty and fear caused by terrorist attacks, agents involved in tourist activities react in various ways. The repression of emotions, the introduction of prevention measures that could stop new episodes of horror, as well as the concerns of the population and holidaymakers, depend essentially on subjective factors. Economic activity, the desire to achieve happiness, the governability of territories and the control of fear determine discourses and images. Does the discursive construction of the feelings raised by the image of the destination and by the momentary disruption of certainties of well-being lead to a modification of the brand image and of the perceived image of these spaces? In order to answer this question, I analyze the visual and verbal discourses of social networks and the media for the emotional contents and the supposed objective discourses concerning security measures and branding actions. We observe two privileged destinations for international tourism, Paris and the Côte d'Azur, before and after the attacks of 13 November 2015 and 14 July 2016.

Keywords: tourisn, terrorism, destination image, emotions

Introduction: Some Concepts

There are two elements of semantic order that we will deal with at the beginning as a way of getting into the subject: the meanings of "paradise" and "terrorism" in dictionaries, and their discursive uses in relation to tourism. As the *Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé* [TLFi] (n.d.) records, the word "terrorism" arose with the French Revolution (1794) to refer to the doctrine of the supporters of the Terror regime. In the definitions contained in this dictionary, the violence exerted by a political organization in order to change an existing political or social order seems to refer to the phenomenon that attained its highest expression in the West in the last century, reflecting intra-territorial tensions. However, the contemporary actions that will occupy me here, the extreme manifestations of the confrontation of two great ways of conceiving the world, which are only apparently based on religious principles and which form the sequels to a long history of confrontations aimed at territorial and economic control, have not yet been taken into consideration by French lexicographers. The *Cambridge Dictionary* (n.d.) refers in a general way to political violence, and the examples it gives do not clarify the possible extension to the meaning currently installed in the imaginary and social discourse of the West. Only in the *Thesaurus* do we find an expression, "9/11", used mostly in the USA, whose referent is a terrorist action in the context that occupies us: the context, in fact, that significantly marked a before and after in the ideological positions and practical arrangements of Western countries. Perhaps it is the *Diccionario de la lengua española* [DRAE] (n.d.), in the second meaning of the term "*terrorismo*" as a succession of acts of violence executed to instill terror, which in its generalization is closer to the meaning it has in our corpus. It is also interesting to observe the terms most closely related to these actions. On the graph that depicts "*terrorisme*"'s semantic proxemy, we observe its close relationship with the nouns "terror", "fear" and "horror". In 2013, France, in a White Paper on national defence and security, defined terrorism as a mode of action of those adversaries who do not follow the rules of conventional warfare to compensate for their lack of means and achieve their political objectives. It stated that terrorism strikes indiscriminately and seeks to take advantage of the consequences that its brutal irruption causes in public opinion (Guehenno, 2013, p. 43).

As for the term "paradise", which we have introduced in the title of this chapter, and whose banal use is assumed by speakers, it is included in the DRAE in its fourth meaning as a very pleasant place. In the *Cambridge Dictionary*, an explicit allusion is made to an individual's pleasant feeling, to the joy that comes from a place where everything is as one would wish it to be. In the TLFi (n.d.), in one of its senses, derived by analogy, it has the meaning of a place that enchants for its beauty, for how pleasant it is to live in, while in another – more specific, and closer to what we know as a tourist paradise – it is the ideal place, dreamed about for the pleasures it can offer.

The Tourism Universe

The tourism system, according to Cooper and Hall (2011), consists of the production and consumption of experiences, constantly renewed around desire, pleasure, happiness (Hiernaux-Nicolas, 2002), built on the basis of estrangement. As Osorio points out, the social function of tourism consists in the liberation of normal reality by allowing us to pass from one way of conducting our lives to another which is susceptible to an organized complexity of possibilities (Osorio, 2006). Sometimes what stands out from the norm, from everyday life – what is, paradoxically, attractive – are the consequences of extreme violence, whether historical or contemporary, which has led to black tourism and mourning tourism, as well as to the trauma studies in this field. We can observe this phenomenon in the French capital, where there has been a constant flow of visitors to the surroundings of the Bataclan nightclub, the object of one of the bloodiest attacks in the capital. For the immediate environment this does not mean its economic recovery, nor the much-desired return to normality after the trauma caused by the attack (Pilleyre, 2018).

If we adopt the meta-theory of Luhmann (1995), the tourist system as a social system is a closed set that is self-generated thanks to communication, because it creates and nourishes it constantly. Although there are real products and services, the tourism universe is configured around schematic narratives that feed on a mythical journey and that transcend the context to become an ideal structure and eliminate noise, whether they originate in the interaction between man and nature (ecological consequences) or in the breakdown of the instituted order (economic crises, traditional wars or terrorism). The joint creation of experiences and values implies, however, that difficulties appear for issuers, service producers and creators of the brand image (Cooper & Hall, 2011). All of them must take into account changing desires, and counteract, by means of discourse, the risks involved in tourism, detailed by Hamadeh and Bassil (2017): health, food, cultural barriers, national policies, religious dogmas, crime, political instability and terrorism. Tourism is vulnerable, says Aramberri (2015), and terrorism is perceived as one of the most threatening elements due to its unpredictable nature. It is true that the exceptional value that consumers give to a destination, obviously subjective, can neutralize the feeling of risk and push them towards travelling, which responds to an absolutely human reflection, because, as Douglas (1996) points out, we, by nature, underestimate the less frequent, hardly probable risks.

A number of studies have been devoted to analyzing the consequences of terrorism on the influx of tourists into territories that have suffered an attack. Some, like Gut and Jarrell (2007), show that, while international journeys suffer, regional travels increase. Others have focused on the fact that countries whose political systems are unstable suffer the consequences over a longer period of time (Korstanje & Clayton, 2012). In this sense the Paris Office of Tourism and Congresses made inquiries in 2015 about the loyalty of travelers to the large cities affected by the terrorist attacks. The answers were similar: the fall was very often brutal, but recovery was rapid. Some particularly attractive destinations, such as Paris, do not have to wait long to see tourists return.

The Object of Study

One of the destinations that I study here, the Côte d'Azur, from which I take as an example two cities, Nice and Grasse, with different characteristics, is one of the oldest in terms of receiving tourists, who in many cases enjoy stays of long duration, besides being one of the most prestigious in the world. The city of Nice, the first tourist city of France after Paris, with 5 million visitors per year (Binacchi, 2016a), which was the object of the attacks of 14 July 2016, had a reputation of being the safest in the country. Grasse, on the other hand, appears a quiet city whose economic activity consists of the production of perfumes and the reception of tourists. The other space that I study is one of the epicenters of world tourist activity, Paris and its region, l'Ile de France, place of all desires. Its remarkable artistic and intellectual life during the last two centuries, the urban changes of the nineteenth century and the vestiges of previous eras, as well as the development of an artisanal luxury industry, have turned it into an immense container of irresistible cultural heritage for tourists. According to figures from the Regional Committee for Tourism, in 2018 the City of Light and its region welcomed 50 million visitors ("Le bilan", n.d.). This was a new record following the decline of the influx, which occurred for various reasons, the main one being lack of security, which encompasses robberies, aggressions and terrorist attacks. The main markets that have recovered have been the Italian, Spanish and Japanese, the most fearful of the terrorist threat, although the current largest market, the Chinese, is still reliant on the full recovery of normality with respect to security. In any case, the two destinations are located in a country that has not had serious problems in recent decades and is at the head of the recipient countries, which is a spur in the medium and long term.

Some Preliminary Reflections

Emotions, generally positive, are key in the relationship of individuals and groups with tourist destinations, although, obviously, terrorism generates strong negative emotions, both in visitors and in residents. I will look at these along with the supposed objective facts that try to counteract or promote them. Then I must ask myself, what happens with people's emotions? Espinoza, in Damasio's reading, conceives the emotions joy, sadness, pride, shame and sympathy (2005), to which I add, with Bericat Alastuey (1999), horror and worry, as fundamental phenomena for the automatic regulation of life. This is what Charaudeau (2008) classifies as hedonistic values within belief-knowledge, built around the pleasure/displeasure axis, and characterized by its manifestation outside rational argumentative paths.

After the terrorist attacks, visitors, tourist actors and the media react in a different way: some get carried away by their emotions, while others repress them or channel them towards hope, which already contains the joy of the future trip. Each one thus constructs “the real”, the subjective, not “the reality”, the phenomena without meaning (Charaudeau, 2007). The emotions that provoke attacks come to us thanks to actions and discourses, both verbal and visual, and it is this which leads me to analyze them. I attempt to understand how the tourist institution regenerates its tissue in order to survive, how the brand image, which is often expressed in terms of territorial identity, is modified, and to what extent the perception of the image of the destination changes or remains stable. To do this, I study the websites of the cities of Nice, Grasse and Paris, blogs of analysts specializing in tourism, personal blogs, free online newspapers and the website of a national television network. Thanks to discourse analysis, centered in this case mainly on the lexical-semantic level, and the study of the iconic, compositional and narrative planes of the images, I will try to show the consequences of the attacks and define the characteristics of the evolution, if any occurs, of the image that is shown and that which is perceived. However, from a methodological point of view, we have to consider, with Jackiewicz (2016), that the boundaries between the appreciative, the evaluative, the axiological and the affective are mobile and fluctuating and, in our case, that the expression of emotions can combine linguistic and rhetorical elements of all those areas, which I will not differentiate here in a systematic way.

Before I go on to present the results of the analysis, we should also consider the notion of a brand. Kotler (2000) defines it as a name, a term, a sign, a symbol or a drawing, or the result of the combination of some of those elements, whose purpose is to give an identity to the products offered by a seller or a group and to differentiate them from those of competitors. Velilla (2010), on the other hand, defines it as a semiotic mechanism that generates associations of values and ideas that provide information, differentiate and seduce, and confer distinction and personality, and for that reason it is at the same time debtor, generator and vehicle of the image, in our case, of a territory. Velilla (2010) concludes, however, that the brand is not defined by what it says of itself, but by what individuals, connected to the media, opinion leaders and social networks, think about it.

It is necessary to take into account the fact that the brand image concerns not only potential or real visitors but also the receiving community, and that the development of the brand may contradict the perception and feelings of the inhabitants of the region (Cooper & Hall, 2011). The Blog des Institutionnels very concisely summarizes the analysis carried out by those responsible for marketing (“Nice Côte d’Azur”, 2011). For the authors, the brand chosen for a city expresses a value system and constructs the meaning. We could be tempted to believe that only the value system is intimately linked to emotions and consequently to the feelings that derive from them (Damasio, 2005), but the signs are also loaded with connotations which have their origin in previous discourses, advertising or literary for the most part, and with which they are associated.

Vincent Gollain, an expert in territorial marketing, explains, concerning the reputation of a territory, that the times when a brand was renewed thanks to an attractive story about identity, geography, heritage and hospitality no longer exist. Today, this renewal is accomplished by playing with brand policies, established, he argues, on brand platforms that include tools "with which we seek to define the medium and long term image and define the reputation", tools which are made available to "the partners in marketing management and ambassadors" (2017).

I would add, to close these reflections, that the image of a territory depends in the first place, albeit in a vague way, on the assets of the space of which it is politically and symbolically part, and the different French regions benefit from the touristic virtues of the nation, especially of terrestrial infrastructures, of air services, as well as of the value and wealth of cultural heritage (Duthion & Mandou, 2016).

Evolutions: The Brand and the Destination

The Previous Image

In 2011, Christian Estrosi, first President of the Conseil général des Alpes-Maritimes and subsequently Mayor of Nice and President of the Communauté Urbaine, propelled and promoted the creation of a new brand image based on the development of the metropolis called "Nice Côte d'Azur" (2011), associated in the international field with the "Nice & Smart" brand (Gollain, 2011). The project was presented to the population of the region and outside it in terms, above all, of development, growth, competitiveness and attractiveness. Estrosi appealed to all economic actors to undertake a project that would provide the territory, in the same way as other major international cities, with a brand that would allow it to achieve greater visibility. The slogans created to describe the brand say a lot about emotional commitment focused on the joyful perception of light and nature, and in a future built around audacity, generosity and change, as well as about the value of the past, which refers both to traditional know-how and to history and its corollary, collective identity. At the same time, the director of the Regional Agency for Development "Paris Ile-de-France" evoked the creation of the brand "Paris Région" and explained that the name of the region had been simplified and generalized to avoid a localism that was hardly exportable, and not only by tourist companies (*La Poste*, 2011).

In 2013, the image was renewed with a logo that also functioned as a slogan, a new territorial brand, aimed at tourists and foreign investors, without the name, already strongly rooted, being modified: "Paris Région, source of inspiration", in which only the preposition explicitly allows us to see the desire for internationalization (Meyze, 2013). The logo is formed by eight colored rectangles, representing the eight departments of the region as well as diversified innovation, which join in a beam radiating in all directions with the central evocation of the international French symbol par excellence, the Eiffel Tower. The aim of this new brand was to rely on tourism, this time as a central element, and on economic dynamism in other sectors to reshape the attractiveness of the brand, which seemed to have lost strength. In this regard Meyze (2013) collects the words of Jean-Pierre Blat, general director of the Regional Committee of Tourism: "The Paris region is an iconic destination, but, compared to Rome, judged more romantic, to London, more 'trendy', or to Berlin, more 'underground', Paris is a little Poulidor which in the end would win the Tour de France!"

In 2014, Grasse was also presented as a city with a long history and innumerable heritage riches, with all the natural attractions you could wish for, the sun, the sea, the mountain, everything added to what had been its usual claim, the perfume industry. All these charms, according to the director of the tourist office of Grasse, were no longer sufficient in the face of the enormous competition that required the loyalty of visitors and the diversification of the offer ("Grasse", 2014). To solve this problem, at least from the symbolic point of view, the city in 2015 launched a new shield, described by its young mayor as "a new graphic signature . . . a new logo [that] is at the same time the sign of our recognition with respect to the past that makes us what we are and the symbol of a future that builds us" (Viaud, 2015, p. 7). The brand image thus reached a city that was committed both to tradition and to renewal based on ecology and solidarity, with a discourse thoroughly centered on pride. But what happened with the destination image?

I have not found explicit traces of the perceived image of the Côte d'Azur in blogs. "Le prochain voyage – Blog voyage", for example, proposed, on 31 August 2014, a tour of nine obligatory destinations on the Côte d'Azur (Aurélie, 2014). The image that its author, Aurélie, proposes is composed of beaches, sun, ports where luxury yachts are anchored, discos, cities whose reputation extends throughout the world and "inland beautiful villages", "a complete destination", what everyone wants to build and where everyone wants to live, an once-in-a-lifetime destination. Nice was identified by its palaces, its ochre façades and its promenade, the "promenade", in which it is delightful to *flâner* (stroll) all year round – this verb seems intrinsic to the city and to mark its image. As always, and still, the joy of living prevails. Few things can be highlighted from the blogs that present Paris to tourists, only the stereotypical importance of the Eiffel Tower and Disneyland, the attraction of strolls along the Seine and visits to the Botanical Garden or the great museums of art, ethnography or science. A beautiful city, a stereotype. The city and even its regions are seen as a great theme park characterized by diversity, but few enter through uncrowded paths. Emotions are always positive.

What was the image that was perceived after the terrorist attacks on Paris and during the summer of 2016? Three months after the Paris attacks, in November 2015, the numbers of reservations made by foreign visitors were still very low in the capital, after having fallen by 22 per cent from the previous year (Hadj-Djilani, 2016). The head of a company specializing in tourism prospective evoked multiple negative circumstances, starting with the attacks in the capital; another pointed out that the foreign media had magnified and repeated again and again the problems suffered by the City of Light.

A month before the terrorist attack on Nice, France's image as a tourist destination was in decline and had lost some of its attractiveness (Bancaud, 2016a). The images that the television channels broadcast and that were uploaded to social networks had dissuaded a large number of visitors from travelling to France, especially to the capital. Result: the occupation rate had dropped by 30 per cent and, among other defections, the number of Japanese visitors had fallen by 56 per cent, the most significant drop but not the only one. The discourse on social networks contributed to making things worse. On Twitter, a tweet echoed by Bancaud in *20 Minutes* (Bancaud, 2016a) highlighted the violence unleashed during the demonstrations with irony: "Do you like the risk? Do you like to destroy things? There is a country for that. France, pleasant stay to all." As we can see, the whole country seemed to be affected. Despite this, the forecasts were still good for the French Riviera, the French Basque Country and Brittany, as their images remained relatively stable.

With regard to security, the city of Nice, after the attacks in Paris, in January 2015 adopted exceptional measures against terrorism and the radicalization of a part of the population. This had to do especially with education, the reinforcement of the municipal police and its activities, video surveillance of the streets, and the monitoring of individuals suspected of sympathizing with the jihadists. In an open letter addressed to the inhabitants of Nice, the tone of the mayor was extremely emotional. He called for resistance, as in the past, against those who had hurt the nation, evoked "feelings of deep sadness" and spoke expressly of mourning.

The Immediate Reactions after the Terrorist Attacks

The terrorist acts of January 2015 in Paris and the demonstrations against the cartoons of Muhammad in *Charlie Hebdo* in many countries of the Arab world caused a considerable decrease in tourist numbers. The verb "to flee" appears constantly in the chronicles. However, the reaction of the tourism managers was very timid and slow (Sulzer, 2015). By contrast, on 13 November 2015, after the explosions around the Stade de France, the President of the Republic, François Hollande, decreed a state of siege and the closing of the borders. In the speech he gave on 16 November before the nation's congressmen, he evoked an act of war against the homeland of human rights. During this speech, he announced the prolongation of the state of emergency for three months, a measure that was ratified by the Parliament, an increase in the number of troops in charge of fighting the threat, and the hardening of sentences for terrorist crimes, among other provisions. Thus, in the Paris region, in the following days all firefighters and members of police were mobilized, in addition to an increase in the number of the Republican Security Companies (CRS). The Vigipirate plan, which had been remodeled in 2014, was intensified and now has a public component that allows citizens to remain alert and detect possible threats.

The media, both national and regional, also reacted immediately to the attacks, *Libération* entitled "Carnages à Paris" (2015), L'Équipe, "L'horreur" (2015), both highlighting terror and bloody death. The day after the attack on Nice, the Regional Committee for Tourism (CRT) launched an initial campaign on social media with the hashtag #CotedAzurNow in order to "create a positive counter-emotion" ("La nouvelle marque", 2016). The French capital had done the same the previous year with the campaign #weloveyouparis ("#Weloveyouparis", 2015). Horror, fear and even shame could be counteracted thanks to the solidarity of Internet users. This method had already been effective on other occasions, provoking an emotional thrust that duplicated that provoked by the media. It was a kind of universalization of the figure of the tourist, liberated from his role as economic actor.

On 16 July, in the economics section of *Le Parisien*, Catherine Gasté (2016) wrote laconically that the attack in Nice had already had "consequences for tourism", and with the caption of the image that accompanied her article (showing a few planes stationary on the runways of the airport) she assumed, in a hypothetical formula, the possibility of a reduction in air traffic. For its part, *France Info*, on 20 July 2016 ("Tourisme: l'effet", 2016), published on its website exactly the same words, before announcing an avalanche of cancellations of hotel bookings and of tour operators, a decrease of 5 per cent of the hotel occupancy rate both in Paris and in the Nice region, and the difficulties that could arise for employment, always in the hypothetical mode.

But even earlier, on 17 July, when the death toll and economic losses as a result of the "strike" and the "attack" – words that are not charged with subjective values – were announced on this television network, the return to normality, to the tourist's lack of concern, was being diagnosed: "Three days after the drama, Nice has returned to its ways, at least in part. The sun shines, the sea is blue and the tourists *flânent*" ("Attentat de Nice", 2016). There are no negative emotions if we exclude the term "drama" in the writing of the news, only the verification of the number of deaths and the return of the joys of life. This distancing by the media is not usual in our time, because, according to the analysis carried out by Bericat Alastuey (1999), the news items considered worthy of being shown in the media are built around horror and shame, which brings with it worry, uneasiness, anxiety and fear. The emotions, in the case that occupies us, were scarcely contained in the images, or in the written quotations of the words of institutional representatives. The horror appears in the declaration of the former mayor of Nice, Christian Estrosi, shown by the verb "hit" repeated in impersonal constructions (gerund, and third-person singular "*on*"). Estrosi's purpose was to eliminate from his speech the capacity for action of the terrorists, while opposing the positive values of the city, its traditional symbol the Promenade des Anglais, which has become the place of transcendent terror, and its international projection (Gasté, 2016). This last component is essential, since brand images are systematically developed to attract tourists from foreign countries because the arrival of nationals is, as mentioned above, guaranteed almost immediately. The words of tourists, which are only collected very exceptionally, also evoke the concern, but in axiological formulations ("Bad environment"), and they reproduce, in a very indirect way, memories linked to visual sensations: "We stayed right in front of the place where it happened" ("Attentat de Nice", 2016). The professionals express their fears and talk about the serious consequences that the event could bring. I would like to emphasize once again that catastrophist speeches are often presented in a "hypothetical" way. For example, the *20 Minutes* journalist (Bancaud, 2016b) explicitly says that Jean-Pierre Mas, president of Travel Enterprises (a business association), "imagines" a future that is not promising, as does Georges Panayotis, president of the consultancy MKG specializing in tourism, who "foresees" that all of France will feel it. The word "danger" appears twice in the article quoted: Paris is the city that is at the "heart of all dangers", and "there is a risk that the geolocation of the dangers carried out by tourists is not the same"; on the other hand, the word "risk" also appears in the following paragraph.

The Long Term

The Huffington Post France (Toussay, 2016) echoed a report by *France 3*, in which the public prosecutor of Nice, interviewed by the television network on 13 July 2016, a day before the Nice attack, spoke of three investigations: of thwarted threats, of failed attempts, and of files sent to the prosecutor's office in Paris. The report also spoke of the social work carried out in the radicalized zones to try to avoid that their inhabitants become involved in terrorist actions. No mention is made of the feelings, no reference is made to the image of the city or the region, but in spite of the misunderstandings, the report and the article want to reassure the population, which, as I said at the beginning, has voice in the construction of the brand and also in the perception of the destination, even if it is from the side least commonly taken into account.

With regard to promotion at the local level, the Office of Tourism and Congress of Nice reacted immediately and, in the face of the bad results anticipated for the season, its director, Denis Zanon, suggested "going back to work on the image, especially the one referring to the security of the city" (Binacchi, 2016a). It is not usual for "image" and "security" to be in the same discourse, since the latter can be associated with fear, an emotion that should be avoided. As had happened in the case of Paris, the reaction of the institutions was very rapid. At the same time as Macron, Minister for the Economy, announced to businessmen that financial measures would be taken to mitigate the losses, Matthias Fekl, Secretary of State in charge of foreign trade, and of the promotion of tourism and French expatriates, promised the support of the entire French diplomatic corps to "convey the image of Nice and the Cote d'Azur" ("Nice: Emmanuel Macron", 2016). Can we assume that this referred to the traditional image of the city and the region, or rather that it referred to a renewed one? Nothing is said about it. We will wait for both to take on a new identity and restore the area's prestige.

While politicians made promises, foreign tourists contemplated the toys and drawings laid on the ground that served as a tribute to the dead of 14 July, and remained in the city "despite the fear" (Binacchi, 2016b). In December 2016, the Regional Committee for Tourism (CRT), which had reacted immediately on social networks after the Nice bombing, deposited a new brand for the region, which had a "bad image". It was "Côte d'Azur-France", born with an aim of trying to reverse the negative tendency initiated by the attacks. The new logo is "simple, sober and elegant" and its colors evoke the region, its natural attractions, and the typography takes on the Art Deco style of the first years of tourism development in the region ("La nouvelle marque", 2016). Nothing in it is a new invention, although certain unpublished forms of marketing come to light. The "Côte d’Azur-France” brand can be seen from that moment on “clothing, accessories and other beach items”, drawn with colours and stylized forms, such as Menton lemons, mimosa bouquets or olive branches, to “carry the colors of destination” (Binacchi, 2017). It plays with sensations, from which emotions are derived, in the same way that good weather, the sea and the sand are evoked.

In May 2017, the strategy was different. The whole south-west region, a huge territory, Provence, the Alps and the Côte d’Azur, gathered its strength to return with greater intensity to international tourism scenarios, as the aftermath of the terrorist attack against Nice had not dissipated completely. We find, once again, the same flavors, the same colors, the same tradition of setting up a seduction strategy for new visitors with the slogan “French Merveilles” (Fraioli, 2017). Each of the regions retains its own brand and specializes in specific products that do not compete with the others’. For the Côte d’Azur, the “image of a host land for congresses and festivals” is maintained, betting on sympathy and service, which will be developed mainly around Cannes, distancing itself from previous images that focused on the sun, the sea and nature. This new strategy should in principle avoid the excessive seasonality of tourist stays and continue loyalty to customers who had not left the city after the attacks. Nice, also, has today associated the legend “Tourisme et Congrès” with its traditional logo. This marketing strategy was completed with an operational program called “Attract Congresses and Events” (Fraioli, 2017).

Inland, the message addressed to the inhabitants of Grasse by its mayor at the beginning of 2018 began with a reflection on terrorism, in the first place transmitting negative emotional values. In a Manichaean vision, the free world was opposed to terrorism, and metonymies put completely different elements face to face for their qualities and defects without nuance, making freedom and life on one side equivalent with lack of freedom and death on the other. Nouns such as “war” and “danger”, and verbs such as “attack” and “weaken”, or the adjective “terrifying”, give a sample of the tone. It nevertheless left a door open to hope, appealing to intelligence, to good sense and to union, so as to end up victorious against the forces of evil thanks to firmness, composure and humanism. The communication also refers positively to the daily life of the inhabitants of the place, with the promise of quality public services and the sustainable development of the whole Pays de Grasse region, which obviously should be largely down to the tourism industry, which would benefit from “the international reputation of the city . . . the beauty of its landscapes, the potential of business tourism, its history, the ability to innovate, its natural resources” (“Les voeux”, 2018, p. 6). In the same issue of the institutional magazine of the Grasse region, *Kiosque*, a report is dedicated to security and law enforcement, with the express desire to “reinforce the image of the municipal police" ("Garantir la sécurité", 2018, p. 23) and of the defence (the army) and security forces of the republican state. We cannot forget that the feeling of security is fundamental for tourism, however subjective it may be, and that we must cultivate it, take it as far as possible. Such reassuring qualities: presence, vigilance, "accompaniment, training and mediation" ("Garantir la sécurité", 2018, p. 23), but also the management of risks, the identification of threats and the anticipation of potential danger. A whole program, which aims to be effective and which tries to remedy the degradation of the brand image and the perceived image of the city and the region, as the Mayor of Nice had done in 2015 ("Attentats à Paris", 2015). In Paris, in November 2016, a year after the multiple attacks in the region, a tourist development scheme for the City of Paris (2017–22) was presented, consisting of 59 concrete measures around four main axes: constant improvement of the quality and diversity of the tourist offer; improvement of reception conditions for visitors to the city; development of a sustainable model that respects the environment and the inhabitants of the region; and lastly, making Paris a competitive destination ("Un plan", 2018).

Conclusion

The Côte d'Azur is visually immersed in the brand image created by the Bastille agency, "Côte d'Azur-France": an image always young, full of color and abstract forms. It is pure image, poetry in colour, a modern evocation for commercial purposes of Robert and Sonia Delaunay's Orphism, concerned mostly with light and color. The aim was "to reinvent the branding image and reinforce the communication device to present the image of a dynamic territory, so that it would be more visible, better identified and appealing to younger, daring audiences, and give renewed interest to the destination" (Bastille, n.d.). It responds to three questions, three challenges: "How to regenerate the image of a territory that suffers diverse negative stereotypes?; How to value the positive and timeless imaginary associated with the Côte d'Azur?; How to return to life the image of one of the most beautiful and mythical destinations in the world?" (Bastille, n.d.). They are probably the same for all destinations that are no longer attractive. The Paris region unceasingly combines entrepreneurial inventiveness, art, and possibilities for tourism, the latest issue from this being Film Paris Région ("La Commission", 2019). This initiative, which tries to attract film producers to Ile de France, has not been created with the explicit intention of attracting tourists, but this will be one of the desired effects. Images, destinations, brands are reinvented continually. They decline in a different way from older proposals: traditional colors and materials, delicious walks, film locations, traditional colors and materials, glamour, art, shows, economic activity, and even security. Branding works at a frenetic pace, looking out for a surprising object, a novel activity – mostly, an exotic event and, especially, a magnificent or disconcerting one.

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Understanding the Ethical Implications of Digital Media

Stephanie Swartz and Susan Luck

Ethical Considerations Regarding Virtual Classroom Collaborations

Abstract: In order to simulate real-life global communication in the classroom, universities throughout the world are engaging their students in collaborative online international learning (COIL) projects. Using digital communication channels and collaborative platforms, students research and present their findings through interactive presentation tools. The learning outcomes include developing students' intercultural communication competency as well as virtual teamwork skills. While involvement in such global learning network environments (GNLEs) is generally viewed positively, instructors and students nevertheless face ethical issues concerning protection of personal data and use of social media, as well as communication across diverse ethnic, demographic and social norms.

Keywords: virtual classroom, virtual teams collaboration, digital communication channels, data privacy, social media

Worldwide, the workplace is becoming increasingly global. The 2016 Wells Fargo International Business Indicator found that "87 percent of U.S. companies agree that international expansion is needed for long-term growth", while Fortune Magazine has listed an additional 500 companies, known as the Global 500, which employ over 67.7 million people who come from 33 countries (Fortune, 2019). With this increase in the globalization of business comes a need for employees to have more than a theoretical understanding of other cultures. And with that need comes an ethical responsibility for the higher education faculty to engage students in experiential learning so that they can gain that understanding.

Traditionally, experiential understanding of cultural differences has come from study abroad, something that often is limited by either the student's ability to pay for such an experience or the university's connections enabling it to offer these study-abroad programs. However, with the advantages of today's technology, international experience is not limited to those who go abroad for a semester. With the aid of technology, universities all around the world are connecting classrooms. What happens inside the classroom is important, yet with this need for experiential knowledge the focus is now on turning the classroom inside out, or *flipping* the classroom.

Students now have the opportunity to collaborate virtually with peers outside their universities and outside their countries with the use of digital technologies. Collaborative platforms such as Slack and videoconferencing and instant messaging tools such as Zoom and WhatsApp, as well as social media channels such as Facebook, have facilitated international connectivity between classrooms. Through engaging their students in Global Learning Network Environments (GNLE) in Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) (Starke-Meyerring, 2007, 2010a, 2010b), instructors hope to develop students' intercultural competencies and virtual team savviness in order to better prepare them for the global workplace.

However, while international virtual classroom projects are enriching for students as well as instructors, with this advantage comes an overarching concern that underlies all uses of technology in the classroom, but in particular the privacy and protection of students as they use and misuse social media. These concerns apply as well to the unmonitored interaction between students having different cultures, languages and social norms. Questions to be raised are as follows. Which concerns, if any, should instructors consider when organizing and carrying out COIL projects? What can instructors do to reduce potential breaches of data protection and ensure that the privacy of their students is respected? How can students best be prepared for COIL projects so that they interact with respect and tolerance? How can collaborative assignments and individual evaluations be carried out fairly?

This essay intends to illustrate some of the ethical issues instructors face when facilitating virtual collaborations between classrooms within the home country and abroad. For this purpose, ethics is seen in the broader sense of standards and codes of conduct. Collaboration between instructors and students across borders in a virtual realm utilizing digital communication channels requires ethical standards and norms as well as codes of conduct which promote mutual trust, respect and fairness, values which are fundamental to collaborative work (Resnik, 2015).

The ethical issues the essay explores begin with the initiation of the collaborations when the instructors set up teams, where they are exchanging the students' email addresses and asking them to perform initial trust-building exercises that require sharing personal profiles. The essay also discusses use of collaborative platforms and social media channels, as well as students' reticence in downloading and utilizing these channels as required for conducting the collaborations. Compliance with data protection regulations, an increasingly important issue, is also discussed. Furthermore, this essay explores ethical considerations involving the use of words, humor and expressions, as well as gender-specific language, which can be offensive to others. Within this context, the difficulties and the potential hurdles of communicating in a foreign language and across cultures are also the focus. Finally, the essay reviews potential areas of concern such as the fair assessment of virtual team efforts. The ethical issues described in the essay are derived from first-hand experiences which the instructors encountered during virtual collaborative projects involving international partners. The essay not only illustrates ethical issues, but also offers potential solutions and offers suggestions as to how instructors can construct GNLEs where students can feel safe.

Background

With the intention of exposing students to experiential learning, four instructors teaching in the USA, Germany, Scotland and Portugal involved their students in a virtual teams project.[1] The online and seated classes covered a range of subject areas such as Organizational Communications, Fashion Management and Digital Marketing. Approximately 150 students were divided up across 25 teams. Furthermore, the teams were composed of undergraduate and graduate students of different ages and ethnic backgrounds who also varied in language and technological proficiencies. The instructors considered the heterogeneity of the project teams a reflection of real-life global working environments, which enhanced the experiential value for students. Research has substantiated that diverse teams are more effective; they share more knowledge and improve mutual learning (Gorgônio et al., 2017).

The COIL project took place over six weeks; it was embedded in each course curriculum, with the assignment, the assessment and impact on the students' final grades closely synced. The assignment asked each team to research a global company's online presence, including its website and social media channels as well as its image on blogs and reviews, with a particular view to the cultural appropriateness of this presence in each team member's country. Students collaborated through Slack and met at least three times during the course of the project using the video communications platform Zoom. Use of other text messaging and informal digital channels such as WhatsApp and Facebook was encouraged. Students then gathered and presented their findings and recommendations through the collaborative online presentation tool called

1 The COIL project referred to in this essay involves the collaborative efforts of the authors together with Dr. Belem Barbosa (University of Aveiro, Portugal) and Izzy Crawford (Robert Gordon University, UK).

Prezi. These final presentations were then graded by all four instructors, who used the Zoom platform to host their own live, multi-country collaborative work session to discuss the presentations and arrive at a mutual grade for each presentation.

Method

Before and after the project, the instructors had their students complete an online survey in order to investigate whether students experienced an increase in intercultural competencies through interaction with their team members. The survey was based on the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale created by Chen and Starosta (2000), which comprised 24 items divided into five factors: Interaction Engagement, Respect for Cultural Differences, Interaction Confidence, Interaction Enjoyment and Interaction Attentiveness. To further determine whether there was an increase in the intercultural communication competence of the students, items concerning the cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions of intercultural communication were taken from Arasaratnam's (2009) Intercultural Communication Competence (ICC) scale. The final survey included qualitative questions created by the instructors concerning students' personal feelings towards the project, what they found most difficult, their satisfaction with the project, and what they would do differently next time. In addition, the students were asked to rate the activity and evaluate both their own and their team members', at home and abroad, in terms of commitment and active participation.

Results

In an article entitled "Building intercultural competence across global classrooms", Swartz et al. (2019) illustrated the impact of COIL projects on the intercultural competencies of students on the basis of the results of this project. Although some of the changes in students' responses were too minimal for it to be maintained with all certainty that COIL projects increase students' intercultural competencies, indicating that for this reason further research must be carried out, the surveys revealed general tendencies. The results showed that students reported a heightened awareness of the differences between partners of different cultures and an increased understanding of the impact of their own behavior on their counterparts during interactions. At the same time, their answers displayed a greater negativity towards intercultural interactions and an increased preference for working with team members of the same culture. Nonetheless, the qualitative answers revealed a high appreciation for the project itself and the opportunity for intercultural exchange (Swartz et al., 2019).

Ethical Considerations

The last few years have seen an increased interest in COIL projects across universities in the USA and Europe. A general consensus seems to exist among instructors that engaging students outside the classroom, known as experiential learning, has become as important as the theoretical discussions within. Starke-Meyerring (2007) noted: “Becoming aware of the culturally boundedness of one’s ways of knowing, and negotiating diverse ways of knowing are difficult to teach but must be learned through active participation” (p. 8). The speed and agility offered through technological advancements in digital communication have encouraged this active approach to higher learning. Yet, while COIL has opened up new avenues of instruction and learning, it has also presented instructors with new challenges, some of them involving ethical considerations. The purpose of this essay is to explore some of these considerations, which arose during the course of the virtual teams project described above.

Data Protection

In the initial stages of the project, the instructors divided the students into teams of five to six students from different universities. In order to avoid multiple email messages and potential confusion, a list with each team member’s email address was provided to the German student member, who was asked to make the initial contact with the other team members. Students were required to provide their university email addresses, although some disregarded this request and used their private email accounts or set up a forwarding function. At this initial and seemingly innocent point, the ethical dilemma began.

The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) implemented in 2018 regulates the transfer and protection of data between individuals of member states and third countries as well as international organizations (European Commission, 2016). It is the most comprehensive data protection regulation ever passed in Europe, and compliance with the GDPR presents universities with additional hurdles. Universities collaborating within the EU and with universities in non-EU countries such as the USA are required to safeguard students’ data and must make these students aware of the purpose behind the collecting and sharing of that data, as well as the length of time for which the data is being collected. Furthermore, students must give their consent to the transfer of data to these partners. For this project, instructors consulted their data security officers at each university to ensure compliance with the GDPR. Students were presented with consent forms in both native and English languages, on which they authorized the sharing of their email addresses with students and instructors from the partnering universities. Furthermore, they were made aware that the use of software tools such as Zoom and Slack during the project required the use of their email addresses.

At the time of this writing, instructors have not yet experienced students who refuse the use of their email and thus are unable to engage in collaborative projects. However, this scenario may become increasingly likely, as the fear of data breaches and their consequences, brought on by recent scandals such as those of Facebook, raises public awareness (Murphy, 2019). Incorporating the help of the universities' data security officers, along with guarantees from the partner universities to safeguard students' private data, has helped to secure the confidence of students and ensure their willingness to participate.

Building Rapport

Research into the use of virtual teams emphasizes the "forming" stage (Tuckman, 1965) and the importance of building rapport and gaining trust among team members for the teams' success (Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1998). To this end, our students were asked to create a self-profile, called "All About Me", as well as a short video clip where they introduce themselves and describe their surroundings, their university and their interests. They were encouraged to provide pictures and a favorite quotation, and discuss hobbies. At the same time, students were told that they needed to provide only as much personal information as they felt comfortable with. These profiles and video clips were uploaded to the Slack platform and thus shared with all the students' team members. The intention here was to break the ice through the students familiarizing themselves with their team members at the launch of the project.

Students provided personal information to varying degrees. While some students included pictures of themselves with family and pets, others uploaded basic information similar to a résumé. It appeared that some students felt very comfortable sharing personal information with their team members, including wedding and vacation photos, while others expressed their feelings that this was a university task and there was no need to allow team members to enter their personal space.

This discomfort was especially clear during a virtual teams project, where instructors made an icebreaker suggestion that students might begin by telling a story from their childhood. Students reported feeling awkward, and most decided to ignore the suggestion, pointing out that this was too personal and that it might cause unpleasant feelings among some of the members whose childhood was perhaps less positive. Differences in reactions to the icebreaker as well as personal profiles could be seen along cultural lines; students from cultures where personal information is more readily exchanged experienced less reticence than those whose cultures have a stronger sense of privacy and who need more time before they feel comfortable sharing personal information. Notably, this division among cultural lines was not necessarily specific to country; often different geographical areas and economic strata within a country's culture result in smaller and diverse cultures, a phenomenon that also may have played out in the reluctance of some to share personal stories.

Even with students' confidence and openness to telling their stories, sharing personal information at the beginning of the project in order to develop rapport can also backfire. Some students reported feeling uncomfortable when another team member's favorite quotation came from the Bible. The same was true when students included church activities as their hobbies. On the other hand, older students were somewhat taken aback by the partying activities of their under-21 European counterparts. The openness with which some students shared their personal tragedies such as terminal illness in the family reportedly made other students feel helpless and uncomfortable. Other issues can also arise: in one instance, a student from North Africa engaged his team member in a heated discussion concerning the latter's self-description as African-American.

While the exchange of personal information bears the risk of abuse by some team members, experience has shown that students are generally open to sharing their interests and that the project work is more successful the more students interact on a personal level. In fact, students who normally remain quiet during a seated class often open up in a virtual setting. By sharing her hobby as a belly dancer, a student who otherwise took an unassuming role during a seated class gained the admiration of her fellow team members.

Use of Digital Communication Channels

Once they had received the names and email addresses of their fellow teammates, the first steps many students took were to look for these teammates on social media communities such as Facebook and Instagram. When creating first impressions, the social media presence of individual students was often given higher priority than the posted "All About Me" personal descriptions. Those students who were less savvy in privacy settings had photos and personal information accessible to curious teammates. On the other hand, students who rejected the use of social media, as well as those who were forbidden to use certain social media platforms due to their company's regulations, found themselves left out of part of the team's flow of information. Furthermore, students who were unfamiliar with instant messaging services such as WhatsApp or Google Hangouts, or who refused to utilize IM technology, were often left out of information exchanges. This finding indicates that more research is necessary to see how age and professional level affect COIL projects; younger students appear to rely more on certain social media tools, while those who held higher professional positions often seemed more aware of the legalities and complexities that come with communicating via social media tools and instant messaging. This aspect alone is an important consideration in any ethical analysis, and the authors acknowledge that more investigation into it must occur.

The collaborative platform Slack enabled students to upload and exchange information as well as text messages during the project. Slack is a cloud-based platform which requires no more than an email and an individual password to set up a workspace that can be shared with team members. The app Zoom, a video conferencing tool, can be embedded in the workspace. Members are invited to join and meetings can be recorded and uploaded to the platform. Students can work together on research and put together their findings using Google Docs, where individual contributions and edits can be attributed to their authors. Only one student is required to set up a Slack workspace or have a Google account to set up the document, alleviating the issue of students refusing to set up accounts or technically less versatile students facing hurdles when trying to access the platforms. Slack also allows workspace-only instant messaging; any message that a team member posts can instantly be read by the other team members on a laptop, desktop or mobile device. It should be mentioned here that, while it would appear that Slack offers the convenience of social media tools in compliance with data privacy regulations, some technologically advanced students still voiced their reservations about using cloud-based software.

Research has emphasized the use of virtual team collaborations for promoting inclusiveness (Starke-Meyerring & Andrews, 2006). Students who face physical or emotional barriers to interacting with others in team activities in the classroom encounter a more even playing field in the virtual realm. As is touched upon in the section on building rapport, introverted students, as well as students with social awkwardness or with disabilities that inhibit social communication and social interaction, often feel more comfortable interacting in the semi-anonymity of online platforms. As a result, they will often contribute more to the tasks than they would in a traditional classroom format and have a more positive learning experience. Furthermore, students who might be more reticent to engage with each other in a classroom setting due to social norms or prejudices may find virtual interaction a safer ground where they can overcome inhibitions and cast aside their partialities.

Use of Language

COIL projects such as the one described in this essay involve communication across several countries and cultures. The language common to all of the students in the project described in this essay was English; some of the students were native speakers and others possessed varying degrees of English fluency. However, even among speakers with an advanced knowledge of English, expressions directly translated from one language to the other became reasons for misunderstandings and even offence. When one German student mistakenly translated his name as “Long” instead of the proper “Tall”, a characteristic he attributed to his person, his US teammates initially refused to work with him, thinking that he was engaging in a sexual innuendo.

In addition, some of the students came from what Hall (1990) described as low-context cultures, which maintain a direct, unambiguous communication style. Other students possessed a high-context communication style, which involves indirect signals and reading between the lines. Even among the low-context cultures, such as the students native to the USA and to Germany, there were differences in the level of directness. A particular incident occurred when the German-based counterparts referred to the ideas of their US-based partners as “old-fashioned”. The German-based students intended the term to mean *conservative*; however, those in the US-based classroom took the term to mean *outdated* and *useless*, which caused them also to take offence at the term. Furthermore, generational as well as regional differences, even between the students of the same culture, created additional opportunities for miscommunication. Luck and Swartz (2018) note that the use of digital channels increases the need to be aware of and clarify these possible communication roadblocks, noting that a face-to-face conversation would quickly resolve misunderstanding whereas a technology-based conversation may not.

The language dominance of the native English-speaking members of the teams was apparent during the course of the project, and non-native speakers reported feeling left out or lost during meetings. The native speakers spoke quickly and made culturally specific references such as to the Super Bowl, which the other members of the team could not relate to. Idiomatic expressions such as “at the end of the day” or “the bottom line” caused confusion among some of the team members, causing them to think the deadline had been moved up. In addition, developments in social norms in those countries where English is a native language have led to changes in the language. For example, non-native speakers of English are largely unaware of politically correct language usage such as the gender-neutral "they" instead of "he" or "she", or use of the expression "disability" in place of "handicapped" or other once-acceptable terms. Further, non-native English-speaking students unaware of the implication of the term "colored" inadvertently cause offence and risk alienating their team members.

These interactions and miscommunications have led the authors to understand that one of the ethical considerations of the virtual classroom collaboration is indeed the ethical use of language and how it differs from culture to culture. An innocent mistranslation becoming an issue due to the unintended interpretation of the word as a sexual innuendo does not on the surface appear to be an ethical issue, nor does the use of idioms. However, the deeper implication is whether, ethically, the instructors can turn the students loose to learn experientially without an in-depth discussion ahead of time about potential language pitfalls and ways to handle them. Equipping students with techniques to stop, for example, a rapid-fire discussion dominated by native speakers or techniques to ask for an explanation of culture-specific references without losing face or feeling awkward by asking is crucial in preparing these students for the COIL projects. Allowing them to go forth and experience miscommunication and learning to handle it on their own is a valuable part of the experiential learning process; however, preparing them for what they may run into is an ethically correct part of the COIL projects.

Assessment

The challenge of assessing individual contributions in a team project fairly and equally remains the same in both a classroom and a virtual setting. Collaborative papers and presentations are difficult to assess, and the composite grade does not always reflect the efforts or lack thereof of individual team members. This problem can be mitigated somewhat more in a virtual team project such as the one described, because contributions are uploaded onto the Slack workspace and the division of labor as well as individual comments and suggestions can be seen in the workspace feed. Furthermore, recordings of Zoom meetings and the uploading of minutes can reveal the individual participation of team members. Another recommendation for evaluating individual participation, which is used in the project described in this essay, is to ask students to complete a team evaluation survey where they give points according to their own and their teammates' contributions to the project, their responsiveness and their fulfilment of roles. Nevertheless, students in general tend to be reticent about grading their teammates negatively, even in the case of anonymity.

In order to ensure a fair assessment of teams, instructors should synchronize the assignment and the expectations and agree to a grading rubric. During a collaborative grading session, they then will share feedback concerning individual and team efforts, as well as the assessment of teams' submissions. In case of discrepancies in assessment, instructors can discuss the reasoning and in some cases adjust their individual evaluations. This process guarantees transparency in grades, and students seemingly feel more comfortable with their individual grades while instructors, at least in the authors' experience, receive fewer questions concerning grading than they do in classroom projects.

Discussion

While the interaction with counterparts from different cultures can promote intercultural competency among students, there is no evidence that this is an inevitable result of participation in COIL projects (Swartz et al., 2019). As we have seen above, there are a multitude of variables which influence students' experiences during virtual classroom collaborations. The extent to which students feel safe in the virtual space, their willingness to share personal information and develop trust in their teammates, their technical savviness and use of social media, and their degree of fluency in the English language as well as differences in communication styles – all of these can impact on acceptance of team members and on the success of the team effort as well as the project outcomes.

A primary factor in ensuring positive outcomes is facilitating inclusiveness throughout all stages of the project (Starke-Meyerring & Andrews, 2006). Instructors must ensure that all students have access to digital channels of communication for both ethical and pragmatic reasons; setting up an assignment without that assurance is setting up failure for students without that access. This includes instructors helping to solve connectivity issues, providing tools such as instruction videos to help students overcome discrepancies in technical savviness and promoting the use of a collaborative platform such as Slack so that all the information is accessible at the same time to all members of the team. Insisting on the recording of meetings, as well as minute-taking, ensures that those unable to attend will remain on the same page as their team members. Students who struggle more with the English language need to be encouraged to ask others to repeat or request that they slow down. For this purpose, weaker students must be taught certain expressions for requesting their needs politely, while native speakers must be made aware of the need to slow down and avoid “insider jokes” and idiomatic expressions. As noted earlier, preparing students for these possibilities is practising good intentional ethics.

Inclusiveness also involves encouraging weaker or less interested team members to participate in the team effort. Rather than simply excluding team members who appear to not be pulling their weight, students should enquire why this is so and offer solutions which may empower weaker students to involve themselves more (Starke-Meyerring & Andrews, 2006). Guiding students to learn to do this is in a sense teaching them not only inclusivity but also teaching them ethical considerations and how to draw factual conclusions rather than ones based on emotion. As Langer and Moldoveanu (2002) pointed out, making individuals mindful of how they have accepted conclusions on the basis of emotion and teaching them to question those emotion-based conclusions “invites further consideration of how the information might vary from still other perspectives” (p.4), which opens the individual to awareness of how they themselves may be perceived. To avoid misunderstandings, teams should develop a set of rules which everyone agrees to adhere to. A list of “Best Practices” should be uploaded to the workspace. Students whose cultures, for example, impart less importance to punctuality as in the case of polychronic cultures (Hall, 1990) are thus aware from the start of the project that their fellow team members expect to begin exactly at the agreed time and that tardiness will be interpreted as a lack of respect.

Ensuring that the communication channels work well is also paramount to the success of COIL projects. Collaborating virtually across cultures poses challenges due to cultural differences, which are in turn compounded by reliance on digital communication channels. Poor connectivity can result in the misinterpretation of facial expressions, and lack of English skills or the use of humor in emails or text messages can cause misunderstandings. Students should be made aware of differences in communication styles as well as behavior due to culture. Class time (whether online or seated) should be devoted to theoretical discussions of culture based on the findings of Hofstede (1991), Hall (1990), Lewis (2006) and others. While these theories may not always apply to ever-changing cultures, they nevertheless help provide the groundwork for understanding tendencies in different cultures. Finally, students engaging in virtual collaborations should be made aware of the limitations of digital communication when conveying non-verbal messages. Exercises in email writing, expressions of disagreement, making suggestions and asking questions, to name a few, should be incorporated into classroom discussion. Furthermore, developments in the

English language due to changes in social awareness need to be conveyed to foreign language learners. During the course of the project, students should be encouraged to contribute anecdotes and examples of misunderstandings to the class, where they can be discussed and potentially resolved.

According to Bennett (2008), intercultural competence is "a set of cognitive, affective and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts" (p. 95). In his Developmental Model of Cultural Sensitivity, Bennet (1986) describes empathy as a fundamental aspect of intercultural competence. Tolerance for behavior different from what one is accustomed to and the capacity to accept ambiguity are essential ingredients for the development of empathy in students. The former can be encouraged through more understanding of the differences between cultures. The latter may be more difficult, since some cultures are less prone to give up certainty than others (Hofstede, 1991). The grasp of cultural differences, combined with empathy, can enable students to interact with counterparts of a different culture effectively. Results of the survey conducted at the end of this project (Swartz et al., 2019) reflected students' increased awareness that cultural differences exist between themselves and their teammates. These results also indicated an increase in respect for those differences and acknowledgment of the need for students to wait before passing judgment on the behavior of their culturally diverse counterpart. Students reported a greater appreciation for those things they could learn from other cultures. More students noted similarities between themselves and students from other cultures than before the project. Nevertheless, there was also a reported decrease in openness to diversity and the desire to work with people from another culture. Thus, it would be too early, and require more research, to maintain that COIL projects diffuse ethnocentristic tendencies and promote global awareness (Swartz et al., 2019).

Conclusion

In light of the global reach of companies and the likelihood that graduates will be entering a workforce consisting of demographic, ethnic and national diversity, university instructors are preparing their students for these challenges through experiential intercultural learning in areas of business communication. Working in virtual teams across global borders offers students the opportunity to develop their intercultural competencies, their ability to communicate effectively using digital communication channels and their understanding of the global business environment (Sapp, 2004). Moreover, some instructors view engaging students in COIL projects as more than increasing their likelihood of success in global business. By engaging their students in GNLEs, instructors hope to develop students' awareness of the interconnectivity of countries and raise their consciousness as citizens of the global community (Starke-Meyerring, 2005).

While COIL projects offer students the opportunity to develop their virtual team working skills, they also present both students and instructors with various challenges. Some of these challenges include considerations of an ethical nature. A virtual teams project such as the one described above involves hurdles including data protection and the use of digital communication channels, as well as issues resulting from the interaction of students from diverse backgrounds, demographics and fluency in English. Keeping these considerations in mind, instructors may take protective measures to reduce concerns and provide students with a sense of safety. Furthermore, instructors may take steps towards reducing unpleasant experiences by raising students' awareness of potential cultural minefields. At the same time, students can be provided with the necessary understanding and linguistic tools to engage successfully with their counterparts. But most importantly, since human interaction cannot and should not be programmed, a sense of tolerance must be heightened among students. Students need to be encouraged to ask questions and learn to view their own preconceptions critically. Tolerance for ambiguity and the capacity to find creative solutions are crucial elements for success in the fast-changing, agile world we live in today.

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Jolanta Łącka-Badura

Through the Ethical Lens: Work Climates Reflected in Employee Reviews and Testimonials

Abstract: The chapter presents the results of a pilot study comparing employee perceptions of the ethical work climates reflected in two types of electronic word of mouth (eWOM): online employee reviews and testimonials. Two text corpora have been examined, comprising respectively 152 employee testimonials extracted from the corporate websites of 14 randomly selected organizations, and 270 (five-star) online employee reviews of the same companies, found on popular (supposedly independent) review websites: www.glassdoor.com and www.indeed.com. Methodologically grounded in the Ethical Climate Theory, the study investigates, in the first place, whether and to what degree the ethical work climate emerges as an important criterion of employer attractiveness in the eyes of existing and former employees evaluating their employing organizations in reviews and testimonials. Secondly, it examines the degree to which the ethical aspect is expressed explicitly or signaled less directly in both corpora. Finally, at a more detailed level, the analysis investigates what types of climates, as proposed by the Ethical Climate Theory (egoistic/instrumental, benevolent/caring, principle/deontological) are foregrounded in each corpus, and how the climate types are expressed linguistically. An attempt is also made to reflect on whether the way ethical work climate is approached in different categories of eWOM may possibly result from their location on the company-independent versus company-dependent continuum, and if so how.

Keywords: employee reviews, employee testimonials, ethical climates

In general, *organizational work climates* refer to "the ways organizations operationalize routine behaviors and the actions that are expected, supported and rewarded" (Schwepker, 2001, p. 39). In particular, they are understood as shared perceptions of (formal and informal) procedures, policies and practices that an organization rewards, supports and expects (Martin & Cullen, 2006; Schneider & Reichers, 1983). Studied for nearly seventy years now, organizational work climates have increasingly attracted the attention of researchers in the field of management, with the majority of studies conducted in recent decades focusing on *facet-specific* climates. Facet-specific climates are related to a particular aspect of the organizational context, such as safety climate (Schneider et al., 1998), justice climate (Naumann & Bennett, 2002), ethical climate (Victor & Cullen, 1987, 1988), service climate (Schneider et al., 1998), innovation climate (Anderson & West, 1998) or diversity climate (Roberson, 2006).

Work climates have been shown to relate to a variety of important outcomes, both global and specific. The former include organizational commitment or department performance, while the latter comprise, for instance, individual innovation, accident rates, individual employee behavior, and customer perception of service quality (Carr et al., 2003; Schneider & Bowen, 1993). Many climates (global and specific) have been found to significantly influence employee attitudes and job satisfaction (see e.g. Schwepker, 2001; Tanner et al., 2015; Yoon et al., 2001).

The type of organizational work climate that forms the center of attention in the present study is the *ethical work climate* (Cullen et al., 1993, 2003; Schwepker, 2001, 2013; Victor & Cullen, 1987, 1988). The paper compares employee perceptions of the ethical climates reflected in two types of electronic word of mouth (eWOM), online employee reviews and testimonials, with a view to determining: whether ethical work climate emerges as an important criterion of employer attractiveness in such types of texts; which categories of climates are foregrounded in each corpus; and how these climate categories are expressed linguistically.

Theoretical Background

This section aims to provide a theoretical background to the analysis. Drawing on the existing literature, it defines the concept of an ethical work climate and provides an overview of its different categories. It also briefly outlines the characteristics of the two genres analyzed, employee reviews and employee testimonials.

Ethical Climate Theory (ECT)

Ethical climate dictates an organization's ethical values and expected behaviours, influencing decision-making, ways of reasoning, and subsequent behaviours in response to situations involving ethical content; it has been found to significantly moderate organizational commitment, employee job satisfaction, psychological well-being, turnover and performance (see e.g. DeConinck, 2010; Martin & Cullen, 2006; Schwepker, 2001; Tanner et al., 2015). The Ethical Climate Theory argues that perceptions of ethical climates within an organization may be influenced by an array of organizational and contextual factors, including external pressures, organizational form and strategic and managerial orientations; in fact, many organizations develop mixtures of ethical climate

Fig. 1: *Original Conceptualization of Ethical Climates (Victor and Cullen, 1987, 1988)*

		LOCUS OF ANALYSIS		
		Individual	**Local**	**Cosmopolitan**
ETHICAL THEORY	**Egoism**	Self-interest	Company profits	Efficiency
	Benevolence	Friendship	Team interest	Social responsibility
	Principle	Personal morality	Team rules and procedures	Law and professional codes

types perceived by organizational actors that coexist simultaneously within organizational sub-units (Manroop, 2015; Martin & Cullen, 2006).[1]

The ethical climate framework was introduced by Victor and Cullen (1987, 1988), who are thus regarded as the "fathers of ethical climate" (Schneider & Barbera, 2014, p. 416). Although other perspectives on ethical climates have been developed since then (e.g. Arnaud, 2010; Babin et al., 2000; Schwepker, 2001, 2013), Victor and Cullen's Ethical Climate Theory seems to be widely regarded as the most influential so far. Their theory defines ethical climate as "the shared perception of what is correct behavior and how ethical situations should be handled in an organization" (Victor & Cullen, 1987, p. 51). In a later publication, these scholars define ethical climate as the "prevailing perceptions of typical organizational practices and procedures that have ethical content" (Victor & Cullen, 1988, p. 101). As Figure 1 shows, Victor and Cullen's original typology comprised nine categories of ethical climates, shown in a 3x3 matrix where the rows represented three ethical criteria (egoism, benevolence, principle), while the columns represented three loci of analysis (individual, local, cosmopolitan).

Later studies provided empirical evidence for five common derivatives of ethical climate: the individual/egoism and local/egoism factors were jointly categorized as "instrumental", while the individual/benevolence and local/benevolence factors formed a single category referred to as "caring" (Figure 2).[2]

1 Wang and Hsieh (2012) emphasize the distinction between *psychological climates* (individual employees' perceptions of their work environment) and *organizational ethical climates* which are group-level constructs derived from the aggregation of psychological climate measures of individual employees. Ideally, the organizational ethical climate should refer to the ethical climate perceived in consensus with all the employees of an organization.

2 See Cullen et al. (1993) for the revised Ethical Climate Questionnaire (consisting of 36 statements measuring employees' perceptions of their work environments).

Fig. 2: *Validated Ethical Climates (Martin and Cullen, 2006)*

		LOCUS OF ANALYSIS		
		Individual	**Local**	**Cosmopolitan**
ETHICAL THEORY	**Egoism**	Instrumental		
	Benevolence	Caring		
	Principle	Independence	Rules	Law and code

Five types of ethical climates resulted from the categorization, whose characteristics can be summarized as follows:

1. *Instrumental*. This type of climate is perceived by workers who see their organizational unit as having norms and expectations that encourage ethical decision-making from an egoistic perspective. Self-interest is perceived as the factor that guides behaviour, even to the possible detriment of others; decisions are expected to serve the organization's interests (e.g. corporate profit, strategic advantage) or provide personal gain. Studies consistently show that instrumental climates are the least preferred by employees (Cullen et. al, 2003; Manroop, 2015; Martin & Cullen, 2006). An instrumental climate tends to be more prevalent in market environments (e.g. retail firms), characterized by constant pressure to perform and generate high sales volume.
2. *Caring*. Rooted in the benevolence theory, the caring climate is commonly indicated by employees as the most favored climate type. In this climate, individuals perceive that decisions are and should be determined by the concern for the well-being of others (both within an organization, and in the society at large). Typical examples of work contexts that foster this type of climate involve great dependence on team members, a need for co-operation and mutual support (Martin & Cullen 2006).
3. *Independence*. The climate suggests that organizational actors believe individuals should act on deeply held, personal moral convictions to make ethical decisions; decisions with moral consequences should thus be based on personal values and convictions with minimum influence from external forces. Research has shown that organizations fostering this type of climate (e.g. new firms and entrepreneurial ventures) are likely to be more adaptive and innovative due to a great deal of trust on the part of management (ibid.).
4. *Law and code*. This climate is based on the perception that organizations support principled decision-making based on external codes (e.g. the law, professional codes of conduct, religious texts). It is prevalent in highly regulated firms operating in pharmaceutical, health and financial industries.

Many of the external regulations are codified in the organizations' policies, for example those dealing with discrimination, harassment and other unfair employment practices. The positive image and reputation of organizations fostering this type of climate have been found to translate into their competitive advantage (ibid.).

5. *Rules.* In this type of climate, most prevalent in bureaucracies and military organizations, decisions are seen as being guided by a strong, pervasive set of local rules or standards such as codes of conduct. The rules are expected to be applied fairly and consistently to guide employee behaviour and people are expected to adhere strictly to those rules; the spirit of trust and collaboration is a precondition of the organizations' competitive advantage (ibid.)

Drawing on Victor and Cullen's classification, numerous studies have been carried out in various areas of activity and various types of organizations, resulting in modified (to a lesser or higher degree) categorizations of ethical climate types. Examples include the following: (a) Barnett and Vaicys (2000) proposing four categories of ethical climate types: self-interest, team/friendship, social responsibility, rules/codes; (b) Brower and Shrader (2000): egoism, benevolence, principle; (c) Cullen et al. (2003): egoism, benevolence, principle; (d) Deshpande (1996) and Deshpande et al. (2000, 2011): professionalism, caring, rules, instrumental, efficiency, independence; (e) Forte (2004): caring, law and code, rules, instrument, independence; (f) Jaffe & Tsimerman (2005): law and codes, caring, rules, instrumental, efficiency, independence; (g) Kim and Miller (2008): caring, team spirit, efficiency, self-interest, law and code, rules; (h) Lin (2011) instrumental, independence, caring, rule, law and code; (i) Peterson (2002): rules, law, employee focus, community focus, personal ethics, self-interest, efficiency; (j) Weber & Seger (2002): instrumental, caring, independence, rule, law and code.[3]

Employee Reviews and Testimonials

Employee reviews and testimonials are regarded as – closely related – genres of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM); the latter is defined as "interpersonal communication, independent of the organization's recruitment activities, about an organization as an employer or about specific jobs" (Van Hoye & Lievens, 2007, p. 373; see also Van Hoye, 2014). If favorable, such opinions can contribute

3 See Tanner et al. (2015) and Newman et al. (2017) for a more extensive review of research into ethical climates.

significantly to the creation of strong employer brands; conversely, if critical comments prevail, the most valuable candidates may be discouraged and seek employment with competitors.

Employee reviews may be deemed as the "real" word-of-mouth, as they precisely match the above-mentioned definition of eWOM. They are typically anonymous, and can contain positive as well as negative information about current or previous employers; they are generated by people who (at least theoretically) have no commercial interest in promoting the employing organization.

Employee testimonials, that is, official statements from employees which explain what they like about their job or company, are characterized by greater complexity.[4] They are predominantly persuasive and promotional, comprising texts of various lengths and level of elaboration, typically found under hyperlinks to career opportunities sections on corporate websites. They have gained significance in the last decades as an instrument used to convey (positive) information about employing organizations, the types of people potential applicants may encounter and work with if employed, quality of work life issues, organizational culture, values and image (Cober et al., 2004; Kroustalis & Meade, 2007; Maagaard, 2014; Walker et al., 2012).

Employee testimonials belong to the category of "company-dependent recruitment sources" of employment information (Van Hoye & Lievens, 2007, p. 373). Unlike job advertisements (seen as the most typical example of a company-dependent source), employee testimonials combine the advantages of company-dependent and company-independent recruitment sources; the former can be directly controlled to promote a favorable image, while the latter share many characteristics with word-of-mouth as an interpersonal information source. The hiring organization being the actual sender of the message conveyed in testimonials, they are nevertheless (at least partly) attributed to individual employees sharing first-hand experience of what it is like to be a member of a particular organization; they provide a human touch to recruitment communication, thus facilitating identification with the potential employer (Cober et al., 2000; Maagaard, 2014). Consequently, employee testimonials can be seen as "company-controlled imitations of word-of-mouth" (Van Hoye & Lievens, 2007, p. 374). The success of the *imitations* depends, to a large degree, on how much

4 *Cambridge Business English Dictionary*: http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/business-english/employee-testimonial.

of the experiences narrated in testimonials seems to originate in the employees themselves, and how much is attributable to the employing organization.[5]

Material and Methods

The analysis compares two corpora: the first comprises 152 employee testimonials (ETs) extracted from the corporate websites of fourteen randomly selected organizations;[6] the second corpus consists of 270 (five-star) online employee reviews (ERs) of the same companies, found on popular independent review websites: www.glassdoor.com and www.indeed.com (accessed 5–8 February 2017). The decision to analyze almost twice as many reviews as testimonials stemmed from the fact that the number of reviews available on the two sites mentioned was far greater that the number of testimonials found on the corporate websites; insisting on an even number of texts in both corpora would thus limit the representativeness of the second corpus. Also, since neutral or negative reviews are by nature very different from positive ones, only the best (five-star) reviews were taken into account, to make the review corpus more comparable with the sample of testimonials and, consequently, render the analysis more reliable. Therefore, the texts under comparison are, on the one hand, employee testimonials, and on the other, reviews by *happy/satisfied* employees. Figure 3 presents the distribution of texts in both corpora.

As can be seen, different numbers of texts were available for different companies, and no employee reviews were found for Bluearc. The analysis does not therefore compare texts evaluating particular employers, but rather investigates the samples as two "wholes", aiming to examine the ethical climates reflected and their linguistic representation in these two genres.

Drawing on the literature on ethical climate types, in particular Cullen et al. (2003), we have used the following general classification model as an instrument of the analysis (Figure 4).

The Egoistic/Instrumental and Benevolent/Caring categories concur with the Egoism and Benevolence categories, respectively, in the original Victor and Cullen model (1987, 1988); the third category (Principle/Deontological) roughly

5 See Cable and Turban (2001), Maagaard (2014), Van Hoye and Lievens (2007) and Van Hoye (2014) for a more detailed discussion of the credibility of employee testimonials as a source of employment information.

6 The corpus of employee testimonials was extracted from the corporate websites mentioned in Appendix 1.

Fig. 3: *Distribution of texts in both corpora: Employee Reviews and Employee Testimonials*

COMPANY	EMPLOYEE TESTIMONIALS (ETs)	EMPLOYEE REVIEWS (ERs) *****
CATERPILLAR	1–10	1–48
ICE	11–15	49–54
ALTISOURCE	16–30	55–72
QUATRRO	31–45	7–80
LANDSCAPE STRUCTURES	46–49	81–84
CALIBRE	50–73	85–110
VICTAULIC	74–87	111–128
NLIVEN SYSTEMS	88–91	129–137
ACCURATE HOME CARE	92–100	138–147
LOCKHEED MARTIN	101–116	148–197
BLUEARC	117–121	––
KINDRED AT HOME	122–131	198–220
TELEPERFORMANCE	132–148	221–269
GENESIS SYSTEMS	149–152	270

Fig. 4: *A model for the analysis of ethical climate types reflected in ETs and ERs*

TYPE OF PERCEIVED CLIMATE
Egoistic/Instrumental
Benevolent/Caring
Principle/Deontological

encompasses the last three categories of the original model, Independence, Rules, and Law and Code, following Cullen et al. (2003).

On the basis of this model, a thematic content analysis was conducted, following the assumption that the repetition of meaningful lexical units indicates the interests and concerns of the communicators. The thematic units were identified later as dominant categories related to the ethical climate types reflected in the employee testimonials and reviews (cf. Chouaib & Zaddem, 2013; Cullen et al., 1993; Cullen et al., 2003).

The following research questions were formulated and used as an analytical framework:

1. Does ethical work climate emerge as an important criterion of employer attractiveness in the eyes of former and existing employees?
2. Which types of climates, as proposed by the Ethical Climate Theory, are foregrounded in each corpus, and how are the climate types expressed linguistically?

It must be noted that at least two methodological challenges were encountered in the analysis. As mentioned earlier in this section, neutral or negative employee reviews are by nature very different form employee testimonials (and very positive employee reviews) in terms of the types of values and work climates communicated; therefore, only the best (five-star) reviews were taken into account in this pilot study, to render the analysis more reliable. The second challenge was the difficulty of classifying certain lexical items as representative of particular climate types and sub-types; an inter-rater reliability test was thus conducted on 100 texts by another rater (a PhD candidate in the field of linguistics). When the scores were compared, few discrepancies were found, yielding the agreement level of approximately 97 %; yet the (not insignificant) degree of subjectivity in the classification cannot be disregarded.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1

Does ethical work climate emerge as an important criterion of employee attractiveness in the eyes of former and existing employees? The analysis of the explicit expression of such values as ethics, morality and honesty does not suggest that existing and former employees attach a high degree of importance to these values as a criterion of employer attractiveness. The lexical units *ethics/ethical* are used in merely 3 % of ETs and 2 % of ERs. Other lexical units that may be interpreted as explicitly indicating the above-mentioned values are virtually absent from both corpora (the lexeme *honest* appears in its literal meaning in less than 1 % of ERs, and no ETs; the lexeme *moral* has not been found in the texts analyzed.[7] If the ethical climate does emerge as an important value in employee reviews and testimonials, it does so through rather implicit signals; although present in more than 90 % of texts in each sample, the signals largely overlap with other organizational values not explicitly related to ethics (cf. Barrow & Mosley, 2005; Frederick 1995; Hultman, 2005). The ways in which those values are ascribed to

7 The lexical unit *honestly* found in phrases such as "Honestly, I must say . . ." has not been taken into account. This approach is maintained throughout the analysis.

particular ethical climates and expressed linguistically will be illustrated in the following subsection.

Research Question 2

Which types of climates, as proposed by the Ethical Climate Theory, are foregrounded in each corpus, and how are the climate types expressed linguistically? Lexical units indicating or suggesting particular ethical climate types have been identified in a vast majority of both ETs and five-star ERs. Merely 5 % of ETs and 6 % of ERs can be classified as devoid of any lexical indication of the ethical climate as perceived by the former or existing employees. Examples of such texts (one ET and one ER) are provided below:

(1) I have been here a while. Like I tell most people I interview, I have had opportunities to leave and could never make the case as to why I should. (ET68)

(2) Assembly Line Worker (Former Employee) Utilized heavy equipment reach trucks, sit-down forklift and overhead cranes. Performed material handling and warehousing functions as required. Performed line checker functions. (ER5)

As illustrated above, ET 68 expresses (indirectly) positive evaluation of the employer, and ER5 can be interpreted as neutral in the textual layer (the very positive evaluation of the employer is expressed by the five-star rate). Yet neither of the two texts reflects the ethical climate types as seen by the communicators.

Figure 5 summarizes the results pertaining to the ethical climate type categories reflected in the employee testimonials and reviews analyzed. As can be seen, several distinct sub-categories characteristic of and relevant for the employment context emerge within the three broad categories of the model (Egoism/Instrumental, Benevolence/Caring and Principle/Deontological).

Egoistic/Instrumental. This broad category is reflected in the majority of employee reviews (71 %) and almost half of the testimonials (47 %), indicating a significant position of this climate type as a criterion of employer attractiveness, particularly in company-independent eWOM. The instrumental ethical climate type is signaled mainly through the use of such lexical units as *power*, *profit*, *competition*, *short breaks*, *salary*, *benefits*, *incentives*, *promotion*, *career*, *opportunities*. Two sub-categories of this climate type that emerge from the analysis are the climate of *personal* egoism/instrumental approach (related to the employees' self-interest) and the *corporate* egoism/instrumental approach (related to the employer's self-interest, which ultimately translates into the employee interest).

Fig. 5: *Results of the analysis of ethical climates types reflected in ETs and ERs*

TYPE OF PERCEIVED CLIMATE	**ETS %**	**ERs %**	**SUB-TYPE OF PERCEIVED CLIMATE**	**ETS %**	**ERs %**
Egoistic/Instrumental	47	71			
			Personal (employee-self-interest)	46	56
			Corporate (Company interest)	3	24
Benevolent/Caring	71	62			
			Caring>>employees	58	51
			Caring>>clients	19	13
			Caring>>community, society, country, environment, etc.	12	3
Principle/Deontological	22	14	Personal morality/Team rules and procedures/ Law and professional codes		

Examples of the former sub-category reflected in the ETs and ERs analyzed include the following:

(3) . . . they have really *good benefits, education*. (ET108)
(4) This company offers you more than a job. Here you can *build a career*. I've received *excellent training* and *development opportunities* are limitless if you are ambitious. (ET142)
(5) Great place to work, *advancement*, *experience*, *competitive pay*, *benefits* and *pension*. (ER39)
(6) *Training* was also great. (ER55)

The lexical representation of the *corporate* instrumental ethical climate is illustrated below:

(7) The organization focuses on bringing out the best in an employee by *creating a drive* that is fuel of the sample analysed, the findings would ed by the willingness to *contribute* and *win*. (ET44)
(8) They have *remained profitable* even during economic recession. (ER127)

The analysis demonstrates that the frequency of occurrence of lexical units indicating the personal instrumental climate type is somewhat higher in ERs than in ETs (56 % and 46 % respectively); on the other hand, the difference in the degree to which employees signal the *corporate* instrumental ethical climate is remarkably large (24 % of ERs and merely 3 % of ETs). The first difference can be interpreted as indicative of the company-independent eWOM reflecting a slightly higher degree of importance attached to personal egoistic/instrumental ethical climates than the company-dependent word-of-mouth. Another observation that seems to confirm this interpretation is the fact that 6 % of the five-star employee reviews do contain some *critical evaluation* of the employer (mostly in the CONS section of the reviews), including the following:

(9) Little advancement opportunities. (ER56)
(10) No breaks before or after lunch. (ER161)
(11) It's easy to get terminated. (ER248)

All the extracts quoted above can be interpreted as indicative of the considerable importance attached by the communicators to the *lack* or *insufficient degree* of the personal instrumental ethical climate in the organization.

As regards the second (very significant) difference, the communicators of ETs appear to be more careful not to project the image of the employing organization as adopting a corporate instrumental ethical approach, often associated with tough, competitive businesses; the finding seems to confirm the significant role that employee testimonials perform as powerful instruments of employer branding, and – consequently – their promotional rather than evaluative nature (cf. Łącka-Badura, 2018; Van Hoye & Lievens, 2007; Van Hoye, 2014).

Importantly, the findings related to the egoistic/instrumental ethical climate type reflected in the two corpora are not entirely consistent with the studies showing that instrumental climates are those least preferred by employees (cf. theoretical background). The present analysis shows that company-independent messages in particular reflect the significance of this climate type in the eyes of employees. Taking into account a limited size of the sample analyzed, the findings would nonetheless need to be validated in a larger-scale study.

Benevolent/Caring. This category of ethical climate types has been signaled in the majority of both ETs and ERs (71 % and 62 %, respectively). The findings are highly consistent with the studies in the field of business ethics pointing to the benevolent/caring ethical climate as the type commonly indicated by employees as the most favored (cf. theoretical background). At the lexical level, this ethical climate type is reflected through the use of such units as *care*, *well-being*, *family*, *team*, *collaborate*, *support/supportive*, *help/helpful*, *friends*, *share*, *respect*, *appreciation*, *together*, etc. Three distinct categories emerge from the analysis: (a) the climate in which employers' care is directed at the *employees*; (b) the climate in which the *clients* are taken care of most; and (c) the climate in which the care is directed at the local community, society, country, the natural environment.

Although the general category of benevolent/caring ethical climate as well as its sub-categories are communicated more frequently in company-dependent eWOM than in company-independent word-of-mouth, the difference does not seem to be very significant, except for the last sub-category, namely the ethical climate in which care is directed at the local community, society, country and the natural environment (12 % of ETs and 3 % of ERs).

The first sub-category (care directed at *employees*) is reflected in a rather similar percentage of ETs and ERs (58 % and 51 % respectively). The extracts below illustrate the linguistic expression of this climate in both text types:

(12) . . . the management team *genuinely cares about the safety and well-being of their employees*. (ET79)
(13) The *support* that I got from the company and from my coworkers was amazing. (ET109)
(14) . . . everyone is always ready to *help*, *listen to your ideas* and *share* a *laugh* with you. (ET119)
(15) The *people* are the most important aspect of the job. (ER45)
(16) I felt like a member of a *family*. (E110)
(17) a very *collaborative* workplace. (ER105)

The care directed at *clients* is signaled in 19 % of ETs and 13 % of ERs. For instance:

(18) . . . I leave work each day with a strong sense of accomplishment from *helping our customers*. (ET22)
(19) It is gratifying when you are able to *help customers* resolve issues on the phone . . . (ET133)
(20) . . . continually striving to improve our company and *service to our customers*. (ER94)
(21) great people who *care about helping their customers*. (ER98)

The care directed at the local community, society, country and the natural environment is signaled in 12 % of ETs and merely 3 % of ERs. For example:

(22) our products *keep people alive* in hospitals. (ET6)
(23) . . . every day you come to work and you're doing something that *helps support the country*, it helps *support our men and women* overseas fighting everyday battles . . . (ET113)
(24) . . . our efforts to be more *environmentally friendly*. (ET49)
(25) You are part of a big *future for kids*. (ER84)
(26) . . . company that *cares* so much, has a *great cause* (*improving* life-long health and well-being). (ER129)

The above results seem to suggest that the degree of importance attached to the benevolent/caring ethical climate is comparable in the company dependent and company-independent word-of-mouth. The most significant difference has been found for the third sub-category of the benevolent/caring climate, which can roughly be described as pertaining to the employers' social responsibility towards external audiences other than the clients. Although low in both corpora under analysis, the percentage of texts signaling the last climate sub-category is four times as high in the testimonials as in the reviews (12 % and 3 % respectively). This might be interpreted as indicative of the company-controlled word-of-mouth seeking to project an image of the employing organization which fits in with the contemporary trends in employer branding, where CSR issues are increasingly taken into consideration by marketing and PR departments.

Principle/Deontological. The analysis demonstrates that a lower degree of importance is attached by employees to this category of ethical climates than to the previous two general categories (Instrumental/Egoistic and Benevolent/Caring). It is nonetheless worth noting that the principle/deontological climate is signaled more frequently in the company-dependent eWOM than in the company-independent word-of-mouth (22 % and 14 %, respectively). The climate is linguistically signalled through the use of such lexical units as *rules*, *procedures*, *standards*, *norms*, *regulations*, *professionalism*, *ethical codes*, etc. The following can be quoted as examples extracted from the ETs corpus: *commitment to values* (ET8), *integrity* (ET 61), business *ethics* (ET 62), work *ethos* (ET73), follow safety *guidelines* religiously (ET 79), high *standards* of training (ET 145), *professional* attitude (ET 148). Examples found in the ERs sample include the following: satisfy the Tier4 final emission *requirements* (ER4), very *professional* environment (ER24), good work *ethics* (ER33), open door *policy* (ER79), solid *principles* (ER94), *standardizing* metrics for advancement (ER102), *procedures* to follow (ER114). The analysis also takes into account instances of indirect communication of *fair treatment* of employees, for instance: recognition given when deserved (ET 15), you can advance on a merit basis (ER20).

It should be emphasized that the principle/deontological climate is the ethical climate category which seems to be most directly related to the values usually associated with high ethical standards. This observation is confirmed by the fact that the lexical units explicitly related to ethical issues occur predominantly in those fragments of both text corpora which have been interpreted as indicative of the principle/deontological climate category (e.g. *ethics*, *ethical*, *ethos*, *standards*, *norms*, *values*). The fact that the company-controlled word-of-mouth tends to signal this climate more clearly and more frequently than the company-independent messages can, again, probably be attributed to the employing organizations' branding strategies. Expressing – through the comments made by happy employees – appreciation of such values as personal morality, respect for rules, procedures, laws and professional codes reinforces the image of a fair and ethical employer.

Summary and Conclusions

This pilot study has sought to investigate employee perceptions of the ethical work climates reflected in two types of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM): online employee testimonials and (five-star) employee reviews. The analysis of the *explicit* expression of ethical climate seems to suggest a rather low status of the climate as a criterion of employer attractiveness in both company-dependent and company-independent word-of-mouth. It is through more *implicit* means that the ethical climate is indicated in the majority of texts in both corpora.

A more detailed examination of the ethical climate types and their linguistic expression in the testimonials and five-star reviews shows some interesting patterns in the degree to which particular climate types are reflected in each corpus. The egoistic/instrumental ethical climate is indicated in the majority of employee reviews (71 %) and almost half of the testimonials (47 %); the significant position of this climate type as a criterion of employer attractiveness, particularly in the company-independent eWOM, is not entirely consistent with the studies showing that instrumental climates are those least preferred by employees. As regards the sub-categories of the egoistic/instrumental climate that emerge from the analysis, two findings are worthy of note. The frequency of occurrence of the lexical signals suggesting the *personal* instrumental climate sub-category is comparable in both corpora; on the other hand, a considerable difference has been found for the sub-category of the *corporate* instrumental climate, indicated in a markedly higher percentage of reviews. The communicators of the company-controlled messages appear to be more careful not to project the image of the employing organization as adopting a corporate instrumental ethical approach, often associated with tough, competitive businesses.

Very much in line with the studies in the field of business ethics, the benevolent/caring climate emerges as the most favored climate type, signaled in the majority of texts in both corpora. Among the three sub-categories of the benevolent/caring climate (i.e. the climate in which employers' care is directed at the *employees*, the climate in which the *clients* are taken care of most and the climate in which the care is directed at the local community, society, country or the natural environment), the most significant difference has been found for the latter sub-category; it may be interpreted as indicative of the company-controlled word-of-mouth seeking to project an image of the employing organization which fits in with the contemporary trends in employer branding, where corporate social responsibility is increasingly appreciated as a characteristic of a good and fair employer.

Finally, the principle/deontological climate type emerges as the least significant criterion of employer attractiveness reflected in employee testimonials and five-star reviews. It is nonetheless worth noting that this climate type is signaled more frequently in the testimonials, another difference that can probably be attributed to the strong employer branding function of the company-controlled word-of-mouth.

The above findings seem to justify the conclusion that the degree to which the ethical climate is reflected in the texts of employee testimonials and five-star reviews, as well as its linguistic expression, is rather similar. Some differences occur at the level of the climate type sub-categories, particularly the corporate instrumental climate and caring climate in which the care is directed at external stakeholders (other than clients). These and other differences may most probably be interpreted as resulting from the position that the two text types analyzed occupy on the company-dependent << >> company-independent continuum. Given the limited size of the corpora under analysis, the results of this pilot study require further, larger-scale research.

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Appendix 1. Corpus of Employee Testimonials

ETs (Employee Testimonials) 1–10 CATERPILLAR
http://www.caterpillar.com/en/careers/why-caterpillar/employee-testimonials.html [accessed 18.09.2014]

ETs 11–15 ICE
https://www.iceenterprise.com/careers/testimonials.jsp [accessed 18.09.2014]

ETs 16–30 ALTISOURCE
http://www.altisource.com/AboutUs/Careers/EmployeeTestimonials.aspx [accessed 18.09.2014]

ETs 31–45 QUATRRO
http://www.quatrro.com/employee-testimonials.html [accessed 18.09.2014]

ETs 46–49 LANDSCAPE STRUCTURES [accessed 18.09.2014]
http://www.playlsi.com/Learn-About-Us/Careers/Employee-Testimonials/Pages/Employee-Testimonials1.aspx

ETs 50–73 CALIBRE [accessed 18.09.2014]
http://www.calibresys.com/careers2/employee_testimonials.html [accessed 18.09.2014]

ETs 74 – 87 VICTAULIC
http://www.victaulic.com/en/our-company/careers/employee-testimonials [accessed 18.09.2014]

ETs 88–91 NLIVEN SYSTEMS
http://www.nliven.com/careers/employee-testimonials [accessed 19.09.2014]

ETs 92–100 ACCURATE HOME CARE
http://www.accuratehomecare.com/employee-testimonials.html [accessed 19.09.2014]

ETs 101–116 LOCKHEED MARTIN
http://www.lockheedmartinjobs.com/testimonials.asp#tab1-anchor?personactive=eli [accessed 19.09.2014]

ETs 117–121 BLUEARC
http://www.bluearcgroup.com/Employee-Testimonials.html [accessed 19.09.2014]

ETs 122–131 KINDRED AT HOME

http://www.kindredathome.com/careers/employee-testimonials [accessed 19.09.2014]

ETs 132–148 TELEPERFORMANCE
http://teleperformanceukcareers.co.uk/testimonials [accessed 19.09.2014]

ETs 149–152 GENESIS SYSTEMS
http://www.genesis-systems.com/how-we-do-it/company-info/employee-testimonials [accessed 19.09.2014]

Judith Ainsworth

Un/Ethical Leadership: A Critical Discourse Analysis of a CEO's Email to Team Members

Abstract: This chapter took a Critical Discourse Analysis approach using a wide range of linguistic devices to systematically analyze a corporate narrative document. Fairclough's Dialectic-Relational approach was applied to the analysis of Wells Fargo's chairman's email to employees during the cross-selling crisis. The analysis focuses on the grammatical devices used to represent organizational activities and outcomes in ways that obfuscate social agency (impersonalization), that evaluate social actors, entities and social events (evaluation), and that limit the author's personal commitment to the truth (hedging). Results show that these devices are used strategically to guide employees' interpretations of the firm's actions so as to make things right for customers, and to legitimize unethical practices towards stakeholders to maximize shareholder value.

Keywords: corporate communication, critical discourse analysis, obfuscation, evaluation, cross-selling scandal

Introduction

Ethical leadership has emerged in the last twenty years as an important topic for understanding the role that ethical leaders can play in deciding the moral principles organizations promote (Treviño, Hartman & Brown, 2000), or as a process where leaders encourage internal stakeholders to formulate the organization's values and objectives as well as facilitate their efforts to uphold these principles (Avey, Wernsing & Palanski, 2012; Ciulla, 2004; Weaver, Treviño & Agle, 2005). The rash of corporate scandals that began in 2001 with Enron and WorldCom, and that continues to this day with cases such as the VW emissions scandal ("Video-statement Prof. Dr. Martin Winterkorn", 2015), the Goldman Sachs fraud scandal (Goldstein, Stevenson & Flitter, 2018) and the Wells Fargo unauthorized accounts scandal (Isidore, 2016), has contributed to the increased interest in understanding executive ethical leadership.

To build upon this line of research, this study chose to analyze a corporate narrative document, namely Wells Fargo's CEO email to employees, better known as "team members" in Wells Fargo jargon (Stumpf, 2016). Corporate narrative documents constitute a persuasive genre of corporate communication used for impression management. In other words, they attempt to shape the audience's impression of a person, event or idea (Schlenker, 1980). Consequently, by focusing on an in-depth text analysis of the discursive strategies employed by the CEO, this study sheds light on how a corporate narrative email influences the audience's perception of executive ethical leadership during a financial scandal. Since the chairman's email was widely distributed on the Internet, the analysis centers on the broader aspect of stakeholders and the general public in terms of managerial manipulation of stakeholders' impressions of organizational legitimacy (Breton & Côte, 2006) through statements of organizational changes such as restructuring and reorganization (Seeger et al., 2005).

The study is based on a social constructivist approach that analyses internal corporate communication which views impression management as managers' attempts to control meaning and "foster a specific definition of the situation" (Fisk & Grove, 1996, p. 7). Thus, executives can use corporate narrative documents to impose a strategic perspective of the organization and its organizational activities and outcomes (Grojean et al., 2004; Liu, Cutcher & Grant, 2017), or of specific organizational stakeholders who are in conflict with the organization or with the industry in which it is operating (Hearit, 2018), or of socio-economic and socio-political issues that impact on the activities, reputation or ethical practices of the organization, such as climate change, a toxic work environment and human rights (Livesey, 2002). Using a text analysis approach, this study seeks to reveal meaning by analyzing text within its situational and social context, including rhetorical and discourse analysis (Livesey, 2002). Specifically, this type of text analysis focuses on "the way language . . . is used by managers to create specific impressions or to persuade organizational audiences to accept managers' versions of reality" (Merkl-Davies & Koller, 2012, p. 179).

Objectives and Contribution of the Chapter

Managers use corporate communication as impression management to convince organizational audiences of the validity, legitimacy or necessity of organizational changes or to portray events such as financial scandals as isolated incidents. In this way, management can demonstrate that the organization's actions are "desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (Suchman, 1995, p. 574). In times of crisis or controversy, such as financial scandals, management uses corporate communication to restore organizational reputation by persuading audiences that the organization is restructuring its norms and procedures to fit with social norms, values and rules (Beelitz & Merkl-Davies, 2012). However, these corporate communications are often characterized by incongruence between managers' and organizational audiences' interpretations of the event, or between the organization's and particular stakeholders' values and beliefs (Merkl-Davies & Koller, 2012). Thus, the objective of this essay is to explore the role of CEO discourse in the construction of executive ethical leadership by Wells Fargo, a publicly owned bank in the USA.

While prior text analysis research conducted from a critical perspective has examined the role of semantic features such as differentiation, repetition and conceptual metaphors in the construction of meaning (Beelitz & Merkl-Davies, 2012; Craig & Amenic, 2004; Liu et al., 2017; Tourish & Hargie, 2012), the current study takes a different approach by analyzing the strategic use of grammatical features such as adjectives, active and passive voice, nominalization and modality to create specific effects that can influence behaviour and attitudes. Nominalization expresses activities and properties as nouns, instead of using verbs and adjectives, and transforms actions and attributes into states or presents processes as facts, as in *improvement* rather than *improve*, thus creating a stable, static and determinate universe of things. Furthermore, grammatical metaphors or nominalizations are seen as a means of abstracting and generalizing[1] from particular events so that these events, such as banking and other financial events, become increasingly rationalized systems in modernity (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

In addition, abstract concepts are more difficult for readers to process. They are more formal and thus increase the "prestige and power" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 657) of texts that use this linguistic strategy. Grammatical metaphors are often observed in economics and finance discourses, for example *sales practices*, *products and services*, *customer satisfaction*, and can be considered a generic feature of corporate narrative documents (Bhatia, 2010). While increasing the factual representation of social reality, grammatical metaphors also make social and corporate actors obsolete, thus absolving these actors of social responsibility and accountability (Fairclough, 2003). Grammatical metaphors "can thus be used strategically to rationalize, normalize and legitimize destructive activities, such as pollution, exploitation, or warfare" (Merkl-Daviers & Koller, 2012, p. 180).

This paper employs a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach to analyzing internal corporate communication addressed to internal stakeholders in the form of Wells Fargo's CEO letter emailed to the organization's workforce. Focusing on the dialectic relationship between language and society (Fairclough,

1 See also Koller and Davidson (2008) for a discussion of grammatical and conceptual metaphors and the use of nominalization as an abstract entity that takes the grammatical and semantic role of social actor.

2003), CDA considers how the content and linguistic features of corporate narrative documents influence and are influenced by the wider socio-economic context in which texts are embedded. In this way, CDA enables us to examine how linguistic and rhetorical devices are used strategically to represent organizational activities in ways that obfuscate unethical executive leadership. To give an example, immediately following the global financial crisis, CEOs of large US banks used two internal and two external rhetorical strategies to downplay any responsibility for fueling the crisis. The two internal strategies – providing rational guarantees and expressing normative responsibilities – were used to strengthen their epistemic authority, while the two external strategies – critiquing judgements and questioning motives – were used to defend their dominant position in the field (Riaz, Buchanan & Ruebottom, 2016). Thus, the critical analysis of the Wells Fargo CEO's email to internal stakeholders is important as it aims to highlight the manipulative techniques used in internal corporate narrative documents to align readers with specific ways of understanding the world (Llopis, Breeze & Gotti, 2017). It is all the more important to reveal these manipulative strategies in the case of organizations that commit fraud (Hearit & Brown, 2004) and implement unethical practices towards stakeholders in an effort to maximize shareholder value and reward executives (Breton & Côte, 2006).

The chapter is organized as follows. In the next section, I discuss the theoretical concept of executive ethical leadership. The third section describes the linguistic analysis approach based on Fairclough's Dialectal-Relational Approach to CDA (Fairclough, 2003) and the underlying three-level analytical framework for this study (Koller, 2012). The fourth section applies this framework to the analysis of a CEO's letter of an American firm operating in the banking industry. I summarize the findings and discuss their implications in the fifth section.

Theoretical Foundation

This section reviews the literature on executive ethical leadership and the characteristics of executive ethical leadership related to transformational, transactional, charismatic, authentic and spiritual leadership styles. I also outline the role of corporate discourse in a CDA approach to constructing executive ethical leadership.

Executive Ethical Leadership

Research on ethical leadership has found that the individual leader's character as demonstrated by honesty, integrity and concern for others is important for fostering positive outcomes associated with employee trust, job satisfaction and well-being (Avey et al., 2012). However, in their study of perceptions of executive ethical leadership, Treviño, Brown and Hartman (2003) found that ethical executive leadership is more than simply a function of character or individual factors. It also includes the transactional component of communication and a reward system to guide ethical behaviour (Brown, Treviño & Harrison, 2005; Treviño et al. 2003). Ethical leaders must work consciously to show that they instill ethical behaviour in their employees by establishing an ethical culture throughout the company. They must ostensibly show that they reward those who comply with this culture and punish those who disobey. Thus, Brown et al. (2005, p. 120) define ethical leadership as the "demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making". According to this definition, ethical leaders must worry about others' perceptions in addition to developing a reputation for ethical leadership (Cravens & Oliver, 2006; Treviño et al., 2000; Treviño et al. 2003). They need ethical guidance from other leaders as well as acting as role models to influence employees' ethical behaviour (Avey et al., 2012; Brown & Treviño, 2014; Weaver et al., 2005). These characteristics of executive ethical leadership can also be linked to organizational effectiveness.

Although the ethical leadership construct shares several characteristics with the constructs of transformational, transactional, authentic and charismatic leadership, Brown and Treviño assert that ethical leadership exhibits a fundamental difference from these, because ethical leaders must be *moral persons* as well as *moral managers* (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Treviño et al., 2000). Thus, ethical moral persons are transformational leaders who inspire their followers to work together for the common good. They care about others, act consistently with their moral principles, consider the ethical consequences of their actions and decisions, and are ethical role models for others. Subordinates perceive leaders with higher moral reasoning to be more transformational and to have integrity, in other words, as leaders with an ethical orientation. However, ethical leadership also consists of moral management, which is more consistent with a transactional form of leadership. Transactional leaders emphasize moral standards. As moral managers, ethical leaders attempt to influence followers' behaviour by explicitly setting ethical standards and holding followers accountable for conforming to these standards through a system of rewards and punishments (Treviño et al., 2000, 2003). Consequently, ethical leadership includes a transactional feature that distinguishes it from transformational leadership.

Authentic leadership also overlaps with ethical leadership in terms of being motivated by positive values and care and concern for others, which is one of the main characteristics of ethical leaders (Treviño et al., 2003). The interviews in this study revealed that authentic and ethical leaders are concerned both for others and for the consequences of their decisions. Furthermore, Brown and Treviño's framework of ethical leadership is associated with outcomes such as followers' ethical decision-making, prosocial behaviour, satisfaction, motivation and commitment (Brown & Treviño, 2006, p. 596). On the other hand, traits of authentic leadership such as self-awareness and being true to oneself do not correspond to Treviño and colleagues' framework of ethical leadership (Treviño et al., 2003).

Finally, the ethical leadership construct does not include traits of the visionary or intellectually stimulating leadership style associated with charismatic leadership. According to Brown and Treviño (2006), what differentiates ethical leadership from authentic, transformational and charismatic leadership is the emphasis on the transactional aspect of leadership. This aspect relates to leaders who influence their followers' ethical or unethical behaviour and who maintain ethical standards through communication and accountability.

Although the literature on ethical leadership focuses on explaining processes of demonstrating ethical leadership and outcomes of ethical leadership, this study approaches ethical executive leadership through the role of discourse in constructing executive ethical leadership during a corporate crisis, which I discuss in the next section.

The Role of Discourse in Constructing Executive Ethical Leadership

CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to analyzing written and spoken texts that views language as a form of social practice implying "a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 5). Furthermore, CDA is concerned with power as a chief condition of social life and focuses on the way in which social and political domination is constructed, reproduced or challenged, by text or talk (Fairclough, 2010). CDA research seeks to understand and explain society, and critique and change it through conveying how language use in context helps maintain or challenge relations of power. CDA examines discourse against the background of social constructivism in which discourses are realized in context, and describes the social actors, entities and events they refer to. When corporate communications are circulated within a discourse community, such as Wells Fargo's team members or the general public, members of that community systematically privilege particular interpretations and values over others, "raising the question of who has the power to communicate their own ideology and how that power is achieved and maintained" (Merkl-Davies & Koller, 2012, p. 180).

In a study of Australian banking narratives during the financial crisis, Liu et al. (2017, p. 695) demonstrated that "leadership and context are discursively constructed and that being seen as authentic in the media is about the capacity of the leader to shape narratives about both their leadership and the context in which their leadership takes place" in order to restore hierarchical power relations with stakeholders. In this way, for-profit organizations can use financial and economic discourses to persuade stakeholders that controversial actions and decisions, such as profit and executive bonuses, are valid and necessary, usually in the name of maximizing shareholder value (Amernic & Craig, 2006; Breton & Côte, 2006). Because discourses contribute to the resources that people use to relate to one another, for example co-operating, competing or even dominating one another (Fairclough, 2003), organizations can deploy discourses "strategically to redefine an organization's relationship with its stakeholders during a public controversy or crisis" (Beelitz & Merkl-Davies, 2012, p. 105). Therefore, this study focuses on the strategic use of discourse to mitigate the public outcry over an organization's fraudulent practices and ethical violations. Executive discourse is thus used to convince stakeholders that the organization has realigned its norms and values with society's ethical norms and values (Cels, 2017), thus restoring ethical leadership. Using discourse in this manner presents an ethical dilemma in itself as it entails influencing and managing organizational stakeholders' perceptions of organizational violations to gain their consent.

Analytical Framework

This section develops the analytical framework used to analyze corporate narrative documents, in this case, an internal executive email to employees. I adopt an agency-focused linguistic analysis approach associated with Fairclough's (2003) Dialectical-Relational Approach that includes written text, layout and associated images, which in turn is based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1994). According to this linguistic theory, language serves three types of functions simultaneously. First, language functions as actional meaning in which it has a part of the action in social events. Second, it shapes social reality and functions as representational meaning. Third, its meaning is interwoven in the textual construction of people's identities and social relations, thus functioning as identificatory meaning (Fairclough, 2003). Consequently, this analysis focuses on the way texts represent and evaluate social actors, entities and social events, specifically "whether actions are represented in ways which specify or conversely elide the agency of actors, and what the social and political significance of this textual 'choice' may be" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 135). In alignment with previous CDA studies (Beelitz & Merkl-Davies, 2012; Merkl-Davies & Koller, 2012), I adopt an abductive approach to explore the role of managerial discourse. This approach entails developing the categories of analysis for text analysis "in line with the research questions, and a constant movement back and forth between theory and empirical data" (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 19). The next section presents the three levels of analysis, micro-level, meso-level and macro-level, which capture the interrelationship between text and context (Fairclough, 2003), followed by the grammatical devices underlying the analysis.

Levels of Analysis: Text, Discourse Practice Context and Social Context

Fairclough (1995, 2003) regards the roles, relations and identities of discourse participants within a discourse community to be constituted and negotiated by means of spoken and written texts. Thus, the connection between text and social practice is seen as being mediated by discourse practice where texts are embedded in broader socio-economic and political contexts. This analytical framework addresses how the content and the linguistic features of texts influence, and are in turn influenced by, the contexts of text production, distribution, reception and adaptation, as well as the broader socio-economic context in which texts are embedded (Fairclough, 1995, 2003). Fairclough (2010) operationalizes this dialectic relationship between language and society in a three-level framework of analysis: (1) micro-level, which is the text itself; (2) meso-level, which is the context of producing, distributing, receiving and possibly adapting texts within a discourse community; and (3) macro-level, the dynamic socio-economic and political context in which the discourse community can be located. An illustration of the three interrelated levels of analysis and the generic research questions they entail can be found in Koller (2012).

Micro-Level Analysis

Micro-level text analysis targets specific linguistic features that are particularly salient for the text under investigation. These features are determined by the research objective, the genre of the text, the audience for the text and the discourse(s) employed in the text. Corporate narrative documents, such as CEO letters and emails, employ elements of public relations discourse (emphasizing promotion and corporate image), finance discourse (emphasizing financial performance) and human resources discourse (emphasizing employee needs and benefits). These narratives are thus characterized by "interdiscursivity" (Bhatia, 2010), in other words, the way different genres, discourses and styles are interwoven in a particular text (Fairclough, 2010). The strategic combination of these three elements enables management to use interdiscursivity to shape organizational audiences' interpretations of organizational activities and outcomes.

This study focuses on three linguistic devices – impersonalization, evaluation and hedging – incorporated strategically to influence organizational stakeholders' attitudes and beliefs. Impersonalization obfuscates social agency so that processes are portrayed in a more abstract, factual manner. Impersonalization renders social agents unknown, thereby absolving management of any responsibility or accountability for organizational activities and outcomes, and encourages acquiescence (Fairclough, 2003). By obfuscating the social actors and processes involved in financial reporting and focusing on rhetoric that sustains the ideology of capitalism, financial firms ensure the long-term survival of a win-at-all-costs form of capitalism that contributes to the rationalization and normalization of questionable practices (Craig & Amernic, 2004). Regarding language, impersonalization is accomplished by grammatical categories such as referential vagueness, passivization, grammatical metaphor, conceptual metaphor and metonymy. By contrast, evaluation is used to make value statements regarding the desirability, importance or usefulness of social actors, events or ideas (Fairclough, 2003). Evaluation takes the grammatical form of attributive adjectives, adverbs, verbs and nouns comprising particular denotative and connotative meanings.

The third linguistic device analyzed is hedging. Hedging generally means "those expressions in language which make messages indeterminate, that is, they convey inexactitude, or in one way or another mitigate or reduce the strength of the assertions that speakers or writers make" (Mauranen, 1997, p. 115). Hedging is typically used in forward-looking statements to express management's uncertain knowledge of plans and objectives for future operations and future economic performance (McLaren-Hankin, 2008). Hedges limit the author's personal commitment to the truth as they are subjective and evaluative. Hedging is characterized by the use of verbs such as *believe*, *expect*, *intend*, *anticipate* and *plan* as well as modal verbs such as *may* and *will* and the conditional *should* and *if* clauses. These grammatical devices will be discussed in more detail and will serve as evidence for subsequent interpretive arguments in a particular communication situation.

Meso-Level Analysis

Meso-level analysis explains why certain texts are represented by certain discourse strategies by investigating the discourse practice context including the production, distribution, reception and possible adaptation of texts. The analysis of discourse practice is concerned with aspects of text production and interpretation. As such, an analysis of the discourse practice context focuses on the roles and relationships between members of a discourse community, and the discursive practices drawn upon and in what combination (Fairclough, 1995). In the case of corporate narrative documents, this entails analyzing the relationship between managers and stakeholders, including regulatory agencies, politicians and intermediaries, such as the media. For text producers and recipients, discourse practice also comprises participants' unequal discourse access due to asymmetrical power between participants. Therefore, conceptualizing executive ethical leadership as being discursively constructed in the interaction between management and organizational audiences means that it constitutes part of the discourse practice context.

Macro-Level Analysis

Macro-level analysis seeks to take the wider social context into account in order to interpret the findings of the text analysis. The objective of the analysis is to explain why social actors and their arguments are constructed in a specific way, and why events and organizations are represented in specific ways. Depending on the text(s) in question, the focus may be on historical, economic, political or cultural contexts and backgrounds, or on a combination of them. Thus, the analysis focuses on details of the societal context, such as the roles allocated to people, and on changes in the societal context and reasons for these changes. In this case, the macro-context is concerned with the ethics of Wells Fargo's cross-selling practices.

Categories of Text Analysis

Social constructivist and critical approaches mainly focus on analyzing lexical, semantic and semiotic aspects of texts that are used to achieve specific economic, social or political goals, such as discrediting a particular stakeholder group that holds values or opinions conflicting with the organization's, or to create a more general effect, such as portraying the organization in a positive light. However, grammatical forms, such as pronouns, active and passive voice, modal verbs and adjectives, can also be used strategically (Fairclough, 2003). Therefore, this analysis focuses on the role of pronouns, passive voice and grammatical metaphor to elide agency (impersonalization), the use of adjectives, adverbs and nouns to evaluate social actors and events (evaluation), and the deployment of modal verbs in limiting the author's personal commitment to the truth (hedging).

Impersonalization

Impersonalization involves the use of linguistic devices to exclude or obfuscate social agents in the representation of processes (Marínn-Arrese, 202). Four common linguistic elements of impersonalization in English are: (1) referential vagueness; (2) passivization; (3) grammatical metaphor (nominalization); and (4) conceptual metaphor and metonymy. Referential vagueness involves shifting the referential scope of first person singular and plural pronouns (i.e. *I*, *we*, *our*, *us*) so that it is not clear who "I", "we", "our" and "us" stand for. Thus, authors use vague referential pronouns to assign actions to an incompletely defined collective social actor. Passivization entails using a passive construction to move or background the social agent, or completely remove the social agent from any involvement in an activity or action. Impersonalization is most often achieved by using grammatical metaphors, in other words, rewording processes and properties as nouns (Halliday, 1994). In this way, a verb or adjective is transformed into a noun by means of nominalization: for example, commit → commitment, stable → stability. Nominalization thus turns actions and attributes into states and constitutes a subtle way of obfuscating agency and presenting processes as facts. Conceptual metaphor involves conceptualizing a more concrete entity in terms of a more abstract entity. In this way, conceptual metaphors are used to refer to social actors at various levels of generality and abstractness and result in fuzzier referential meaning.

In some cases, the identity of the social actor is excluded through suppression or backgrounding. The social actor may be completely suppressed when there is no reference to them anywhere in the text. Backgrounding removes social actors related to the activity by pushing them into the background, although they can still be inferred from the context because they are mentioned elsewhere in the text (van Leeuwen, 1996). Social actors can be excluded because they are unknown, considered irrelevant or redundant (Blanco Gomez, 2002), for legal or ethical reasons or to protect an actor's identity. However, impersonalization may be used strategically to deliberately conceal the actor's identity in order to avoid culpability (Martínez Caro, 2002) and accountability. As nominalization often involves a noun replacing an underlying verb (e.g. we *have improved* our sales practices → *improvements* to our sales practices), it leaves "attributions of causality and responsibility unclear" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 124) and can result in rendering underlying logical relations implicit. Furthermore, if the actor is removed, it implies that social events happen without any human intervention and that "a self-generated process can be achieved" (Goatly, 1996, p. 554).

Evaluation

Evaluation refers to the qualities attributed to social actors, entities and social events. Authors use evaluative statements to either explicitly or implicitly commit themselves to specific values (Fairclough, 2003). In this respect, evaluative statements can be either explicit or implicit statements about what is desirable or positive and what is undesirable or negative, as in the following examples:

Example 1 (explicitly positive): "*highest possible* standards of ethics" (line 47)
Example 2 (explicitly negative): "as *difficult* as today's news is" (lines 53–4)
Example 3 (implicitly positive): "customers receive *only* the products they want" (line 22)
Example 4 (implicitly negative): "activity that is *inconsistent* with the values" (lines 31–21)

Other than cases of irony and sarcasm, implicit evaluation is expressed by adjectives, adverbs, verbs or nouns that do not express positivity or negativity. Their evaluative meaning is therefore often dependent on the discourse practice context, for example, the text's communicative purpose, or on the linguistic co-text, for example, the words with which they typically co-occur. In example 4, *inconsistent* is implicitly negative, as one tries to mitigate the regulatory agencies' investigations and media reports that portray Wells Fargo's values and culture as negative and undesirable. Furthermore, while qualities are typically expressed through adjectives and adverbs, verbs and nouns can also function to make subjective judgements describing and qualifying the properties of social actors, events and entities.

As corporate narrative reporting is characterized by the discourse of public relations, which aims to portray the organization in a favorable light, positive evaluation predominates in corporate narrative documents (Bhatia, 2010). However, evaluation may also be used to convey specific attitudes towards the organization and towards organizational audiences, such as customers, employees and shareholders, or towards social, economic or political issues, such as treatment of employees or financial activities.

Hedging

Hedging involves the use of a number of linguistic devices that tone down and limit the author's personal commitment to the truth of the proposition conveyed. Common linguistic hedging devices are modality and conditional phrases using *should* and *if*. Authors can use modal verbs to qualify their commitment to the truth and invoke possibility: for example, "products customers *may* not have requested" (line 15). *Should* has references to tentative assumption in the context of starting a sentence with *should* (McLaren-Hankin, 2008): for example, "*Should* you get questions from customers" (line 25). Another way of modifying commitment to a prediction is by specifying conditions via *if* clauses (Pindi & Bloor, 1987). Conditional sentences starting with *if* lessen the likelihood that an event will occur: for example, "*If* we learn of any additional customers who require refunds" (line 16).

Analysis of Wells Fargo CEO's Email

To produce an in-depth CDA, I have applied a detailed linguistic analysis to a small text sample, namely Wells Fargo's CEO's message emailed to team members on 8 September 2016, in which the CEO provides the company perspective on the 8 September settlement announcement. The email is 588 words long and is reproduced in Appendix 1. In Appendix 2, the text is analyzed line by line for a total of 51 lines. This line-by-line approach aids the discussion of the findings below. I focus on the way language is used strategically to impose the chairman's perception of managing organizational activities and outcomes.

Micro-Level Text

The focus of the analysis is on impersonalization, evaluation and hedging in Wells Fargo's CEO's message, meaning that I analyze the way in which social actors, entities and social events are represented and evaluated in the text. The micro-level analysis of the sample text in Appendix 2 reveals that impersonalization is prevalent, with referential vagueness most prevalent. This result is not surprising since impersonalization constitutes a generic feature of corporate communication (Bhatia, 2010). I further this analysis by focusing in the next sections on the strategic use of impersonalization devices, evaluation and hedging, as a means of achieving social and economic goals.

Referential Vagueness

Referential vagueness is accomplished through the use of first-person plural pronouns, *we*, *our*, *us*, that are used to refer to the collective social actor "Wells Fargo" ("relationships with *our* customers and *our* passion for doing the right thing are essential to *our* success", lines 20–1). Except in lines 3–4 and 45 (*I*, *me*), the text refers to one collective social actor relating to the firm, namely "Wells Fargo" (lines 8, 20, 27, 41, 45, 46). In fact, all important decision-making is attributed to the collective social actor "Wells Fargo" ("at *Wells Fargo*, when *we* make mistakes, *we* are open about it, *we* take responsibility, and *we* take action", lines 8–9). On the other hand, statements such as "*committed* to the best interests of our customers" (line 27) suggest that these are metaphorical expressions, because public companies such as Wells Fargo are unable to commit to anything. As a collective social actor, Wells Fargo further reinforces this by the ungrammatical use of the first-person-plural pronoun *our* instead of the grammatically correct pronoun *its*. Indeed, Wells Fargo is referred to as a fairly static entity resting on its laurels, which has "made improvements" (line 18) and "made investments" (line 36). This suggests that the firm's name "Wells Fargo" is used to denote independent decision-making by a social actor.

Also, one would assume that Wells Fargo as a collective social actor comprises all constituents of the company including employees, yet *we* is set apart from *team members* (lines 29–30, 37, 38, 41). Wells Fargo is acting on behalf of team members and is "committed to having a supportive, caring, and ethical environment for team members" (lines 29–30) along with "enhanced team member training" (line 37). Furthermore, the statement "our commitment to our customers, team members, and all of our stakeholders" (lines 38–9) categorizes employees along with outsiders. In paragraph seven, employees are referred to in the second person when Wells Fargo stipulates "standards of ethics and business conduct" (line 42) that employees are "expected to adhere to" (line 41). Employees are next included in the collective pronoun "ourselves" (line 48) and then in the second person in the ritual "thank you" in the final paragraph, distancing them from the corporate decision makers. While employees are praised for their "commitment" (line 50), all strategies to allay the cross-selling scandal are attributed to Wells Fargo. This tendency to regard employees as separate from the firm, rather than an integral part of it, is a defining characteristic of late capitalism, which prioritizes growth, sales quotas and increasing profits.

Passivization

The text contains three different types of passivization that put information the author deems important into the subject position. The three types are: (1) passive voice with grammatical actor; (2) passive voice with no social actor; and (3) agentless passives ("period *reviewed*", lines 13–14). Passive constructions either obfuscate agency or mention the actor, although the actor is an abstract entity. Paragraph 3 of the message deals with Wells Fargo's customer-oriented culture. The different ways it uses of expressing its company culture, namely *culture*, *relationships*, *passion*, all take subject position, which indicate that they are the focal point of the message conveyed to employees. In line 7, for "culture" to assume subject position, a passive construction ("is centered on") is required to emphasize that "doing what is right for our customers" contributes to the company culture. "Doing what is right for our customers" is a grammatical actor in the form of a nominalized phrase rather than a social actor.

The fourth paragraph alludes to the practice of cross-selling that Wells Fargo engaged in during the previous eight years. "Unsecured credit cards" (line 13) and "fees" (line 14) are used as grammatical actors, with the passives "opened" and "associated" with no social actor. Thus, the passives portray social events as if they occurred of their own volition and allow managers to portray questionable sales practices by means of obfuscating agency, thereby absolving them of responsibility and accountability.

The seventh paragraph deals with regulations for accountability and for the ethical performance of team members which are conveyed in the form of passive constructions. The paragraph focuses on the future contribution of team members to the ethical performance of the company, rather than on the ethical performance of Wells Fargo, the implied collective actor. In the case of "is expected" (line 41), the grammatical actor "team member" assumes the important subject position and replaces the social actor, Wells Fargo. In line 42, "standards" is mentioned as the actor of the passive "are spelled out", but is an abstract entity.

Wells Fargo only assumes subject position when the author wants to portray the firm as a purposeful collective social actor making all the right decisions: for example, "we have agreed to pay penalties" (line 5), "agreed to an independent review of our sales practices" (line 6), "at Wells Fargo . . . we take responsibility, and we take action" (lines 8–9). This suggests that management uses active and passive voice strategically. The active voice is used to foreground information that management considers important, and when management wants to claim responsibility for positive actions and decisions. The passive voice is used to background information that management considers unimportant, and dissociates the company from negative organizational outcomes.

Grammatical Metaphors or Nominalizations, and Conceptual Metaphors

Grammatical metaphors in the form of nominalizations are the second most prevalent form of impersonalization after referential vagueness. Grammatical metaphors or nominalizations replace social actors with grammatical actors by using the noun-form of the verb as subject of the sentence ("Our *commitment* to our customers", line 38) or by combining an adverbial of time with a grammatical metaphor ("*Today's agreements* are consistent", line 9). Conceptual metaphors also replace social actors with grammatical actors ("*relationships* with our customers and our *passion*", lines 20–1). In addition, combining grammatical metaphors with conceptual metaphors allows nominalizations to serve as social actors ("all of our *actions* together keep Wells Fargo strong and vibrant", line 46).

The message of the entire statement is centered around the conceptual metaphor "culture" (lines 7, 22, 27, 32 and 45). It is the driver of Wells Fargo's extensive reorganization strategy with statements such as "entire *culture* is centred on doing what is right for our customers" (line 7), "relationships with our customers and our passion for doing the right thing . . . have been part of our company's *culture* for more than 160 years" (lines 20–3) and "Wells Fargo's *culture* is committed to the best interests of our customers" (line 27), and is the determining factor in the firm's image repair. In fact, Wells Fargo stresses the crucial role of its "unique *culture* [which] sets us apart" (line 45) and which is "inconsistent with the values and *culture*" (lines 31–2) and "inconsistent with our *Code of Ethics*" (line 43). As a grammatical actor, *culture* enables Wells Fargo to downplay any ethical wrongdoing and justifies the organizational activity of selling products and services to customers by fraudulent means to increase profits. However, it also removes the unethical deceit and manipulation from the business of opening unauthorized accounts. The grammatical metaphor *culture* is thus used as a means of obfuscating the precise nature of the firm's activities and the unethical and fraudulent nature of these activities. In this context, the focus on *culture* seems to indicate that profit is "an unproblematic measure of success" (Chwastiak & Young, 2003, p. 548).

Evaluation

Figure 1 presents instances of evaluation in the sample text according to their positive or negative meanings and whether those meanings are implicit or

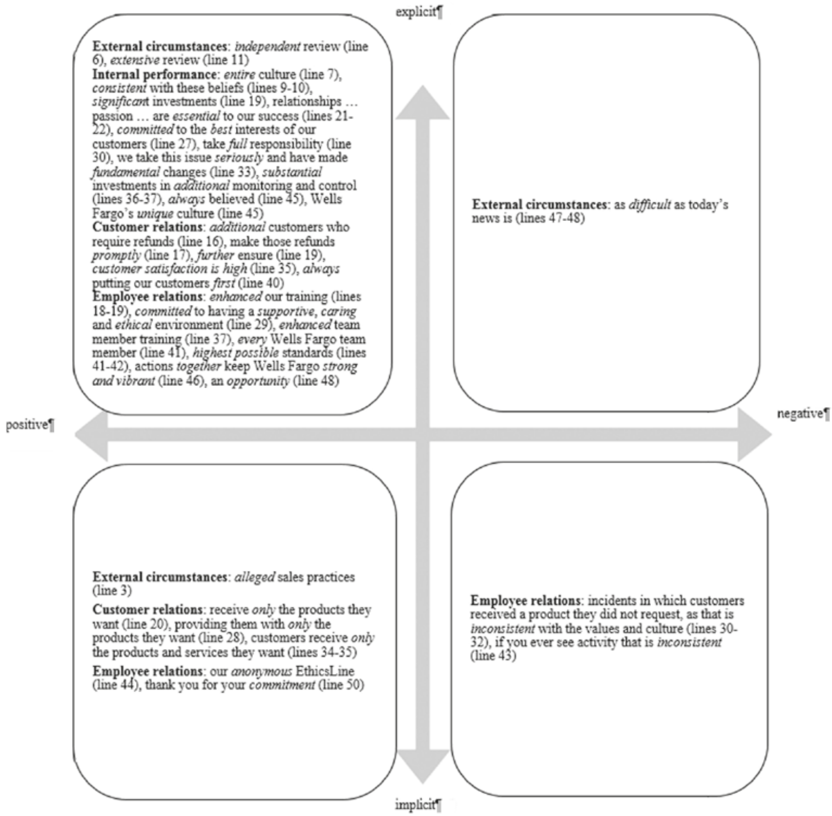

Fig. 1: *Evaluations in the CEO's message*

explicit. Of the 40 instances of evaluation in the text, three-quarters are explicitly positive, with six more implicitly positive. Only one evaluation is explicitly negative, and two are implicitly negative evaluations. Negative evaluation is restricted to external circumstances, specifically the results of the financial investigation surrounding the firm's operations. Implicit negative evaluation attempts to downplay unethical cross-selling practices and is also a subtle way of shifting responsibility to employees. In contrast, internal performance, customer relations and the firm's relations with employees are all evaluated positively. These overall findings are not unusual for a genre characterized by public relations discourse aimed at portraying the organization in a positive light (Bhatia, 2010).

The few instances of negative evaluation occur in the first, sixth (first bullet) and seventh paragraphs. In each case, negative evaluation is juxtaposed with positive concepts or combined with positive evaluations to neutralize the negativity. For example, *alleged sales practices* is followed by the sentence that the "news will be widely reported, and I want to be sure you hear from me on where we stand and why we are taking these steps" (lines 3–4). Likewise, *inconsistent* is couched in positive, moral, upright wording as "inconsistent with the *values and culture* we strive to live up to every day" (lines 31–2) and "inconsistent with our *Code of Ethics*" (line 43) and "our anonymous *EthicsLine*" (line 44). Finally, reference to "as difficult as today's news is" is embedded in the sentence stressing "*opportunity* to recommit ourselves to our customers" (line 48). This suggests that the strategic use of evaluation promotes "a positive image of the company, even in adverse and challenging economic circumstances" (Bhatia, 2010, p. 39). However, evaluation is never presented as anyone's opinion, but is cleverly used to provide an ostensibly neutral and objective description of facts, instead of an attitude driven by management's agenda.

Hedging

The text uses three different types of linguistic hedging devices: (1) modality; (2) conditional phrases using *if*; and (3) starting sentences with the conditional *should*. When a modal verb is used, for example "products customers *may* not have requested" (line 15), the author throws doubt on the activity and attempts to negate the fact that customers received these products without their knowledge. In other words, modal verbs limit the author's personal commitment to the truth. Another way Wells Fargo limits or tones down commitment to a prediction or the possibility of the prediction occurring is by specifying conditions in phrases such as "*[i]f* we learn of any additional customers who require refunds" (line 16) and "*[i]f* you ever see activity that is inconsistent with our code of ethics" (line 43). "*Should* you get questions from customers, family members, or friends about today's news" (line 25) allows Wells Fargo to make statements that express uncertain knowledge. Although Wells Fargo invokes the possibility of questions from stakeholders, *should* signifies that this assumption is only tentative. As a result of the combination of these features, the chairman's letter to team members "strongly projects a positive and forward-looking image of the achievements" (Bhatia, 2004, p. 15) and organizational changes affecting employees that Wells Fargo has made. Bhatia (2004, p. 15) interprets this "as being very typical of business activity, which always thrives on building positive relations between participants, in this case between the organization [and] the employees".

Meso-Level: Discourse Practice Context

The purpose of the CEO, as board representative and formal head of the company, in sending this email is to provide a personal account of the organizational activities and events surrounding the recent settlement announcement. Although John Stumpf, chairman and CEO of Wells Fargo, is semiotically present in the form of his signature, linguistically he is almost entirely absent. The first person singular *I* is used once in the opening paragraph (line 3) and once in the second-last paragraph (line 45). In fact, the chairman does not even use *I* in the final paragraph in the context of ritually thanking the firm's employees for their contributions. In this text, the function of the "supposed" author of the message is purely symbolic. The chairman is merely the animator who articulates the text (Goffman, 1981). He serves as the spokesperson for others in the organization, presumably senior management, whose position his statement reflects.

The audience for this email is employees who, as frontline team members, are particularly targeted in paragraph six using a bulleted list. The bulleted list actually provides guidelines and information for employees to use should they receive questions from stakeholders and the public. Firms use this typical public relations strategy because the public is more likely to relate to workers on the front lines than those in the highest ranks, so firms seek to empower employees who will counter the negative message (Gaines-Ross, 2010). Firms actually want to let people ask questions directly to employees who have been through the experience and perhaps have the same grievances. "Employees who share their company's values are its natural allies and most believable voices" (Gaines-Ross, 2010, p. 74). However, in this text, the bullets directly provide the script for employees to follow. In other words, the CEO manipulates employees to spread positive information about organizational changes and provides the arguments to support these claims. In addition, through reiteration of the company's position, employees are used to achieve the ultimate goal of late capitalist organization: maximize shareholder value.

Any reference to stakeholders centers almost completely on Wells Fargo's customers in paragraphs three, four, five, six and eight. *Customers* appears fourteen times in the message, in addition to nine occurrences of the pronouns *they*, *their* or *them*. Paragraphs three and five emphasize "doing what is right for our *customers*" (line 7), "relationships with our *customers*" (lines 20–1) and "earn our *customers*' trust" (line 23). Paragraphs five and six seek to redress Wells Fargo's controversial sales practices by ensuring that "*customers* receive only the products they want" (line 20) and "products [*customers*] want" (line 28); "*customers* receive only the products and services they want and value" (lines 34–5). Paragraph six further emphasizes the "best interests of our *customers*" (line 27), "commitment to our *customers*" (line 38) and "putting our *customers* first" (line 40). Finally, paragraph eight concludes with "recommit[ting] ourselves to our *customers*" (line 48). Once again, the focus of the message is on ensuring that employees receive only positive information and guidelines for serving customers ethically, which ultimately contributes to repairing the firm's reputation (Cravens & Oliver, 2006) and allays investor concerns.

Macro-Level: Social Context

The text analysis reveals that the message only implicitly refers to the socio-economic context which forms the background to the firm's settlement announcement published on 8 September 2016. During the previous five years, and as subsequent investigations revealed, for more than eight years (Egan, 2017) Wells Fargo's management instituted a "work environment characterized by intense pressure to meet aggressive and unrealistic sales goals" (United States Senate Committee, 2016, p. 1). Cross-selling products and services to current (and phoney) customers was one of the main reasons Wells Fargo was able to weather the financial crisis of 2008–9 much better than any other US bank (Hearit, 2018). However, these practices are only obliquely referred to in the opening paragraph as "alleged sales practices" (line 3), in paragraph four as "consumer and small business retail banking deposit accounts and unsecured credit cards opened" (lines 12–13) and "products customers may not have requested" (line 15), and in paragraph eight as "issues" (line 47).

Furthermore, the message makes no reference to events such as the December 2013 *LA Times* exposure of Wells Fargo's pressure-cooker sales culture (Reckard, 2013b) that provoked strong reactions from former employees (Reckard, 2013a) and the follow-up investigation resulting in the City of Los Angeles suing Wells Fargo in May 2015 (Reckard, 2015). The first four paragraphs of the text focus on settlements, agreements to pay penalties (although omitting to provide the exact amount of $185 million), refunds of $2.6 million of fees, and possible future refunds depending on the current review. Paragraphs four, six, seven and nine, of which paragraph six is the longest in the message, detail how Wells Fargo has restructured operations. Thus, the narrative constructed by the chairman's email is that of a firm responding by means of strategic reorganization to a third-party

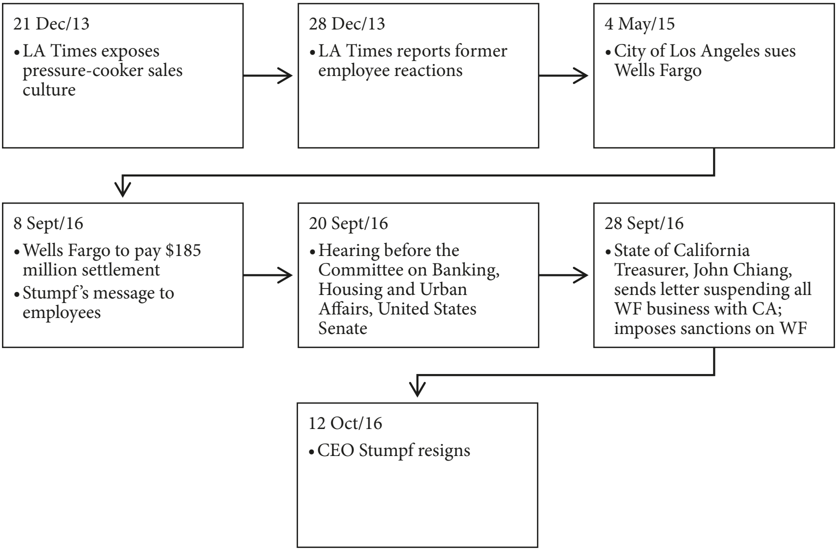

Fig. 2: *Timeline of exposure, investigation and penalties*

review of its sales practices initiated in response to media reports. Figure 2 presents a timeline of the most important events surrounding the publication of the 8 September 2016 message to employees.

Although the CEO's statement depicts a positive portrayal of an ethical and customer-oriented culture at all levels of the organization, the City of Los Angeles lawsuit concluded the opposite. The lawsuit stated that upper management and executives at Wells Fargo should be blamed for unlawful and fraudulent conduct, in addition to the 5,300 employees who were fired for opening unauthorized accounts. "Wells Fargo has 'known about and encouraged these practices for years', the California lawsuit said. 'Wells Fargo has engineered a virtual fee-generating machine, through which its customers are harmed, its employees take the blame, and Wells Fargo reaps the profits'" (Egan, 2016b). Furthermore, the CEO's portrayal of these practices as inconsistent with Wells Fargo's culture differs dramatically from expert findings and employee experience. Julie Ragatz, director of the Center for Ethics in Financial Services at the American College, said the "culprit in this case in not just the individuals involved, but the corporate culture itself" (Egan, 2016b). One former employee thinks the illegal activity was systemic and said it "was ingrained in the culture for a long time" (Egan, 2016b). During the Hearing before the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, one senator told the chairman that "Wells Fargo had a sales culture that was blatantly antiethical to what is best for customers" (p. 16).[2] Mr John Chiang, Treasurer for the State of California, concurred when he wrote in his letter to the Wells Fargo chairman and members of the board of directors that the "recent discovery that Wells Fargo & Company fleeced its customers by opening fraudulent accounts for the purpose of extracting millions in illegal fees demonstrates . . . a culture which actively promotes wanton greed" (Chiang, 2016).

Many senators also questioned the chairman about accountability in the executive ranks because Wells Fargo had not admitted to any responsibility for a single misdeed and described the following:

> Wells Fargo team members, many struggling to support a family on $12 or $15 an hour – my understanding is Wells Fargo tellers make about $11.80 an hour. Wells Fargo team members . . . followed their managers' guidance to do whatever it took to make their quotas . . . goals that Wells now admits were too high. They have been accountable, these low-income workers. The workers lost their jobs with no parachute of any color. (p. 3)

Senators wanted to know if Ms Carrie Tolstedt, Senior Executive Vice President for Community Banking, who departed with "millions of dollars in compensation after thousands of [the bank's] employees defrauded customers" (p. 9), would be held accountable. Ms Tolstedt "knew of this problem at least 5 years ago and is retiring [and walking] away with up to $150 million" (p. 3). While 5,300 team members were fired, Ms Tolstedt did not inform the chairman or the board of directors, even though both Mr Stumpf and she herself sat on that board. Senior management and the board of directors apparently did not perceive any fault either. However, once the scandal became public, "remedial actions were stepped up against front-line team members, but the praise and performance bonuses continued to be lavished upon Ms. Tolstedt until as recently as 2 months ago" (p. 4) up until two months before the hearing. Ms Tolstedt was also awarded "over $20 million in bonuses between 2010 and 2015 because of strong cross-sell ratios [even though] she was hitting numbers by these fraudulent accounts" (p. 17). During the hearing, the chairman was lambasted for "gutless leadership" (p. 27) and for "personally cit[ing] Wells Fargo's success at cross-selling retail accounts as one of the main reasons to buy more stock in the company" (p. 28). Back in 2010, in a letter to shareholders, the chairman wrote that Wells

2 The page numbers in parentheses in the next sections refer to the Hearing before the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs United States Senate on 20 September 2016.

Fargo's goal was eight products per customer because eight "rhymed with great" (p. 1). In reality "most customers at big banks average fewer than three accounts" (p. 27). Meanwhile, every quarter the chairman hypocritically held ethics sessions for employees.

Regarding treatment of employees, the chairman's message insists that Wells Fargo provides a "supportive, caring and ethical" work environment. On the same day as the chairman appeared before the Senate Committee, Egan reported that "[f]ormer employees [told] CNNMoney that they felt incredible demands from managers to meet sales quotas. The same managers turned a blind eye when ethical and even legal lines were crossed." One employee said, "I had managers in my face yelling at me" (Egan, 2016b). To determine the truthfulness of these reports, the chairman was questioned at the hearing about whether Wells Fargo culture enables employees to "feel empowered", to "come forward and speak and be heard" (p. 33). Just as he wrote in the analyzed text, the CEO answered that employees are asked to report infractions to managers, HR Advisors or an anonymous EthicsLine. However, employees contradicted these claims of ethical leadership occurring at any level of the organization. "Reporting infractions to the executive office was as useless as reporting to branch managers or district managers. They all covered each other up and fabricated excuse after excuse" (Reckard, 2013a).

With a few leading questions during the Senate hearing, the chairman agreed that workplace actions should reflect the values of the institution, meaning that senior executives like Mr Stumpf are responsible for nurturing and honing a company-wide ethical culture for its employees and its employees' actions. Following this line of inquiry, the hearing focused on the 5,300 fired employees and whether the company established some kind of orchestrated effort to get so many employees to commit fraud:

> But when thousands of people conduct the same kind of fraudulent activity, it is a stretch to believe that every one of them independently conjured up this idea of how they would commit this fraud. Is it not very probable that there was some orchestration that happened at some level? If not – I am not suggesting it was you personally by any means, but does it not defy common sense to think that there was not some orchestration of this? (p. 18)

Rather than instilling an ethical culture, the chairman and his senior executives created an environment in which a culture of "deception and deceit thrived" within the organization (p. 19). This environment was a "combination of low wages, punishing sales quotas, [and] grossly misaligned compensation incentives throughout the bank's organizational structure, as is evidenced [by the fact] that [the chairman] removed it" (p. 19). During the following exchange about ethics (pp. 42–3), the chairman had no answer:

Senator.	Will you make it up to those who were fired for not meeting goals when you say those goals were ill-advised? Is that ethical?
Mr Stumpf.	[No reply.]
Senator.	Will you make them whole?
Mr Stumpf.	I do not know . . .

As for the ethical treatment of customers, as well as a customer-oriented culture resulting in high customer satisfaction that permeates Wells Fargo's message, Wells Fargo itself admits that "new account openings and credit card applications plunged by 30 per cent between August and September" (Egan, 2016a). Wells Fargo customers were absolutely livid over these phantom accounts (Isidore, 2016). When victims wanted to turn to the justice system to hold Wells Fargo accountable the bank rerouted them to forced arbitration, because it argued that arbitration clauses included in the contracts customers signed to open legitimate accounts also covered disputes related to the false ones set up without their knowledge or consent. One Senator provided his own narrative to counter Wells Fargo's hedging tactics: "This is not a matter of customers who '. . . *received products and services they did not want or need*', as Wells Fargo puts it. That makes it sound like there was a mix-up under the Christmas tree and I got the right-handed baseball glove that was meant for my brother Charlie" (p. 3). Wells Fargo also sold customers enhanced identity theft protection, so that at the same time as the bank was stealing customers' identities it was charging for protecting them. It seems customers paid for an ID theft product that failed to discover the fraudulent Wells' accounts.

Summary of Executive Ethical Leadership

One of the two pillars of executive ethical leadership is being a *moral person*. Articulating organizational values must come from the top. The "tone, emphasis, what the leader does, what the leader says, is sometimes more important than anything else . . . and it was only . . . as a result of what ultimately Los Angeles County and the regulators and others did that forced the issue" (p. 16). The financial industry has been pushing for lower regulations and more trust in the industry's operations. However, with the Wells Fargo's scandal, trust in large financial institutions and trust between Wells Fargo and its customers have been lost. Wells Fargo's narrative assured everyone that it was addressing the problems and working on various types of remediation in 2011, 2013 and 2015. Now, in 2016, Wells Fargo is once again saying trust us, we are working on it, but it is still not doing what needs to be done to restore confidence with government entities and the public. Thus, as a *moral person*, the chairman lacks integrity, honesty and trustworthiness. He fails to demonstrate integrity due to inconsistencies between his words and his actions. He fails to show commitment to values through his own actions, as well as care and respect for others that might guide these actions. He lacks trustworthiness in expecting that another party, or other parties, will perform particular actions to redress the situation while he and top executive leaders have let the situation persist for years, and have even rewarded those leaders.

The second pillar of executive ethical leadership is being a *moral manager*. As a *moral manager*, the chairman and everyone at the executive level must display ethical leadership that promotes appropriate conduct and guides followers to honor these principles. The analysis reveals that the chairman failed to instill ethical organizational practices and failed to facilitate internal stakeholders' efforts to uphold these values. Much of the text analyzed focuses on customer relationships, while neglecting the need to forge better relationships with employees and do what is right for employees, particularly the 5,300 fired employees. Those employees "did not unilaterally decide to be dishonest" (p. 35). Wells Fargo punished the workers at the bottom of the chain and did not punish anyone at the top. Although he is CEO and chairman of the board, Mr Stumpf repeatedly said at the hearing that the board will decide whether any senior executive will be held accountable and whether any clawbacks of executive bonuses are warranted. He does not want to prejudice any board decisions, which indicates a corporate culture at the top that does not care. This seems particularly disturbing when Wells Fargo fails to support team members but repeatedly manipulates them into serving as allies.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have used Critical Discourse Analysis and a wide range of linguistic devices to analyze a written text more systematically and in more detail than an analysis using fewer resources. I have applied Fairclough's (2003) Dialectic-Relational approach to the analysis of a CEO's email to employees of an American banking firm. By linking the content and linguistic features of the chairman's message to the specific context of the text production and reception, and to the broader socio-economic context, I show that management uses linguistic and semiotic devices strategically to achieve a variety of economic and public relations goals.

This analysis demonstrates that linguistic devices such as impersonalization, which obfuscates social agents, and evaluation, which attributes qualities to social actors, entities and social events, can be used strategically to guide audience's interpretation of organizational activities and outcomes. In Wells Fargo's 2016 chairman's message, they are used to portray sales practices in a positive light and to emphasize an ethical corporate culture regarding customers and team members. In this respect, I show that impersonalization has an ideological effect. By transforming actions into nouns and deleting social agents, the relationship between cause and effect is obfuscated, a phenomenon which, in turn, neglects to attribute responsibility and weakens accountability.

In the sample text, impersonalization plays a major part in normalizing and legitimizing aggressive sales practices and manipulation of stakeholders' impressions of ethical organizational activities by depicting them in an abstract and advantageous manner. This would not be possible if the impact of an aggressive cross-selling culture was stated in congruous language, which realizes people, places and things as nouns, actions as verbs, and logical relations of time and consequence as adverbs and conjunctions (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 238). Congruous language would therefore reveal that Wells Fargo's unethical culture originated with executive leadership at the highest levels of the company.

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Appendix 1. Wells Fargo's CEO Email to Team Members 2016

Inside the Stagecoach

Perspective on Sept. 8 settlement announcement

A message from John Stumpf, Chairman and CEO of Wells Fargo & Company.

The following message from CEO John Stumpf was emailed to all Wells Fargo team members on Sept. 8, 2016.

SEPTEMBER 8, 2016

Today we are announcing settlements with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, and the Office of the Los Angeles City Attorney over alleged sales practices. The news will be widely reported, and I want to be sure you hear from me on where we stand and why we are taking these steps.

Specifically with today's settlements, we have agreed to pay penalties and agreed to an independent review of our sales practices.

Our entire culture is centered on doing what is right for our customers. However, at Wells Fargo, when we make mistakes, we are open about it, we take responsibility, and we take action. Today's agreements are consistent with these beliefs.

Prior to these settlements, we completed an extensive review by a third-party consulting firm going back into 2011. The review included consumer and small business retail banking deposit accounts and unsecured credit cards opened during the period reviewed. Based on this review, we have refunded $2.6 million of fees associated with products customers may not have requested, averaging about $25 per account. If we learn of any additional customers who require refunds, we will make those refunds promptly.

We also have made improvements to our sales practices, enhanced our training, and made significant investments in monitoring and controls to further ensure customers receive only the products they want. At Wells Fargo, relationships with our customers and our passion for doing the right thing are essential to our success, and they have been part of our company's culture for more than 160 years. Every day, we work to earn our customers' trust and provide products and services that help them succeed financially.

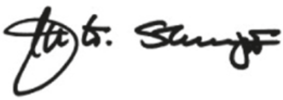
Should you get questions from customers, family members, or friends about today's news, here are some key points to keep in mind:

- Wells Fargo's culture is committed to the best interests of our customers, providing them with only the products they want and value. We also are committed to having a supportive, caring, and ethical environment for team members. We regret and take full responsibility for the incidents in which customers received a product they did not request, as that is inconsistent with the values and culture we strive to live up to every day.
- We take this issue seriously and have made fundamental changes over the past three years to ensure that customers receive only the products and services they want and value, and customer satisfaction is high.
- We also have made substantial investments in additional monitoring and control systems and enhanced team member training.
- Our commitment to our customers, team members, and all of our stakeholders is to take every opportunity to reinforce the values and principles of always putting our customers first.

As you know, every Wells Fargo team member is expected to adhere to the highest possible standards of ethics and business conduct, which are spelled out in our *Code of Ethics*. If you ever see activity that is inconsistent with our *Code of Ethics*, please report it immediately to your manager, HR Advisor, or our anonymous EthicsLine.

I have always believed that Wells Fargo's unique culture sets us apart, and all of our actions together keep Wells Fargo strong and vibrant. This includes the actions we take when issues arise. So, as difficult as today's news is, this is an opportunity to recommit ourselves to our customers, doing all that we can to put their interests first.

Thank you for your commitment to satisfying our customers' financial needs and helping them succeed financially.



Appendix 2. Annotated CEO's Email

Today *we* (REF) are announcing *settlements* (GM) with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, and the Office of the Los Angeles City Attorney over *alleged* (EV) *sales practices* (CM). The news will be widely *reported* (PAS), and I want to be sure you hear from me on where *we* (REF) stand and why *we* (REF) are taking these steps.

Specifically with today's *settlements* (GM), *we* (REF) have agreed to pay penalties and agreed to an *independent* (EV) review of *our* (REF) *sales practices* (CM).

Our (REF) *entire* (EV) *culture* (CM) is *centered* (PAS) on doing what is right for *our* (REF) customers. However, at Wells Fargo (REF), when *we* (REF) make mistakes, *we* (REF) are open about it, *we* (REF) take responsibility, and *we* (REF) take action. *Today's agreements* (GM) are *consistent* (EV) with these beliefs.

(11) Prior to these settlements, *we* (REF) completed an *extensive* (EV) *review* (GM) *by a third-party consulting firm* (PAS) going back into 2011. The *review* (GM) included consumer and small business retail banking deposit accounts and unsecured credit cards *opened* (PAS) during the period *reviewed* (PAS). On the basis of this *review* (GM), *we* (REF) have refunded \$2.6 million of fees *associated* (PAS) with *products* (REF) customers *may not have requested* (HED), averaging about \$25 per account. *If* (HED) *we* (REF) learn of any *additional* (EV) customers who require refunds, *we* (REF) will make those *refunds* (GM) *promptly* (EV).

We (REF) also have made *improvements* (GM) to *our* (REF) *sales practices* (CM), *enhanced* (EV) *our* (REF) training, and made *significant* (EV) *investments* (GM) in *monitoring and* *controls* (GM) to *further* (EV) ensure customers receive *only* (EV) the products they want. At *Wells Fargo* (REF), *relationships* (CM) with *our* (REF) customers and *our* (REF) *passion* (CM) for doing the right thing are *essential* (EV) to *our* (REF) *success* (GM), and they have been part of *our* (REF) company's culture for more than 160 years. Every day, *we* (REF) work to earn *our* (REF) customers' trust and provide *products and services* (GM, CM) that help them succeed financially.

(25) *Should* (HED) you get questions from customers, family members, or friends about today's news, here are some key points to keep in mind:

- *Wells Fargo* (REF)'s culture is *committed* (EV) to the *best* (EV) interests of *our* (REF) customers, providing them with *only* (EV) the products they want and value. *We* (REF) also are *committed* (EV) to having a *supportive, caring, and ethical* (EV) environment for team members. *We* (REF) regret and take *full* (EV) responsibility for the incidents in which customers received a product they did not request, as *that* (REF) is *inconsistent* (EV) with the *values and culture* (CM) *we* (REF) strive to live up to every day.
- *We* (REF) take this issue *seriously* (EV) and have made *fundamental* (EV) *changes* (GM) over the past three years to ensure that customers receive *only* (EV) the *products and services* (GM, CM) they want and value, and *customer satisfaction is high* (EV).

(36) • *We* (REF) also have made *substantial* (EV) *investments* (GM) in *additional* (EV) monitoring and control systems and *enhanced* (EV) team member training.

- *Our* (REF) *commitment* (GM) to *our* (REF) customers, team members, and all of *our* (REF) *stakeholders* (REF) is to take every opportunity to reinforce the *values and principles* (CM) of *always* (EV) putting *our* (REF) customers *first* (EV).
  As you know, *every* (EV) Wells Fargo team member is *expected* (PAS) to adhere to the *highest possible* (EV) standards of ethics and business conduct, which are *spelled out* (PAS) in our *Code of Ethics*. *If* (HED) you ever see *activity* (GM) that is *inconsistent* (EV) with our *Code of Ethics*, please report it immediately to your manager, HR Advisor, or *our* (REF) *anonymous* (EV) EthicsLine.

(45) I have *always* (EV) believed that *Wells Fargo* (REF)'s *unique* (EV) culture sets *us* (REF) apart, and all of *our* (REF) *actions* (GM, CM) *together* (EV) keep *Wells Fargo* (REF) *strong and vibrant* (EV, CM). *This* (REF) includes the *actions* (GM) *we* (REF) take when *issues* (CM) arise. So, as *difficult* (EV) as today's news is, this is an *opportunity* (EV) to recommit *ourselves* (REF) to *our* (REF) customers, doing all that *we* (REF) can to put their interests first.

Key:
REF: referential vagueness
PAS: passivization
GM: grammatical metaphor
CM: conceptual metaphor (text for producer)
EV: evaluation
HED: hedging

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In our ever growing interconnected world, communication has become an essential tool for businesses and entrepreneurs. To be effective, business communication needs to take social and ethical considerations into account. This volume brings together different perspectives about ethics in business and communication, with special emphasis on the new challenges deriving from the digital world. From a variety of disciplinary perspectives (discourse analysis, communication studies, linguistics, rhetoric, semiotics, business and management studies), the contributors explore the production and interpretation of texts and interactions from an ethical perspective, as well as the use (and abuse) of communicative strategies and tactics of persuasion. Among other topics, the volume deals with the use of rhetorical and linguistic strategies in the entrepreneurial pitch, ethical leadership in business management, gender issues in entrepreneurship, the ethics of tourism, and the use of digital and collaborative tools in professional and educational contexts.

Verónica González-Araujo, PhD in Modern Languages is Lecturer at the University of Alcalá and member of the Institutional Marketing and Digital Communications Department.

Roberto-Carlos Álvarez-Delgado, PhD in Audiovisual Communication and Advertising, is Lecturer in Communication Studies and Director for Institutional Marketing and Electronic Communications at the University of Alcalá.

Ángel Sancho-Rodríguez, PhD in Audiovisual Communication and Advertising and Graduated in Business is Associate Professor at the University of Alcala and coordinator of the Master in Audiovisual Production, Complutense University of Madrid.

www.peterlang.com

Peter Lang
Bruxelles