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CONSTRUCTING PERSUASION IN TOURISM PROMOTION WEBSITES: A CORPUS-ASSISTED STUDY OF HYPHENATED ADJECTIVES IN ENGLISH

Abstract

The discourse of promotional tourism employs a rich array of adjectives. However, to date, there exists a dearth of comprehensive studies exploring the usage and characteristics of hyphenated adjectives within promotional tourism discourse. This paper focuses on the lexical examination of such adjectives and elucidates their persuasive role as interpersonal markers that shape the author's voice/stance within the metadiscourse framework. Two main objectives are pursued: (1) to determine the keyness of hyphenated adjectives within the study corpus (PROMTOUR) in comparison to their occurrence in the enTenTen20 reference corpus, and (2) to identify and classify morphological patterns and clusters associated with hyphenated adjectives. A specialized corpus comprising over 760,000 words from 33 original English promotional tourism websites is analyzed using Sketch Engine. The findings indicate that hyphenated adjectives account for approximately 30% of the adjectival lemmas, displaying a remarkably high occurrence in PROMTOUR. Consequently, these adjectives emerge as a pivotal lexical characteristic employed by the authors to fulfil readers' expectations within this particular genre. Furthermore, qualitative analyses reveal the recurrent occurrence of specific morphological patterns, notably those involving past and present participles. The implications of the study for the teaching of tourism English and translation are also discussed.

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Key words

hyphenated adjectives, tourism discourse, keyness, morphological patterns, persuasion.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, the initial phase of visiting a tourist destination commonly commences in the digital sphere, where prospective travelers are encouraged to embark on an experiential journey. Suau Jiménez (2012) introduced the notion of “tourist 2.0” within the context of tourism discourse to describe individuals who increasingly organize their trips through online platforms. These tourists or travelers actively participate by conducting searches, making comparisons, and no longer relying solely on the guidance of travel agencies. Instead, their decisions are directly influenced by the presentation of tourist products or services on the Internet. Indeed, the Web has become an optimal space not only for the emergence of 2.0 genres like blogs, travel forums, and institutional websites but also for accessing digital versions of traditional paper-based tourist materials, such as brochures, guidebooks, and travel magazines. These digital adaptations further benefit from the multimodal and interactive nature of the online domain, incorporating features such as videos, search engines, and hyperlinks. Indeed, digital multimodality is becoming an indispensable component of the ESP digital landscape (Guillén-Galve & Vela Tafalla, 2023).

In accordance with Calvi’s (2010) classification, promotional tourism websites, including those of institutional nature, fall within the category of institutional genres, which are disseminated by official entities such as national governments, local councils, and departments, among others, with the primary objective of promotion. Calvi (2010) characterizes tourism websites as a macro-genre encompassing other genres, such as descriptive guides, practical guides, sections for professionals, and travelers’ forums, among others. The presence of genre hybridity within tourism websites gives rise to diverse textual typologies that serve distinct purposes. While providing comprehensive tourist information akin to guidebooks, these websites also place significant emphasis on promotional elements typical of advertisements and brochures, aiming to entice users to visit a particular destination. Consequently, they serve a persuasive function in addition to providing informational content.

The language of promotional tourism websites can shape tourists’ perceptions, behavior and even attitudes towards a particular destination. Consequently, the language utilized on these websites actively contributes to the construction and description of tourist experiences. As Dann (1996) suggests, places are not inherently touristic; rather, their touristic nature is constructed through the use of language. In the context of tourism websites, this involves the adoption of an engaging and captivating language that is highly emphatic and rich in very positive evaluative terms (Cappelli, 2006). Given the exclusive focus on positive and exotic perspectives, the discourse of tourism has been described as a “a form of extreme language” (Dann, 1996: 65).

Persuasion within promotional tourism discourse has been approached through the exploration of interpersonal metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005; Hyland &

Tse, 2004) and its mechanisms of stance and engagement, derived from the author's voice and the reader's involvement respectively (Suau Jiménez, 2016). Numerous studies have focused on adjectives, or boosters in the context of metadiscourse, and their persuasive function in constructing effective promotional communication (Durán-Muñoz, 2019; Edo Marzá, 2011; Goethals & Segers, 2016; Kang & Yu, 2011; Mapelli, 2008; Pierini, 2009; Suau Jiménez, 2016). However, despite their significance in English tourism promotional language, hyphenated adjectives have received little attention in these works, remaining virtually unnoticed.

This study aims to contribute to the lexical analysis of tourism promotional language by undertaking a quantitative and qualitative research of hyphenated adjectives in a corpus of tourism destination websites in English. This is achieved by comparing our specific corpus of English-language tourism promotion websites, known as PROMTOUR, with the English Web 2020 reference corpus (enTenTen20). The analysis begins with a keyness examination to determine the significance of hyphenated adjectives in promotional tourism discourse. Subsequently, a more in-depth qualitative exploration is conducted to identify prevalent morphological patterns and clusters associated with hyphenated adjectives in the language used for tourism promotion. By shedding light on the persuasive role and linguistic characteristics of hyphenated adjectives, this research contributes to a better understanding of promotional tourism discourse.

2. METADISOURSE AND TOURISM PROMOTIONAL COMMUNICATION

Metadiscourse, as defined by Hyland (2005: 37), refers to “the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assist the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage the readers as members of a particular community”. This analytical framework has been applied to various studies, including those examining digital genres such as Twitter conference presentations (Villares, 2023) and tourism promotional websites (Ivorra-Pérez, 2014; Mapelli, 2008; Suau Jiménez, 2012, 2019), revealing the dynamics between authors and readers and exploring how authors guide readers towards their intended objectives through the use of targeted strategies.

These metadiscursive strategies manifest as interpersonal markers of stance (representing the author's perspective) and engagement (reflecting the reader's perspective) (Hyland, 2008; Hyland & Tse, 2004). Within the discourse of tourism promotion on websites, persuasion is intricately tied to the authorial voice/stance, which is manifested through the use of hedges, attitudinal markers, self-mention markers, and, notably, various types of adjectives. This study particularly focuses on the lexical analysis of hyphenated adjectives, which are considered a specific type of interpersonal marker of stance.

In order to achieve effective social communication, and specifically in the context of promotional communication, it is crucial for the senders or writers to carefully craft and adjust their interactions in accordance with the needs and expectations of the receivers (Suau Jiménez, 2020). This concept aligns with Sacks et al.'s (1974) notion of "recipient design" wherein senders modify their style and structure based on the intended recipients. Consequently, in order to achieve effective communication, senders must possess an understanding of the persuasive techniques and communication strategies that are most likely to resonate with their readers, taking into account disciplinary and genre-specific conventions, and adapt their discourse accordingly.

In the context of the tourism community, the authors of texts should know the linguistic expectations of tourists or readers with regards to the lexicon employed in tourism promotion websites. Previous research (Durán-Muñoz, 2019; Edo Marzá, 2011; Goethals & Segers, 2016; Kang & Yu, 2011; Mapelli, 2008; Pierini, 2009; Suau Jiménez, 2016) have demonstrated that the use of adjectives serves as a mechanism through which writers of tourist promotional genres establish their authorial voice, thereby projecting credibility and fostering persuasion.

Beyond adjectives, various studies have delved into other persuasive mechanisms employed in tourism promotional language, exploring the markers contributing to the creation of an interpersonal discourse based on the author-reader relationship, which is "fundamental for the achievement of the communicative objective of tourism promotion genres, the persuasion of the reader" (Suau Jiménez, 2012: 144). Attitude, engagement, and self-mention markers have been identified as significant elements in this regard (Labarta Postigo & Suau Jiménez, 2006; Suau Jiménez, 2015, 2016). Moreover, verbs of perception, which evoke pleasurable sensations and recreate the tourist experience, have been examined (Mocini, 2005; Pérez Vázquez, 2011; Soto-Almela & Navarro-Coy, 2018). Modal expressions of necessity have also been pinpointed as explicit markers of persuasion (Radovanović, 2020). Additionally, other linguistic devices such as puns, neologisms, and phraseological units have been noted for their contribution to the unique creativity of tourism discourse (Navarro-Coy & Soto-Almela, 2014). These elements collectively work to captivate the recipients' attention. Nevertheless, as previously indicated, the primary focus of this study revolves around adjectives as an essential component of the authorial voice that effectively enhances persuasion in tourism promotional discourse.

3. ADJECTIVES IN TOURISM DISCOURSE

This section provides a comprehensive review of existing research on the different uses and roles of adjectives in tourism promotional language. The majority of these studies have employed qualitative methodologies, focusing on the categorization of adjectives within specific tourism genres, such as hotel websites. Additionally,

quantitative studies have been conducted to highlight the salience of adjectives in the language used for tourism communication.

Based on previous findings, we start from the premise that “evaluative adjectives are a key part of the lexico-semantic characterisation of this specialised discourse” (Durán-Muñoz, 2019: 17). Indeed, studies by Pierini (2009), Edo Marzá (2011), Goethals and Segers (2016), among others, have consistently revealed that evaluative adjectives comprise the highest proportion of adjectives in tourism discourse.

Pierini (2009) proposed a classification encompassing 16 semantic categories of adjectives employed in the domain of accommodation discourse. This classification is based on considerations of lexical-semantic, grammatical, and pragmatic factors. In broad terms, adjectives are grouped into three categories, namely descriptive adjectives (e.g., *twin, single*), experiential adjectives expressing perceptions or emotions (e.g., *happy, vibrant*), and positive evaluative adjectives (e.g., *beautiful, excellent*).

In line with Pierini (2009), Edo Marzá (2011) also presents a classification that focuses on the semantic and pragmatic aspects of evaluative adjectives specifically employed on hotel websites. This classification encompasses five primary categories that feature positively oriented evaluations, contributing to an overall depiction of hotel websites in an extremely positive light. These adjectives, classified into aesthetic appeal, general appraisal, deviance, emotional/sensory appeal, and size/strength-related adjectives, concentrate on aspects such as importance, excellence, beauty, or sensory perception. Edo Marzá (2011: 107) highlights that the most prevalent adjectives in her corpus belong to the category of general appraisal, and she observes that “the percentage of evaluative adjectives is high, as expected, with respect to more neutrally aimed texts”. Suau Jiménez (2016: 211) further emphasizes that these evaluative adjectives convey “pre-conceived and well-designed values (history, variety, diversity, modernity, etc.) in order to make a competitive difference”, serving as a discursive strategy that comes from the author’s stance and aims to enhance the product and persuade the customer (Suau Jiménez, 2012).

From a quantitative perspective, Kang and Yu (2011) conducted a comparative analysis between a tourism corpus known as TEC (Tourism English Corpus) and the general English corpus F-LOB (The Freiburg-LOB Corpus of British English from the 1990s). In their study, Kang and Yu (2011: 134) conclude that “TEC has adopted a great number of adjectives, especially the ones with positive and cheerful meanings, to sketch the wonderland”. In terms of percentages, adjectives account for 10% of the TEC corpus, whereas the F-LOB corpus registers 7%. Furthermore, Goethals and Segers (2016) employed a comparative approach to examine the use of adjectives in descriptions of tourist attractions in the social travel guide 2.0 Minube, contrasting it with their usage in the traditional genre of printed brochures. Their findings indicate that the keyness of tourism language relies partially but significantly on the

utilization of adjectives, which constitute a higher proportion of keywords compared to the overall average for all word classes.

The issue of keyness regarding adjectives has also been examined by Durán-Muñoz (2019). Her study involved assessing the keyness of adjectives in a corpus of adventure tourism promotional texts (ADVENCOR) by comparing their usage with adjectives found in two reference corpora: the COCA and the BNC. A total of 216 adjectives were analyzed, with 50% displaying no significant difference in usage between ADVENCOR and the reference corpora. However, the remaining 50% of adjectives demonstrated higher usage in ADVENCOR compared to the reference corpora, with 16% exhibiting a notably high degree of representativeness in ADVENCOR. The three primary categories of adjectives that characterized adventure tourism discourse included adjectives related to adventure activities, superlative forms, and compound adjectives.

The objectives of this study are to quantitatively and qualitatively explore the usage of hyphenated adjectives within English promotional tourism websites, as well as to examine how these adjectives fulfil their persuasive role. The analysis conducted in this research will specifically address the following research questions:

RQ1: Does the focus corpus (PROMTOUR) exhibit a significant keyness for hyphenated adjectives when compared to their occurrence in the reference corpus (enTenTen20)?

RQ2: Do hyphenated adjectives bring about recurrent morphological patterns within the promotional tourism discourse in English?

4. METHODOLOGY

The PROMTOUR corpus comprises 763,844 words sourced from 33 promotional tourism websites, originally written in English (see Appendix). These websites are institutional in nature, endorsed by national or regional governments, and aim to provide descriptions and promote English-speaking destinations worldwide. The majority of these destinations are located in the United Kingdom, followed by the United States, Ireland, and other countries such as Australia, Canada, Malta, and South Africa. The corpus encompasses various sections found on the destinations' websites, including *Best city tours*, *Things to do*, *Activities*, *Food & Drink*, *Shopping*, *What's on*, *Accommodation*, *Traveller Information*, and more. Although PROMTOUR was initially collected using Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al., 2014), a thorough manual revision was conducted after compilation to eliminate any words related to website privacy policy, accessibility, and legal notice, as these were deemed irrelevant to the promotional objectives.

The adjectival lemmas from PROMTOUR were extracted using Sketch Engine. Since our study focuses primarily on hyphenated adjectives, we specifically

searched for adjectives within PROMTOUR containing a hyphen. These adjectives were lemmatized and tagged for further analysis. Moreover, Sketch Engine was utilized to examine the keyness of hyphenated adjectives in our specialized corpus compared to the reference corpus, English Web 2020 (enTenTen20), which encompasses over 36 billion words and includes web texts related to arts, business, games, health, home, recreation, science, sport, society, and technology.

First, the keyness analysis using corpus analytic methods will enable us to generate a list of the top hyphenated adjectives that function as keywords in PROMTOUR. Additionally, for the qualitative analysis, we will explore the various patterns exhibited by hyphenated adjectives in PROMTOUR, categorizing them based on morphological and other recurring patterns that appear to characterize our corpus and, consequently, the promotional tourism discourse in English.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings will be systematically presented and analyzed in three distinct sections: (i) the descriptive examination of the corpus, (ii) the investigation into the keyness of hyphenated adjectives, and (iii) the categorization of these adjectives within the context of promotional tourism discourse.

5.1. Descriptive results

The analyses conducted using Sketch Engine have provided valuable insights into the composition of PROMTOUR. The total number of lemmas identified in the corpus amounts to 31,092, with 5,155 corresponding to adjectival lemmas and 1,519 specifically categorized as hyphenated adjectives. Consequently, adjectival lemmas constitute 16.58% of the overall lemmas in PROMTOUR. Among these adjectival lemmas, hyphenated adjectives account for 29.47%, representing 4.89% of the total lemmas in the corpus.

Table 1 showcases the top 20 hyphenated adjectives derived from PROMTOUR, along with their respective frequency and position within the wordlist. The position refers to the place of a hyphenated adjective among the total number of adjectival lemmas in PROMTOUR. The most frequently occurring hyphenated adjective is *award-winning*, occupying the 80th position with 181 instances. Following is *world-class* with 86 occurrences and the 181st position, while *world-famous* ranks as the third most common hyphenated adjective, appearing 70 times. Notably, all the adjectives listed in Table 1 have a frequency of at least 20, with the final three hyphenated adjectives being *much-loved*, *five-star*, and *high-end*.

POSITION	HYPHENATED ADJECTIVE	FREQUENCY
80	Award-winning	181
181	World-class	86
222	World-famous	70
225	Self-catering	69
333	Year-round	41
351	Family-friendly	37
366	State-of-the-art	35
367	Well-known	35
368	Picture-perfect	35
384	Family-run	33
410	Cliff-top	31
416	Open-air	31
422	Jaw-dropping	30
436	Awe-inspiring	28
451	One-of-a-kind	27
471	Mouth-watering	25
481	Low-cost	24
525	Much-loved	21
537	Five-star	21
553	High-end	20

Table 1. Top 20 hyphenated adjectives in PROMTOUR

The majority of hyphenated adjectives found in PROMTOUR consist of two words. Nevertheless, our corpus also includes hyphenated adjectives composed of three and four words, known as “dephrasal compounds” or “phrasal compound adjectives”. These are phrases or clauses in which the constituent words are hyphenated (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002) and function as premodifiers (Bauer & Renouf, 2001). The data analysis reveals that two-word adjectives dominate, with 1,415 different lemmas out of the total 1,519 hyphenated adjectives in PROMTOUR, accounting for over 93% of the occurrences. Three-word adjectives follow with 79 lemmas (5.20%), while four-word adjectives comprise 24 lemmas (1.58%).

Regarding the three-word adjectives, Table 2 presents the top 10 instances, where the pattern *x-year-old* is the most commonly observed, followed by *behind-the-scenes* and *up-and-coming*. These adjectives are used in sentences extracted from PROMTOUR, as exemplified below:

- (1) Enjoy the height of luxury with a stay at a *hundred-year-old* Cotswold stone hunting lodge located on the legendary Blenheim Palace.
- (2) This unique *behind-the-scenes* experience immerses you into the world of filmmaking and features authentic sets.
- (3) The Seaport has become the new *up-and-coming* spot of Boston.

Table 2 also includes the top 10 four-word adjectives, wherein *state-of-the-art* and *one-of-a-kind* exhibit the highest frequency of occurrences. These two adjectives are

commonly employed in conjunction with other hyphenated adjectives within the same sentence:

- (4) Inside, there, a *fine-dining* restaurant and an *award-winning state-of-the-art* spa.
- (5) This is a prime spot for the *foot-tapping one-of-a-kind* sessions that Belfast is rightfully famous for.
- (6) You'll be rewarded with *world-class one-of-a-kind* attractions.

The majority of three-word and four-word adjectives found in PROMTOUR are hapax legomena, indicating a high level of lexical diversity within our corpus rather than lexical repetition. In line with Pierini (2015: 17), compound adjectives in English “provide a means to create neologisms and occasionalisms”.

3-WORD ADJECTIVES	FREQUENCY	4-WORD ADJECTIVES	FREQUENCY
X-year-old (<i>twenty-year-old, hundred-year-old...</i>)	53	State-of-the-art	35
Behind-the-scenes	16	One-of-a-kind	27
Up-and-coming	8	X-million-year-old (<i>sixty-million-year-old</i>)	6
Farm-to-table	6	Out-of-the-way	2
Black-and-white	4	Two-and-a-half	2
Up-to-date	4	Melt-in-the-mouth	1
Day-to-day	3	Pay-as-you-go	1
Larger-than-life	2	Up-close-and-personal	1
Over-the-top	2	Up-to-the-minute	1
Back-to-back	2	Iron-and-steel-framed	1

Table 2. Top 10 three-word and four-word adjectives in PROMTOUR

Institutions often depict cities as leading urban centres using adjectives such as *state-of-the-art*, *world-class*, and *world-famous*. Cities seem to be represented as “centres of high technology, industry, trade, banking, finance, professional activity, higher education and the arts” (Flowerdew, 2004: 579). The allure of being a state-of-the-art world city is a growing tourist attraction in the face of relentless globalization. The concept of cutting-edge cities coexists with the notions of uniqueness and authenticity, which are commonly emphasized in the description of the tourist experience (Soto-Almela, 2017). In our corpus, the adjective *one-of-a-kind* is employed in this sense. The issue of authenticity has received significant attention in tourism studies. In line with Ram et al. (2016: 111), ‘authentic’ here denotes being “real, reliable, trustworthy, original, first hand, true in substance, and prototypical as opposed to copied, reproduced or done the same way as an original”. MacCannell (1989) was among the first to argue that the search for authentic experiences is a primary motivation for travel, as tourists hope to encounter a more genuine way of life in other cultures compared to their own. Travelers are often characterized as seekers of experiences, desiring to engage with the typical or

authentic aspects of a destination. They seek authenticity and truth, which are positively represented through the expression of local values and identities. Additionally, tourists are attracted to unique and genuine destinations, often drawn to culturally unspoiled sites where they can encounter something new, distinct, and original (Taylor, 2001).

In PROMTOUR, other frequently used adjectives such as *five-star*, *high-end*, or *behind-the-scenes* appear to be formulaic invocations closely tied to the core mythologies of tourism, particularly the distinction sought by travelers. Thurlow (2015, 2016) and Thurlow and Jaworski (2012, 2017) have extensively explored elite discourse in an era of global mobility, examining how marketers and commercial agents employ visual, spatial, material, and linguistic resources to depict exclusivity. They demonstrate that the rhetoric of elite status and the discourse of luxury pervade contemporary society and are expressed in highly sophisticated ways. The language of elitism aims to establish distinction through notions of superiority and excellence.

5.2. Keyness of hyphenated adjectives

In this section of the results, our focus is on examining the keyness of hyphenated adjectives in PROMTOUR by comparing their occurrence with a general reference corpus, namely the English Web 2020 corpus (enTenTen20). Our objective is to determine whether the usage of hyphenated adjectives in PROMTOUR surpasses that in enTenTen20 and can be considered significant keywords in the context of promotional tourism discourse in English. We first automatically obtained the list of PROMTOUR keywords, and subsequently, we identified all the hyphenated adjectives that ranked among the top 500 keywords. This analysis resulted in a compilation of 18 key adjectives, which are presented in Table 3:

No.	Keyword	Freq. PROMTOUR	Freq. enTenTen20	Keyness score
69	Self-catering	69	41,494	40.2
86	World-famous	70	55,748	34.9
96	Cliff-top	31	3,843	33.1
98	Picture-perfect	35	11,781	32.7
152	Must-see	43	42,133	25.1
193	Family-run	33	31,097	22.2
199	Jaw-dropping	30	26,088	21.7
208	Breath-taking	29	24,998	21.4
240	Michelin-starred	21	10,374	19.9
256	Must-visit	19	8,169	18.9
268	Mouth-watering	25	25,823	18.3
297	Award-winning	181	470,832	17.2
321	Awe-inspiring	28	41,526	16.6
348	Family-friendly	37	72,029	16.0

388	Much-loved	21	28,098	15.0
401	High-octane	16	13,108	14.6
451	World-class	86	264,024	13.8
475	Open-air	31	73,182	13.4

Table 3. Keyness of the hyphenated adjectives in PROMTOUR

The findings presented in Table 3 indicate that the 18 hyphenated adjectives, which appeared among the top 500 keywords, exhibit an unusually high frequency in PROMTOUR compared to enTenTen20. Regarding their ranking, only four hyphenated adjectives, namely *self-catering* (69th), *world-famous* (86th), *cliff-top* (96th), and *picture-perfect* (98th), can be found within the top 100 keywords.

While all 18 hyphenated adjectives appear to be more frequently used in the focus corpus than in the reference corpus, our aim was to identify the adjectives that exhibited the greatest disparity in frequency between PROMTOUR and enTenTen20. To achieve this, we calculated the effect size of the adjectives, representing the significance of the difference between the two corpora. The Log Ratio statistic, obtained using the UCREL effect size calculator (Hardie, 2014), was employed for this purpose. The Log Ratio is a binary logarithm, and each point on the scale signifies a doubling of the ratio, as presented in Table 4:

Log Ratio 1	The keyword is 2 times more common in PROMTOUR than in enTenTen20.
Log Ratio 2	The keyword is 4 times more common in PROMTOUR than in enTenTen20.
Log Ratio 3	The keyword is 8 times more common in PROMTOUR than in enTenTen20.
Log Ratio 4	The keyword is 16 times more common in PROMTOUR than in enTenTen20.
Log Ratio 5	The keyword is 32 times more common in PROMTOUR than in enTenTen20.
Log Ratio 6	The keyword is 64 times more common in PROMTOUR than in enTenTen20.
Log Ratio 7	The keyword is 128 times more common in PROMTOUR than in enTenTen20.
Log Ratio 8	The keyword is 256 times more common in PROMTOUR than in enTenTen20.
Log Ratio 9	The keyword is 512 times more common in PROMTOUR than in enTenTen20.

Table 4. Interpretation of the Log Ratio statistic

The calculation of effect sizes revealed a reordering of the hyphenated adjectives in terms of keyness, highlighting that certain adjectives are significantly more prevalent in PROMTOUR compared to enTenTen20. Table 5 illustrates that the majority of adjectives have a Log Ratio of 6, indicating that they are 64 times more frequent in PROMTOUR than in enTenTen20. Notably, the adjective with the most substantial discrepancy in frequency is *cliff-top*, which appears 512 times more frequently in PROMTOUR than in enTenTen20 (Log Ratio 9). Following are *picture-perfect*, *Michelin-starred* and *must-visit*, each with a Log Ratio of 7. The smallest effect size obtained corresponds to Log Ratios of 4 and 5.

It is worth highlighting that *award-winning* and *world-class*, while being the most frequent hyphenated adjectives in PROMTOUR based on frequency (see Table 1), have slipped to the 16th and 17th positions, respectively, in terms of keyness (see Table 5). Conversely, the adjectives *self-catering* and *world-famous*, which

occupied the top two positions in the keyword list, do not exhibit the most substantial discrepancy in frequency. This observation underscores the utility of effect size in distinguishing between key words of varying degrees of significance.

No.	Keyword	Log Ratio
96	Cliff-top	9
98	Picture-perfect	7
240	Michelin-starred	7
256	Must-visit	7
69	Self-catering	6
86	World-famous	6
152	Must-see	6
193	Family-run	6
199	Jaw-dropping	6
208	Breath-taking	6
268	Mouth-watering	6
401	High-octane	6
321	Awe-inspiring	5
348	Family-friendly	5
388	Much-loved	5
297	Award-winning	4
451	World-class	4
475	Open-air	4

Table 5. Effect size of key hyphenated adjectives

The hyphenated adjectives in PROMTOUR encompass both descriptive and evaluative attributes. Out of the 18 key hyphenated adjectives identified, 11 exhibit evaluative characteristics, expressing subjective judgments, while the remaining 7 are descriptive, providing referential content and factual information. Specifically, the descriptive adjectives in PROMTOUR include *cliff-top*, *Michelin-starred*, *self-catering*, *family-run*, *family-friendly*, *award-winning*, and *open-air*. Both descriptive and evaluative adjectives “trigger positive and lively images of the destinations and experiences in the minds of the prospective visitors” (Kiss, 2018: 156). Pierini (2009) previously observed the coexistence of simple descriptive and evaluative adjectives in tourism discourse. Our research extends this coexistence to hyphenated adjectives. Descriptive elements are combined with favorable messages conveyed through evaluative adjectives such as *picture-perfect*, *must-visit*, *must-see*, *jaw-dropping*, *breath-taking*, *mouth-watering*, and *awe-inspiring*. These adjectives “present the beauty, allure, and uniqueness of destinations or of attractions” (Manca, 2016: 79). Furthermore, these adjectives often appear in an attributive position, qualifying nouns, rather than in a predicative position. Examples from PROMTOUR include:

- (7) Enjoy a brisk *cliff-top walk* along the Causeway Coast Way.
- (8) Make a stop at this *picture-perfect village* before sailing down the Sound of Jura.

- (9) Tuck into hearty pub grub and delectable *Michelin-starred dishes* on a foodie break.
(10) Titanic Belfast is a *must-visit attraction* where the tragic legacy of the Ship of Dreams is brought to life.

Not only do the key hyphenated adjectives serve as modifiers for nouns, but they are also frequently subject to modification themselves through the inclusion of intensifiers, which appear to amplify and emphasize their positive connotations. Within the PROMTOUR corpus, one can identify adverbial intensifiers such as *absolutely picture-perfect*, *truly mouth-watering*, *exquisitely awe-inspiring*, and *completely open-air*. Prior research (Dann, 1996; Durán-Muñoz, 2012; Gotti, 2006) have provided evidence demonstrating that these pre-modifying adverbs are strategically employed to captivate the attention of readers and listeners, rendering the discourse appealing and attractive.

Besides, compound adjectives, which are already a powerful emphatic mechanism which enables information to be compressed into a lexical unit with two or more bases, frequently co-occur with other adjectives or compound adjectives. This juxtaposition of adjectives creates strings that accentuate various attributes of a tourism product, as demonstrated by the following examples extracted from PROMTOUR.

- (11) ... locking together to create a *breath-taking, picture-perfect* avenue.
(12) This *enchanted three-storey self-catering* property has even been immortalised by poets Tennyson and Browning over the years.
(13) This is a *must-see award-winning English* garden with a mile long 'Capability' Brown designed lake, Italian Garden, woodland and maze.
(14) It's the ideal stop-off for a *delicious mouth-watering* lunch, brunch or afternoon tea.
(15) An *award-winning, family-friendly* Georgian country house hotel.

5.3. Hyphenated adjectives categorization

An ad hoc categorization of the hyphenated adjectives was developed for the purpose of this study. This classification was derived from recurring patterns observed among a group of adjectives, indicating that hyphenated adjectives constitute conventional or formulaic expressions that combine "at least two words favoured by native speakers in preference to an alternative combination which could have been equivalent had there been no conventionalization" (Erman & Warren, 2000: 30).

More than 40% of the hyphenated adjectives found in PROMTOUR (42.65%) can be classified under a specific category. Specifically, 471 adjectives exhibit morphological patterns that vary in frequency throughout the corpus, while 177 adjectives can be grouped based on their shared constituent, either the left-hand or the right-hand element of the compound.

Regarding morphological classification, the NOUN+PAST PARTICIPLE pattern emerges as the most prevalent in PROMTOUR, comprising 260 adjectives (17.12%). These adjectives, referred to as “derivational compounds” (Crocco Galéas, 2003), demonstrate a high degree of productivity in our corpus, resulting from a combination of compounding and derivation. This pattern conveys the meaning of “possessing, provided with, characterized by X” and encompasses hyphenated adjectives where the right-hand element (the head) is an *-ed* form of a verb (e.g., *adventure-filled*), preceded by a noun. Within this pattern, we also identify adjectives that form recurrent clusters sharing the same right-hand component. These clusters primarily describe attributes such as shape (*-shaped*), size (*-sized*), or colour (*-coloured*), among others, as illustrated in Table 6:

Noun+past participle patterns	Examples
Noun+filled	Adventure-filled, celeb-filled, colour-filled, culture-filled, fairy-filled
Noun+based	Art-based, Belfast-based, charity-based, biscuit-based, nature-based
Noun+shaped	Animal-shaped, crown-shaped, UFO-shaped, diamond-shaped, face-shaped
Noun+covered	Cocoa-covered, frost-covered, gorse-covered, heather-covered, meadow-covered
Noun+sized	Bite-sized, child-sized, king-sized, life-sized, pint-sized
Noun+inspired	Awe-inspired, brasserie-inspired, comic-inspired, emo-inspired, foodie-inspired
Noun+packed	Action-packed, adrenaline-packed, adventure-packed, culture-packed, fun-packed
Noun+lined	Art-lined, brick-lined, castle-lined, grass-lined, lavender-lined
Noun+coloured	Ash-coloured, bronze-coloured, caramel-coloured, cream-coloured, emerald-coloured
Noun+themed	Adventure-themed, Christmas-themed, Halloween-themed, horror-themed, movie-themed
Noun+related	Coffee-related, Edinburgh-related, island-related, oyster-related, train-related
Noun+topped	Crown-topped, glass-topped, grass-topped, heather-topped, table-topped

Table 6. Noun+past participle productive patterns in PROMTOUR

Less productive patterns in terms of noun + past participle compounds include noun+fuelled (e.g., *adrenalin-fuelled*), noun+aged (e.g., *barrel-aged*), noun+battered (e.g., *beer-battered*), noun+infused (e.g., *booze-infused*), noun+walled (e.g., *glass-walled*), noun+focused (e.g., *customer-focused*), noun+powered (e.g., *steam-powered*), and noun+smoked (e.g., *hickory-smoked*).

The second most prevalent morphological pattern observed in PROMTOUR is ADJECTIVE+PAST PARTICIPLE compounds, accounting for 85 adjectives (5.60%). Within this category, there are instances where adjectives share the same rightmost constituent. For instance, we find adjective+inspired (e.g., *African-inspired*, *Asian-inspired*, *literary-inspired*), adjective+shaped (e.g., *crescent-shaped*, *cruciform-*

shaped, hexagonal-shaped), adjective+coloured (e.g., *navy-coloured, blue-coloured*), and adjective+themed (e.g., *Canadian-themed, literary-themed*). These examples demonstrate the diversity of *-ed* forms integrated into hyphenated adjectives, highlighting the descriptive and persuasive potential of tourism promotion websites. Notable examples within this pattern include *Aboriginal-owned, cold-blooded, floral-scented, fuchsia-edged, high-ceilinged, rough-textured, and wild-haired*.

Furthermore, the past participle is combined with adverbs to create hyphenated adjectives following the pattern ADVERB+PAST PARTICIPLE, which accounts for 3.09% of the hyphenated adjectives in PROMTOUR (47 adjectives). Within this category, notable clusters describing cuisine and locations emerge, such as well+past participle, newly+past participle, much+past participle, and freshly+past participle, as illustrated in Table 7:

Adverb+past participle patterns	Examples
Well+past participle	Well-aimed, well-curated, well-earned, well-loved, well-priced
Newly+past participle	Newly-conserved, newly-developed, newly-established, newly-opened, newly-renovated
Much+past participle	Much-deserved, much-lauded, much-loved, much-overused, much-storied
Freshly+past participle	Freshly-baked, freshly-brewed, freshly-prepared, freshly-fermented, freshly-squeezed

Table 7. Adverb+past participle productive patterns in PROMTOUR

The presence of culinary discourse, a distinctive feature of tourism language, is evident in PROMTOUR. This is illustrated by the utilization of the pattern freshly+past participle and the adjectives *Michelin-starred, mouth-watering, fine-dining, and farm-to-table*. Food tourism is often portrayed as embracing local, fresh, and regionally branded cuisine, as opposed to the fast food culture brought about by globalization. Destinations strive to reinforce their identity through local gastronomy. According to Yeoman and McMahon-Beatte (2016), culinary discourse plays a vital role in attracting food enthusiasts, for whom food often serves as the primary motivation for travel. For foodies, “food is a focus for socialising and a means for simultaneous enriching experiences, expressing personal identities and adding to quality of life” (Yeoman & McMahon-Beatte, 2016: 97).

Additionally, other prevalent patterns involve the use of the present participle, which is combined with nouns and adjectives. Thus, the pattern NOUN+PRESENT PARTICIPLE appears in 52 lemmas (3.42%), while ADJECTIVE+PRESENT PARTICIPLE is found in 27 lemmas (1.78%). As shown in Table 8, the former exhibits lexical diversity, whereas the latter demonstrates a more repetitive nature, with the adjective+looking cluster being the most frequently observed.

Present participle patterns	Examples
Noun+present participle	Adrenalin-pumping, award-winning, awe-inspiring, chocolate-making, dolphin-watching, foot-tapping, fossil-hunting, knee-trembling, mouth-watering, soul-shaking
Adjective+present participle	Distinguished-looking, exotic-looking, fearsome-looking, good-looking, peaceful-looking, regal-looking, best-selling, free-standing, macabre-sounding, wise-cracking

Table 8. Present participle patterns in PROMTOUR

In addition to the morphological patterns based on past and present participles, PROMTOUR offers other frequent patterns of hyphenated adjectives in which there is a common element, which can be either the left-hand or the right-hand element. Thus, for example, hyphenated adjectives containing numerals constitute a considerable group in PROMTOUR (65 lemmas, 4.28%). In promotional tourism discourse, it is common to use adjectives which follow the pattern NUMERALS+WORD to describe the duration of an activity, the distance between two points, the size of a place, the number of stars in a hotel, the number of rooms or the height of a building. For this, hyphenated adjectives such as *one-day* (itinerary), *two-hour* (trip), *three-bedroomed* (cottage), *four-star* (hotel), *five-minute* (walk), *six-acre* (garden), *seven-sided* (capsule), *eight-storey* (atrium) or *nine-day* (route) are used. The patterns WORD+STYLE and ALL+WORD occur in 25 (1.65%) and 21 lemmas (1.38%), respectively. Some examples containing these patterns are:

- (16) There’s also lots of new, *retro-style* stuff, plus *vintage-style* hairdressers and beauticians.
- (17) From April to September, this family-run business goes to where you are to warm you up with *barista-style* coffee or rich-hot chocolate.
- (18) They come in all shapes and sizes and ensure *all-weather* and *all-year-round* interest for visitors, especially families.
- (19) In the ultimate Silicon Valley indulgence, why not custom-design your own luxury *all-electric* car at Santana Row’s Tesla store?

The patterns NOUN+FRIENDLY (20 adjectives, 1.32%) and NOUN+FREE (19 adjectives, 1.25%) are also notable in PROMTOUR. The inclusion of terms that are presented as friendly and free is inherently appealing. As stated by Edo Marzá (2011: 117), the use of compounds with friendly conveys “open-mindedness or some specificity that may be attractive or even necessary for the guest”. Examples of these patterns include *artist-friendly*, *bike-friendly*, *family-friendly*, *gay-friendly*, *car-free*, *dairy-free*, *hassle-free*, and *stress-free*. Finally, we observed the patterns WORD+RICH (11 adjectives, 0.72%), MUST+VERB (8 adjectives, 0.52%), and NOUN+MADE (8 adjectives, 0.52%) in the data. PROMTOUR includes instances such as *history-rich* (town), *species-rich* (grassland), *must-see* (attraction), *must-try* (street food), *man-made* (wonders), and *custom-made* (roads).

6. CONCLUSION

This study offers quantitative and qualitative data that can be potentially revealing for the lexical characterization of promotional language in the tourism domain, with a specific focus on the persuasive function of hyphenated adjectives as metadiscursive markers within the authorial voice.

Firstly, from a quantitative perspective, the examination of the PROMTOUR corpus reveals that hyphenated adjectives constitute approximately 30% of the adjectival lemmas, with two-word hyphenated adjectives comprising the vast majority, accounting for over 90% of all hyphenated adjectives.

The analysis of keywords has identified 18 key hyphenated adjectives among the top 500 keywords. Furthermore, the analysis of effect size has demonstrated that these adjectives are more prevalent in PROMTOUR compared to enTenTen20, indicating variations in their significance. The study of keyness addresses our first research question and suggests a noteworthy level of keyness in PROMTOUR for hyphenated adjectives, surpassing their occurrence in the reference corpus.

Thus, from a lexical perspective, these adjectives appear to be characteristic elements of promotional tourism discourse, contributing to the construction of effective promotional communication. In this communication, which is viewed as a social interaction, it is crucial for promoters to understand the tourists' expectations regarding the vocabulary and language used in tourism websites. This understanding allows the promoters to tailor their language to the recipients, aligning with the concept of "recipient design" introduced by Sacks et al. (1974). It is important to note that all genres, including those associated with tourism promotion, impose certain expectations on their readers. Authors must be aware of these expectations in order to craft their discourses accordingly (Suau Jiménez, 2020). The adjectives examined in this research constitute a component of authors' decision-making process in determining the content of their promotional discourse.

Secondly, a more in-depth qualitative examination of the hyphenated adjectives in PROMTOUR addresses our second research question and supports the assertion that these adjectives exhibit recurring morphological patterns within the domain of promotional tourism discourse in English. Among these patterns, the prevalence lies with adjectives formed with a past participle as the right-hand element, which can be observed in cohesive clusters throughout the corpus. Additionally, other frequent patterns involve the use of present participles. By closely analyzing the hyphenated adjectives, we have been able to identify additional non-participle patterns that are prevalent in PROMTOUR, shedding light on the appellative nature of promotional tourism discourse.

The outcomes of this study carry pedagogical implications for the instruction and learning of tourism English as a type of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). In fact, the examination of digital genres, such as tourism promotional websites, actively contributes to the implementation of genre-informed instruction. ESP students have specific language requirements focused on effective communication

with their future counterparts in the global professional arena. Consequently, the development of receptive and productive English skills becomes indispensable. As emphasized by Cappelli (2006: 9), “every professional in the tourism industry needs to master the language of tourism”. For this purpose, it is important to carefully consider the selection of vocabulary to be taught and the ways in which persuasive communication is achieved through the use of specific lexical items.

An understanding of the keyness and usage of hyphenated adjectives can be regarded as a significant stride towards achieving proficiency in this specialized language domain. Such understanding holds the potential to enhance the persuasive writing skills of learners studying tourism English (El-Garawany, 2021), enabling them to produce more functional, accurate, and linguistically appropriate promotional tourism messages in English. It can serve as a safeguard against the manifestation of unconventional forms in this discourse, thereby mitigating the so-called translationese effect (McEnery & Xiao, 2007: 4) and preventing learners and translators from being influenced by their native language (L1) and inadvertently resorting to a language of translation (Pérez Rodríguez, 2006). The language of translation is characterized by the excessive use of loan translations (calques), which may result in an overreliance on unconventional adjectives and give rise to an unfamiliar and unnatural promotional tourism discourse.

Furthermore, recognizing the keyness of hyphenated adjectives in tourism promotion is crucial to “avoid the lengthier relative clauses that could convey the same information” (Biber et al., 1999: 536). For instance, instead of *rock that has a diamond shape*, the more efficient and formulaic expression *diamond-shaped rock* can be employed. This observation aligns with the concept of formulaic language or formulaic sequences, which refer to conventionalized combinations of form and meaning within a speech community (Buerki, 2016). These sequences can be viewed as institutionalized phrases (Bybee, 2010).

We have concluded that hyphenated adjectives are central lexical items in tourism promotion in English. Consequently, translating these adjectives into languages like Italian or Spanish, which lack a similar word-formation mechanism, could present considerable challenges. Thus, future research exploring the strategies employed by professional translators to address the difficulties associated with translating hyphenated adjectives from English into other languages would be of significant interest.

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Appendix

Institutional promotional websites forming PROMTOUR

Websites (countries)	URL
England	https://www.visitengland.com
Great Britain	https://www.visitbritain.com
Ireland	https://www.ireland.com
Malta	https://www.visitmalta.com/
Northern Ireland	https://www.discovernorthernireland.com
Scotland	https://www.visitscotland.com
Wales	https://www.visitwales.com
Websites (cities)	URL
Bath (England)	https://visitbath.co.uk/
Birmingham (England)	https://visitbirmingham.com/
Brighton (England)	https://www.visitbrighton.com/
Bristol (England)	https://visitbristol.co.uk/
Cambridge (England)	https://www.visitcambridge.org/
Leeds (England)	https://www.visitleeds.co.uk/
Liverpool (England)	https://www.visitliverpool.com/
London (England)	https://www.visitlondon.com/
Manchester (England)	https://www.visitmanchester.com/
Oxford (England)	https://www.visitoxford.org/
Southampton (England)	https://visitsouthampton.co.uk/your-visit
York (England)	https://www.visitliverpool.com/
Belfast (Northern Ireland)	https://visitbelfast.com/
Cardiff (Wales)	https://www.visitcardiff.com/
Swansea (Wales)	https://www.visitswanseabay.com/
Edinburgh (Scotland)	https://edinburgh.org/
Boston (US)	https://www.boston.gov/visiting-boston
California (US)	https://www.visitcalifornia.com/
Chicago (US)	https://www.choosechicago.com/
New York (US)	https://es.nycgo.com/
Washington (US)	https://washington.org/
Cork (Ireland)	https://purecork.ie/
Dublin (Ireland)	https://www.visitdublin.com/
Johannesburg (South Africa)	https://visit.joburg/
Sydney (Australia)	https://int.sydney.com/
Toronto (Canada)	https://www.seetorontonow.com/