

Persuading by addressing: a functional approach to speech-act comparison

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Abstract: Advertisements are intended to persuade the addressees to buy a particular product or service. In order to achieve this communicative purpose, text producers make use of various strategies. Apart from directly appellative speech acts like recommendations, requests or invitations, they use referential, expressive and phatic utterances as an indirect means of persuasion. The phatic function, which, according to Jakobson (1960), provides the appropriate channel for communication, is of particular importance in this respect. If the channel does not work properly, the persuasive function will never fulfil its aim. In the following paper, a small corpus of English, Spanish and German advertising texts is analysed in order to find the indicators of the phatic function, which is instrumental in making persuasion work.

General considerations

As we know, advertising texts are supposed to make a target audience buy a product or a service, even though they might not have known that there was such a product or service in the first place, let alone felt the need to have it. Therefore, they have to be informed about its existence first. The headline below the image of a beautiful car tells us: *Der neue Renault Espace ist da* ('The new Renault Espace is out') and reminds us that, every year, the new Beaujolais is announced in the same way: *Le Beaujolais nouveau est arrivé* (French is used even in Germany). It seems surprising that the new product is introduced using the definite article, as if we were supposed to know that a new model of the Renault Espace was about to appear in the shop window, and now, indeed, it is there: *the* new Renault Espace we have been waiting for.

Once we start looking at advertising texts this way, we discover that many of them look or sound as if they were part of ongoing communication between people who have known each other for some time. In German, the target audience is usually addressed with the polite form *Sie* normally used between strangers, but nevertheless the tone is colloquial: *Sie möchten Ihre Jobsuche ganz entspannt angehen? Damit können Sie jetzt sofort loslegen: einfach Ihr Gesuch auf unserer Homepage ablegen ...* ('You want to start your job search in an absolutely relaxed way? Why don't you get cracking right away: just deposit your application on our website.'). The words *Job* and *loslegen* are marked as 'informal' in the dictionary (see Duden, 1993). Furthermore, the modal particle *einfach* is typical of informal, spoken language, which is not normally used with people one has never met before.

Jakobson (1960) speaks of the 'phatic function', referring to the language used to open, prolong or close communicative contact. 'Phatic communion' is often thought of as being completely void of meaning because it 'just' serves to control the channel of communication. Apart from the fact that this function is vital for any kind of communication (which would not work without a channel), I think that phatic communication has another very important function: it is a means of defining and shaping the social relationship between sender and recipient. This is exactly the field where we decide how to address a person, which pronouns and register to use, whether to mention titles and honorifics, or whether or not to employ metacommunicative devices (see Nord, 2007), to name but

a few general aspects. For translation and interpreting, it is indispensable to master the conventions of phatic communication, since it lays the foundation for the exchange of information or other communicative intentions.

In the following article, I shall first look at how the phatic functions are linked with the persuasive function of advertising texts. In a second step, I will analyse the way in which the phatic function and its subfunctions (initiating contact, maintaining it, closing it, and shaping social relationships) are verbalised in advertising texts, and whether and how the forms of verbalisation differ from one culture to another.

I start out from the hypothesis that the selection of linguistic forms is not only determined by the structures offered by the linguistic system, but also by behaviour conventions developed through the course of time (cf. Lewis, 1969). Therefore, these conventions are culture-specific, not language-specific. Even in those cases where a language offers only one form (for example, the pronoun 'you' as the only form of address) speakers have the choice to use it or to avoid it. Also, this choice will most probably be guided by cultural conventions.

Conventions are learned through observing – in order to analyse the conventions of phatic communication we need a corpus of authentic communicative acts. For the purpose of this article, I have compiled a random corpus of 300 advertisements from newspapers and journals sold in Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom. It includes 22 different categories of products and services¹ and covers a time span of 5 years (1996–2001). The exact list of sources is given in the Appendix.

Using countries as cultural units seems to be justified in this case because advertisements are usually targeted specifically at countries, and not at language areas. Large language areas, like those of Spanish or English, are not culturally homogeneous, and we know that companies often design different campaigns for different countries. Very expensive products, like perfumes or jewellery, where we observe worldwide advertising, are an exception because, obviously, 'the beautiful and the rich' constitute a (dia)culture of their own that extends right across language and culture boundaries.

This study is part of a comparative style analysis (Nord, 2003) or comparative rhetoric. However, it has very little in common with Vinay and Darbelnet's *Stylistique Comparée* (1958). It is not meant to be a *Méthode de traduction*, a translation method, but designed as a means of *enabling* translators to produce adequate and stylistically acceptable translations. Contrastive grammars compare units of the language system, whilst comparative stylistics compare units of language use. It is not based on a comparison between texts and their translations, but on a comparison of *authentic* parallel texts, that is, texts written in different languages but belonging to the same or similar genres and text types because they are intended to achieve comparable communicative functions. We are not looking for text-type or genre conventions, but the aim is to identify speech acts or communicative actions aiming at certain functions. In this regard, we will analyse the form, frequency and distribution of their verbalisation in two or more 'linguacultures' (that is, users of a specific language forming a culture group).

Style is defined as the choice a speaker makes from two or more grammatically correct forms to express a particular communicative intention. Whenever there is more than one way to verbalise an intention, speakers or writers have to make a choice, and this choice is guided, albeit unconsciously, by the conventions prevailing in the culture in which they live and speak or write.

Phatic function and advertising

Advertisements are usually regarded as belonging to the persuasive function, which is a subfunction of the appellative. Advertisements are intended to 'persuade' the audience, that is, to 'cause [them] to do something, by reasoning, arguing, begging, etc.' (DCE, 1993). However, persuasion works best if it is not recognisable as such – in the 1960s Vance Packard spoke about the 'hidden persuaders' (Packard, 1967).

Therefore, advertisers rarely use open requests, recommendations, suggestions or advice. The quantitative relationship between the various forms of (indirect) persuasion and those of direct appellativity is 5:1 in the British corpus, 3:1 in the Spanish corpus, and 4:1 in the German corpus.

By contrast, indirect persuasion works via other communicative functions like the referential, expressive or, indeed, phatic function.

If the phatic function is responsible for the efficiency of the communication channel, as stated by Jakobson, its importance for persuasive communication is obvious. Without a channel, communication is impossible, and if the sender fails to open a channel, persuasive intentions are bound to be lost.

Phatic utterances are salutations and goodbyes, formulas used when answering a telephone call or presenting oneself or somebody else to another person, or when we establish a link from one topic to another in a talk. A typical form of phatic communication is the so-called 'small talk' about the weather between persons who do not know each other but are sitting together in a train compartment or standing next to each other at a reception with glasses of wine. Small talk can develop into a 'real' conversation, but it need not do so.

These few examples show that phatic communication relies heavily on the conventionality of the linguistic, non-linguistic or paralinguistic forms that are used. It is a failure of phatic communication if we greet somebody saying, 'How are you?' and the person starts describing his or her state of health in all detail. Or if, 'Isn't it a lovely day?' is answered negatively, for example, by, 'No, this is not a lovely day at all!' Phatic openers usually require an affirmative answer.

The conventions of phatic communication are often neglected in foreign language and, probably, translation teaching, which is sadly notorious in literal translations of phrases like 'Have you met my husband?' in translated novels or dubbed films.

In the field of social relations we have to distinguish between status and role. Status is the category attributed to a person on the grounds of social origin, education, profession, etc., at a certain moment; whereas roles can vary from one situation to another. A male employee who behaves as a subordinate of his boss in the office may 'boss' his children and wife around at the dinner table at home, although his status has not changed.

It is the status that determines the phatic behaviour between two persons who meet for the first time. In the course of time, they may develop a role relationship that may or may not correspond to the status relationship. Forms of address play an important part in this process because they do not only reflect but also shape the role relationship. In some cultures (for example, Germany) there are certain rituals for the transition from one form of relationship to the other (asymmetrical to symmetrical, formal to informal, etc.).

In cultures that do not make a distinction between formal or informal forms of address, the social relationship has to be marked by other means (for example, by using titles or honorifics, or the first name or, as will be shown later, changing register).

Combining Jakobson's definition of phatic communication as establishing, maintaining and closing contact between sender and receiver and my enhancement of this definition by adding the functions of expressing the sender's attitude towards the receiver and shaping the role relationship between communication partners, I would like to analyse the linguistic and stylistic markers of these three functions, which I would like to call contact, attitude and relationship indicators. For this purpose, I ask the questions below.

- Which linguistic forms are used to open, prolong or close the contact between sender and receiver (contact indicators)?
- How often and in which form are the addressees of advertisements addressed directly (attitude indicators)?
- Which linguistic or stylistic means are used to mark the intended role relationship between sender and receiver (relationship indicators)?

The most important aspects of analysis are form, frequency and distribution, which will be used as parameters in culture comparison.

Corpus analysis

The corpus has been described above. Given its limited size, the findings cannot be generalised as such, but they may shed some light on the cultural differences in form, frequency and distribution of

the linguistic and stylistic means used to mark the three aspects of phatic communication described above.

Contact indicators in persuasive texts

As mentioned before, contact indicators serve to open, prolong and close the communicative channel. Therefore we may distinguish opening indicators, prolongation indicators and closing indicators.

Opening indicators

Openings are marked by salutation formulae (en. *Cheers!* de. *Willkommen*,¹ attention signals like 'Listen', 'Excuse me', or inarticulate sounds like 'psst', nominal forms of address like 'Sir', 'Women', or personal pronouns in the vocative: 'Hey, you'), as the examples show.

- 1 *Women!* Cheaper car insurance. Some men will try anything to get cheaper car insurance! *Sorry guys!* You can try as hard as you like, but Diamond is just for women. Diamond only does car insurance for women because women are better drivers. (FIN)²
- 2 [*Psst!*] You are very close to experiencing something quite exceptional. (ALC)
- 3 *Ésta es la distancia que te separa de tu oficina. Tranquilo. No pasa nada porque te reserves un poco de tiempo para ti mismo. // Acortamos distancias. Acercamos personas.* (TEL)
- 4 *»En mi nombre y en el del Comité de dirección de SSA Ibérica, quiero agradecer a todos nuestros clientes, afiliados y partners la confianza depositada en nuestra solución ...«* (FIN)
- 5 *Willkommen bei ANA, der größten Fluglinie Japans.* (TRA)

Rhetorical questions are also used as phatic openers, as the following examples show. In German, they are marked by the lack of inversion (for example, *Sie möchten ...?* instead of *Möchten Sie ...?*, example 8). In the Spanish corpus they are usually not directed at the addressee (example 9). In English they seem to be mostly negative (example 6). Other questions, which are often motivated by the picture in the advertisement, can also serve as openers. They name the problem for which the sender offers the solution and will therefore be called topical questions (examples 10 and 11).

- 6 Don't you love just things that make life easier? (HOU)
- 7 *¿Quiere probar cuánta cobertura tiene el inalámbrico Digital Samsung? Llévase de paseo.* (TEL)
- 8 *Sie möchten Ihre Jobsuche ganz entspannt angehen? Damit können Sie jetzt sofort loslegen: einfach Ihr Gesuch auf unserer Homepage ablegen.* (COM)
- 9 *¿Hay una manera mejor de terminar el año?* (AUT, mit Bezug auf die Abbildung)
- 10 *¿Piel apagada, deshidratada?* (COS)
- 11 Condensation and dampness? Solved with an EBAC dehumidifier. (HOU)

Another frequent form is a conditional clause naming a dilemma where the offered product would be a good solution.

- 12 If you're thinking about borrowing money, we could help you. (FIN)
- 13 *Si quiere saber por qué España está de moda, haga sus compras en El Corte Inglés.* (COM)
- 14 *Wenn es auch bei Ihnen mal schneller gehen soll, dann kommen Sie am besten zu unserem neuen Express-Service.* (AUT)

Table 1 illustrates the frequency of openers in the 3 corpora. Since each corpus consists of 100 texts, the absolute numbers may also be read as percentages. As far as distribution is concerned, we could not detect a particular clustering for certain product categories.

Prolongation indicators

It seems logical that the sender of a persuasive text wants to keep up the contact with the addressee as long as possible in order to make sure that the audience will remember the advertisement when they have the opportunity to buy the product. It is usually the slogan or headline that is intended to serve this purpose. The slogan is normally used all over a campaign, whereas the headline may vary between different advertisements. Slogans and headlines are characterised by rhetorical devices like rhythm, rhyme, assonance, alliteration, parallelisms, puns or allusions.

- 15 With ice. With cola. With feeling. Vodka toffee. Not for the Sweet & Innocent. Dooley's toffee liqueur. (FOB)
- 16 A rowing boat for a liqueur. (Possibly the best swap in history.) (ALC)
- 17 FREEZE! Icy pink meets silver plum, glitter got the shivers. (COS)
- 18 Get the glitter bug. Glitterations Christmas 2001. The season is upon us, get ready to party. Glitz and glam, sexy and sultry. Whatever look you want to create, keep yourself sparkling. Get it on. Rimmel. (COS)
- 19 Conquer Rome. All roads lead to the new Mövenpick Hotel Central Park in Rome ... Guests may enjoy the 'Dolce far niente' on the terrace of the Gran Café ... (TOU)
- 20 *Noble su reposo, de roble su carácter. Canarias Cuba del Ron.* (ALC)
- 21 *O tomas ron con Schweppes Limón o Schweppes Limón con ron.* (FOB)
- 22 *Culto al ego. VegaFina. Hecho a mano. Sabor suave, placer intenso.* (TOB)
- 23 *Haz 'click' y huele. En el futuro se podrán percibir aromas a través de los nuevos periféricos de los ordenadores.* (FIN)
- 24 *Groß. Stark. Unverzichtbar! Bild wirkt.* (INF)
- 25 *Lieber trocken trinken als trocken feiern.* (ALC)
- 26 Do it with German engineering. (German corpus, AUT)

Table 2 illustrates the frequency of rhetorical devices in the headlines or slogans of the corpus text. Not all texts have a slogan or headline. Some have both, and several slogans contain more than one rhetorical device. Therefore, percentages refer to the sum total of rhetorical figures found in the corpus.

Table 2 shows that syntactic style figures are rather frequent in the three corpora, whereas puns are much more frequent in the English and German than in the Spanish texts. Assonance and alliteration are most frequent in the English advertisements. The frequency of emotional and even sexual connotations is the highest in the Spanish corpus. The high percentage of allusions in the German corpus is due to: a large number of intertextual relations between slogans of different

Table 1: Opening signals in persuasive texts

Opening indicators	English	Spanish	German
Salutations	1	0	1
Attention signals	1	1	0
Nominal forms of address	1	0	0
Pronominal forms of address	1	0	0
Thanks	1	1	0
Rhetorical questions	2	4	5
Topical questions	7	5	2
Conditional clauses	1	3	2
Total	15	14	10

Table 2: Prolongation signals in persuasive texts

Prolongation indicators	English		Spanish		German	
Rhythmic patterns	6	10.0%	5	14.3%	2	3.6%
Syntactic style figures	14	23.3%	9	25.7%	10	18.2%
Assonance, alliteration	6	10.0%	4	11.4%	1	1.8%
Rhyme	5	8.3%	1	2.9%	0	0.0%
Connotations	4	6.7%	8	22.9%	5	9.1%
Puns	17	28.3%	2	5.7%	15	27.3%
Allusions	6	10.0%	2	5.7%	14	25.5%
Foreign language	2	3.3%	4	11.4%	8	14.5%
Total	60	100%	35	100%	55	100%

products; and to a typical form of slogan which reminds of the pattern of German proverbs: *Wer damit zahlt, kriegt Meilen* (literally: 'Who pays with this [that is, the Lufthansa Visa Card] earns miles', like: *Wer langsam geht, kommt auch zum Ziel*).

Closing indicators

It is interesting to note that there are no real closing indicators in the corpus. Example 27 uses a goodbye formula; however, this is meant as a play on words because the TV guide wishes the audience a nice evening (in front of the television, of course).

27 TV Today. *Schönen Abend noch ...* (INF)

28 Available at: Barrats or a stockist near you. (FAS)

29 Servicio de atención al cliente 902 11 95 80. Internet: <http://www.and.es> (AUT)

30 Weitere Informationen erhalten Sie kostenlos unter freecall 0800 33 07001, im T-Punkt oder unter www.t-online.de (TEL)

However, almost all corpus texts indicate the shop where you can buy the product, or a home page or telephone number from which to obtain further information. This could be compared to a kind of 'see you later' and can therefore be regarded as an indicator of prolongation rather than of closing.

Attitude indicators

We might think that advertising texts simulate a first encounter between persons who do not know each other (except for some series of interlinked advertisements). In 'real life', the normal behaviour in such a situation would be a presentation or self-identification, which is indeed found in some advertising texts, but only in a very limited number.

31 *Treat your taste buds* to the unexpected delights of more than 100 domestic grape varieties. (ALC)

32 *Escápate a la aventura con Viajes El Corte Inglés.* (TOU)

33 *Entdecken Sie neue faszinierende Seiten der Literatur.* (INF)

34 *Compartir.* CHROME AZZARO (COS, *das Bild zeigt Großvater, Vater und Sohn*)

35 *Jetzt Probe fahren.* (AUT)

36 *No pasa nada porque te reserves un poco de tiempo para ti mismo.* (TEL)

37 *Unser Geschenktipp: schnucklige Eierwärmer.* (FAS)

38 *Cómo llamar de Barcelona a Vigo ahorrándote hasta un 25%.* (TEL)

39 *Wie man Mitarbeiter motiviert: Schmeißen Sie alle raus!* (FIN)

40 *Your car should have a lot of space in it, not your wallet.* (AUT)

41 *'La vida debe vivirse hacia adelante, pero sólo se comprende hacia atrás.'* Sören Kierkegaard. (ALC)

42 *Außerdem sollten Sie ein Auge auf die Leistungswerte werfen.* (OFF)

43 *Damit können alle 190er-Fahrer ab sofort rechnen. Das Sparbuch für den 190er.* (AUT)

44 *There's a storm brewing ... and at its eye you'll find the new Puma Thunder.* (AUT)

45 *Juntos hacemos tu vida mejor.* (FOT)

46 *Wie auch immer in Zukunft informiert wird: Sie hören von uns.* (INF)

47 *Half-price golf irons. Here's an ideal opportunity for anyone buying their first full set of irons ...* (MED)

48 *Hier geht's rein.* (OFF, *mit Bezug auf das Internet*)

49 *¡La cuenta atrás ha comenzado!* (COM)

50 *Safety first: www.dresdner-bank.de* (FIN)

51 *Sabes elegir.* (ALC)

52 *Acabas de perder una oportunidad de oro. ... Búscalos en el interior de los sobrecitos de Nescafé. Y no dejes pasar ni una sola oportunidad de encontrar oro.* (FOB)

53 *Auf dem Weg zum Parkplatz brauchen Sie zwei Airbags.* (FAS)

54 *Gucci rush, for men.* The new fragrance *for men* from Gucci (COS, *spanisch*)

55 *... everyone's favourite little black number* (ALC, *Freixenet black lable*)

56 *2000 - ¿principio o fin? Hay fechas que marcan eras. El año 2.000 será una de ellas. Pero no*

todos están preparados *para las consecuencias que se derivarán de la entrada en el nuevo milenio; por eso para algunos el 2.000 será el principio y para otros el final.* (OFF)

57 Good taste has many faces. ... *Jeder informierte Erwachsene sollte die Freiheit haben, sich für den Genuss von Tabak zu entscheiden.* (TOB)

58 *Wer hoch hinaus will, kann sich keine Abstürze leisten.* *Sichern Sie sich darum einfach mit einem Server von MAXDATA ab.* (OFF)

The following forms of address are indicators of sender attitude towards the audience:

- imperatives (examples 31, 32, 33) and, in German and Spanish, infinitives with imperative function (examples 34, 35), which, as such, are directed at the addressed audience;
- all references to the second person, both formal and informal (where applicable) (such as, personal or possessive pronouns, in Spanish personal verb endings), indicating the following speech acts: suggestion (examples 36, 37, also 21), instruction (examples 38, 39), recommendation (examples 40, 41, 42), expression of opportunity (example 43), promise (examples 44, 45, 46), indication (examples 47, 48), as well as exclamations (example 49), warnings (example 50), approval (example 51), disapproval (example 52);
- direct or rhetorical questions directed at the addressee (examples 6 to 11);
- references to the target-group in the 3rd person (examples 15, 43, 54); and
- impersonal generalisations including the addressee (for example, 'everyone', 'you', 'man', passive, and the proverb-like slogans in the German corpus).

A certain amount of advertisements do not express any direct attitude towards the receivers: 18 in the English, 15 in the Spanish, and 19 in the German corpus. On the other hand, most texts contain more than one attitude marker. Table 3 illustrates the frequency in the corpus.

The high frequency of attitude indicators in the German corpus seems surprising at first sight. But more than half of them (50.1%) correspond to the group of neutral forms like infinitives, instructions ('How to ...'), indications, reference to the target group and generalisations, which play a much less important role in the other 2 corpora (13.1% in the English and 8.3% in the Spanish corpus). This makes the appellativity of the German texts less obvious.

Table 3: Attitudinal indicators in persuasive texts

Attitude indicators	English		Spanish		German	
Imperative	64	55.7%	71	58.7%	38	25.5%
Infinitive	0	0.0%	1	0.8%	14	9.4%
Suggestion	0	0.0%	2	1.6%	1	0.7%
Instruction	0	0.0%	1	0.8%	1	0.7%
Recommendation	1	0.8%	1	0.8%	2	1.3%
Opportunity	2	1.7%	0	0.0%	5	3.4%
Promise	18	15.7%	18	14.9%	11	7.3%
Question	11	9.6%	12	9.9%	11	7.3%
Indication	2	1.7%	0	0.0%	1	0.7%
Reference to the target group	4	3.5%	3	2.5%	5	3.4%
Generalisation	11	9.6%	6	5.0%	53	35.6%
Other forms	2	1.7%	6	5.0%	7	4.7%
Total	115	100%	121	100%	149	100%

Table 4: Forms of address in persuasive texts

Forms of address	English		Spanish		German	
Formal (<i>usted/es, Sie</i>)	71	100.0%	28	40.0%	46	77.9%
Informal (<i>tú, du</i>)			40	57.1%	2	3.4%
Neutral	0	0.0%	2	2.9%	11	18.7%
Total of adverts with forms of address	71	100%	70	100%	59	100%

Relationship indicators

The relatively high frequency of neutral forms in the German corpus has a considerable impact on the definition and shaping of role relationships, which relies, in part, on the forms of direct address (see Table 4). In 'real life', Germans would expect a person one meets for the first time to be addressed in the polite form, unless this person is a child. This is quite different in our corpus texts. In the German and Spanish advertising, we find both the formal and the informal forms of address. In the German texts, however, the informal address is the exception (for example, in advertisements offering products to young people, like blue jeans or ice cream). In the Spanish texts, the informal address is much more frequent than the formal one. Table 4 shows the percentages (in relation to the sum total of corpus texts with direct forms of address). In the English texts, imperatives are considered as explicit forms of address.

Judging by the forms of address, the Spanish texts seem to mark a much more confidential role relationship than the German texts, which appear to mark a greater social distance. This might lead to the conclusion that Spanish text producers simulate a partner relationship like the one between close friends, whereas German text producers prefer a more formal relationship, corresponding, in fact, to the situation in 'real life' in Spain and Germany, respectively. But as was mentioned before, apart from the forms of address, register plays an important part in the shaping of social relationships. This could mean that in cultures where forms of address are less variable, register would compensate for this lack of differentiation. In fact, this is exactly what the corpus texts show.

In the English corpus, we find the following markers of an informal register: With regard to syntax, there are ellipses (examples 1, also 11, 15, 59), parentheses (example 16), incomplete sentences (examples 19, 45), relative clauses without a pronoun (example 60), and prepositions at the end of the sentence (example 61). With regard to lexis we observe a large number of words and expressions which in the *Dictionary of Contemporary English* are marked as 'informal' or 'not formal', such as '... to get the shivers ...', '... get ready ...', 'Xmas', 'telly', 'posh', 'ultimate', or even as slang (such as '... to twig ...' in the sense of 'grasp', '... to give an edge ...', '... whatever turns you on ...', '... what the hell ...', also example 62). Modal particles (especially 'just', as in example 63), contractions which are typical of spoken language, such as 'doesn't', 'don't', 'isn't', 'I'll', 'I've', 'we'll', 'here's', (also example 64), and some interjections are also markers of an informal register (example 17).

- 59 Nothing on TV. No new message. Off-licence shut. What the hell – everything to colour and care for your hair. (COS)
- 60 Isn't it nice to get *something you really want* for Christmas for a change? (TEL)
- 61 Men, difficult *to buy for*? (FAS) / Love the skin *you're in*. (MED)
- 62 Business travel doesn't have to B A rip-off. (TRA, British Airways)
- 63 So I *just* drive and it gives me the right directions? Yes! *Just* listen to the clear voice directions on this satellite navigator, exclusive to Dixons. (TRA)
- 64 *You ain't seen nothing, 'til you've seen our gift guide*. If you think *you've* seen every Christmas gift call for our free Ultimate Gift Guide today. (FAS)

Similar markers are found in the Spanish and the German corpus.

- 65 *La prensa está de acuerdo: un turismo que parece un deportivo*. O al revés. (AUT)
- 66 *La única cosa que no cuestionamos (al menos de momento)*. (AUT)
- 67 *Invierte sabiendo que en cualquier momento puedes recuperar tu dinero. El camino para realizar tus sueños sólo lo marcas tú*. (FIN)
- 68 *Baje de las nubes y toque de pies* en Ofiprix. (OFF)
- 69 *Mausi tot. Gerade noch Herzensbrecher und plötzlich aus die Maus*. (MED)
- 70 *Wer an der Börse Geld machen will, braucht gute Nerven. Fragen Sie doch einfach mal*. (FIN)
- 71 *Der ideale Platz zum Surfen. debitel gibt Ihnen die Freiheit, sich auch mal abseits der üblichen Pfade ins Internet einzuloggen. debitel: na, hat's geklingelt?* (TEL)

Table 5 shows the frequency of informal register markers in the corpus texts. On the whole, the frequency is highest in the English corpus and lowest in the Spanish corpus. This corresponds to the form and frequency of attitude markers discussed previously. A culture in which the lack of formality in the relationship is marked by the form of address will not need so many stylistic markers of informality, and vice versa.

Table 5: Markers of informal register

Marker	English		Spanish		German	
Ellipsis	25	25.8%	7	36.7%	22	36.1%
Parenthesis	3	3.1%	1	5.3%	0	0.0%
Incomplete sentence (Anakoluth)	3	3.1%	4	21.0%	5	8.2%
Other syntactic markers	5	5.2%	1	5.3%	0	0.0%
Colloquialisms	14	14.4%	2	10.5%	17	27.9%
Slang	8	8.2%	1	5.3%	2	3.3%
Spoken language	31	31.9%	0	0.0%	3	4.9%
Particles and discourse marker	5	5.2%	1	5.3%	10	16.4%
Interjections	3	3.1%	1	5.3%	1	1.6%
Other lexical markers	0	0.0%	1	5.3%	1	1.6%
Total	97	100%	19	100%	61	100%

The results of the analysis are interesting, not only with regard to quantity, but also with regard to quality. In the Spanish corpus, syntactic devices represent more than 68% of the register markers, in the English corpus they represent only 37%, and in the German corpus no more than 44%. On the other hand, in the English and the German corpus, lexical markers are not only more frequent but also more variable. This may partly be due to the fact that in English and German style is graded much more strictly than in Spanish (if we consider Crystal & Davy's five grades of formality (1969: 74), leading from *frozen*, *formal*, *consultative* to *casual* and *intimate*). However, the differences in frequency and distribution must be attributed to the influence of culture-specific conventions. What is particularly striking, in this context, is the overwhelming frequency of markers of spoken language in the English corpus we have listed above.

72 It takes more than 8 years for a child's immune system to fully develop. Until then nothing reduces the symptoms of fever faster or for longer than Nurofen for Children. NUROFEN KNOWS CHILDREN. (MED)

73 Thermal S. With the benefits of Vichy thermal spa water *to intensively rehydrate* your skin. (MED)

74 LOEWE obsequia a los compradores de cualquiera de los siguientes modelos ... (INF)

75 *Refinando la perfección. El tweeter con la tecnología Nautilus, que ha hecho merecedores de los más encendidos elogios a los modelos de la Serie Nautilus 800, ha sido ahora incorporada [sic] a la Serie 600 S2.* (HOU)

Finally, we should not forget to mention that the frequency of markers of a formal register is extremely low. Examples 72 and 73 represent a *consultative register* (according to Christal & Davy, 1969), and the tone of example 19, above, is slightly more formal than usual because it is obviously directed at an educated (and, probably, more affluent) audience that recognises the allusion. Examples 74 and 75, which may be translations, sound almost parodistic; at least the latter case, where the very formal style seems inadequate to both situation and genre. The German corpus contains a few examples that are stylistically unmarked, but not a single text marked as formal or literary.

Concluding remarks

To conclude, we look at the results of the analysis as a whole. Table 6 illustrates that, as far as the first five parameters are concerned, there are only gradual differences between the three cultures. The low frequency of opening markers and self-identifications leads to the conclusion that producers of persuasive texts obviously prefer to simulate a relationship between friends. In all three corpora, appellative speech acts are the most important markers of phatic function. In the English and the Spanish corpus these speech acts are mainly personal, whereas they are mainly impersonal in the German corpus – this may be due to an intention to avoid the formal pronoun of address.

The greatest differences can be found with regard to relationship indicators, that is, forms of address and register markers.

Table 6: Phatic function indicators in advertising texts

Indicators of phatic function	English		Spanish		German	
Opening indicators	15	4.1%	13	4.8%	10	2.9%
Sender identification	5	1.4%	13	4.8%	8	2.3%
Prolongation devices	60	16.5%	35	12.9%	55	16.1%
Appellative forms	115	31.7%	121	44.6%	149	43.6%
Direct speech	71	19.6%	70	25.8%	59	17.3%
Informal register	97	26.7%	19	7.1%	61	17.8%
Total indicators	363	100%	271	100%	342	100%

The use of pronominal forms of address in persuasive texts corresponds to the general usage in similar situations of each culture. In Germany, for example, the normal form of address between adults who do not know each other is *Sie* (except in the world of academia, between students). In Spain, the use of the informal second person singular is the general rule amongst colleagues, teachers and students at university, but also with shop assistants, taxi drivers, waiters and waitresses, especially if they are younger or of the same age as the speaker. A small-scale analysis of job offers in Spanish and German has shown that in **all** the German offers, the requests to send in an application use the polite form of address (even in offers directed at young people), whereas most (although not all) Spanish requests use the informal address.

If *Sie* is the only acceptable form of address in these cases, German text producers (like the English) have to resort to register markers if they want to establish an informal relationship with the audience in order to 'persuade by addressing'. Where an informal relationship is the objective, forms of address and register are complementary. Since lexical register markers are more difficult to identify, syntactic markers, especially those of spoken language, are preferred. Considering the limited scope of the study, these results cannot be over-generalised. But I hope to have shown that the initial hypothesis can be verified: The phatic function relies on the conventionality of the linguistic and stylistic means. Even though persuasive communication strives after originality to attract the audience's attention, this is not true for the phatic aspect, where cultural acceptability is the aim.

Comparative linguists may need contrastive grammars to compare the structures offered by language systems. Translators (and particularly trainee translators) need comparative style analysis to guide them in their decisions in the translation process. This study has an exemplary and methodological character. It is intended to show how translators can elicit the conventions of verbal behaviour in their working cultures, and this is not restricted to foreign languages and cultures. It includes what we call our 'native' or 'mother' linguaculture. Intuitive knowledge is often treacherous or may not be up to date. Corpus-based empirical studies show what 'reality' is like at a certain moment.

Notes

- ¹ To specify the languages, I am using the abbreviations of: en. = English, es. = Spanish, de. = German.
- ² The product categories are indicated with each example: FIN = financial services (banks, insurance companies, investment brokers), ALC = alcoholic drinks, TEL = telecommunication, TRA = transport, HOU = household products and services, COM = commerce, AUT = cars and accessories, car rental, COS = cosmetics, FOB = food and beverages, TOU = tourism, TOB = tobacco products, INF = media of information, books, press, FAS = Mode, EDU = education, OFF = office equipment, MED = medical services and health care.

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Appendix: Corpus

Advertisements in English (United Kingdom)

- 1) *Daily Telegraph*, 12/2001.
- 2) *Daily Mail*, 12/2001.
- 3) *The Mail on Sunday*, London, 12/2001.
- 4) *The Observer*, London, 12/2001.
- 5) *Life. The Observer Magazine*, London, 12/ 2001.
- 6) *New woman*, London, 01/2002.

Advertisements in German (Germany)

- 1) Nord, Oliver (1999): *Über die Funktionen von Wortspielen in Werbeanzeigen. Untersuchungen zur Werbewirksamkeit von Wortspielen an hand eines Zeitschriftenkorpus*. Unpublished MA thesis. Heidelberg University.
- 2) *Die Marke*, Supplement of *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, on the occasion of Deutscher Marketingtag 2001.
- 3) *DB mobil*, magazine of Deutsche Bahn AG, 12/2001.
- 4) *Der Spiegel*, political magazine, 05/2001.
- 5) *Lufthansa Magazin*, 11/2001, 12/2001, 01/2002.

Advertisements in Spanish (Spain)

- 1) *Actualidad Económica*, Madrid 5 - 11 March 2001.
- 2) *The Tourist*, monthly magazine distributed in Spanish hotels, 2/01.
- 3) *Cosmopolitan España* 7/96.
- 4) *Ronda Iberia*, in-flight magazine of Iberia, 3/98, 5/98.
- 5) *El País Semanal*, regular supplement of *El País*, 10/96, 10/97, 10/98.
- 6) *Inversión. Semanario de ahorro y gestión de patrimonios*, Spanish magazine with a focus on economic topics, 23/02-01/03, 2001.
- 7) *Capital*, Spanish magazine, 6/01.
- 8) *El País*, nationally distributed daily newspaper published in Madrid 11/01.