

Giuseppe De Bonis, Maria Elisa Fina and Linda Rossato (eds.)

Italy in Translation

Institutional Tourism Discourse through the Lens
of the DIETALY Project

PETER LANG

Italy in Translation: Institutional Tourism Discourse through the Lens of the DIETALY Project explores how Italy has been linguistically, culturally, and visually constructed for foreign audiences through institutional tourism discourse. Drawing on the results of the PRIN DIETALY research project, the volume examines English-language tourism materials produced between 1919 and 1959 by the Italian National Tourist Board (ENIT) and other national and local institutions. Through a series of national and regional case studies, it highlights the role of institutional discourse in mediating cultural values and in constructing images of Italy and its regions in relation to broader historical, political, and socio-economic transformations.

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Introduction

Giuseppe De Bonis, Maria Elisa Fina and Linda Rossato
Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Italy in Translation: Institutional Tourism Discourse through the Lens of the DIETALY Project brings together the main findings and developments of the PRIN DIETALY research project, which investigated Italian institutional tourism discourse in translation, with a core focus on materials produced between 1919 and 1959 by the Italian National Tourist Board (ENIT) and other national and local bodies.

Structured in three parts, the volume combines historical, linguistic and translation-based approaches to examine how language, translation and multimodal communication contributed to shaping and disseminating Italy's image abroad. By foregrounding the role of institutions in cultural mediation and in the construction of national and regional identities through tourism, the volume addresses a largely underexplored field at the intersection of tourism studies and translation studies. Thanks to its interdisciplinary scope and the use of digital tools, the book will be of interest to scholars in translation studies, linguistics, cultural history, tourism and communication, while offering a valuable point of reference for future research on memory, identity and intercultural promotion. In doing so, the volume continues and expands on the special issue published in *Altre Modernità* (Agorni & Parini 2025), consolidating its findings while offering further insights into the materials collected – particularly by the research unit based at Ca' Foscari University of Venice – within the DIETALY project.

The first part of the volume outlines the methodological foundations of the project and proposes an interdisciplinary approach to tourism translation. *Mirella Agorni's* chapter conceptualises tourism translation as a constitutive form of cultural mediation rather than a secondary technical service. Bringing tourism studies into dialogue with translation studies, it argues that multilingual promotion shapes destination image through purpose-driven strategies ranging from translation to localisation and transcreation. Drawing on the DIETALY project, the chapter adopts a diachronic perspective to examine English-language institutional materials produced by ENIT between the 1920s and the post-war decades. This historical lens reveals how access, credibility

and trust were institutionally managed, while language labour remained largely invisible. By situating contemporary debates on AI-assisted translation within this longer trajectory, the chapter shows that automation reconfigures rather than replaces mediation, highlighting the continued centrality of institutional language governance in international tourism communication.

The second part of the volume brings together three complementary perspectives on how ENIT contributed to shaping Italy's international identity for English-speaking audiences across the twentieth century. Through a diachronic lens, the contributions examine the interplay of visuals, language, translation and thematic framing in institutional tourism communication. By analysing brochures and magazines produced for Anglophone markets, this part highlights ENIT's strategic role in crafting a persuasive, culturally mediated image of "Italian-ness" abroad.

Viviana Mauro's chapter examines how ENIT shaped Italy's image for British and American audiences between 1919 and 1939. Through a qualitative and comparative analysis of English-language publications explicitly targeting each readership, the study explores linguistic, visual and cultural adaptation strategies. It shows that British-oriented texts – especially those authored by William Stormont – adopted a personalised, authoritative voice combining practical guidance with persuasive and immersive storytelling. Publications for American readers, which increased in the 1930s alongside rising U.S. arrivals, were characterised by various strategies aimed at promoting a positive image of Italy for the American audience. While overt fascist propaganda was generally avoided, it surfaced in specific commemorative editions aimed at the American market. Overall, the chapter demonstrates ENIT's differentiated yet coherent strategy of adapting tourism discourse to distinct Anglo-American expectations in order to consolidate Italy's international appeal.

Linda Rossato's chapter traces the emergence of food tourism in Italy through a diachronic analysis of ENIT's multilingual brochures and magazines published between 1931 and 1959. Combining Discourse-Historical Analysis with translation studies perspectives, it examines how Italian cuisine moved from a marginal element of tourist promotion to a central marker of national identity. The 1931 booklet *Gastronomic Italy* is identified as a manifesto that legitimised Italian gastronomy—often through comparison with French cuisine—and employed strategic translation and cultural

mediation to render regional dishes accessible to Anglophone readers. In the 1930s, culinary discourse was integrated into prestigious, multilingual magazines, where food was framed through professionalism, abundance and subtle ideological references. In the 1950s, the rhetoric shifted towards authenticity, regional traditions and experiential value, rebranding cuisine as part of everyday Italian lifestyle. Overall, the chapter demonstrates that Italy's global gastronomic image was the result of a deliberate, long-term institutional construction rather than a spontaneous by-product of tradition.

Maria Elisa Fina's chapter provides a diachronic analysis of 344 visuals in fourteen ENIT brochures in English published between 1920 and 1963. Combining quantitative classification of the images with qualitative multimodal analysis based on Kress and van Leeuwen's framework, the study traces the evolution of Italy's promoted image across the 1920s, 1930s and post-war period. It identifies a shift from the static, contemplative aesthetics of the 1920s – dominated by line drawings of monuments and landscapes and largely devoid of human presence – to the “monumental realism” of the 1930s, characterised by photography and an emphasis on infrastructure and modern services. In the 1950s, visual rhetoric became increasingly experiential and lifestyle-oriented, foregrounding leisure, sport and social vitality. Overall, the findings show how ENIT progressively reconfigured Italy from a “museum of Europe” into a dynamic space of modern, lived experience for Anglo-American audiences.

Overall, the three chapters in this part reveal how ENIT's international image-making operated through a coordinated interplay of language, visuals and thematic framing. While addressing different dimensions of institutional tourism discourse – from audience-oriented linguistic adaptation and thematic reframing to the evolution of visual rhetoric – they collectively point to a coherent promotional strategy aimed at mediating Italian national identity for Anglophone markets across the twentieth century. This perspective underscores the role of institutional tourism communication in stabilising recurring imaginaries of “Italian-ness” while remaining responsive to changing cultural expectations and historical contexts.

The third part of the volume brings together three studies that investigate institutional tourism discourse as a strategic site for the construction, negotiation and circulation of territorial identities in the twentieth century. Drawing on English-language brochures and booklets produced by ENIT, the

chapters examine how tourism communication mediated space, identity and institutional authority, operating across different geographical and symbolic scales. Rather than approaching tourism solely as an economic activity, the contributions foreground its discursive and cultural dimensions, highlighting the role of language, images and translation in shaping durable imaginaries of place for international audiences.

The two chapters devoted to the Veneto region offer complementary perspectives on the emergence of regional tourist identity in a context marked by administrative fragmentation and symbolic asymmetry. *Giulia Cavalli* adopts a qualitative and multimodal approach to reconstruct the long transition from the geopolitical framework of *Le Tre Venezie* to the gradual articulation of Veneto as a coherent regional destination, between the end of the First World War and the institutional recognition of the Veneto region in 1970. Her analysis situates tourism promotion within broader political, institutional and cultural transformations, showing how symbolic continuity and thematic cohesion preceded formal administrative recognition. Special attention is paid to the central role of Venice as a narrative and semiotic anchor, whose dominance both enabled and constrained the construction of a regional imaginary. In this sense, the chapter highlights how institutional tourism discourse functioned as a tool of cultural cohesion, selectively organising space and meaning in the absence of a fully developed regional governance framework.

Daniela Cesiri's chapter complements this qualitative perspective through a diachronic, corpus-driven analysis of brochures produced by ENIT between the 1920s and the 1940s. By combining quantitative keyword analysis with qualitative discourse interpretation, her contribution uncovers the linguistic and stylistic mechanisms through which the Veneto region was presented to English-speaking tourists. The findings reveal a selective interplay between cognitive and affective components of destination image construction, with particular emphasis on infrastructure, accessibility, war memory and leisure. Importantly, the chapter demonstrates that, despite the ideological context of the Fascist regime, tourism discourse remained largely oriented towards destination appeal and international usability rather than overt political propaganda. Read together, the two chapters show how regional identity was unevenly constructed through recurring discursive patterns, thematic

hierarchies and institutional priorities, rather than emerging as a stable or homogeneous category.

Extending the analytical scope beyond the Italian peninsula, *Giuseppe De Bonis's* chapter shifts the focus to tourist destinations described as “Italy beyond Italy”, referring to border regions and colonial possessions promoted by ENIT in the 1930s. Through a qualitative, discourse-oriented and multimodal analysis of dedicated booklets, the study examines representations of peripheral areas such as Istria and Brioni in the northern Adriatic, alongside Italian colonial territories such as Tripoli in Libya and Rhodes in the Dodecanese. The chapter shows how ENIT’s tourism communication functioned as a form of cultural mediation and soft power, integrating these peripheral and colonial spaces into an expanded national imaginary through strategies of normalisation, selective historicisation and visual framing. It also highlights the role of translation as an institutional practice that stabilises and renders internationally legible the ideological and promotional configurations developed in the Italian source texts, while depoliticising geopolitical and imperial contexts.

Taken together, these three chapters underscore institutional tourism discourse as a flexible yet powerful means of organising space, managing centre–periphery relations and producing coherent representations of Italy and its regions for international audiences. By combining qualitative, quantitative, multimodal and translational perspectives, they show how tourism communication not only shaped how places were imagined and perceived but also contributed to the long-standing normalisation of territorial hierarchies and identities that continue to inform contemporary debates on regional branding, cultural memory and tourism governance.

This volume encourages a reconsideration of tourism translation as a central component of institutional destination-making rather than a secondary practice. Across different historical phases, materials and analytical perspectives, the contributions show how multilingual tourism communication has played a key role in shaping internationally legible representations of Italy and its regions. Translation, localisation and related forms of recontextualisation emerge as interconnected processes through which access, coherence and cultural resonance are negotiated over time. Grounded in the historical findings of the DIETALY project, the volume highlights the

long-term strategic dimension of institutional tourism discourse, while also drawing attention to enduring issues of responsibility, visibility and trust in mediated communication. In this sense, the book provides a framework for reflecting on how past practices continue to inform contemporary debates on multilingual promotion and technological mediation.

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Representing the Veneto Region to English-Speaking Tourists: A Diachronic Corpus-Driven Investigation of Tourist Promotional Brochures Produced between the 1920s and the 1940s

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ABSTRACT

The decades between the 1920s and the 1940s in Italy were marked by significant historical-political events: the consequences of World War I, the rise of the Fascist regime, and the events that would lead to World War II. Despite this period of unrest, the state tourism agency, *Ente Nazionale per le Industrie Turistiche* (ENIT), continued to produce a large volume of promotional material (such as brochures) in Italian and in several languages, including English, targeting international visitors whose foreign currency was crucial to the national economy. This study investigates a corpus of brochures to understand how the projected destination image (Hunter 2016) of the Veneto region was constructed during these critical historical decades. To do so, the research conducts a quantitative and a qualitative investigation on a purposely compiled corpus of 26 brochures produced in English between the 1920s and the 1940s. Using WordSmith Tools Version 8 (Scott 2022), a Keyword Analysis is performed to identify statistically relevant discursive patterns, followed by a qualitative investigation on the contexts in which these keywords occur in the corpus to interpret the tourist promotional strategies behind these patterns. The findings are interpreted and critically discussed by drawing on the notion of destination image construction, a well-known strategy in tourism studies (Hunter 2016). Then, results are further examined considering the specific historical period(s) during which the brochures were published, thereby interpreting results diachronically and exploring whether historical events influenced the way in which the Veneto region was promoted to international English-speaking prospective tourists. The quantitative analysis of the corpus confirmed its high degree of specialisation, displaying high Standardised Type-Token Ratio (STTR) and a high mean sentence length, compared to the reference corpus used (written component of the BNC). These stylistic features demonstrate the adoption of an elaborate, highly persuasive discourse structure typical of materials designed to influence pre-visit decision-making. The qualitative findings reveal constant efforts that focus on the Cognitive and Affective components of the destination image construction strategy (Kim & Yoon 2003). The diachronic interpretation of data also reveals that the historical events had indeed an impact on the destination image construction but only to a certain extent: themes of war heritage were strategically incorporated to construct a Cognitive Image component related to World War I memory, but the focus on the destination prevailed over fascist political propaganda during later years (1930s–1940s). The Affective strategy of

highlighting the emotions that a destination would create in the visitors was maintained throughout the fascist period, effectively overriding the regime's attempts to impose a rhetoric of national "mass tourism".

Keywords: Tourism promotion; Veneto Region; Destination image construction; English corpus linguistics; Diachronic analysis

RESUMEN

Las décadas comprendidas entre los años veinte y cuarenta del siglo XX en Italia estuvieron marcadas por importantes acontecimientos histórico-políticos: las consecuencias de la Primera Guerra Mundial, el auge del régimen fascista y los acontecimientos que conducirían a la Segunda Guerra Mundial. A pesar de este período de agitación, la agencia estatal de turismo, ENIT (*Ente Nazionale per le Industrie Turistiche*), siguió produciendo un gran volumen de material promocional (como folletos) en italiano y en varios idiomas, incluido el inglés, dirigido a los visitantes internacionales cuya moneda extranjera era crucial para la economía nacional. El estudio analiza estos materiales para comprender cómo se construyó, mantuvo o modificó la imagen proyectada del destino (Hunter 2016) de la región del Véneto durante estas décadas históricas tan críticas. Para ello, la investigación emplea un enfoque cuantitativo y cualitativo basado en un corpus recopilado expresamente, compuesto por 26 folletos elaborados en inglés entre los años 1920 y 1940. Utilizando WordSmith Tools Versión 8 (Scott 2022), se realiza un análisis de palabras clave para identificar conceptos temáticos estadísticamente relevantes, seguido de una investigación cualitativa sobre los contextos en los que estas palabras clave aparecen en el corpus para interpretar las estrategias discursivas que subyacen a estos patrones. Los resultados se interpretan y se discuten críticamente basándose en el marco teórico proporcionado por la investigación sobre la noción de construcción de la imagen de destino, una estrategia bien conocida en los estudios sobre turismo (Hunter 2016). A continuación, los resultados se interpretan más a fondo teniendo en cuenta los períodos históricos específicos durante los cuales se publicaron los folletos, interpretando así los resultados de forma diacrónica y explorando si los acontecimientos históricos influyeron en la forma en que se promocionó la región del Véneto entre los posibles turistas internacionales de habla inglesa. El análisis cuantitativo del corpus confirmó su alto grado de especialización, mostrando una alta relación tipo-token estandarizada (STTR) y una alta longitud media de las frases en comparación con el corpus de referencia utilizado (componente escrito del BNC). Estas características estilísticas demuestran la adopción de un discurso elaborado y muy persuasivo, típico de los materiales diseñados para influir en la toma de decisiones previas a la visita. Los resultados cualitativos revelan esfuerzos constantes centrados en los componentes cognitivos y afectivos de la estrategia de construcción de la imagen del destino (Kim y Yoon 2003). La interpretación diacrónica de los datos también reveló que los acontecimientos históricos tuvieron efectivamente un impacto en la construcción de la imagen del destino, pero solo hasta cierto punto: los temas de ENIT sobre el patrimonio bélico se incorporaron estratégicamente para construir un componente de imagen cognitiva relacionado con la memoria de la Primera Guerra Mundial, pero el enfoque en el destino prevaleció sobre la propaganda política durante

los años posteriores (décadas de 1930 y 1940). La estrategia afectiva de destacar las emociones que un destino crearía en los visitantes se mantuvo durante todo el período fascista, anulando eficazmente los intentos del régimen de imponer una retórica de «turismo de masas» nacional.

Palabras clave: promoción turística, región del Véneto, construcción de la imagen de destino, lingüística de corpus en inglés, análisis diacrónico

1. Introduction³⁰

The history of the Italian region of Veneto as a tourist destination dates back to the eighteenth century during the period of the so-called “Grand Tour” of Europe (Zannini 2014). The Grand Tour is also generally considered a precursor to mass tourism, even though it was reserved for the elites. However, it laid the foundations for modern travel and popularised the idea of travelling for leisure and cultural enrichment, thus creating a market for tourist infrastructures. The actual start of mass tourism is generally attributed to later developments like railway travel and organised package tours, which made travel accessible to a much wider audience (Lopes 2011).

Mass tourism movement led to the creation of written genres that promoted the destinations to be visited: not only guidebooks but also tourist brochures were a particularly popular and effective genre in the tourism industry since they effectively concentrate in a compact format the essential promotional and practical information to be provided on a destination (Calvi 2010). Brochures are also effective in the promotion of particularly popular destinations since they allow creators to summarise the most appealing attractions of the destination, thereby creating in the existing and prospective visitor’s minds a specific image of the destination (Francesconi 2011).

In Italy, ENIT (*Ente Nazionale per le Industrie Turistiche*; lit. National Institute for Tourism Industries) was founded in 1919 with the aim of promoting Italy as a national and international tourist destination (Berrino 2011). To do so, it produced a consistent amount of material in Italian and several other

³⁰ This study is part of the DIETALY (Destination Italy in English Translation Over the Years) PRIN2020 Project (Project Nr. 2020C4RRB5) funded by the Italian Ministry of University and Research (MUR), also accessible at <<https://pric.unive.it/projects/dietaly/home>>.

languages, including English (Agorni 2025).³¹ This study explores the construction of the Veneto region's destination image through ENIT promotional brochures published between the 1920s and the 1940s. The period is marked by profound socio-political shifts from the post-WWI reconstruction to the height of the Fascist era that had profound influence on tourism (Semeraro & Pasini 2018). The research's aim is to conduct a corpus-driven analysis on a corpus of brochures as well as to analyse recurrent discursive strategies employed by ENIT to promote the Veneto region. The study proceeds in three phases: first, WordSmith Tools Version 8 (Scott 2022) is used to perform a Keyword Analysis on the corpus followed by a qualitative investigation on the wider context in which these keywords occur in the corpus; any significant pattern found is, then, discussed using the notion of destination image construction, a well-known strategy in tourism studies (Hunter 2016). Finally, the study further interprets the results by contextualising them according to the specific historical period(s) during which the brochures were published in order to explore whether the specific historical events influenced the way in which the Veneto region was promoted to international English-speaking prospective tourists.

The chapter is organised as follows: Section 1.1. presents the state-of-the-art concerning destination image construction. Section 2 offers a brief overview of the history of tourism in Veneto during the decades 1920s–1940s, while Section 3 describes the dataset, the corpus and the methods used to investigate it. Section 4 contains the quantitative and qualitative analyses, whose findings are discussed in Section 5 using the notion of destination image construction. Finally, Section 6 offers the diachronic elaboration of the results, while Section 7 presents some Conclusive remarks on the study.

1.1. Tourism Destination Image Construction: An Overview of the State-of-the-Art

Destination image construction is an essential concept in tourism promotion and in successful destination management and marketing (Molina et al. 2010; Chu et al. 2022) since it is at the foundation of the creation of any material or genre that seeks to promote the specific destination. Reynolds (1965) has described the creation of an image in the consumers' mind as "the

³¹ Further details, please refer to the Introduction in this volume.

development of a mental construct based upon a few impressions chosen from a flood of information”. In the case of tourism destination image, this information comes from several sources, including guidebooks, advertising and brochures (Molina et al. 2010). Tourism management research defines destination image construction as a

«multidimensional concept» [...] that includes three constructs: 1) destination imagery or the whole touristic landscape; 2) the projected destination image or destination marketing campaigns; 3) and the perceived destination image or the combined effects of marketing and real destination experience on the visitor(s). In the context of expensive high quality promotional materials such as guidebooks and brochures in print form, the distinction between projection and perception is relatively clear as the expense of publishing such materials imparts a certain degree of authority on the marketers’ behalf». (Hunter 2016: 221)

Nowadays, materials can also include digital genres and social media, which play a fundamental role in constructing a destination image, sometimes constituting the sole support employed to this purpose. However, since the present study analyses printed brochures, this section focuses on printed materials and the corresponding state-of-the-art.

Molina et al. (2010) explore the relationship between tourist information sources and the formation of a tourist destinations image. They focus in particular on brochures and the role they play in generating that image. The results of the study reveal that the amount of information sources and the degree of their utilisation have a strong influence on the generation of an induced destination image. Moreover, they confirmed a positive relationship between the image generated by tourist brochures and the actual destination image, concluding that tourist information should be designed to be attractive and relevant to specific tourist groups’ demands to be influential on destination choice. Ayu and Budiwaspada (2022) consider Purwakarta Regency in Indonesia as a case study of destination image in the use of a trifold brochure to communicate the place’s identity and enhance its tourism image. The study concludes that the identification of identity in the brochure successfully correlates with the spread of the text through socio-cultural dimensions. The visual branding elements present Purwakarta’s character as a selling point, matching the predominant goal of the Tourism Office, which is to attract tourists and to improve the regional economy. Finally, Sebbeh (2022) focuses on the role of graphic design

elements in accelerating the development of Ghana's tourism industry, whose tourism potential has not been fully harnessed due to inadequate publicity methods. The study examines materials available across the country, including brochures and highlights various graphic design elements that could be used to create an effective destination image, thus succeeding in promoting tourism in Ghana.

Overall, the common element that emerges in the studies analysed in this brief overview is the strategic role that brochures can play as graphic, tangible promotional materials in influencing the destination image and promoting tourism. This is still valid today, when digital materials, social media, and computer-based communication have made printed brochures almost obsolete. The role of brochures in constructing a destination image was essential during the decades considered in this study, when tourism promotion and destination image construction could happen only “analogically”, through printed materials.

2. Tourism in Veneto between the 1920s and the 1940s

As already mentioned in the Introduction, the Veneto territory has always been a popular tourist destination. During the years considered in this study, ranging from the 1920s to the 1940s, the major historical-political events of the two World Wars had severely affected the presence of tourists. Since it is only after the 1950s that official statistics on tourism in Italy were officially conducted by ISTAT (*Istituto Nazionale di Statistica*; lit. National Institute for Statistics);³² before this date, we only have informal, approximate figures calculated by ENIT.³³ Therefore, it is difficult to calculate the number of tourists before and during the period taken into consideration.

What is certain from historical sources is that the two World Wars had a profoundly disruptive and transformative impact on tourism in Veneto. During World War I (1914–1918), the Veneto territory became a major

³² <<https://www.istat.it/tag/serie-storiche/>>. Last accessed: 27 November 2025.

³³ <

battlefront and the site of several crucial battles after Italy's defeat at Caporetto in 1917, which led to Austro-Hungarian and German forces pushing deep into the region. The region also suffered from aerial bombings and served as a strategic headquarters for occupying forces (Proctor 2017). Initially, these events devastated the areas directly involved in battlefronts and bombings, and halted tourism, but in the aftermath, they led to the development of new forms of tourism, particularly related to war memory and heritage (Aliano 2020).

In the post-war years, the fascist regime took power and tried to handle also the tourist industry, one of the country's "crucial invisible assets, which permitted the national budget to remain in balance and which therefore allowed Italy to prosper and develop", as Bosworth (1997: 3) puts it. The regime tried to add its totalitarian approach to this industry, creating the CIT (*Compagnia Italiana Turismo*; lit. Italian Tourism Company) that would produce tourism material in a more lenient way than ENIT. However, the regime failed in its attempts since tourism experts of the time argued for a more pragmatic approach to attract post-war international tourism, prioritising foreign currency over the regime's rhetoric of national "mass tourism" (Bosworth 1997).

As for the specific situation in the Veneto region, in the years leading to World War II (1930s) and in the years of conflict (1940s), the region was directly involved like during the Great War. In fact, the territory was involved in World War II through extensive Allied bombing raids, which caused significant damage and civilian casualties. The region also hosted partisan resistance against the Axis forces (Baldoli 2010).

Naturally, the tourism industry was affected: in the 1930s and 1940s, the fascist regime tried to impose its own agenda to the sector (Bosworth 1997); however, Venetian elites and town authorities prioritised economic interests, particularly the development of cultural tourism, over the fascist ideological project of nationalisation of the masses (Longo 2004). Exhibitions, plays, concerts and the *Venice Biennale* festival were primarily used as a pragmatic means to inject life into the flagging post-war economy (1930s) and serve local commercial tourism. Venice, in particular, was able to cooperate with the regime by seizing upon the rhetoric of economic reconstruction, ultimately using national politics to satisfy local goals of wealth and prosperity, regardless of fascist ideological motivations (ibid.).

3. The Present Study: Dataset and Method of Investigation

3.1. Brochures as a Genre in Tourism Promotion

As already mentioned, the “projected destination image” (Hunter 2016) serves as the primary conceptual lens for this study. In the context of institutional tourism discourse, this image is not merely a reflection of geographical reality, but a linguistic construct designed to appeal to the expectations of prospective tourists. Research on tourist brochures emphasises that these materials function as semiotic sites where national identity and local heritage are negotiated (Stoian 2015). Moreover, as noted by Francesconi (2011: 343), “brochures have been only recently critically addressed”. Since this observation, the state-of-the-art has offered other investigations on brochures as a genre in tourism promotion, either in printed or in digital form, for example Caroline Scarles and Jo-Anne Lester (2013), Hiippala (2015) and, more recently, Messner (2025), all argue that tourist brochures can be considered image generators and have found that brochures have indeed some influence on destination choice. These studies also show some observations in common that can be summarised as: effective brochures should meet three primary objectives, that is, influencing image formation, driving destination choice and satisfying tourist needs.

Moreover, Calvi (2010) classifies tourism brochures as a macro-genre, a tangible product characterised by stylistic hybridity, usually presented as a booklet or fold-out combining descriptive and practical contents with graphic elements. Unlike guidebooks, their dominant feature is a strong promotional style, aligning them closely with advertising genres. Brochures are utilised both pre-trip, for decision-making, and at the destination to suggest additional landmarks. This inherently promotional nature fosters the frequent use of evaluative language forms, distinguishing the brochure from other types of tourism promotional material. They belong to different types based on their creator: Commercial Genres, developed by agencies for direct sales and Institutional Genres, issued by official bodies like ENIT (the source for the brochures here investigated) to establish a destination’s image.

Building on Calvi (2010), Francesconi (2011) employs a multimodal analysis to focus on the interplay of visual and verbal modes in destination image construction, using an Institutional Genre brochure from the Malta Tourism Authority as a case study. She refines the definition of brochures as a genre

characterised by a promotional function, multimodal nature, and specific tourism objectives. The visual component primarily conveys core destination values, which are then clarified and confirmed by the verbal text. Brochures, being informative yet highly promotional pre-visit texts, aim to construct a positive destination image to convert readers into actual visitors, thereby influencing holiday destination choice. Francesconi (2011) demonstrates that brochures achieve their communicative function through highly persuasive discursive strategies across both visual and verbal modes, and identifies their typical generic structure: a cover, summary, general presentation and a tailored offer.

Even though a visual or a structural analysis was not the object of the present investigation, the possibility to clearly identify brochures from other genres present in the database (e.g., booklets, short travel guides/guidebooks, etc.) was useful in the collection of the dataset to be included in the corpus.

3.2. The Dataset and Corpus of Brochures in This Study

The present study conducts a corpus-driven investigation on brochures that were collected from the database of promotional materials produced by ENIT and, in turn, collected for the PRIN2020 Project DIETALY.³⁴ The dataset is, thus, composed of the materials produced by ENIT during the decades 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. The criteria applied for the selection were essentially two: (a) the materials had to be brochures presenting the characteristics of the tourist brochure as defined in Section 3.1 and (b) the brochures had to specifically promote the Veneto region, its cities, areas or aspects of the territory. Some of the brochures promoted some aspects of the Italian peninsula (e.g., “The Lakes of Italy”) or were dedicated to specific activities (e.g., “Golf in Italy”). In these cases, the brochures were included only if they promoted parts of the Veneto region, and only the text promoting it was included in the corpus. Finally, since the study investigates how Veneto was promoted to English-speaking tourists, only brochures in English were included in the corpus.

The brochures thus collected were 26. The list of titles is provided in the Appendix. Not all the brochures were printed with an exact date of publication. When this kind of information was available on the material,

³⁴ See Notes 1 and 2. The database and more detailed information on the project are available at <<https://pric.unive.it/projects/dietaly/home>> (see also Note 6).

it is indicated in the Appendix (after the list of References) next to the corresponding title of the brochure (e.g. “*Padova* – 1927”); if not available, then the information was gathered by cross-referencing internal dates in the text of the brochures themselves (e.g. in the Appendix indicated as “*Treviso* – 1920s”).

The brochures were then collected to form a corpus that was investigated using WordSmith Tools Version 8 (Scott 2022). The software for corpus analysis was used to look for any significant discursive patterns. To do so, WordSmith was used to conduct a Keyword Analysis in order to identify specific words that recurred with a certain frequency. Then, a qualitative investigation was conducted on the occurrences in which these keywords recur in the corpus to examine their wider context of occurrence that could indicate the strategies employed to construct the image of the destination.

4. Corpus-Driven Analysis

4.1. Quantitative Findings: General Corpus Description

This section provides the stylistic description of the corpus of brochures, while Table 1 outlines its quantitative stylistic features computed by the software. Comparing the corpus’s characteristics with existing British National Corpus (BNC) data helps clarify which features are present in the corpus under investigation, both in terms of general language use and features specific to the domain of tourism promotion.

Table 1. Corpus stylistic description

	Brochures Corpus	Reference Corpus (BNC_written)
Tokens	152,812	88,726,585
Types	18,237	340,764
STTR	45.13	43.15
Mean word length (in characters)	4.70	4.66
Sentences	7,020	3,866
Mean in words	23.82	465.26

Drawing on corpus linguistics methodologies outlined by studies such as Semino and Short (2004) and McEnery et al. (2006), the quantitative analysis of the corpus of brochures is conducted by using the written component

of the BNC 2014 version as reference corpus. Led by Lancaster University, the BNC 2014 version is an extensive 100-million-word database of contemporary British English. By capturing real-life language, this resource allows researchers to track linguistic evolution and provides educators, lexicographers and the public with authentic examples of modern usage across various genres (<<https://cass.lancs.ac.uk/bnc2014/>>). This study has used the written component of the BNC, which includes, “a balanced sample of 90 million words of current British English writing across multiple genres (newspapers, magazines, fiction, e-language, written to be spoken, official documents)” (Brezina et al. 2021). Therefore, the written component of the BNC is a suitable reference corpus to investigate tourist brochures from the 1920s–1940s because it provides a statistically representative tool for diachronic linguistic analysis.

The figures noticeable for Tokens and Types of the corpus of brochures indicate that it is highly specialised when contrasted with the reference corpus, while the measure of lexical diversity offered by the Standardised Type-Token Ratio (STTR) points to slightly different results. As illustrated in Table 1, the corpus of brochures exhibits an STTR of 45.13, which is slightly higher than the figure of 43.15 displayed by the reference corpus. Usually, TTR-based measures quantify the proportion of unique vocabulary used (McEnery et al. 2006). Therefore, a slightly higher STTR in the corpus of brochures suggests that the brochures contained in the sample seem to use a marginally richer or less repetitive vocabulary than the general written language of the BNC. This could be explained by specific stylistic choices by the authors of the brochures who needed to use a varied descriptive and promotional vocabulary to maintain readers’ interest in marketing materials in a relatively short space. The brochures in the corpus, in fact, condensed the promotion of the Veneto territory, or several areas of the same territory, in a limited number of pages, which range from a minimum of eight to a maximum of fifteen pages. For this reason, the authors of the brochures needed to focus on specific aspects of those areas that might attract prospective visitor’s attention, while reflecting the specific identity of the territory itself. The analysis conducted in the following section identifies on what aspects of the territory the authors decided to focus, thus creating a specific brand with which tourists could identify Veneto and the different aspects of its territory once arrived at the destination.

As for the other statistical measures of the corpus, the mean word length value is nearly identical in the two corpora (4.70 vs. 4.66 characters, respectively), suggesting no significant difference in the use of complex words typically associated with a text’s lexical complexity and stylistic formality, typical of written genres (de Haan & van Esch 2007; Biber & Conrad 2019).

The most remarkable difference lies in the values concerning sentence structure. Data referring to the corpus of brochures shows 7,020 sentences with a Mean length in words of 23.82. This sentence length is typical of written texts, structured in periods of long and complex sentences. According to Semino and Short (2004), communicative purpose shapes syntax, and considering that brochures are designed for efficient information transfer and persuasion (Calvi 2010; Francesconi 2011), a mean sentence length of approximately twenty-four words suggests a style that balances clarity with detail. This avoids the overly fragmented syntax of spoken language but also the highly embedded, complex structures often found in more technical texts such as academic genres (de Haan and van Esch 2007).

4.2. Quantitative Findings: Keyword Analysis

The keyword search focused on the lexical words that can be considered to occur with a significant frequency (at least 100 times) in the corpus. Interestingly, they do not refer to the Veneto territory, but they can be used for the construction of the image of any destination in Italy. These keywords are shown in Table 2, which shows the keywords followed by the frequency column displaying the word’s raw count in the corpus. Then, the last column shows the “keyness” of the word in the corpus as computed by WordSmith Tools Due to the relatively small size of the corpus, two decimal places are reported in the percentages to better illustrate their keyness in the corpus.

Table 2. Keywords occurring in the corpus of brochures

Keyword	Freq.	%
Lake	417	0.27%
Italy	305	0.19%
Great	282	0.18%
Italian	256	0.16%
Railway	242	0.15%
Line	241	0.15%

Table 2. (Continued)

Keyword	Freq.	%
Resort	229	0.14%
Winter	211	0.13%
Fine	207	0.13%
Famous	193	0.12%
Summer	192	0.12%
Motor	182	0.11%
Class	177	0.11%
Communications	172	0.11%
Valley	164	0.10%
Hotels	157	0.10%
Miles	144	0.09%
Sea	144	0.09%
Bathing	142	0.09%
Rome	138	0.09%
Road	133	0.08%
Season	132	0.08%
Bus	130	0.08%
Climate	120	0.07%
Numerous	120	0.07%
Station	113	0.07%
Sports	110	0.07%
Waters	109	0.07%
Monte	108	0.07%
Along	106	0.06%
Baths	104	0.06%
Church	102	0.06%

A close observation of the keywords in Table 2 reveals a promotional strategy that seems to prioritise national prestige and modern efficiency over individual sensory experience typical of the language of tourism promotion (Dann 1996), as testified by the presence of keywords such as RAILWAY, MOTOR, COMMUNICATIONS, ROAD, BUS and STATION. Unlike British tourism discourse, which frequently employs adjectives to create an emotional or “must-see” desire (Manca 2016), the Italian corpus (albeit composed of texts written in English) seems to shift to a more pragmatic and ideologically driven discourse characteristic of the Fascist era’s institutional tourism. Instead of finding

more evocative keywords such as adjectives that describe the territory and its beauties, the high frequency of the nouns just exemplified reflects the regime’s effort to project an image of a modern, technologically advanced Italy that serves the narrative of national progress (Bosworth 1997; Longo 2004). This is further evidenced by keywords such as *HOTELS*, *WATERS* and *BATHS* to denote excellence, effectively making evocative adjectives unnecessary since they are used as ideological markers of a modernised country, emphasising infrastructure and logistical prowess rather than aesthetic beauty.

Table 3 shows the keywords that did not score at least 100 times in the corpus, but that are referred to the Veneto territory and were more likely to contain a specific strategy of destination image construction. These keywords were analysed based on their occurrences in the corpus in order to identify their collocational range as well as phrases they frequently occur within (Section 4.3). Table 3 displays the same values in the columns as Table 2 with the addition of column N that indicates the position of the keyword in the keyword analysis as produced by the software to show the relative significance that the keyword has in the corpus.

Table 3. Keywords specifically referring to the Veneto region

N	Key Word	Freq.	%
110	Cortina	93	0.06%
115	Alpine	77	0.05%
118	Abano	61	0.03%
120	Canal	47	0.03%
122	Lido	51	0.03%
136	Piave	40	0.02%
148	Cadore	38	0.02%
168	Belluno	33	0.02%
183	Asiago	29	0.01%
200	Bassano	26	0.01%
373	Gondolas	11	0.00%
377	Doges	11	0.00%
386	Padova	10	0.00%
392	Feltre	10	0.00%

Another interesting case is the word “Venezia/Venice”, which was present in the Wordlist results used to generate the Keyword Analysis but not in the

Keyword Analysis itself, indicating that it is not statistically significant for the corpus. Therefore, and for space constraints, these two words were not included in the Qualitative Analysis, even though the city was indirectly described through other keywords (Section 4.3).

4.3. Qualitative Findings

The Qualitative Analysis run on the keywords in Table 3 revealed specific patterns in the choice of how the image of specific areas of the Veneto region was constructed.

A few keywords, such as CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, CADORE, BASSANO and FELTRE are only mentioned as lists of stops, such as part of itineraries or bus routes, at the end of the brochures with no other description given. This happened for all the instances in which they occurred in the corpus (see Frequency Column in Table 3). In these cases, no Qualitative Analysis was conducted on these toponyms.

As for the other keywords in Table 3, specific connotations could be noticed. For instance, ALPINE is used in specific collocations. Examples (1)–(4) (emphases in bold type added) show the use of each keyword in the corpus with Example (1) representing one of four identical uses; while Example (2) is the only occurrence in the corpus of the phrase Example (3) represents one of six occurrences of similar uses; Example (4) is again the only example of the corresponding keyword.

- (1) On the evening of November 1st, with the Ancona and Basilicata Brigades and the **Alpines** of the Pelmo, Exilles and Pieve di Cadore battalions [Guide_Italian_Battlefields];
- (2) There is an excellent service of **alpine guides** [Mountains_of_Italy];
- (3) It is also frequented in winter for sports and is a good centre for excursions and **alpine climbing** [Lake_Garda];
- (4) The climate is **sub-alpine**, mild and equable [Here's_Italy].

The examples illustrate that the word is used to refer to the Alpine corps (Example 1) or to professional services offered, or sport activities that can be performed (Examples 2 and 3), while Example 4 refers to the specific climate, that tourists might enjoy once at the destination. Example (1) reflects the promotional strategy already noticed in the keywords in

Table 2 (Section 4.2), namely, the promotion of a territory by highlighting elements that evoke characteristics of excellence (in the case of keywords in Table 2). This aligns with the Fascist propaganda that involved tourism promotional discourse as well: the regime, in fact, sought to nationalise the tourist experience. Instead of the traditional evocative and nostalgic view of the country, promoted through its architecture, art, history or nature, the regime shifted perspective on the country's achievements as a modern nation (Longo 2004). In the case of Example (1), the text promotes national pride, when referring to the courage demonstrated by the Alpine Brigades during World War I.

These first examples illustrate how the authors of the brochures' linguistic choices aimed to construct a specific destination image of the Veneto territory: for instance, by building a cognitive image of the destination's features (Kim & Yoon 2003), such as its historical identity by referencing to Alpine corps (Example 1), or to professional services (Example 2), and to sporting opportunities (Example 3). These cognitive attributes are critical because they influence tourists' perceptions and market competitiveness by defining what a destination typically offers and what visitors can do there (*ibid*). Moreover, the construction of this image relies on the social semiotics of the so-called connotative signs (Matos et al. 2015; Hunter 2016). For instance, Example (4) provides factual context (the region's climate), while Examples (1)–(3) actively project an identity, that is, a concept inherently linked to the tourist object and the projected image created by the texts' authors to differentiate the destinations as unique.

PIAVE and BELLUNO appear specifically associated with World War I. While PIAVE is found forty times in the corpus, it is used in twenty cases to refer to episodes or places associated with World War I (Example 5 illustrates one of these cases). In the other occurrences, the toponym is used as part of list of itineraries or as part of other toponyms (e.g., UPPER VALLEY OF THE Piave). The same can be said for Belluno, whose association with World War I is found twice in the corpus (one is illustrated in Example 6).

- (5) In the neighbourhood of Treviso the stretch of plain between the Sile and the **Piave** and the hilly mass of the Montello are of particular interest, as these were the sites of the stubborn resistance of the Italian troops [Venezia_Tridentina];

- (6) Over Perarolo, Longarone and Ponte delle Alpi we reach **Belluno**, where the 4th Italian Army Corps had its seat [Abano_Thermal_Cures].

As can be seen from the titles of the brochures in which the occurrences were found, reference to the conflict does not appear in brochures specifically dedicated to war tourism since they are dedicated to the leisure exploration of the territory (Venezia_Tridentina, i.e. *Venezia Tridentina* in the Appendix, which despite the name includes the Veneto area) and to visits to thermal resorts (Abano_Thermal_Cures, *Abano and its thermal cures* in the Appendix), therefore it is a strategy of the writer to emphasise the role that these places had during World War I. In terms of destination image construction, these two examples strategically imbue geographical locations with historical and cultural significance (Govers et al. 2007). In these cases, the brochures function as “tourist information sources [that] have an important influence on destination image” (Molina et al. 2010: 722) by inducing specific associations even in materials not primarily dedicated to war tourism.

On the other hand, other places are associated with different characteristics that remind of the strategy to connect the country to an image of modern efficiency and industrial progress. These are ABANO, ASIAGO, and PADOVA. Examples (7)–(11), respectively, illustrate these characteristics.³⁵

- (7) A watering-place in the Euganean Hills, nearly 6 miles from Padua. It [Abano] has strongly radioactive warm chloride-sodium, bromoiodic-lithic waters [Health_resorts];
- (8) But particularly picturesque is the Plateau of **Asiago**, north of Vicenza, a very pleasant and extremely popular spot for holidays [Vicenza];
- (9) In the most charming corner of the western plain of the **Asiago** tableland (which takes the name of Plateau of Lavarone) stands this small and delightful lake at an altitude of 3,840 ft. in the middle of woods and meadows [Veneto_Julian_Venetia];

³⁵ Example (7) is the only instance in which ABANO is used in this context, Examples (8) and (9) are two of four examples of the use of asiago with these connotations, while Examples (10) and (11) are the only instance in which PADOVA is referred to in that specific context. As in the other cases illustrated so far, the other occurrences of the keywords were excluded because the toponym was used as part of a longer expression and as part of a list in an itinerary, so with no semantic connotations attached.

- (10) **Padova's** greatest glory is its University, founded in 1222 shortly after the University of Bologna [Padova];
- (11) Owing to the wealth and fertility of the surrounding territory, **Padova** is the first industrial and commercial emporium of Venetia [Padua].

Example (7) refers to Abano and is contained in a brochure specifically dedicated to health and water resorts in Italy. What is interesting to notice is that here the destination is described by emphasising the quality of its thermal water. Examples (8) and (9) describe the Asiago area with details that focus on the subjective perception and emotions that the place creates (or will create) in the visitor (e.g., PICTURESQUE, VERY PLEASANT in Example 8; MOST CHARMING, DELIGHTFUL in Example 9) without elaborating any element that actually makes this place as described. The reader, in fact, is told how to feel about the specific place but without being told what to look at. Prospective visitors are not told if the charm comes from the architecture, the landscape, or some other typical local elements. The image construction of Padova³⁶ in Examples (10) and (11) is also interesting to note since the city is not described in its intrinsic qualities or importance but always in relation to something else, be it the University (Example 10), which might be hardly interesting to prospective holiday-makers, or Venice (Example 11), to which tourists might be more attracted than Padova. The city itself is described as INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL EMPORIUM, thus with characteristics that might not be attractive for international tourists. However, the image construction of Padova in Examples (10) and (11) offers a significant departure from the emotive–evaluative strategy seen in the Asiago descriptions, favouring a pragmatic identity defined by external relations and institutional utility in alignment with the analysis of the most frequent keywords found in the corpus. In fact, just like the keywords in Table 2 (Section 4.2) revealed a general promotional strategy prioritising modern efficiency over the individual sensory experience, the characterisation of Padova as an “industrial and commercial emporium” can be seen as a deliberate rhetorical choice that aligns with the Fascist regime’s broader ambition to transform Italy into a modern, productive power. In

³⁶ The city is generally named “Padua” in English. However, in the brochures it is always called with its Italian name, Padova. For this reason, to avoid confusion, it is indicated with its Italian name in the Chapter as well.

the context of the 1920s and 1930s, the “emporium” was not merely a site of trade, but a symbol of the *Stato Nuovo* (New State), which sought to reconcile Italy’s glorious past with a hyper-productive future (Falasca-Zamponi 1996). This industrialisation of the landscape served a specific geopolitical purpose since it demonstrated that, under Fascism, Italy had achieved the logistical discipline and economic vigor necessary to compete with Northern European powers (Bosworth 1997).

Other terms that were included in the Qualitative Analysis were: CANAL, LIDO, GONDOLAS and DOGES. CANAL and LIDO did not produce results exclusively connected to Venice, since they also referred to other places such as CANAL OF LEME or CANAL S. BOVO, but they were only listed as stops in itineraries. The association between CANAL and Venice is illustrated in Examples (12) and (13). Examples (14) and (15) show the collocations for LIDO; Examples (16) to (17) display the collocations of GONDOLAS, while Example (19) exemplifies the collocations for DOGES.³⁷

- (12) Just as the Venetian tongue is a miracle of exquisite expression, so its architecture is a miracle of colour, movement, and grace, which one may find repeated again and again, in a hundred different forms, from the world famous scenery of St. Mark’s and the **Grand Canal**, to the most remote little squares, the most **peaceful canals**, the humblest, forgotten byways [Here’s_Italy];
- (13) Ample evidence of the glorious history of the great Republic still survives in the ancient palaces that line the **Grand Canal** and in the **picturesque smaller canals** [Venezia];
- (14) the upper Adriatic is dominated by the **Lido at Venice** [Honeymoon_Journey];
- (15) the most important summer bathing resort of the Region, namely, the **Lido of Venice**. The **Lido** — a brilliant “plage” frequented by the highest cosmopolitan society [Venice];

³⁷ As in the case of toponyms, the examples provided are the only instances of the specific use of the keyword in the corpus. The other contexts in which the keywords occurred were, as usual, lists of places, itineraries or maps, so with no semantic connotation attached.

- (16) its [Venice's] **silent and graceful gondolas**, and its people who give a characteristic note of animation to the whole picture [Venice];
- (17) The romantic Venetian lagoon is a veritable refuge of lovers, and especially at the hour of sunset and on moonlit evenings is thronged by **innumerable gondolas** [Venezia];
- (18) The Ducal Palace (or **Palace of the Doges**, a unique expression of art and a synthesis of fourteen centuries of history [Venice].

The choices that emerge from these collocations point to a specific characterisation of Venice. The canals might be described as PEACEFUL and PICTURESQUE (Examples 12 and 13), but the brochures also suggest tourists look for the smaller ones, for humble and FORGOTTEN BYWAYS already giving advice to avoid the overcrowded places of mass tourism that also characterise Venice today. It is also interesting to notice how the LIDO is referred to in the corpus. While it should be named as “Lido di Venezia”, or LIDO OF VENICE (as in Example 15) in its more frequent adaptation in English, the corpus contains the unusual phrase LIDO AT VENICE (Example 14). Example (15), moreover, uses the French borrowing “plage” (instead of an English equivalent). Therefore, the author intentionally evokes a sophisticated atmosphere associated with the French Riviera. This linguistic choice serves as a marker of high status, signalling that the Lido is a space of curated luxury rather than just a natural geographical feature. This aura of exclusivity is further reinforced by the presence of the phrase “highest cosmopolitan society”, implying that the location’s value is derived as from its elite social groups of regular frequenters as well as from its physical beauty. By using one simple borrowing, the text effectively frames the Lido not merely as a geographic site but as a prestigious social stage where language and clientele converge to reinforce a sense of aristocratic refinement and global relevance.

Examples (16) and (17) contain descriptions of the city’s romantic and eternal beauty through the choice of adjectives such as SILENT and GRACEFUL in reference to the GONDOLAS. However, reference to the city’s eternal problem generated by mass tourism is also present in Example (17) in the use of INNUMERABLE to indicate the number of gondolas available for visitors, which might hold indirect negative connotations since gondolas were, as still are, one of the city’s main attractions for foreign tourists. Dictionary sources, such as *Cambridge Dictionary*, *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) and *Merriam-Webster*

illustrate the word's meaning with "too many to be counted/numbered", collocating this adjective with burdens, errors or frustrations. In the specific context of Example (17), although it begins with romantic imagery of Venice at sunset, the adjective "innumerable" introduces a negative connotation of congestion and overwhelming presence of gondolas that contradicts the idea of a romantic refuge/escape. We can see that the term shifts the scene from one of peaceful intimacy to one of logistical excess, especially when paired with the verb "thronged", which means "to go somewhere or be present somewhere in large numbers" (OED), which further emphasises the concept of a density of objects that might be beyond comfort. Consequently, it transforms the romantic refuge into a crowded, chaotic space where the sheer volume of gondolas threatens the very solitude and beauty lovers have come to find. Even though during the period in which the brochures were written the two terms might have had a different semantic prosody, it might be hypothesised that their connotation is similar to the interpretation here provided, in consideration of the fact that a consultation of the OED reported the possible "negative" associations in use already in the first decades of the twentieth century.

5. Discussion of Findings: Constructing the Image of Veneto as a Tourist Destination (1920s–1940s)

The investigation conducted in this study has provided evidence for the discursive strategies used to construct a specific image of the Veneto region during the 1920s–1940s in the corpus of brochures, aligning closely with the theoretical components of destination image construction. The Keyword and Qualitative Analyses revealed that destination image is typically structured around two fundamental components of destination image construction, that is Cognitive and Affective Image (Kim and Yoon 2003). The former is represented by objective attributes (e.g., attractions and infrastructure), while the affective component lies in elements that aim at provoking a subjective and emotional response in the readers.

The corpus-driven analysis clearly revealed this twofold marketing strategy that leverages both these components not for the Veneto region as a whole but, rather, for single aspects or individual areas of its territory. The Keyword Analysis indicated that the most frequent and statistically significant

keywords (RAILWAY, LINE, MOTOR, COMMUNICATIONS, HOTELS and STATION as well as ABANO and PADOVA) aligned with the Fascist regime's political agenda that aimed at projecting Italy's image as a modern, efficient and industrialised country that foreign visitors would wish to visit because of these aspects rather than for its traditional natural, historical or artistic landmarks (Falasca-Zamponi 1996). This confirms a present-day concept in destination image construction, namely, that destination features, such as accessibility and services, are crucial for building a positive destination image and attracting prospective tourists (Molina et al. 2010). These keywords, therefore, construct a reliable, modern and high-class image of the region's infrastructure, a key component of the Cognitive Image (Kim & Yoon 2003).

The Affective Image component uses evaluative language to create a desirable imagery, influencing the potential visitor's mind (Matos et al. 2015; Martins 2015). Because tourism products are intangible, these "projected images" are designed to "inspire and to influence [tourists] during the decision-making process", transforming a physical landscape into a symbolic mental prototype that enhances a region's "attractiveness and market competitiveness" (Marine-Roig 2015). This was the case of places directly connected with war tourism (e.g. PIAVE AND BELLUNO).

The emotive keywords directly linked to the Veneto region were statistically non-significant, suggesting their secondary role to the general destination appeal. However, descriptions of specific places or the territory utilised a highly strategic focus, constructing a Cognitive Image in the case of the almost scientific explanation given to the characteristics of ABANO's thermal waters or the industrial and educational relevance of PADOVA, which emphasise their objective attribute and role in building a modern nation. The construction of an Affective Image and the subjective visitor experience is noticeable for resort areas such as Asiago: the brochures relied heavily on Affective Imagery (e.g., Examples 8 and 9), using terms that anticipate the visitor's emotional perceptions upon arrival. Matos et al. (2015) stress the importance of such imagery in the pre-trip phase since these expressions act as linguistic tools that influence the prospective tourist's decision-making process by creating strong emotional expectations.

The analysis of the keywords CANAL, LIDO, GONDOLAS and DOGES was crucial for examining the image construction of Venice, a key Veneto destination, despite not resulting statistically significant. The Lido is described with

terms suggesting prestige and exclusivity (Examples 14 and 15), employing specific social class markers. Conversely, suggestions to avoid crowded areas in Venice is found in the brochure illustrated in Example (17), which signal a tension between the projected romantic image (Hunter 2016) and the negative aspects of mass tourism (Govers et al. 2007). Even though it is just one brochure, by directing tourists toward hidden corners and peaceful canals, the brochure manages expectations, guiding visitors towards a more authentic experience (Marine-Roig 2015) that differentiates the perceived image from the overcrowded reality. This represents an early attempt at destination image management (Molina et al. 2010).

6. Interpreting Results in Their Historical Context

This final part of the study seeks to further interpret results from the corpus of brochures on the basis of their publication date/period. The purpose is to explore, diachronically, whether historical events influenced the way in which the Veneto region was promoted to English-speaking tourists.

Drawing on the theoretical framework of destination image construction (Martins 2015; Hunter 2016), which posits that image is a social construct influenced by external factors, this study argues that three key historical events affected the Veneto brochures (1920s–1940s): the post-WWI era, given the region's battlefield status; the Fascist Regime (1922–1943), under which ENIT produced the promotional material as propaganda; and the escalating tensions leading to WWII, potentially hindering foreign travel.

For the 1920s period, the corpus-driven analysis evidenced consistent historical influence, in which brochures construct a military/patriotic identity via the WWI legacy, specifically associating Piave and Belluno with the conflict. Brochures also used these toponyms as symbols of national identity and sacrifice, establishing a Cognitive Image rooted in historical authenticity. This discourse persisted into the 1930s as a point of national pride.

The brochures from the 1930s frequently use terms suggesting modernity and accessibility, aligning with the Cognitive Image component of the destination image construction strategies discussed in Section 5. This may reflect the fascist regime's effort to promote an industrialised country and attract foreign currency, a key component of the Projected Destination Image (Molina et al. 2010). However, explicit propaganda elements are minimal.

As noted in Section 2, ENIT's material remained largely consistent with previous decades, prompting the creation of a more compliant concurrent agency. Historical sources (Section 2) confirm that local authorities often prioritised economic benefit over ideological rhetoric.

Results from the 1940s brochures confirm the lack of a relevant political agenda. The emphasis on Italy/Italian was interpreted via destination image construction, where Cognitive and Affective Image keywords proved more significant. The luxurious affective language generally prioritised the profitable, high-class leisure image over overt political propaganda across the decades.

7. Conclusions

In conclusion, the corpus-driven analysis of ENIT's Veneto brochures (1920s–1940s) has revealed a twofold destination image construction: a Cognitive Image component promoting modern infrastructure and an Affective Image component highlighting historical identity (WWI sites) and natural beauty. Venice's promotion balanced prestige with an authentic escape from mass tourism. Diachronic comparison tested how this projected image resisted external pressures (World Wars, fascist propaganda), measuring the relationship between the destination's Identity and its Projected Image.

One of the limitations of the study lies in the fact that, for the time being, the corpus-driven investigation could not consider – for space constraints – content words in the Word List that might have contributed to complete the analysis in terms of destination image construction. Moreover, the study focuses only on the verbal component of the English-language brochures, excluding the multimodal visual component.

Future research might include a Keyword and Concordance Analyses of nouns, adjectives and verbs used in the brochures used to describe the Veneto region. Finally, a visual analysis might also determine if non-verbal elements reinforce or diverge from the projected image, compare different language versions (e.g., Italian or other languages) to detect varying discursive strategies, and expand the corpus to include other media (e.g., guidebooks) for a thorough destination image construction.

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Appendix³⁸

Title of Brochure	Year/Period of Publication
The Garda Lake and its climate	1920s
Treviso	1920s
Veneto and Julian Venetia	1920s
Venezia	1920s
The Julian Venetia	1921
Abano and its thermal cures	1926
Padova	1927
Honeymoon Journeys in Italy	1930s
Malcesine Lago di Garda	1930s
Padua	1930s
The Dolomites	1930s
Venezia Tridentina	1930s
Venice	1930s
Verona	1930s
Vicenza	1930s

³⁸ The brochures are listed in chronological order: first the periods when no clear date was indicated on the publication, then the brochures with exact date when this information was available on the brochure.

Title of Brochure	Year/Period of Publication
Lake Garda North Italy	1932
The Dolomites northern Italy	1937
Leisure and Pleasure in Italy	1940s
The Lakes of Italy	1940s
The Mountains of Italy	1940s
The Seas of Italy	1940s
Here's Italy	1945

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