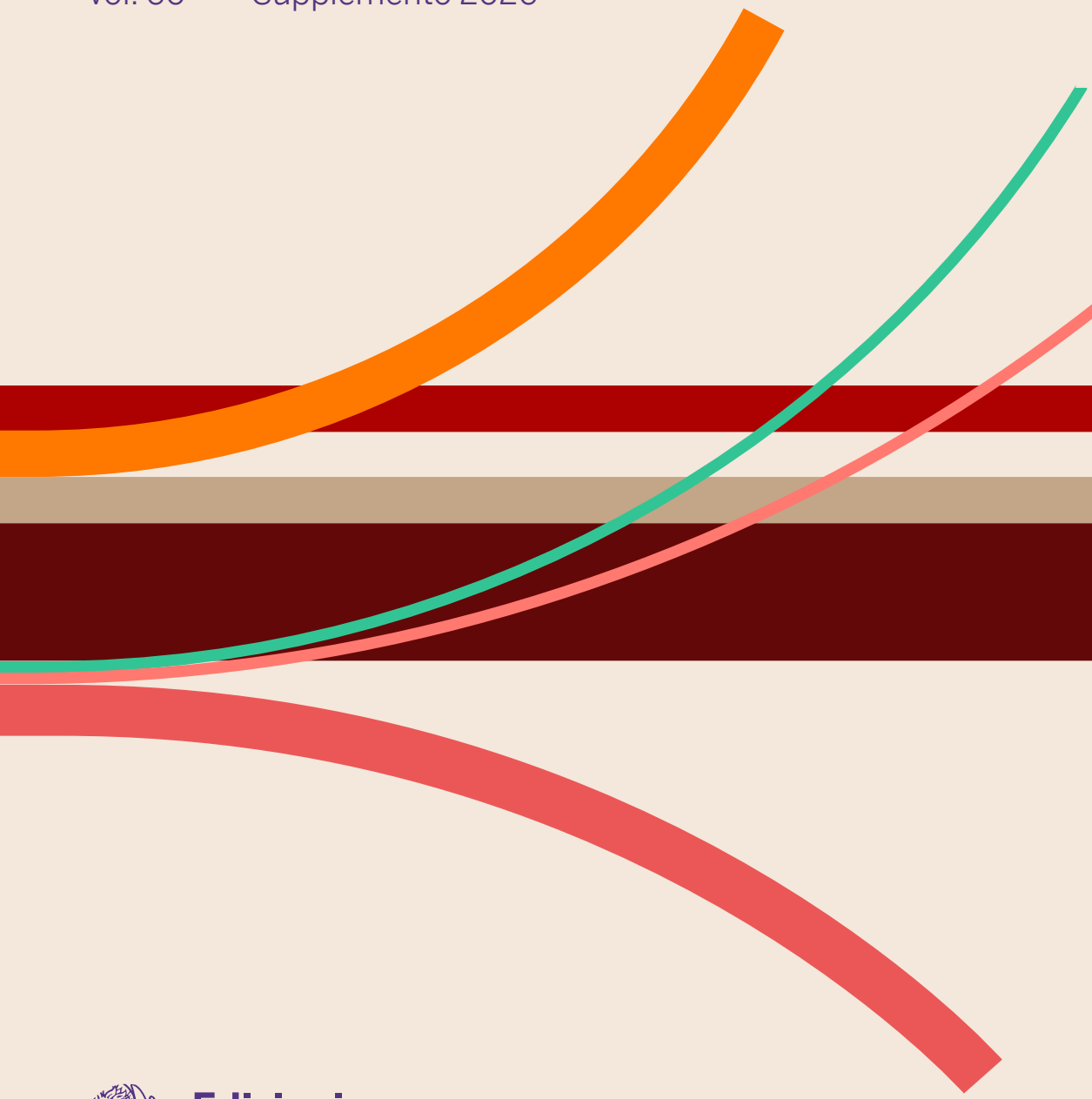
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Abstract

This special issue explores how food discourse constructs cultural identities, ethical values and consumer practices across institutional, commercial and digital contexts. Through corpus-assisted, critical and multimodal discourse approaches, the contributions examine representations of traditional and novel foods, from Italian culinary heritage and gastronationalism to alternative proteins and sustainable consumption. Together, they reveal how language and visual communication negotiate authenticity, health, innovation and responsibility, shaping contemporary food cultures and perceptions of what constitutes desirable food.

Keywords Food discourse. Cultural identity. Multimodal communication. Food marketing. Sustainability.

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edited by
Daniela Cesiri, Michele Sala, Stefania M. Maci

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A Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis of Nutella®'s Website in English and in Italian
Representing Corporate Advocacy Between Traditional Values and Innovation

Daniela Cesiri
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Abstract Food brands with a long-standing tradition strive to balance heritage with modern trends and sustainability goals. As a case in point, Nutella® seeks to promote its brand through two distinct strategies: glocalization and corporate advocacy. This study presents a corpus-based discourse analysis of Nutella®'s web pages in English and Italian, exploring how the brand expresses corporate advocacy across different linguistic and cultural contexts. Findings show that Nutella® varies its discourse: the Italian web page focuses on socio-agricultural governance, labor ethics, and supply-chain value to protect brand heritage in its home market. On the other hand, the English web page emphasizes glocalized traceability, regional provenance, and circular economy commitments to build global brand legitimacy among international consumers.

Keywords Corporate advocacy. Glocalization. Food branding. Corpus-based discourse analysis. Nutella.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Nutella®: Between Tradition and Glocalization. – 3 Corpus Composition and Method of Investigation. – 4 Findings. – 5 Discussion of Results: Negotiating Heritage, Glocalized Traceability, and Corporate Advocacy. – 6 Conclusions.

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1 Introduction

Economic studies on corporate longevity show that the food and beverage manufacturing sector dominates the list of the most long-standing industries (Hudson 2014). In addition, the food manufacturing sector alone generates such large revenues that it is considered one of the largest industrial segments in the worldwide economy. Depending on how broadly researchers define the sector (i.e., more narrowly as packaged/ultra-processed goods or more broadly as all agricultural processing; see Kaur, Chauhan 2026, and Guja et al. 2026, respectively), global revenues typically range between $2.2 trillion and $9.5 trillion.[1]

Hence, food brands that originate from family businesses and hold a long-standing legacy tend to operate at the intersection of globalization and local identity, seeking to carefully balance established tradition with modern commitments to sustainability and technological evolution (Balderas-Cejudo et al. 2025). In this regard, Nutella® can be considered a case in point: first produced by a local family-run confectionery business in 1946, today it is produced worldwide, so the brand[2] strives to find its balance between a global-scale production and distribution, on the one hand, and promotional messages of local intimacy, on the other (Cova, Pace 2006; Cesiri 2025). Nutella® seems to frequently promote itself through two distinct strategies: glocalization (i.e., adapting global brands to local cultures; Cova, Pace 2006) and corporate advocacy (namely, when a company publicly supports social and environmental issues; Cova, D'Antone 2016).

This study presents a corpus-based discourse analysis of Nutella®'s official websites, in English and Italian, in order to explore how Ferrero, the company behind the Nutella® brand, expresses corporate advocacy across different linguistic and cultural landscapes. By contrasting the results from the sub-corpus in Italian and the sub-corpus in English, the study aims to investigate how the company communicates its corporate identity. The research specifically addresses two central research questions (RQs):

1 Global data available at `https://www.statista.com/outlook/cmo/food/worldwide/#revenue`.

2 According to marketing studies, a product is "anything that can be offered to a market to satisfy a want or need" (Kotler, Keller 2016, 168), while a brand is a trademark attached to a product that defines it as a multi-dimensional mental representation, personality, and relationship (Stern 2006). So, Nutella® – created as a product – has now become a brand with its own dedicated line of Nutella®-based products (e.g., muffins, biscuits, etc.), websites, and product-inspired gadgets, cafés (Cesiri 2025), and communities (Cova, Pace 2006). In this study, it is investigated as a brand, not as a product, and will be referred to in this sense throughout the paper.

RQ1: How do the discursive strategies of corporate advocacy differ between Nutella®'s Italian and English websites?

RQ2: In what ways do advocacy strategies used in the two versions of the websites interact with glocalization and the preservation or adaptation of brand heritage across local and international target audiences?

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents Ferrero's flagship product Nutella®, framing its brand history against the state-of-the-art on glocalization and food studies; Section 3 presents the corpus and the methodology used to investigate it in the present study. Section 4 provides the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the corpus data, while Section 5 discusses the findings. The paper concludes with Section 6, which also offers directions for future research.

2 Nutella®: Between Tradition and Glocalization

Literature studying Nutella® is surprisingly not abundant.[3] The few works consulted are from marketing or communication studies, and their findings all tend to highlight the complex dynamics that Ferrero's flagship product always tries to achieve between preserving a deeply rooted cultural heritage and implementing flexible glocalization strategies across diverse international markets. For instance, Padovani (2004) has established the brand's foundational myth as a symbol of post-war Italian ingenuity and socio-cultural identity, forming the traditional core upon which Nutella®'s global brand equity rests. Building on this heritage, Cova and Pace (2006) have also demonstrated how a mass-marketed convenience product successfully fostered bottom-up consumer empowerment through platforms like 'my Nutella® The Community', where passionate fans actively co-created brand meaning while reinforcing traditional emotional attachments.

This resilient brand iconicity is further analyzed by Cova and D'Antone (2016), who have examined how Nutella®'s deeply entrenches traditional status helped Ferrero navigate severe anti-consumption pressures and public health debates, such as the global

3 However, it seems that the product is popular as a case study for students writing their BA and MA dissertations, since many case studies are available that explore the brand's marketing and advertising strategies. However, these dissertations are quite repetitive and do not add much to existing literature on Nutella®. For this reason, they were not included in this overview, except for Gioia and Blaas (2014), here cited as representative of the category.

palm oil controversy, by counterbalancing institutional critiques with entrenched consumer affection and trust. As the brand expanded internationally, this traditional core was systematically paired with glocalization strategies to achieve cross-cultural resonance. Gioia and Blaas (2014) have illustrated this digital 'think global, act local' approach by analyzing how Nutella® adapts its online web presence across five distinct national markets, balancing standardized global attributes with localized aesthetics, recipes, and narrative themes.

Extending this cross-cultural focus to market adaptations, Piscopo (2024) has explored the discursive and identity mutations that international agrifood brands undergo in Franco-Italian contexts, showing how Nutella® recontextualizes its messaging to align with local gastronomic expectations without diluting its core identity. In emerging and non-Western markets, Retnowati et al. (2021) have demonstrated that localized packaging variations, controlled product variations, and strong overarching brand equity are critical determinants in cultivating consumer trust within distinct regional settings. Finally, Cesiri (2025) has provided a linguistic and socio-cultural perspective on how food products are communicated to younger audiences, emphasizing how Nutella®'s traditional narrative as a wholesome family staple is discursively adapted to navigate varying international regulations and cultural norms regarding child nutrition and advertising.

This short overview of the literature on the topic has highlighted that the studies available converge in showing that the dominance of Nutella® on the global market relies on a constant balance among several promotional strategies, namely: connecting its identity with nostalgic, consumer-driven tradition, continuously recalibrating its packaging, digital presence, discursive strategies, and tailoring its communications to fit local socio-cultural landscapes.

However, the lack of research concerning the connection between Nutella®'s socio-cultural heritage, community dynamics, and international marketing strategies, also emphasizes the gap in the literature that could help us understand how brand discourse specifically integrates corporate advocacy with glocalization across digital channels, the medium whose affordances are most extensively exploited by the brand.

The present study seeks to fill this very gap by employing a corpus-based discourse analysis of Nutella®'s official websites in both English and Italian to examine – quantitatively and qualitatively – how the brand combines corporate advocacy with its glocalization strategies across distinct linguistic and cultural contexts. By contrasting these two sub-corpora, the study aims to investigate possible differences and/or similarities between marketing-driven glocalization and transparent corporate communication, thus offering new empirical insights into how a long-standing food brand discursively negotiates

the balance between tradition, global adaptation, and modern commitments to social and environmental responsibility.

3 Corpus Composition and Method of Investigation

The corpus was collected by extracting the verbal components of the web pages from specific sections of the website dedicated to Nutella® (`https://www.nutella.com`). These sections were those dedicated to the description of the history of the product, its ingredients, packaging, and sustainability. Then, two sub-corpora were created: one for the pages in Italian (taken from `https://www.nutella.com/it/it/`) and one for those in English (available at `https://www.nutella.com/int/en/`).[4] The sections were accessed from the main website's homepage: next to the product's logo – on the left-hand side of the web page – a drop-down menu bar allows users to visit the sections 'Scopri Nutella®' (lit. Discover Nutella®)/'Inside Nutella®', which contains all the sub-sections investigated in this study. The sections and sub-sections included in this main 'drop-down menu bar' are illustrated in Table 1.[5]

Table 1 Sub-sections in Nutella®'s website (Italian and English versions)

Sections and Sub-sections (Italian)	Sections and Sub-sections (English)	Contents
Le nostre azioni (lit. Our actions):	Our Commitment for sustainability:	Description of the company's commitment and the brand's characteristics in terms of environmental sustainability

4 A comparison of the English and Italian versions of the web pages revealed a few stylistic and thematic differences. Because it was not possible to ascertain whether they were parallel texts or translated texts edited after translation, the two versions of the websites were not considered source-target texts, but rather as parallel, independent texts, and were analyzed as such in the study.

5 For copyright reasons, it was not possible to provide screenshots of the web pages in this paper since the copyright holder did not respond to the author's requests. Being a corpus-based investigation, this did not affect the contents of the analysis. However, the web pages could be reproduced here to illustrate how the author accessed the data. A description and hyperlinks were provided to compensate for the lack of images. The titles of the sections are provided in Italian and in English, respectively.

Impegno per la sostenibilità (lit. Commitment for sustainability):	The Nutella® Palm Oil	Sub-section dedicated to describing the characteristics of the specific ingredients in terms of nutritional values and their environmental impact
Il nostro impegno in ogni ingrediente (lit. Commitment in every ingredient):	The Nutella® Cocoa	As in the previous sub-section
olio di palma (lit. palm oil)	The Nutella® hazelnuts	As in the previous sub-section
cacao (lit. cocoa)	The Nutella® sugar	As in the previous sub-section
nocciole (lit. hazelnuts)		
zucchero (lit. sugar)	Recycling the Jar	Instructions on how to re-use the jar
Qualità e Ingredienti (lit. Quality and Ingredients)	Our Quality & Ingredients	Other ingredients used to make Nutella® are listed and explained in terms of their nutritional value
Ricicla il vasetto (lit. Recycle the jar)	Recycling the Jar	Instructions on how to re-use the jar
Il nuovo look (lit. Our new look)	New Look	Description of the new look of the Nutella® Jar and label
La nostra storia (lit. Our story)	Our Heritage	History of the Nutella® product and brand (it starts with a timeline of Ferrero)
FAQ	FAQ	FAQ section mostly dedicated to answering allegations and concerns about risks and hazards to consumers' health regarding palm oil and the use of other ingredients

As Table 1 shows, the sections contain comparable thematic content, differing primarily in how the information is structurally distributed across the two sub-corpora. Future research will consider cultural differences concerning the organization of the drop-down menu bar that allows users to access the different sections and the multimodal visual composition of the web pages, as well as how the visual and verbal components of the web pages interact to convey specific meanings (whether literal or symbolic).

Once gathered into the two sub-corpora, the verbal components of the sections were then investigated using Sketch Engine,[6] an online platform that integrates functions for corpus construction, management, annotation, and analysis. In addition to enabling users to upload corpora of their own compilation, the platform provides web-based access to an extensive library of pre-built multilingual corpora (Kilgarriff et al. 2014; Kovačević 2026).

The texts were collected, manually cleansed by removing hyperlinks, formatting inconsistencies, and visual elements that were not to be included in the analysis, and saved as text-only files. The aim of this part of the analysis was to examine differences and/or similarities – in terms of discursive strategies – between the two sub-corpora that could be considered as indicators of how the brand combines corporate advocacy, glocalization and the promotion of traditional values across the two different cultural contexts. For this reason, the sub-corpora were uploaded to Sketch Engine's corpus query system, which automatically generated a list of keywords. In fact, Sketch Engine can be used to extract single-word and multiword units from a corpus that define the content or topic of the corpus itself (Kilgarriff et al. 2014).

Drawing on corpus linguistics methods of investigation (e.g., McEnery et al. 2006), Sketch Engine considers keywords as any individual words that occur significantly more frequently in a target corpus than in a reference corpus. Although this statistical threshold applies to all parts of speech, keyword extraction predominantly highlights content words, given that function-word frequencies remain relatively static across varied corpora. Therefore, for both sub-corpora, two reference corpora were selected from the library available in Sketch Engine: the 'Italian Web 2020' and the 'English Web 2021' corpora were used for the Italian and the English sub-corpora, respectively, since they are both general corpora from web sources, thereby reflecting the characteristics of the texts in the sub-corpora under analysis. Table 2 summarizes the composition of the two sub-corpora.

Table 2 General quantitative composition of the two sub-corpora

Sub-corpora	Italian	English
Tokens	5,772	6,497
Words	5,073	5,623
Lemmas	1,202	1,235
Sentences per document	231	242
Average words per sentence	22	23

6 Available at: app.sketchengine.eu/.

This general overview reveals that the two sub-corpora are similar in terms of size and stylistic complexity. The similar figures in terms of Tokens and Words seem to confirm a comparable structural significance (Kovačević 2026) between the Italian and the English versions. Even though the sub-corpora were not lemmatized for POS tagging analysis,[7] the automatic calculation of the lemmas generated by the platform also indicates very similar figures, suggesting that the sub-corpora – albeit small – are lexically dense and stylistically rich.

The Sketch Engine query function generated two lists of keywords. As sub-corpora contain significantly fewer words than the reference corpus, comparing raw counts (absolute frequency) may give misleading results (Kilgariff et al. 2014). When producing its output, like any application or software for corpus linguistics, Sketch Engine normalizes its data into relative frequencies by calculating a 'Keyness Score' (KS). The KS highlights which words appear particularly often in the sub-corpus compared to the reference corpus: the higher the KS, the more characteristic that word is to the corpus under investigation (*ibid*.). For this reason, the keywords selected from the output generated by Sketch Engine were those that presented a KS of at least 100 – which was deemed suitable considering the general size of both sub-corpora. 128 keywords were selected for the Italian sub-corpus, while 118 were selected for the English one.

A further selection was then conducted among these keywords to perform a Concordance Analysis and examine the specific co-text and context of occurrence of these keywords in the two sub-corpora. The keywords were selected from lexical words that corresponded to recurrent themes observed in the sub-corpora. To ensure analytical transparency and avoid subjective cherry-picking, the subset of keywords chosen for Concordance Analysis was filtered according to three explicit, replicable criteria. First, items were required to meet a minimum absolute frequency threshold of 2 within their respective sub-corpus to ensure structural presence across texts. Second, items were evaluated for semantic relevance to the core research themes (i.e., supply-chain governance, environmental sustainability, labor ethics, and geographical provenance; see Section 4). Third, purely functional linguistic items, grammatical markers, and generic non-domain-specific adjectives (e.g., standard intensifiers or general evaluative terms lacking thematic specificity) were excluded. This systematic filtering yielded the targeted lexical items analyzed in detail in Section 4 below.

7 Part-of-Speech (POS) consists in automatically assigning a grammatical category (e.g., noun, verb, adjective, modifier) to each token in a text (Kilgariff et al. 2014).

4 Findings

4.1 Keyword Analysis

For space constraints, not all the keywords extracted can be shown here: Table 3 and Table 4 show only the keywords used for the Concordance Analysis. In both Tables, the column 'Keyword' contains the keyword analyzed; 'Frequency' indicates the number of hits in the sub-corpus; 'Relative frequency' indicates the normalized frequency calculated automatically restricting it for the specific sub-corpus and in proportion to its size; KS indicates the 'Keyness Score'. In Table 3, moreover, translations into English are provided after each keyword in Italian, except when they originally occurred in English in the sub-corpus.[8]

Table 3 Keywords used for concordance analysis (Italian sub-corpus)

Keyword	Frequency	Relative frequency	KS
agroforestazione (lit. agroforestry – n.)	5	866,25085	856,161
deforestazione (lit. deforestation)	11	1905,75195	834,068
coltivatore (lit. farmer)	21	3638,25366	819,666
piantagione (lit. plantation)	12	2079,0022	464,027
farming	3	519,75055	380,634
sustainable	4	693,00067	344,432
earthworm	2	346,50034	342,731
tracciabilità (lit. traceability)	9	1559,25159	323,402
idrogenazione (lit. hydrogenation)	2	346,50034	304,936
coltivatori (lit. farmers)	2	346,50034	303,743
approvvigionamento (lit. supply)	10	1732,50171	225,291
tracciabile (lit. traceable)	2	346,50034	217,419
minorile (lit. minor – adj.)	6	1039,5011	184,442
filiera (lit. supply chain)	19	3291,75317	176,226
redittività (lit. profitability)	1	173,25017	173,7
coltivazioni (lit. crops)	1	173,25017	160,373
sostenibilità (lit. sustainability)	22	3811,50391	159,27
agroforestali (lit. agroforestry – adj.)	1	173,25017	153,884
deodorare (lit. [soil] deodorization)	1	173,25017	145,726
erbicida (lit. herbicide)	1	173,25017	130,723
disboscare (lit. deforestation)	1	173,25017	128,583

8 Keywords in Tables 3 and 4 and the Examples in the Concordance Analysis were not edited; thus, non-standard spellings and/or typographical errors present in the original website source texts have been retained *verbatim*.

mugnai (lit. millers)	1	173,25017	116,969
eradicare (lit. eradicate)	1	173,25017	115,886
resiliente (lit. resilient)	1	173,25017	113,847
conservation	1	173,25017	110,311
emisfero (lit. hemisphere)	3	519,75055	108,141
disboscamento (lit. deforestation)	1	173,25017	106,754
coltivazione (lit. cultivation)	14	2425,50244	106,3

Table 4 Keywords used for concordance analysis (English sub-corpus)

Item	Frequency	Relative frequency	Score
traceability	11	1693,08911	800,388
agroforestry	5	769,58594	494,496
deforestation	10	1539,17188	482,342
hydrogenation	3	461,75159	378,327
smallholder	5	769,58594	373,503
recyclable	6	923,50317	311,39
agrifarms	2	307,83438	308,824
campania	2	307,83438	244,154
lazio	2	307,83438	183,437
earthworm	2	307,83438	174,977
traceable	2	307,83438	173,269
mauritius	3	461,75159	159,228
orchard	7	1077,42029	154,653
cultivation	8	1231,33752	152,85
rainforest	5	769,58594	152,036
deodorise	1	153,91719	150,302
value-chain	1	153,91719	146,023
child-centered	1	153,91719	142,444
non-certified	1	153,91719	141,766
plants	3	461,75159	121,324
unmistakable	2	307,83438	119,198
sustainable	35	5387,10156	118,638
piedmont	2	307,83438	118,343
sustainably	2	307,83438	114,268
recycle	8	1231,33752	113,458
agronomist	1	153,91719	111,913
foodborne	1	153,91719	106,798
eco-system	1	153,91719	106,316
chile	7	1077,42029	106,249
remediate	1	153,91719	106,046
farmer	35	5387,10156	104,332
multi-stakeholder	1	153,91719	103,566
auditing	2	307,83438	100,417

An analysis of the keywords selected for Concordance Analysis suggests how Nutella® appears to strategically balance corporate advocacy and marketing-driven glocalization depending on its target audience. In the Italian sub-corpus **[tab. 3]**, the highest-ranking keywords exhibit an intense focus on structural supply chain integrity, labor dynamics, and environmental risk management, as evidenced by terms such as *agroforestazione*, *deforestazione*, *coltivatore*, and *filiera*. The presence of terminology from other domains such as *minorile* (administration) and *redditività* (business and finance) suggests that Nutella®'s corporate discourse in its home market directly confronts sensitive, high-stakes supply chain issues. For instance, the presence of these keywords may indicate reference to broader industry concerns, such as the EFSA evaluations on contaminants in palm oil,[9] to which Ferrero responded by mitigating health risks and lowering thermal processing temperatures,[10] while simultaneously launching the so-called '*Progetto Nocciola Italia*' (lit. 'Project Hazelnut Italy') to reduce reliance on Turkish hazelnut imports.[11] The reference to workers, their age and working conditions may also be interpreted as a defense against allegations and a hint at solutions enacted by the company[12] to reinforce the brand's image and maintain trust among its consumer base (Amine 1998; Keller 1999). However, in the Italian sub-corpus, we also notice localized agricultural terms (e.g., *mugnai*, *erbicida*, *disboscamento*) that seem to construct an image of transparent corporate advocacy designed to safeguard brand trust and tradition among an audience intimately familiar with the brand's origins.

On the other hand, the English sub-corpus **[tab. 4]** shows preference for keywords that seem to frame glocalization and focus on the brand's action-oriented commitments. For instance, this is indicated by keywords such as *traceability, sustainable, recyclable* alongside geographic markers (*Campania, Lazio, Piedmont, Chile, Mauritius*). It is interesting to notice that these placenames were not present in the list of keywords for the Italian sub-corpus, not even in the lowest-ranking positions. Their presence in the English sub-corpus, therefore, may suggest a corporate effort to provide international consumers with verifiable provenance to mitigate anti-consumption skepticism

9 Please check the following link: https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/180110.

10 Please check the following link:https://www.reuters.com/article/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/nutella-maker-fights-back-on-palm-oil-after-cancer-risk-study-idUSKBN14V0MG/.

11 Please check the following link: https://channels.ft.com/en/foodrevolution/hazelnut-sourcing-spreads-discontent-for-italys-nutella/.

12 Please check the following link: https://www.osservatoriodiritti.it/2020/09/16/ferrero-lavoro/.

regarding raw materials, while simultaneously referencing specific Italian regions alongside global hubs to discursively link traditional Italian 'heritage' with an international supply chain model. Traceability systems, in fact, serve as a critical corporate mechanism to eliminate information asymmetry between producers and skeptical consumers, transforming credence attributes (such as ethical sourcing) into verifiable facts (Aung, Chang 2014). In the English sub-corpus in particular, Nutella® appears to focus in particular on the traceability of its supply chain and the local origin of its ingredients; this may be used by the brand to connect its strategy of disclosing a transparent supply chain with the perception of the product's authenticity (Duong 2024), reassuring ethically conscious global markets about the quality of its product while ensuring at the same time its international consumers' trust (Garaus, Treiblmaier 2021).

4.2 Concordance Analysis

The Concordance Analysis of these keywords produced a total of 158 concordances for the keywords in the Italian sub-corpus, and 175 concordances for the keywords in the English sub-corpus.

The qualitative Concordance Analysis of the Italian sub-corpus can be conducted by grouping together semantically aligned keywords into distinct conceptual clusters. This method suggests specific communicative patterns revolving around themes such as institutional accountability, structural risk mitigation, and socio-environmental ethical management. The first semantic cluster that could be identified is represented by keywords such as *filiera* (19 occurrences), *approvvigionamento* (10 occurrences), *tracciabilità* (9 occurrences), *tracciabile* (2 occurrences).[13]

> 1) Ci impegniamo per migliorare costantemente e garantire l'approvvigionamento responsabile delle nostre materie prime lungo tutta la filiera (lit. We are committed to continuous improvement and to ensuring the responsible sourcing of our raw materials throughout the entire supply chain).

> 2) Nutella® è il risultato degli sforzi quotidiani di ogni singolo individuo lungo la filiera (lit. Nutella® is the result of the daily efforts of every single person throughout the supply chain).

13 The examples provided in this Section are all representative instances of the corresponding concordances found by Sketch Engine in the sub-corpus for that specific keyword. For this reason, only one example is provided for each keyword to illustrate its usage in the corresponding sub-corpus. The examples were selected by using the first concordance for each keyword.

3) In altri paesi, invece, è stato più semplice raggiungere alti livelli di tracciabilità (lit. In other countries, however, it has been easier to achieve high levels of traceability).

4) L'olio di palma che utilizziamo per produrre Nutella® è 100% sostenibile, tracciabile fino ai mulini e proviene principalmente dalla Malesia (lit. The palm oil we use to make Nutella® is 100% sustainable, traceable all the way back to the mills, and comes mainly from Malaysia).

Examples (1) to (4) show how these keywords collocate with evaluative modifiers such as *responsabile* (Example 1), *alti livelli* (Example 3), and *sostenibile* (Example 4). By referring to the management of a transparent supply chain, the Italian sub-corpus appears to discursively frame the production process as a highly structured and transparent one that can be verified by the consumers, thus increasing their trust in the brand itself (Sakthivel et al. 2024).

The second cluster focuses on agro-ecological management and the prevention of deforestation. It is represented by keywords such as *deforestazione* (10 occurrences), *disboscamento* (1 occurrence), *agroforestazione* (5 occurrences), *agroforestali* (1 occurrence), *piantagioni* (11 occurrences), *coltivazione* (11 occurrences).

5) 100% certificato RSPO e derivante da pratiche con obiettivo zero deforestazione (lit. 100% RSPO-certified and sourced from practices aimed at zero deforestation).

6) No al disboscamento aree con valori elevati di stock di carbonio (lit. No to deforestation in areas with high carbon stocks)

7) L'agroforestazione è un sistema di gestione delle risorse dinamico ed ecologico (lit. Agroforestry is a dynamic and ecological resource management system).

8) 5,4 milioni di alberi non da cacao, a sostegno dei progetti agroforestali (lit. 5.4 million non-cocoa trees to support agroforestry projects).

9) Attraverso questo sistema, il nostro olio di palma può essere tracciato fino ai mulini, garantendo che non provenga da piantagioni soggette alla deforestazione (lit. Through this system, our palm oil can be traced back to the mills, ensuring that it does not come from plantations involved in deforestation).

10) il miglioramento delle loro [delle popolazioni locali] condizioni di vita e incentivare pratiche di coltivazione sostenibili (lit.

improving their [local populations'] living conditions and encouraging sustainable farming practices).

In Examples (5) to (10), the brand seems to link its communicative strategies to expressions typical of environmental discourse in concrete land-management initiatives (Steffensen, Fill 2014). In these examples, the keywords co-occur with action-oriented premodifiers and goal-directed targets such as *obiettivo zero deforestazione* (Example 5), *sostegno ai progetti agroforestali* (Example 8), and *pratiche [...] sostenibili* (Example 10), projecting active ecological intervention rather than abstract greenwashing (de Freitas Netto 2020).

The second cluster, however, still contains keywords that refer to more abstract processes. In the third cluster, we can include keywords whose semantic content partially overlaps with that of the second cluster but refers to more concrete actors and concepts. This cluster, in fact, includes keywords that address socio-economic governance, labor rights, and community welfare, and is represented by keywords such as *coltivatori/coltivatore* (hence the partial overlap with the second cluster; 22 occurrences), *minorile* (6 occurrences), and *redditività* (1 occurrence).

11) migliorare le condizioni di vita dei coltivatori e delle loro comunità e promuovere pratiche sostenibili per proteggere le risorse naturali (lit. improve the living conditions of farmers and their communities and promote sustainable practices to protect natural resources).

12) ciò significa adottare misure per contrastare il lavoro minorile e migliorare l'accesso all'istruzione e alle risorse primarie (lit. this means taking steps to combat child labor and improve access to education and basic resources).

13) creare un equilibrio tra le questioni sociali e ambientali da un lato e la redditività dall'altro (lit. striking a balance between social and environmental issues on the one hand and profitability on the other).

Examples (11) to (13) illustrate how the keywords appear to reflect a corporate discourse of protection and institutional intervention alongside markers such as *migliorare* (Example 11), *misure per contrastare* (Example 12), *creare un equilibrio* (Example 13) that suggest the brand's active role in supporting the countries from which it sources its ingredients, thereby answering allegations (see Section 4.1) and building consumer trust, as already seen in the second cluster.

Concerning the English sub-corpus, as already noticed for the Keyword Analysis, some similarities but also some differences could be found in the Concordance Analysis. In this case, four semantic clusters could be identified for the English sub-corpus, whose communicative strategies appear to be oriented toward transparent glocalization, brand provenance, socio-ecological responsibility, and circular economy commitments.

The first semantic cluster that could be identified seems to focus on geographic traceability and is represented by keywords such as *traceability* (10 occurrences), *traceable* (2 occurrences), *Piedmont* (2 occurrences), *Lazio* (2 occurrences), *Campania* (2 occurrences), *Chile* (7 occurrences), *Mauritius* (3 occurrences), *Agrifarms* (2 occurrences), *value-chain* (1 occurrence).

14) In **Chile** and the USA, for example, Ferrero has achieved full **traceability**.

15) The palm oil we use in Nutella® is 100% sustainable palm oil, **traceable** back to the mills.

16) this fruit goes back to its roots in Italy, as supply can also be found in **Piedmont**.

17) historically this has been in the regions of **Piedmont, Lazio** and **Campania**, therefore taking care of the sustainable value chain development and preservation in these areas is key.

19) to improve and enhance the economic, environmental and social sustainability of small sugarcane producers in **Mauritius**.

20) Ferrero has established hazelnut farms (**Agrifarms**) in Chile, Argentina, South Africa and Australia.

21) we will continue working to strengthen our cocoa sustainability program with a positive and lasting impact on the cocoa **value-chain**.

Examples (14) to (21) illustrate how Nutella®, in the web pages in English, appears to discursively connect historical brand heritage with a globalized supply chain: domestic Italian placenames are collocated with brand identity and heritage preservation (Examples 16 and 17), whereas international sourcing locations seem to be framed around verified provenance and full supply-chain transparency to reassure consumers regarding raw materials (Examples 14, 15, and 20). The shared element in these examples is the continued used of markers such as 'sustainability' and 'traceability' that, as already

seen in the Italian sub-corpus, may be interpreted as an attempt at addressing allegations and building consumer trust.

The second cluster appears to focus on agro-ecological management and forest protection and is represented by keywords such as *agroforestry* (5 occurrences), *deforestation* (9 occurrences), *rainforest* (5 occurrences), *cultivation* (8 occurrences), *orchards* (7 occurrences), *eco-systems* (1 occurrence).

22) Our ever-growing support to **agroforestry**. We encourage cocoa farmers to diversify their farms by mixing cocoa.

23) We are aware that the palm oil supply-chain faces environmental challenges, particularly concerning its impact on **deforestation**.

24) All the cocoa we buy for Nutella® comes from **Rainforest** Alliance Certified farms.

25) These criteria aim to enforce sustainable practices in the **cultivation** of palm oil.

26) The hazelnuts used in Nutella® come from hazelnut **orchards**, which are mainly found in Mediterranean type climates.

27) responsible sugarcane production creates lasting value for the people, communities, businesses, economies and **eco-systems** involved.

Similarly to the sub-corpus in Italian, the English sub-corpus appears to link the brand's environmental discourse to quantifiable conservation targets, collocating keywords with active commitments such as collaboration with local cocoa farmers (Example 22), and protecting specific environments (Examples 23, 24 and 27). Again, the common elements suggest the idea that the company is particularly aware of these issues and acts accordingly in the preservation of local biodiversity systems as well as sustainable cultivation practices.

The third cluster addresses welfare and human rights protection. It is represented by keywords such as *farmer/farmers* (34 occurrences), *smallholder/smallholders* (5 occurrences), and *child-centered* (1 occurrence).

28) Momboye Célestin, one of many cocoa **farmers** who have participated in **farmer** trainings organized by Ferrero's partner ECOOKIM.

29) The vast majority of the world's cocoa is produced by **smallholder** farmers, most of whom live in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

30) Remediation can vary from individualized support to children and parents to broader **child-centered** community development programs.

In this cluster, illustrated in Examples (28) to (29), keywords feature in contexts in which the brand describes its actions to support local communities in the field of education (Example 30), income enhancement (Example 28), and multi-stakeholder partnerships aimed at mitigating social risks in agricultural communities (Example 29). All these examples may be seen as the brand's intention of demonstrating its commitment to local communities, at the same time addressing allegations and building international consumers' trust (see Section 4.1.).

Finally, the fourth cluster shows semantic themes connected to circular economy, sustainable packaging, and processing integrity, as represented by keywords such as *recyclable* (6 occurrences), *recycle* (7 occurrences), *sustainable* (34 occurrences), and *hydrogenation* (3 occurrences).

31) The iconic Nutella® jar that preserves the delicious taste of Nutella® is **recyclable**.

32) our raw materials along our supply-chain, enhance the living conditions of farmers and their communities and foster **sustainable** practices to protect natural resources,

33) most importantly, it does not go through the **hydrogenation** process, which produces 'trans fats' that have been recognised by the authorities and the scientific world as particularly harmful to health.

Through the keywords representing the fourth cluster, the brand seems to emphasize its environmental commitment through the recyclable jar (Example 31). At the same time, it also appears to retain its usual role in terms of brand responsibility in the case of ingredient selection, workers' conditions, and supply chain (Example 32), while assuring food quality and safety through technical disclosures (Example 33). If the last two examples may be considered as a continuation of what was interpreted as an answer to allegations and strategies to build the international consumers' trust, already seen in the previous clusters and the keyword analysis (see Section 4.1), Example (31) and its reference to recycling add another element, namely, consideration for the environment at home. In this particular case, responsibility seems to be placed not only in Nutella's® hands, in providing a recyclable jar, but the brand appears to shift agency towards its consumers who are now solely responsible for the actual

recycling of the jar. This may in turn be interpreted as a strategy to enhance the brand's own image in order to construct a more favorable corporate image through building a sense of community involvement by means of recycling behavior (Rondinelli, Berry 2000; Mee, Clewes 2004).

Beyond the lexical and semantic clustering, a discourse analysis perspective reveals a few patterns of agency and nominalization across both sub-corpora. For instance, corporate commitments seem to be predominantly constructed through first-person plural agency ('ci impegniamo' in Example 1, and 'we will continue working' in Example 21), framing Ferrero as an active, ethically driven institutional leader company taking direct responsibility for sustainable governance (Klettner, Clarke, Boersma 2013). Goal-oriented dynamic verbs are also used to convey agency, as in 'garantire' in Example 1, or 'enforce' in Example 25, which present corporate commitments not as abstract aspirational ideals, but as concrete, active institutional practices designed to instill trust.

Finally, systemic socio-environmental challenges appear to be expressed through nominalization (e.g., 'deforestazione' in Example 5 or 'lavoro minorile' in Example 12, and 'deforestation' in Example 23) or through passive constructions (e.g., 'piantagioni soggette alla deforestazione' in Example 9). This grammatical shift seems to strategically dissociate the brand from original industry-related damages while foregrounding its voluntary interventions.

5 Discussion of Results: Negotiating Heritage, Glocalized Traceability, and Corporate Advocacy

The Keyword and Concordance Analyses conducted in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 have provided quantitative and qualitative data to understand how Nutella® discursively constructs its brand discourse on its web pages in English and in Italian. Both parts of the analysis have clearly indicated that instances of corporate advocacy emerge in both languages.

Management and marketing studies have defined corporate advocacy as the explicit public promotion of social, environmental, or political causes by a commercial enterprise, extending beyond traditional brand promotion to position the firm as an active, responsible institutional actor within societal governance (Dodd, Supa 2014; Wettstein, Baur 2016). In the consumer goods sector, and especially in the global food industry, corporate advocacy has become an essential instrument to address consumers' scrutiny, supply chain controversies, and anti-consumption skepticism regarding raw material sourcing, environmental degradation, and fair labor standards (Du et al. 2010).

By contrasting the results of the qualitative analyses of the Italian and the English sub-corpora, corpus data suggests that Nutella® does not necessarily adopt a unified approach to corporate advocacy. Instead, the brand appears to strategically implement 'glocalization' – i.e., the integration of global corporate standards with localized cultural expectations (Sorge 2005) – to express distinct modes of corporate advocacy tailored to the socio-cultural expectations of each market segment (Robertson 1995). In the 'domestic' Italian sub-corpus, in fact, keywords seem to be directly linked to structural supply-chain governance, agricultural labor dynamics, and socio-economic risk management indicated a more localized, defensive stance of corporate advocacy (Bochenek 2019). This may be interpreted as reflecting the fact that domestic consumers in Italy possess a historically longer and culturally deeper connection with the brand Nutella®, which is considered not only a cultural symbol but also an emblem of national industrial pride (Padovani 2004; Cesiri 2025). Consequently, in its home market, corporate advocacy appears to rely less on superficial branding or generalized environmental slogans; instead, it seems to prefer explicit socio-agricultural disclosures and potential reputational vulnerabilities associated with raw material extraction, labor fairness, and child protection in global supply chains. By employing explicit, specialized agricultural terminology (as shown in Examples 5 to 8), discourse in the Italian sub-corpus seems to be grounded in the brand's transparency and detailed socio-agricultural governance. This strategy aligns with what Du et al. (2010) describe as legitimization through concrete corporate social responsibility substance, where corporate advocacy acts as an institutional shield designed to preserve brand heritage and the trust of domestic stakeholders in the face of allegations (see Section 4.1).

On the other hand, the English sub-corpus suggests a slightly different market context where Nutella® needs to construct global brand legitimacy (Huang, Shi, Deng 2026) among international consumers who may view the product primarily through the lens of a global brand rather than a domestic heritage icon (Cova, Pace 2006). In fact, in the English sub-corpus the concepts of systemic transparency, standardized circularity, and geographical origin appear to prevail. From a corporate advocacy perspective, this emphasis on traceability may function as a proactive communicative countermeasure against anti-consumption sentiment, particularly surrounding the allegations discussed in Section 4.1. regarding controversial ingredients such as palm oil and imported hazelnuts (Aung, Chang 2014; Garaus, Treiblmaier 2021). By emphasizing the verifiable provenance of Nutella®'s ingredients and raw materials, the English sub-corpus appears to address the skepticism of international consumers through the institutional language of supply-chain mapping (Muratore, Marques 2022). Furthermore, the explicit

inclusion of Italian regional placenames alongside foreign, exotic production locations may be an attempt at discursively connecting traditional Italian heritage with an international, multi-origin supply model (Urde, Greyser, Balmer 2007). In doing so, Nutella®'s corporate advocacy in English-speaking – or generally international – markets could be used to frame sustainability not as an isolated local duty, but as a globally coordinated, standardized model (*ibid.*).

6 Conclusions

This study has shown that, while the two analyzed sub-corpora seemed to fulfil expectations in terms of corporate advocacy, they also appeared to implement it through fundamentally different discursive strategies. In the Italian sub-corpus, Nutella® appeared to ground its discourse in legitimizing its socio-agricultural governance and demonstrating ethical accountability to protect the brand's connection to the national heritage. In the English sub-corpus, on the other hand, the brand seemed to focus on glocalization by blending symbolic Italian origin markers with globally recognized sustainability and verifiable traceability standards in order to establish brand authority in the international market.

The study also shows some limitations represented by the limited size of the corpus. In addition, the study has considered only the verbal component of the web pages and only some of their sections. Future research will further expand this investigation, by analyzing the visual component of the website (in both its English and Italian versions, since no other language versions are available). Moreover, other Nutella®-related products could be included as well as other Ferrero products. Finally, other media could also be added to the analysis (e.g., the company's social media platforms), while comparative analyses could include similar brands originating in Italy or in other countries.

Notwithstanding the limitations already observed, the analysis conducted in this study contributes to research on corporate advocacy by showing that effective corporate advocacy in digital brand communication is inherently contextual: global brand legitimacy can be achieved not through standardized, uniform messaging, but through culturally aligning corporate disclosure with the specific expectations, and heritage connections of distinct audiences.

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