Keywords in Unesco Websites:
The Role of Image in Destination Marketing

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Online communication plays a vital role in tourist image formation and travel choices in the digital era. In this way, institutional communication performs a central role in tourism, influencing the market through text and keywords choice on websites. This study aims to analyse online communication by focusing on tourism discourse, i.e. English language as a specialised and promotional discourse in tourism, with a special emphasis on Dann's rhetorical strategy of keywords. The present study explores the communication used in UNESCO websites and its contribution to tourist destination image formation through corpus-based Discourse Analysis. The focus on a selected number of Sicilian and Maltese UNESCO websites highlights the differences in online communication and the potential influence on tourist image formation. A combined methodological approach, both qualitative and quantitative, is adopted. Specifically, the Corpus Linguistics approach is utilised to extract quantitative data; a qualitative analysis is derived from the data interpreted from a linguistic perspective. The data emphasise that the two sub-corpora of UNESCO Sicilian and Maltese websites communicate different destination images. Findings can contribute to a further reflection on tourism discourse used for institutional communication, to influence the tourist impact on UNESCO sites and potentially influence destination image formation and consumer purchase behaviour.

Key Words: Tourism Discourse Analysis, keywords, Tourist Destination Image, UNESCO websites, Corpus Linguistics

Introduction

The main aim of the UNESCO World Heritage List is to protect and preserve cultural and natural sites worldwide. In order to impose management rules, limitations and protection policies, cultural and natural sites need coordination and support from local governments and authorities to pursue their primary goals. Therefore, the UNESCO label has a powerful worldwide appeal and attraction due to the selected sites' relevance to worldwide travellers and tourists' opinions.

The literature review in this paper demonstrates a positive correlation between UNESCO World Heritage Sites and tourism (Buckley, 2002; Mondini & Re, 2012; Patuelli, Mussoni & Candela, 2012; Frey, Pamini & Steiner, 2013; Cuccia, Guccio & Rizzo, 2014, Pagano, 2021). However, limited research has so far concentrated on the type of Tourist Destination Image (Gunn, 1972; Crompton, 1979: 18; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Embacher & Buttle, 1989; Gartner, 1994; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 2000; Buhalis, 2000; Beerli & Martín, 2004)

conveyed by UNESCO websites to potential tourists through the use of Tourism Discourse. Primarily, there is a lack of knowledge in comparative Tourism Discourse Analysis applied to UNESCO websites.

The present study, therefore, aims to address this gap in the literature and stands out as a further development of two preceding case studies. The first of these papers by De Cantis & Pagano (2018) analyses the destination image of a selected number of historical / archaeological Maltese and Sicilian non-Unesco websites through their use of the kind of Tourism Discourse employed (Dann, 1996). The second paper by Pagano (2021) examines the destination image conveyed by a selected number of Maltese and Sicilian websites in UNESCO websites through their use of Tourism Discourse, focusing only on the sections named: *Outstanding Universal Value-Brief Synthesis, Authenticity and Integrity*. However, the sections devoted to *Protection and Management Requirements* had never been the object of previous research and constitute, therefore, the aim of the present work.

The purpose of Tourism Discourse Analysis in the section *Protection and Management Requirements* - although it is not explicitly built as promotional material - is to identify whether and to what extent it can potential affect the tourist destination images of visitors' to Malta and Sicily and, consequently, their decision-making process.

The cultural UNESCO websites selected for Tourism Discourse Analysis include:

  Syracuse and the Rocky Necropolis of Pantalica, Sicily;

  Arab-Norman Palermo and the Cathedral Churches of Cefalú and Monreale, Sicily;

  Late Baroque Towns of the Val di Noto, South-Eastern Sicily;

  City of Valletta, Malta;

  Ħal Saflieni Hypogeum, Malta;

  Megalithic Temples of Malta.

The two Mediterranean islands of Sicily and Malta have different geographical sizes have developed very differently in the tourism field. Still, they possess a number of historical / archaeological UNESCO sites (De Cantis & Pagano, 2018; Pagano, 2021). The Maltese websites refer to archaeological sites dating from 6,000-3,000 BC to the present, while the Sicilian websites refer to archaeological and historical sites dating from 500 BC until the 18th century. All three Maltese sites were included in the World Heritage List in 1980. The three Sicilian sites were included between 2002 and 2015 (Val di Noto in 2002; Syracuse in 2005; Arab-Norman Palermo/Cefalù in 2015). The present study contributes to the research focus of this Journal since it provides policy implications for island tourist destinations.

Literature Review

In today's world

> *advances in technology have made it possible to discover and explore a locality before one physically travels to it* (Hallett & Kaplan-Weinger, 2010:8).

In this respect, Dann and Parrinello provide a very effective definition when they use the expression 'word-of-mouse' (2007:12). Moreover,

> *technologies ... allow people to 'gaze' on tourist sites without leaving home* (Ritzer & Liska, 1997:102).

Consequently,

> *Web 2.0 has allowed the potential tourist to take a central role in the selection of tourist destination: tourists ... play an active role. They are now defined as prosumers* (Maci, 2020:63),

i.e. tourist consumers who have become producers.

Thus,

> *one of the most relevant issues for the tourism industry concerns the strategies adopted to present destinations on the web promotionally. ... In this process, the tourism industry plays an important role in the exploitation of a highly persuasive type of language* (Maci, 2020:183)

Dann (1996) defines this as Tourism Discourse.

Tourism Discourse (Dann, 1996; Maci, 2013; Manca, 2016a) has been the focus of academic research over the last few decades and has been explained in several ways. More specifically, it is

> [a] *sub-system of the common language used in professional, technical or scientific areas for descriptive or communicative purposes* (Gotti, 2006:8).

In his work, Dann claimed that

> *the language of tourism attempts to persuade, lure, woo, and seduce millions of human beings and, in so doing, convert them from potential into actual clients* (Dann, 1996:2).

Moreover, he suggested that

> [the] *tourism industry exploits language to attract and control tourists and their experience of a destination* (1996:144).

Besides, the language of tourism is characterised by some specific rhetorical strategies, which have been defined as 'comparison, keywords and keying, testimony, humour, languaging and ego-targeting' (Dann, 1996:171-188). Tourist experts have long analysed these aspects (Ernawati, 2001; Pierini, 2008; Mattiello, 2012; Maci, 2013, 2020; Cappelli, 2013; Cesiri, 2016).

Among the abovementioned rhetorical strategies, keywords are often the focus of Tourism Discourse Analysis, defined by Dann as words that 'fire the imagination' (Dann, 1996:174) of the potential visitor for a persuasive purpose. In parallel, Scott (1998:24) defines them as 'words whose frequency is unusually high compared to some norm or with standard language'.

After Dann, the most remarkable and widespread works on English as the language of tourism must mention other contributions such as Van den Abbeele and Fodde (2012), who focus on the socio-cultural dimension of global tourism. Authors such as Gotti (2006) further investigate the linguistic features of Tourism Discourse while Cappelli (2006) examines the linguistic strategies of Tourism Discourse. Moreover, Francesconi (2005, 2007) focuses on the language of tourism promotion and Manca (2016a) explores persuasion in Tourism Discourse.

Besides Tourism Discourse, the present study also focuses on a relevant connected issue, namely tourist destination image. More specifically,

> *the image held by consumers about a destination plays a significant role in travel purchase decisions ... Major objectives of any marketing strategy will usually be to either create a new image or to reinforce positive images already established in the minds of the target audience* (Pike, 2008:201).

As Pike suggests,

> *the range of definitions used in the tourism literature has been so great that image is becoming marketing jargon* (Pike, 2008:202).

The most meaningful works on destination image include early contributions such as Crompton's, which defines tourist destination image as *'the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination'* (Crompton, 1979:18). For Echtner and Ritchie however, (1991), tourist destination image has been described as the perception of a destination's attributes and the holistic impressions it generates. Embacher and Buttle (1989) stated that a destination image includes ideas and concepts elaborated by an individual or a group about a certain destination. Buhalis defines image as '[an] idea,

belief, feeling or attitude' or '[a] set of expectations and perceptions a prospective traveller has of a destination' (2000:99). Consequently, tourism destination image plays a relevant role in an individual's travel decision-making process (Crompton, 1979; Innis, 1986; Cho *et al.*, 2001).

Baloglu and McCleary (1999) present a model that produces an overall destination image, which is based on two dimensions: *cognitive* image and *affective* image. The cognitive dimension regards beliefs or knowledge about a destination's attributes, while the affective dimension refers to the feelings evoked by the destination. Before visiting a destination, the cognitive and affective images derive from information drawn from different sources, which the mind processes and organises (Frías *et al.*, 2008). More specifically,

> *the cognitive component constitutes awareness: what someone knows or thinks about a destination. The affective component is based on how one feels about this knowledge* (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007:403).

Researchers agree that the affective image is a subjective, emotional response to cognitive knowledge about a tourist destination (Li, Cheng, Kim, & Petrick, 2008; Smith *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, the cognitive image positively influences the affective image before visiting the destination (Kim & Stepchenkova, 2015; Tan & Wu, 2016).

Other contributions define destination image as an idea that

> *is shaped by the images that a destination evokes, and by the atmosphere and the attractions that the consumer expects from it* (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991:6).

> *These stereotypical, effective and unique images form tourists' mental construct* (Gallarza, Saura & Garcia, 2002:62).

As for the relationship between destination image and websites, the literature confirms (Molinillo *et al.*, 2018) that websites result in the best perception of the destination image and the highest intention to visit. Indeed, online information sources strongly influence tourist behaviour (Buhalis, 2000; Kim & Fesenmaier, 2008; MacKay & Vogt, 2012; Tan & Wu, 2016). As a

matter of fact, interacting with websites allows potential visitors to experience destinations without physically visiting the location (Buhalis & Law, 2008) and provides a contribution to destination image formation (Cho, Wang & Fesenmaier, 2002).

As far as image formation is concerned, Gunn (1972) identified three different segments in forming the concept of image: the organic, the induced and the modified induced image.

Organic Images are formed from past experiences and unbiased sources of information, while;

Induced Image develops from marketing information, such as brochures, guidebooks or websites, or specific destination advertising (Gartner, 1994);

Modified Induced Image refers to the image of a destination after visiting it.

On the other hand, Gartner (1994) identified three hierarchically interrelated components:

Cognitive, which refers to values, beliefs, knowledge, and ideas that a person has about a certain reality or object. It is generated by a series of mental processes through which a person evaluates the attributes known about the product;

Affective, which refers to an individual's feelings and emotions connected to a destination;

Conative, which refers to how a person reacts to a situation; it has to do with action taking place when a destination has been chosen. It is obviously a consequence of the images developed during the previous cognitive and affective phases.

The interesting model proposed by Baloglu and McCleary (1999) takes two relevant determinants into consideration: *stimulus factors*, which can be directly observed and measured, and *personal factors*, which refer to psychological characteristics not directly observable. We could dare say that stimulus factors are somehow in parallel with Gunn's concept of the induced image, while personal factors are in parallel with Gunn's organic image.

On the basis of all the abovementioned contributions, the present study will use Gunn's (1972), Gartner's (1994)

and Baloglu & McCleary's (1999) studies to examine the *induced* image of destination conveyed by the Maltese and the Sicilian UNESCO websites here selected, through the analysis of the Tourism Discourse employed.
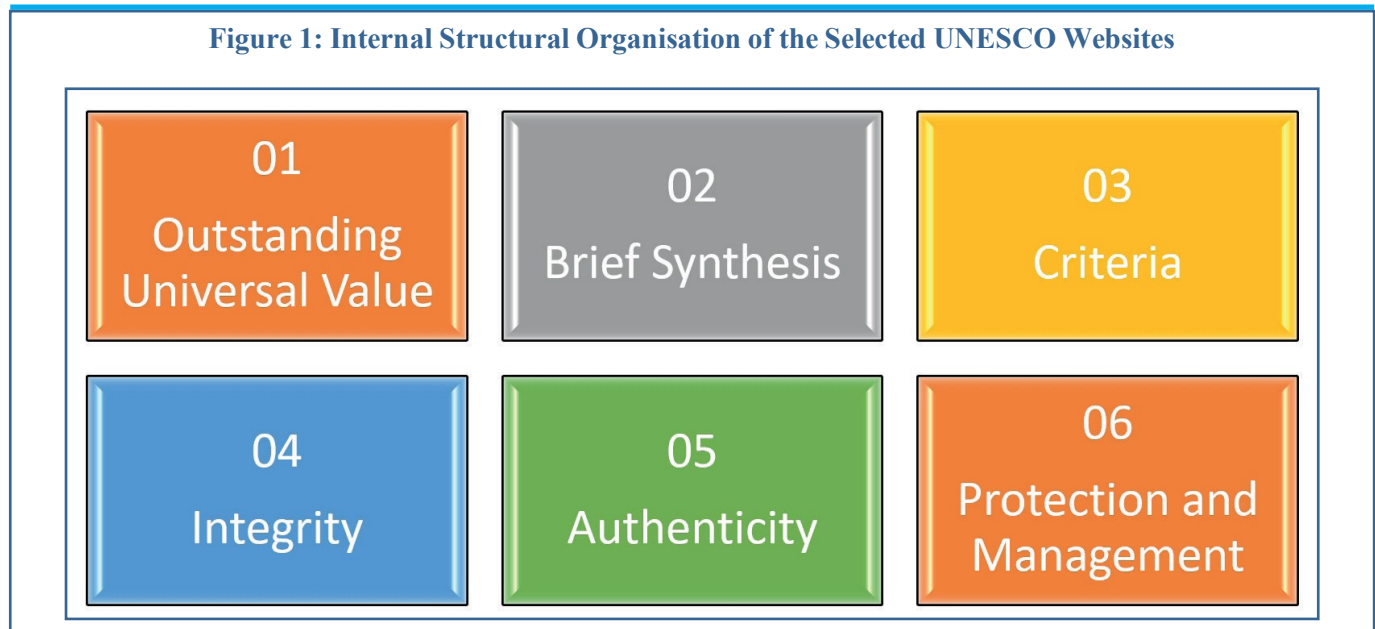
Methodology And Materials

As already noted, a combined methodological approach, both qualitative and quantitative, is adopted in the present study. Specifically, the Corpus Linguistics approach is utilised (Teubert, 2005; Nigro, 2006), which regards the application of theoretical studies to the language actually used. Indeed, 'Corpus Linguistics is empirical. Its object is real language data' (Teubert, 2005:3). It 'extracts quantitative data and interprets them from a linguistic perspective' (Manca, 2016a:1, also cited in Pagano, 2021). Thus, Corpus Linguistics sprang from the need to be more objective about language and to free description from subjective intuition (Halliday, 1996; Sinclair, 1996).

The quantitative and qualitative analysis of the selected UNESCO websites is, therefore, based on the examination, description and interpretation of the collected data.

The quantitative approach generally concentrates on the largest corpus possible from a wide range of sources. These data are then analysed computationally, and the output provides sets of figures that point out the frequency of occurrence of lexical items and phrases. The consequent qualitative Discourse Analysis (van Dijk, 1993b; 1995) concentrates on the contexts of the texts in the corpus and explores patterns of language use.

The Maltese and Sicilian UNESCO websites here selected constitute the whole 'corpus' on which the present study concentrates; the Maltese and Sicilian UNESCO websites being two sub-corpora. Being objective, the websites considered in this study constitute a small corpus (Sicilian websites: 1,106 words; Maltese websites: 860 words). Nevertheless, 'even when small-scale, a corpus is a reliable aid when working with domain-specific language' (Bowker & Pearson, 2002:48).

The two sub-corpora of Maltese and Sicilian UNESCO websites were chosen for Tourism Discourse Analysis and compared for two main reasons: firstly, they share the same internal structural UNESCO website organisation, which is made up of the sections illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Internal Structural Organisation of the Selected UNESCO Websites

01 Outstanding Universal Value	**02** Brief Synthesis	**03** Criteria
04 Integrity	**05** Authenticity	**06** Protection and Management

Secondly, they have the same focus, i.e. they all deal with and underline the measures adopted to protect and preserve their historical/archaeological sites through the laws issued for such purposes. As noted above, the present study focuses only on the section *Protection and Management Requirements,* as other sections of the UNESCO websites (i.e. Outstanding Universal Value – Brief Synthesis; Integrity; Authenticity) have already been examined in a previous case study (Pagano, 2021).

More specifically, the basis of this study lies in Dann's first comprehensive study on the language of tourism (1996) and, in particular, on the rhetorical strategy of *keywords*, which he defines as words which 'fire the imagination' (Dann, 1996:174) of the potential visitor and which, therefore, have a promotional and persuasive purpose**.** In parallel, Scott's definition of keywords (1998:24) is also considered in the present study: as already emphasised, he defines keywords as 'words whose frequency is unusually high in comparison with some norm or with standard language'. As already noted and as will be shown, the concept of frequency, in particular the frequency of occurrences, is fundamental in the quantitative analysis proposed here.

The present study also follows van Dijk's aforementioned approach to critical Discourse Analysis (1993b; 1995), which belongs to the field of applied linguistics. Discourse Analysis studies texts, written or spoken, and it is interested in the relationship between texts and the contexts in which they arise and operate. Discourse Analysis works with 'utterances', i.e. sequence of words – written or spoken – in specific contexts. It focuses on the participants in the discourse, their relationships, their difference in power or knowledge, and their goals.

In the present study, the software *WordSmith Tool 6.0* (Scott, 1998; 2012) is employed for linguistic analysis (that is, the collection of linguistic items), as it is

> *an integrated suite of programs for looking at how words behave in texts. It generates statistical information* (Francesconi, 2007:12).

As will be emphasised, words and keywords are employed with different frequencies by the two sub-corpora of websites when dealing with the issue of *Protection and Management Requirement*s and, therefore, a different tourism destination image of Sicily and of Malta may be conveyed to potential tourists on the basis of the different linguistic choices adopted.

To provide further detail on the process - each website in this study is analysed with a special focus on Dann's rhetorical strategy of keywords (1996) through an examination of the occurrences of two specific lexico-grammatical features, namely, nouns and adjectives (pre / post modifiers) (Halliday & Mathiessen, 2004) selected for this study. The concepts of collocation and colligation (Firth, 1957; Sinclair, 2003) are not under scrutiny here. By using *Wordsmith Tools 6.0* (Scott, 1998, 2012), the quantitative analysis identifies the occurrences of

keywords – belonging to the two lexico-grammatical categories selected – in the two sub-corpora of websites. Such occurrences reveal key semantic fields (see Figure 2) to which the two selected lexico-grammatical features belong.

In order to better clarify the object of the research, ***pre-modification*** is:

> *a left-dislocation of terms with an adjectival function that modifies the head nouns qualities or properties. This may also create complex nominal groups whose modifiers are head nouns which have acquired an adjectival role* (Maci, 2013:51).

Conversely, ***post-modification*** is

> [the] *phenomenon of a dependent phrase, clause, etc., restricting the meaning of a preceding headword through modification, i.e. by ascribing a property to it* (Aarts, Chalker & Weiner, 2014:314).

The resulting data then undergoes a corpus-based Discourse Analysis, through which the Tourism Discourse employed by the two sub-corpora of UNESCO websites is examined and interpreted.

Data Analysis

The total number of words employed by the two sub-corpora of UNESCO websites when dealing with the issue of *Protection and Management Requirements* is rather similar (Sicilian websites: 1.106 words, Maltese websites: 860 words). As already noted, each UNESCO website (WordSmith Tool 6.0: Scott, 1998, 2012) is examined with a particular focus on Dann's rhetorical strategy of keywords (1996) by considering the occurrences of two specific lexico-grammatical features selected for this study, namely: nouns and adjectives (pre-/post-modifiers) (Halliday & Mathiessen, 2004). However, the frequency of occurrences of the linguistic data examined shows some differences between the two sub-corpora. The percentage data obtained from the two lexico-grammatical categories examined (i.e. nouns and adjectives) point out some differences between the two sub-corpora of websites, which will be examined, discussed and interpreted, thus leading us to the conclusions drawn after the data analysis.

As shown in Figure 1, the occurrences of nouns and adjectives in the two sub-corpora identified key semantic fields, namely:

- *Institutions;*
- *Legislation and Management Requirements;*
- *Protection;*
- *National Monuments;*
- *Tourism Impact;*
- *Physical Risks;*
- *Environmental Aspects;*
- *Socio-Economic Impact.*

Table 1 shows each key semantic field with percentage rates for each sub-corpus of websites. These data facilitate a comparative Tourism Discourse Analysis between the two sub-corpora of websites.

Figure 2: Key Semantic Fields in the Section: *Protection and Management Requirements*

Institutions

Legislation and Management Requirements

Protection

National Monuments

Nouns   *Tourism Impact*   ***Adjectives***

Physical Risks

Environmental Aspects

Socio-Economic Impact

Table 1: Key Semantic Fields in the Section Protection and Management Requirements			
Key Semantic Fields in Protection and Management Requirements	**Islands**	**Nouns**	**Adjectives**
Institutions	Malta	2.79 %	1.16 %*
	Sicily	3.34 %*	1.08 %
Legislation and Management Requirements	Malta	6.97 %	4.53 % **
	Sicily	6.78 %	2.44 %
Protection	Malta	4.53 %	3.25 %*
	Sicily	4.61 %*	3.16 %
National Monuments	Malta	3.83 %	3.13 %
	Sicily	6.69 %*	2.98 %
Tourism Impact	Malta	2.79 %	2.09 %**
	Sicily	2.07 %	1.08 %
Physical Risks	Malta	0.00 %	0.00 %**
	Sicily	0.09 %	0.09 %**
Environmental Aspects	Malta	0.23 %	0.23 %
	Sicily	0.90 %	0.54 %**
Socio-Economic Impact	Malta	0.00 %	0.00 %
	Sicily	0.09 %	0.18 %**
Legend: One star: one percentage prevailing over the other website. Two stars: both percentages are prevailing over the other website			

The data results highlight some relevant aspects. Examining the lexico-grammatical category of nouns in the key semantic field referring to *Institutions*, the percentage data are higher in Sicily than in Malta (3.34% vs. 2.79%). In comparison, in the lexico-grammatical category of adjectives, Malta's percentage data result is slightly higher (1.16% vs. 1.08%). Globally, the percentage rates do not emphasise any major difference between the two sub-corpora of UNESCO websites when dealing with the *institutions* which manage the preservations and conservation of historic / archaeological sites.

The lexico-grammatical category of nouns in the key semantic field referring to *Legislation and Management Requirements*– although occurrences are quite relevant in both sub-corpora of websites – shows that the percentage is slightly higher in the UNESCO websites in Malta (6.97% vs. 6.78% in the Sicilian websites). This emphasises that both sub-corpora perceive the need to refer to specific laws and act as a relevant basis to explain and justify all the measures undertaken over time in heritage protection. A more substantial difference exists with the lexico-grammatical category connected to adjectives, i.e., 4.53% in the Maltese websites vs 2.44% in the Sicilian websites. Therefore, the difference between the data in

the two sub-corpora is not very remarkable, thus proving that heritage protection both in the Sicilian and Maltese UNESCO sites is strongly supported in terms of the law.

There are no significant differences between the two sub-corpora of UNESCO websites in the key semantic field connected to *Protection*. Indeed, in the category of nouns, we find a slightly higher percentage in Sicily than in Malta (4.61% vs 4.53%). As for the lexico-grammatical category of adjectives, results are 3.25% for Maltese websites versus 3.16% for Sicilian websites. Such data, therefore, do not emphasise any substantial differences between the two sub-corpora; on the contrary, they prove that the issue of protection is widely dealt with in the web texts of both sub-corpora of UNESCO websites (Cho & Sung, 2012).

In the category of nouns under the key semantic field connected to *National Monuments*, percentage rates are higher in the Sicilian websites, with a score of 6.69% for Sicily and 3.83% for the Maltese websites. Conversely, a slight difference exists in the lexico-grammatical category of adjectives (2.98% Sicily; 3.13% Malta).

As for the lexico-grammatical category of nouns in the key semantic field referring to *Tourist Impact,* this

category receives slightly more emphasis on the Maltese websites rather than on the Sicilian websites (2.79% in Malta vs 2.07% in Sicily). In the lexico-grammatical category of adjectives, the percentage rates show 2.09% in Malta vs 1.08% in Sicily. Both categories show that *Tourist Impact* is stronger on the Maltese websites than the Sicilian ones.

As for the key semantic fields showing lower occurrences, the *Environmental Impact* is devoted more attention in the Sicilian websites than in the Maltese ones (nouns: 0.90% in Sicily vs 0.23% in Malta; adjectives: 0.54% in Sicily vs 0.23% in Malta). *Physical Risks* are only mentioned on the Sicilian websites (nouns and adjectives: 0.09% in Sicily vs 0.00% in Malta). The *Socio-Economic Impact* is mentioned on the Sicilian websites and not on the Maltese ones (nouns: 0.09% in Sicily vs 0.00% in Malta; adjectives: 0.18% in Sicily vs 0.00% in Malta).

Discussion and Conclusions

The theoretical contribution of the present study relates to the exploration of Tourist Destination Image (Gunn, 1972; Crompton, 1979; Embacher & Buttle, 1989; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Gartner, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 2000; Buhalis, 2000; Beerli & Martín, 2004) conveyed by three Maltese and three Sicilian UNESCO websites to potential tourists through the analysis of the type of Tourism Discourse adopted – i.e. English as a specialised and promotional discourse in the tourism field (Dann, 1996; Gotti, 2006; Maci, 2013, 2020). The focus in particular is on the frequency of occurrence of *keywords* (Dann, 1996). The aim was to identify whether and to what extent the Tourist Discourse (Dann, 1996; Gotti, 2006; Maci, 2013, 2020) utilised in the Sicilian and Maltese UNESCO websites here selected - although not specifically built as promotional material - may equally affect potential visitors' destination images (Gunn, 1972; Crompton, 1979; Embacher & Buttle, 1989; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Gartner, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 2000; Buhalis, 2000; Beerli & Martín, 2004) of Sicily and of Malta and, hence, their decision-making process.

Since very little research has been undertaken on a corpus-based Tourism Discourse Analysis of Sicilian and Maltese UNESCO websites, the aim of this study was to address this gap in knowledge.

More specifically, the present article explores the Tourism Discourse used in the section named *Protection and Management Requirements* of the selected Sicilian and Maltese UNESCO websites and its contribution to tourist destination image formation (Gunn, 1972; Crompton, 1979; Embacher & Buttle, 1989; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Gartner, 1994; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 2000; Buhalis, 2000; Beerli & Martín, 2004).

A mixed methodological approach, both qualitative and quantitative, was adopted. More specifically, the Corpus Linguistics approach (Teubert, 2005; Nigro, 2006) was utilised, whose purpose is the application of theoretical studies to the language in use (Nigro, 2006; Teubert, 2005; De Cantis & Pagano, 2018; Pagano, 2018).

More specifically, in the present study, three UNESCO websites in Malta and the three in Sicily were analysed with a special focus on the rhetorical strategy of *keywords* identified by Dann (1996), ie. 'words which fire the imagination' (1996:174), through an examination of the occurrences of two specific lexico-grammatical features selected for this study, namely nouns and adjectives (Halliday, 2004; Maci, 2020). The concepts of collocation and colligation (Firth, 1957; Sinclair, 2003) were not under scrutiny here. The *WordSmith Tool 6.0* software (Scott, 1998, 2012) was used for linguistic analysis (i.e. collection of linguistic items). Through its use*,* the quantitative analysis identified the occurrences of keywords – belonging to the two aforementioned lexico-grammatical categories selected, i.e. nouns and adjective – in the two sub-corpora of UNESCO websites. As specified above, keywords have been defined as 'words with unusually high frequency' (Scott, 1998:24) and such occurrences identified key semantic fields, which the two lexico-grammatical features selected belong to.

The focus on Dann's rhetorical strategy of 'keywords' (1996) offers a wider and deeper perspective in the analysis of the Tourism Discourse utilised in the two sub-corpora of UNESCO websites. By adopting the Corpus Linguistics approach and by selecting two specific lexico-grammatical features (Halliday & Mathiessen, 2004; Maci, 2020), the results have highlighted how the Tourism Discourse employed in the two sub-corpora of UNESCO websites can contribute to the formation of an

induced destination image of Sicily and of Malta and, consequently, influence potential visitors' destination image (Chen & Tsai, 2007) and their decision-making process.

As already emphasised in Data Analysis, findings show that the only common feature between the two sub-corpora of websites concerns heritage protection, and it is strongly supported in terms of the law. Indeed, both sub-corpora of websites show their need to refer to specific laws and act as a relevant basis to explain and justify all the measures undertaken in heritage protection over time.

As for the main differences between the two sub-corpora, from a strictly linguistic perspective, the Maltese websites use a simple sentence syntax and show an adaptation to the morpho-syntactic requirements of the English language (Aarts, 2011). Regarding other features, in their lack of references *to Socio-economic Impacts*, the Maltese websites convey a further element of attractiveness, as this absence contributes to creating the idea of a destination that is problem-free (Dann, 1996), i.e. of a place far from the issues connected to potential visitors' places of residence and their ordinary lives. In addition, the absence of *Physical Risks* communicates the image of a safe, relaxing place and further reinforces the idea of escape (Dann, 1996).

Besides communicating the idea of a safe and problem-free destination, the Maltese websites also show a more balanced approach in the presentation of Malta. As it emerges from the occurrences in the key semantic field regarding *Tourism Impact*, Malta's historical past seems to combine with modern aspects, thus providing the idea of a tourist destination which is able to match past and contemporary issues. In other words, the Maltese websites further enhance the island's attractiveness from different perspectives and, consequently, convey the image of a destination that can meet the needs of a greater variety of potential visitors (Bigné, Sanchez & Sanchez, 2001).

On the other hand, the Sicilian websites linguistically seem to suggest all the typical characteristics of texts conceived in Italian and then translated into English, as the sentence structure refers to an Italian morpho-syntactic one. The result is that we find an Italian sentence syntax where English words are used. Additionally, they lack the conciseness of the Maltese web texts.

In the Sicilian websites, most occurrences refer to the issues of *Conservation and Protection* and show that the websites are more concerned about their historical features. No hint is made to Sicily as a problem-free destination. On the contrary, references to seismic risks, in the past as well as today (Sicily: nouns and adjectives: 0.09% vs 0.00% in Malta) are inevitably introduced, both when dealing with the present and, especially, with the 17th-18th century Baroque architecture and the reconstruction of some eastern Sicilian towns after the earthquake in 1693.

The difference between the two sub-corpora in the percentage rates regarding *Environmental Aspects* (Malta: nouns and adjectives 0.23%; Sicily: nouns 0.90%; adjectives 0.54%) is probably due to the higher rate of pollution in Sicily, which requires more frequent references to the environment and to the risks affecting its heritage, as well as the measures adopted to reduce the consequences.

Therefore, the final *induced* images of Malta and of Sicily, as their UNESCO websites convey them, could be synthesised as follows:

- A balanced image of Malta, relying both on its well-preserved past as well as on the modern reality of a relaxed and problem-free destination is proposed to potential visitors.

- A more traditional image of Sicily is, on the contrary, conveyed in its UNESCO websites, which mainly relies on its artistic and archaeological history and heritage as its major factor of attractiveness and its main pull factor but which cannot omit to mention some challenging aspects inherent in its seismic territory or due to environmental issues, with the consequence of reducing the features of a 'problem free' destination (Dann, 1996).

Following the findings, tourism policies could suggest investing more in an *induced* destination image of Sicily which should be communicated not merely by focusing on its archaeological / artistic heritage but, which also deals with *Protection Management*, notwithstanding its seismic territory, which could also reinforce and convey the idea of a reassuring and lively place. Consequently, as for tourist communication, the occurrences in the key semantic field connected to *Environmental Aspects* and

to seismic risks could and should be reduced, while the occurrences in the key semantic field connected to *Tourist Impact* need to be increased and reinforced in order to enhance Sicily's attractiveness as a destination and foster its pull factors.

In this way, Sicilian UNESCO websites could influence potential visitors' cognitive component in the process of forming a destination image (Gartner, 1993) or, in Gunn's words (1972), they could contribute to the formation of a better and more complete *induced* image or, in Baloglu and McCleary's (1999) they could offer an extra *stimulus factor*.

Limitations and Further Research

Through interpreting the linguistic data obtained from the corpus-based Discourse Analysis carried out on the two sub-corpora of UNESCO websites, the present study has uniquely demonstrated the extent to which the Tourism Discourse employed in them could influence the tourism destination image of Sicily and of Malta and, consequently, potential visitors' decision-making process when choosing them as destinations. In so doing, it has also provided a potential contribution to understanding destination image formation more generally. The application of the methodology utilised could also be considered as a contribution to knowledge.

From a wider perspective, owing to the growing attention paid today to tourist destination marketing and branding and considering the relevant role played by the Tourism Discourse employed by the media, this study is likely to provide extra material in the field of image-related studies to support the overall success of tourist destinations.

However, it is important to identify the inherent limitations which could lead to a further expansion of the research area. Indeed, further research might include:

Empirical studies – mainly by providing visitors and potential visitors with questionnaires, which could more deeply explore tourists' images of Sicily and Malta both prior to and following a visit to the islands. Therefore, not only will the tourists' induced image be the focus of the research, but also the modified induced image (Gunn, 1972) of Sicily and of Malta. Research could also consider exploring the approach to information about Sicily and Malta among younger tourists. Therefore, a statistical survey through questionnaires or, better, a linguistic analysis of comments about Sicily and Malta posted on social media (i.e.: Users Generated Content) could represent a possible field of corpus-based Tourism Discourse Analysis.

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Appendix

Table 2: Key Semantic Fields and Percentage Rates - Malta					
Key Semantic Fields	**Archaeological Sites**	**Hypogeum (182 words)**	**Megalithic Temples (299 words)**	**Valletta (379 words)**	**Total words 860 (Malta)**
Nouns	Institutions	1.64%	1.00%	4.74%	2.79%
	Legislation and Management	4.94%	8.02%	7.12%	6.97%
	Protection	7.69%	6.02%	1.84%	4.53%
	National Monuments / Heritage	3.84%	5.35%	2.63%	3.83%
	Human / Tourist Impact	0.54%	1.67%	4.74%	2.79%
	Environment/al Impact	0.0%	0.66%	0.0%	0.23%
	Physical Risks	0.0%	0.00%	0.0%	0-00%
	Socio-Economic Impact	0.0%	0.00%	0.0%	0.00%
Pre/postmodifiers	Institutions	0.54%	0.33%	2.11%	1.16%
	Legislation and Management	3.84%	5.68%	3.95%	4.53%
	Protection	3.29%	6.02%	1.05%	3.25%
	National Monuments / Heritage	3.84%	4.34%	1.84%	3.13%
	Human / Tourist Impact	0.0%	1.00%	3.95%	2.09%
	Environment/al Impact	0.0%	0.66%	0.0%	0.23%
	Physical Risks	0.0%	0.00%	0.0%	0.00%
	Socio-Economic Impact	0.0%	0.00%	0.0%	0.00%

Table 3: Key Semantic Fields and Percentage Rates – Sicily					
Key Semantic Fields	Archaelogical Sites	Syracuse (507 words)	Arab-Norman Palermo, Cefalù (283 words)	Val di Noto (316 words)	Total words 1106 (Sicily)
Nous	Institutions	4.93%	1.76%	2.21%	3.34%
	Legislation and Management	5.71%	9.54%	6.01%	6.78%
	Protection	3.74%	5.65%	5.06%	4.61%
	National Monuments / Heritage	5.52%	7.42%	7.91%	6.69%
	Human / Tourist Impact	2.76%	3.18%	0.0%	2.07%
	Environment/al Impact	0.98%	1.76%	0.0%	0.90%
	Physical Risks	0.0%	0.35%	0.0%	0.09%
	Socio-Economic Impact	0.0%	0.35%	0.0%	0.09%
Pre/postmodifiers	Institutions	0.78%	0.70%	1.89%	1.08%
	Legislation and Management	1.97%	1.41%	4.11%	2.44%
	Protection	1.18%	1.76%	7.59%	3.16%
	National Monuments / Heritage	2.76%	1.41%	4.74%	2.98%
	Human / Tourist Impact	1.97%	0.70%	0.0%	1.08%
	Environment/al Impact	0.98%	0.35%	0.0%	0.54%
	Physical Risks	0.0%	0.35%	0.0%	0.09%
	Socio-Economic Impact	0.19%	0.35%	0.0%	0.18%

Table 4: Key Semantic Fields and Frequency of Occurrences – Malta					
Key Semantic Fields	Archaelogical Sites	Hypogeum (182 words)	Megalithic Temples (299 words)	Valletta (379 words)	Total words 860 (Malta)
Nous	Institutions	3	3	18	24
	Legislation and Management	9	24	27	60
	Protection	14	18	7	39
	National Monuments / Heritage	7	16	10	33
	Human / Tourist Impact	1	5	18	24
	Environment/al Impact	0	2	0	2
	Physical Risks	0	0	0	0
	Socio-Economic Impact	0	0	0	0
Pre/postmodifiers	Institutions	1	1	8	10
	Legislation and Management	7	17	15	39
	Protection	6	18	4	28
	National Monuments / Heritage	7	13	7	27
	Human / Tourist Impact	0	3	15	18
	Environment/al Impact	0	2	0	2
	Physical Risks	0	0	0	0
	Socio-Economic Impact	0	0	0	0

Table 5: Key Semantic Fields and Frequency of Occurrences – Sicily					
Key Semantic Fields	Archaeological Sites	Syracuse (507 words)	Arab-Norman Palermo, Cefalù (283 words)	Val di Noto (316 words)	Total words 1106 (Sicily)
Nous	Institutions	25	5	7	37
	Legislation and Management	29	27	19	75
	Protection	19	16	16	51
	National Monuments / Heritage	28	21	25	74
	Human / Tourist Impact	14	9	0	23
	Environment/al Impact	5	5	0	10
	Physical Risks	0	1	0	1
	Socio-Economic Impact	0	1	0	1
Pre/postmodifiers	Institutions	4	2	6	12
	Legislation and Management	10	4	13	27
	Protection	6	5	24	35
	National Monuments / Heritage	14	4	15	33
	Human / Tourist Impact	10	2	0	12
	Environment/al Impact	5	1	0	6
	Physical Risks	0	1	0	1
	Socio-Economic Impact	1	1	0	2