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- a cura di D. Londei, D.R. Miller, P. Puccini, Gli atti completi delle giornate di studio del CeSLiC del 17-18 GIUGNO 2005:

“**Insegnare le lingue/culture oggi: Il contributo dell’interdisciplinarietà**”, a

<http://amsacta.cib.unibo.it/archive/00002055>,

disponibile anche in versione cartacea:

Londei D., Miller D.R., Puccini P.(a cura di), 2006, *Insegnare le lingue/culture oggi: Il contributo dell’interdisciplinarietà*, Atti di Convegni CeSLiC 1, Bologna, Edizioni Asterisco.

- a cura di Miller D.R. e Pano A., *Selected Papers* di quelli presentati al convegno nazionale CeSLiC del 4-5 dicembre, 2008:

“**La geografia della mediazione linguistico-culturale/ The Geography of Language and Cultural Mediation**”, a

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disponibile anche in versione cartacea:

Miller D.R. e Pano A., 2010, *La geografia della mediazione linguistico-culturale, Selected Papers*, Atti di Convegni CeSLiC 2, Bologna, Du.press.

Inoltre gli E-libri del CeSLiC comprendono:

3) la collana di *Studi grammaticali*

[http://www2.lingue.unibo.it/ceslic/e\\_libri\\_studi\\_grammaticali.htm](http://www2.lingue.unibo.it/ceslic/e_libri_studi_grammaticali.htm)

È un grandissimo piacere presentare un nuovo contributo, molto apprezzabile, di **Cinzia Spinzi**, dottorata in *English for Special Purposes* presso l’Università di Napoli, Federico II e docente di grammatica funzionale e di linguaggi specifici presso l’Università di Bologna, e di traduzione all’Università del Salento. La studiosa si occupa di linguistica sistemico-funzionale e di quella dei corpora, applicando frequentemente i risultati delle sue indagini in questi campi a quello della traduzione. Svolte in una prospettiva fortemente interculturale, le sue ricerche focalizzano in particolare la fraseologia nel linguaggio diplomatico e in quello dell’ecoturismo, quest’ultimo l’oggetto specifico dello studio che ora proponiamo. Ha pubblicato due monografie: *English, Language and Communication* e *La Comunicazione Specializzata: un approccio fraseologico al discorso diplomatico britannico (1997-2007)*, mentre tra i suoi saggi segnaliamo il recente, “The terroridiom principle between spoken and written discourse”, nell’*International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* (John Benjamins 2010). La Spinzi è anche co-curatore della rivista *Cultus: the Intercultural Journal of Mediation and*

*Communication*, la cui pregevole missione è di privilegiare il dialogo inestricabile che vi è tra lingue e culture.

Il titolo del saggio è:

**‘How this holiday makes a difference’:**

**The language of *environment* and the environment of *nature* in  
a cross-cultural study of ecotourism**

Partendo dal presupposto che le differenze culturali spesso costituiscono una fonte potenziale di problematiche traduttive, questo contributo mira a evidenziare le differenze che emergono sul piano linguistico, a livello lessicale, ma soprattutto fraseologico, in seguito a variegati orientamenti culturali che agiscono come filtri.

Il linguaggio specialistico analizzato riguarda una nicchia particolare del mercato del turismo, ossia l’ecoturismo, che sta conquistando un terreno sempre più vasto in seguito ad una maggiore attenzione rivolta nei confronti di tematiche attuali, come quelle di impatto ambientale. Abbracciando una prospettiva interculturale, il lavoro indaga il diverso approccio che la cultura americana, britannica e italiana mostrano nei confronti dell’*ambiente* e della *natura*, ipotizzate, in questo contesto, come categorie ideologiche del linguaggio utilizzate per la promozione dell’ecoturismo.

È centrale allo studio la classificazione operata negli anni da Hall (1976; 1983; 1990) fra culture verosimilmente più orientate verso il contesto, come quella italiana, e quelle più orientate verso il testo, come quelle americana e britannica. Tale suddivisione comporta una serie di diverse tendenze, soprattutto comunicative, che caratterizzano le culture e quindi anche le lingue. Per esempio, ad una maggiore espressività dell’Italiano sembrerebbe corrispondere una comunicazione più informativa dell’Inglese britannico.

I dati analizzati derivano da un corpus comparabile assemblato *ad hoc* che include testi scaricati da siti web ufficiali dell’ecoturismo. L’analisi parte da un approccio quantitativo basato sulla *Corpus Linguistics*, avvalendosi della teoria fraseologica che risulta rilevante anche a livello traduttivo. Emergono notevoli discrepanze fra le tre lingue nell’uso dei termini chiave del discorso.

I risultati dell’indagine rilevano differenze di lessicalizzazione dei concetti fondamentali che sono parte di altrettanto diverse scelte fraseologiche nelle tre lingue. Il lavoro conferma l’importanza di come la pratica traduttiva possa trarre vantaggi da uno studio sistematico delle *multiword units* nelle lingue e culture.

**Concetti chiave:** *environment, nature, corpus linguistics, phraseology, cultural orientations*

Donna R. Miller



Bologna, li 20 giugno, 2010

**‘How this holiday makes a difference’:  
The language of *environment* and the environment of *nature* in  
a cross-cultural study of ecotourism**

Cinzia Spinzi

(University of Bologna and University of Salento)

### **1. Introduction**

Much of our understanding of the world comes from words; what people know and experience is the results of the words chosen to deliver information. If information is given for promotional purposes then words become indispensable tools in commerce. Moreover, cross-cultural discrepancies complicate the scenario in that the individual world-view is a “local map and is not a good guide to understanding texts produced by other cultures” (Katan 2004: 325). Thus, cultural frames are of paramount importance in the cognitive process underlying any communicative event and they cannot be disregarded in the translation act. Actually, as Hofstede underlines (2001: 21), the first influences of culture start in the translator’s mind. Two premises are behind this paper: firstly, the role of language in the changing usage of pristine tourist natural areas is worthy of greater attention since it determines the future of ecosystems (see Cantrill, J. G., and Oravec, C. L. 1996); secondly, comparable corpora show how language is deployed to achieve particular goals and, additionally, they “can often lead naturally to discussion of aspects of the other culture as reflected in the language” (Thompson 2001: 312).

The language of tourism has been the subject of a number of recent studies which look at this type of specialized discourse from different perspectives: from its description as a specialized language (Gotti 2006), to web translation assessment (Pierini 2007), and cross-cultural analysis (Manca 2008; 2009). The contribution of this paper lies in its focus on a niche of the tourist market, a relatively young branch of tourism, that is ecotourism, investigated from a cross-cultural perspective for translation purposes. It addresses the issue of the construction of overt ideological categories (e.g. *environment* and *nature*) employed by the discourse of ecotourism in three languages (American English, British English and Italian) to promote its message in order to “persuade potential customers into becoming actual clients by addressing their cultural needs and personal motivations to travel” (Edwards and Curado

2003: 26). Ideology, in this work, relies on van Dijk's (1998: 9) conceptualization as 'social cognition', namely a system of values, beliefs, thoughts shared by members of groups, which support their interests socially and organize their social representations cognitively.

What we argue here is that the different "expressive" (e.g. Italian) and "instrumental" (USA and UK) patterns of communication (Katan 2004; 2006) shape the way the three languages construe the 'environment' and 'nature' to 'sell', and that the awareness of these differences may enhance translation. These different ways of communication are mainly due to "filters" which are the cultural orientations that "help individuals orient themselves in society" (Katan 2004: 325). If not appropriately considered they may cause "misperception, misinterpretation and mistranslation" (*ibid.*). Embracing this perspective (see also Simons et al. 1993; Trompenaars et al. 2000), this study also endorses the view that no approach to translation may disregard contrastive linguistics, but "to be of relevance to translators, contrastive studies need to move well beyond the sentence level, to be corpus based, rather than intuition based, and to take full account of context and co-text" (Malmkjaer 1998: 70-71).

The outline of this paper is as follows: in the next sub-section we will be explaining the theoretical premises to the study; section two is dedicated to the data and methodology this work relies on; section three briefly introduces the discourse of ecotourism and starts the analysis and findings are illustrated in section four. The last part summarizes results.

### **1.1 Theoretical background**

The theoretical basis for this study draws insights from different disciplines: employing the descriptive tools of corpus studies it combines cross-cultural communication, contrastive linguistics and translation looking at language from a multi-word perspective. Indeed, it is by now commonly accepted that translation implies a functional equivalent re-encoding of a text into another language which goes beyond the word-for-word rendering (Schäffner 1996). This matches one of the advantages of corpus studies that is the uncovering of preferred realizations of meaning in language which are inextricably linked to phenomena such as semantic preferences and prosody, collocation and colligation (Sinclair 1996; Partington 1998). On the other hand, current studies have demonstrated the close link between phraseology and culture (Sabban 2007; Manca 2008; 2009) as well as between sets of phrases and translation practice (Freddi 2009), with formulaic language being the intersection among theories on form, meaning and culture in language. To put it another way, phraseology shows

the pitfalls of translation when trying to understand the meaning of the original text and, above all, when phrases and idiomaticity are taken into account (Colson 2008: 200). For example, moving from Moon's pragmatic approach to formulaicity, in her investigation of the phraseology in filmic speech, Freddi (2009) points out the 'diegetic function' of the formulae, which are also related to genre-specificity. Furthermore, her findings reveal how the routinized language undergoes a process of dilution when being transferred from English into Italian.

Drawing on Sinclair's ideas on context of situation and meaning, Manca (2008)'s investigation of phraseology in the language of Farmhouse Holidays brings to light important differences concerning adjectives used to describe accommodation. She underlines how that specialized language mirrors the cultural contrast between the British English content-oriented message versus the Italian tendency to privilege form and a more complex style.

Placed in the contrastive tradition, Tognini Bonelli's (2002) methodology of 'functionally complete units of meaning' is relevant to this study in that it aims to find functional correspondences across languages. This method shows that, through the study of the phraseology around a node word and its collocations, we can achieve a more accurate translation. In other words, the main aim is that of producing a target text which may have the same emotional and cognitive response in the receiving audience as in the source readership (Salmon 2005).

In such a comparative perspective, an important distinction is that between High Context Cultures (HCC) and Low Context Cultures (LCC), with the former being more context-oriented (e.g. Italian) and the latter being more text-oriented (e.g. English) (cf. Hall 1983; see also Simons et al 1993; Katan 2004; 2006). This difference comes to the fore in our research because "contexting" (Hall 1989: 85-128), namely cultural orientation, can influence the discursive mechanisms used to address the public. For the sake of clarity, whereas the 'text' refers to the information transmitted, the context is primarily concerned with the "total environment in which the text unfolds" that is, the context which "precedes text, inasmuch as the context of situation (and that of culture) is seen as being prior to the discourse that relates to it" (Halliday in Miller 2004: 3).

According to Hall's theory a specific communication constellation and accordingly, a number of different behaviours or ways of interpreting the world occur when people from different cultural backgrounds meet. For instance, identified as low context cultures, the USA and the UK cultures focus on facts rather than emotions, on 'doing' rather than on 'being', and tend to emphasize individualism (Katan 2004; Trompenaars et al. 2000). By contrast,

portrayed as context-oriented, the Italian culture prefers to express feelings, is more past-oriented and concentrates on relationships. Accordingly, HCCs prefer implicitness and indirectness and leave context outside the text, whereas LCC communication is more instrumental and prioritizes information and facts. However, as will be shown, American culture sometimes allows space for emotions more than the British would consider appropriate. Thus, the American and British cultures tend to operate differently with respect to the Italian culture, and language mirrors these variances which, if disregarded, may cause misunderstanding and miscommunication (Katan 2009: 13).

Hall's distinction of low/high context culture seems to be difficult to apply when comparing close cultures in a more analytical way. With the aim of providing a more universally applicable framework the Dutch anthropologist Hofstede addresses this issue and distinguishes five cultural dimensions which emerged from a research on work-related values in employees at IBM during the 1970s. Each dimension is measured in relation to a basic problem all societies have to cope with, but offering a different response to its solution. The dimensions are as follows:

- 'power distance' relates to how (in)equality is distributed in society. Cultures with low power distance are characterized by more interdependence and mutual support; on the contrary, in cultures with high power distance stratification and hierarchy prevail;
- 'uncertainty avoidance' concerns the level of stress when facing the unknown future, and cultures like the USA and the UK, which score low on this parameter, show a higher level of tolerance towards uncertainty;
- 'individualism/collectivism' criterion measures orientation to integration in a group;
- the 'long-term vs. short-term' dimension is related to the choice of focus for people's efforts: the future or the present;
- 'masculinity vs. femininity' dimension is related to the implications deriving from the different social and emotional roles of genders.

As he states, these dimensions were not decoded a priori and they are "just a way of...well, beginning to make sense of the very complex reality" (Hofstede and Chiaro 2009: 30).

For the purpose of this work we shall be considering the 'individualism versus collectivism' dimension, which is close to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's couple of 'communitarianism/individualism' (2000). Starting from Hofstede's dimensions, the two researchers focus more on the behaviours than on underlying values. Drawing on Hall's theory, they speak of a 'neutral/emotional' pattern to refer to the extent to which emotions are overtly expressed. Furthermore, their 'universalist/particularism' orientation relates to a

preference for rules instead of relationships and, thus, this parameter matches only partially Hofstede's 'uncertainty avoidance'. Finally, in order to answer the question of the humanity-nature relationship they go back to Kluckhohn et al's (1969) value orientation theory which proposes "mastery", "harmony" and "submission" as different ways of approaching the natural environment. Both studies classify the American culture as tending towards a conquering approach to nature.

## **2. Materials and methods**

The data which form the basis for investigation were gathered from an *ad hoc* small multilingual comparable corpus of ecotourism that was compiled on the basis of the following sampling criteria:

- both major varieties, American English and British English, were included together with the Italian counterpart so as to take into consideration different languages and cultures;
- the time span was restricted to 2009 to focus on contemporary texts.

The number of running words amounts to a total of 91,858 tokens for the Italian sub-corpus, 65,648 tokens in the British sub-corpus and 72,134 in the American sub-corpus<sup>1</sup>.

The texts were downloaded from the official websites of ecotourism, which represent non-profit associations committed to the promotion of responsible travelling practices ([www.ecotourism.org](http://www.ecotourism.org); [www.ecoturismo-italia.it](http://www.ecoturismo-italia.it)). These sites provide links to local websites (for a full list see bibliography) and their selection was driven by the main purpose of designing a corpus, which served the specific function of being representative of the specialized domain of ecotourism, neglecting 'exported ecotourism' for cultural reasons. For instance, figure 1 shows the home page of the Italian website where the link on the left, "I nostri viaggi", displays several ecotourist packages:

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<sup>1</sup> The size of a corpus does not constitute an issue covered in this paper, however, as Sinclair states (2001: xi) "a small corpus is seen as a body of relevant and reliable evidence".

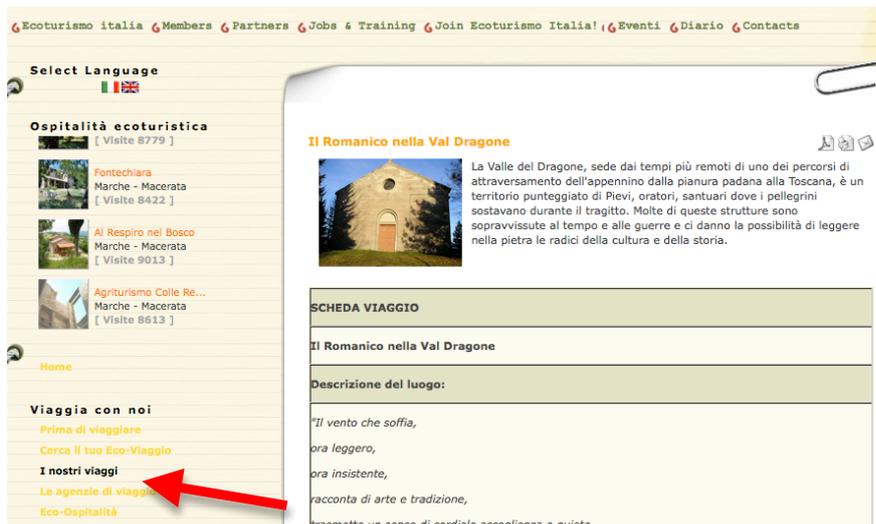


Figure 1: from the web page of the official site of ecotourism, [www.ecoturismo-italia.it](http://www.ecoturismo-italia.it)

All those holiday packages available online at the moment of compilation were downloaded. Similarly, as displayed in figure 2, the international website of ecotourism provides links to different eco-destinations offered by local organizations around the world:

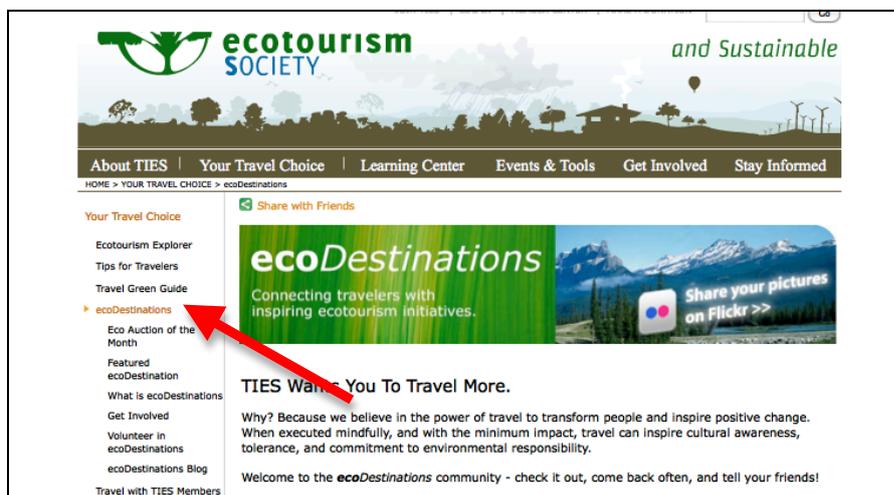


Figure 2: Link to eco-destinations from [www.ecotourism.org](http://www.ecotourism.org)

Since we were interested in studying how the two assumed ideological categories are described in language and how cultural orientations affect the promotion of this type of holiday, only the texts describing the trips were taken into account. These texts have the same persuasive communicative purpose, they contain short information about ecotourism and, above all, they describe the destinations focusing on their natural properties, such as flora and fauna.

Texts from the three sub-corpora were run through Wordsmith Tools 5.0 (Scott 2007) to extract analysable information around the search words. Methodologically this research combines quantitative and qualitative analysis, involving a number of steps.

Drawing insights from the theory of phraseology as carried out by corpus linguistics in relation to the translation process (Tognini Bonelli 2002), the analysis is quantitative when assessing the significance of some words on the basis of frequency criteria or when looking at collocational profiles statistically produced by the software. It is also qualitative in that it takes into account some aspects of language that, though not at the top of the numerical list, provide relevant linguistic insights. Collocation is the main analytical tool since it is a suitable vehicle for the “semantic analysis of a word” (Sinclair 1991: 115-116) and the related concepts of semantic preference and discourse prosody (Stubbs 2001). The investigation begins by exploring the text as a whole to look at the order of discourse and see what similarities the three languages present in the outline of the information. Then, the analysis will concentrate on the lemmas ‘environment’ and ‘nature’ assumed as ideological categories of the discourse of ecotourism and their Italian posited equivalents ‘ambiente’ and ‘natura’. This was suggested by the holistic definition provided by the Ecotourism Society in 1991, which identifies ecotourism as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people<sup>2</sup>”. The examination of the word in its co-text will confirm this hypothesis. When you embark upon a corpus-based activity you do not know what scenario will open up as comparable corpora may be the source of a potential “serendipity process” (Johns 1988). So the initial results led to a number of cross-analyses of collocates leading, for example, to an investigation of the word ‘territorio’. The items were compared and contrasted across languages in their phraseological behaviour and results were discussed in the light of cross-cultural communication studies.

### **3. The discourse of ecotourism**

As observed in previous research (Spinzi 2004), the idea of full-immersion nature holidays pre-dates ecotourism, so its novelty resides in the sensitiveness to environmental and social issues, in accordance with the Kyoto Protocol on minimal impacts on the climate, which are “reflected in new discourses and a new lexicon” (Mühlhausler and Peace 2001: 378).

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<sup>2</sup> [www.ecotourism.org](http://www.ecotourism.org) last accessed on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Coined in the late 1970s, ecotourism as a term implies what mass tourism is not or, in other words, an alternative to the negative effects of traditional forms of tourism (for details of linguistic implications of the term ‘ecotourism’ see Spinzi 2004). For some researchers (see Wallace and Russell 2004), ecotourism may be considered a form of nostalgia stemming from the need for exclusive experience in places of natural beauty, far from the madding crowd. Conceptualised as a catch-all phrase, the term obviously entails some ambiguities due to the number of objectives pursued. For the purpose of this study, we shall be looking at ecotourism as more than just leisure experiences which imply a visit to natural areas and involve activities such as flora and fauna observation while staying in hotels or lodges based on ecologically conservative principles.

The websites under scrutiny in this research have their own layout, which displays common sections concerning the description of the promoted areas and practical information about the eco-tour. Nevertheless, it is worth noticing that most of the sites of ecotourism introduce sections that focus on the novelty of this vacation and on the limited size group<sup>3</sup>. Despite the differences and the various ways of denominating the sections, the websites reveal similarities across the three languages and the following chart roughly displays them:

<b>American Texts</b>	<b>British Texts</b>	<b>Italian Texts</b>
-Country/Trip overview	-Country	-Denominazione del viaggio
-Location/departures	-Location	-Descrizione del luogo
-Price/vouchers	-Price	-Descrizione viaggio
-Introduction to (title)	-Vouchers	(gruppo, alloggio)
-Day-by-day itinerary	-Description/What we offer	-Programma del viaggio
-(Small group) holiday/group size	-(Traveller’s tales)	-Costi (spese comprese e non comprese)
-(Award winner)	-Rooms, food and facilities	-(Consigli) / (curiosità)
-How this holiday makes a difference/ Eco Tourism policies	-How to find us	-Perchè è un viaggio ecoturistico/Filosofia di viaggio e ecosostenibilità
	-How this holiday makes a difference/ Eco-policies	-Contatti/come arrivare

**Table 1: Sections displayed by the Ecotourism websites collected in the corpus**

The American and the British websites prefer to place practical outlined information at the very beginning of the text to start then a narration of the promoted experience. Furthermore, the individualistic American culture stresses from the very beginning (in this case the visual layout of the web page) the importance of travelling in small groups and provides information about the appreciation for the travel companies’ commitment to support

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<sup>3</sup> The websites including these pieces of information are the following: [www.ecotourism.org](http://www.ecotourism.org); [www.responsibletravel.com](http://www.responsibletravel.com); [www.ecotourdirectory.com](http://www.ecotourdirectory.com); [www.ecoturismo-italia.it](http://www.ecoturismo-italia.it).

local communities and economies. Another relevant feature is the focus on ‘*how* this holiday makes the difference’<sup>4</sup> (emphasis added) with respect to the Italian websites ([www.ecoturismo-italia.it](http://www.ecoturismo-italia.it); [www.pelagos.it](http://www.pelagos.it)) which provide only reasons for that. In order to account for the ‘*how*’, the American and the British explain what they have been implementing so far and in so doing they provide facts. Below are three typical extracts chosen randomly from the three sub-corpora and it is worth observing that the American and British description extends for many lines:

1. *Perchè è un invito alla scoperta ed alla tutela della natura e delle tradizioni di un territorio ricco di biodiversità.* (Because it is an invitation to discover and to safeguard nature and to conserve traditions and biodiversity)
2. *Each year we conduct extensive safety audits to ensure our properties comply with local regulations as well as our own safety requirements. We also conduct reviews of our itineraries to ensure they include as much local interaction opportunities as possible, where our travellers can engage with the locals and learn their way of life and the local cultures of the places we visit. These experiences often make our trips unique.* (from the USA sub-corpus)
3. *The cabin is a show case of environmentally responsible building. Although there a handful of straw bale houses in the UK, this is the first holiday home. We aim to provide high quality accommodation in natural surroundings whilst demonstrating to the wider public that straw can be used to create a beautiful yet practical and durable form.* (from the British sub-corpora)

It is immediately clear that in the American and British texts the description includes LCC written details such as ‘doings’ (e.g. *we conduct*) and ‘achievements’ (e.g. *show case; demonstrating*) whereas in the Italian counterpart no information is given and personal communication is emphasized (*invitation*) or, in other cases, this section is left out (see for instance texts from [www.fsnc.it](http://www.fsnc.it)). The potential traveller is expecting to ‘read’ information from the setting but a client expecting ‘text’ would not be satisfied with it.

### **3.1. From the language of the *Environment* ...**

One of the main advantages of corpus techniques is given by the criterion of frequency which points to areas that promise to be interesting. A glance at the relative frequency of *environment* in the three sub-corpora uncovers a mismatch among the three languages:

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<sup>4</sup> The section named “How this holiday makes a difference” is a feature of [www.responsibletravel.com](http://www.responsibletravel.com); other web sites use different phrases like “eco-policies” ([www.ecotourdirectory.com](http://www.ecotourdirectory.com)) or “Important information about this trip” ([www.nathab.com/america](http://www.nathab.com/america)). In the Italian sub-corpus the section “Perchè è un viaggio ecoturistico” comes from [www.ecoturismo-italia.it](http://www.ecoturismo-italia.it) whereas “Filosofia di viaggio e ecosostenibilità” was found on [www.pelagos.it](http://www.pelagos.it).

*environment* turns up at the top of the wordlist in the British sub-corpus (0.14 %) followed by a lower relative frequency in the American sub-corpus (0.11%) with the Italian ranking third (0.3%). A preliminary observation of these figures brings us to speculate about a different usage of the given item across languages, in particular, in the Italian language.

If we look at the collocational profile of the item in the American and British sub-corpora (tables 2 and 3) the content collocates give a picture of the semantic preferences associated with *environment*: very much from nature (*wildlife; natural*), social (*people*), ethical (*damage; commitment; respecting*) and economic fields (*economy*). The wider range of British preferences points out the broad semantic usage of this item or, better, its “semantically undifferentiated” status, that is “the term covers a number of different phenomena” (Mühlhäusler and Harré in Penman 2001: 146):

NWord	With	Total
1 ENVIRONMENT	environment	43
3 IMPACT	environment	10
4 NATURAL	environment	10

**Table 2: Top content collocates in the American sub-corpus**

NWord	With	Total
1 ENVIRONMENT	environment	91
6 LOCAL	environment	20
8 OUR	environment	17
11 NATURAL	environment	10
15 HOLIDAY	environment	8
18 WILDLIFE	environment	7
22 DAMAGE	environment	6
23 RESPECTING	environment	6
25 PROTECT	environment	5
27 COMMITMENT	environment	5

**Table 3: Top content collocates in the British sub-corpus**

In particular, what the two sub-corpora share is the occurrence of the very frequent association between the classifier *natural* and the search item, which constitutes the core of more extended phrases. A scan of the vertical axis of the first set of concordances reveals the ethical question of not harming the environment as central in the American sub-corpus:

1. "Leave No Trace" ethic will help minimize the impact on the natural **environment**. We partner
- 2..... travel, either by treading lightly on or enhancing the natural **environment**, making real
- 3... The travel provides economic growth while protecting the natural **environment** -- any
- 4..... Our style of travel maintains a low impact on the natural **environment**. Use is
- 5.....leave no trace ethic will help minimize the impact on the natural **environment**. Carbon Off-
6. Leave No Trace" ethic will help minimize the impact on the natural **environment**. \* On this
- 7 of commerce to support "right livelihood" without compromising the **environment** or human
- 8 llectual discourse. Finally, our health begins with our food and the **environment** in which we
- 9 help to eliminate built up soap residue in the linens, pollution of the **environment** and reduce
- 10 ccess of redesigning our operations to be increasingly friendly to the **environment**. We lead
- 11 ark in a locally owned camping facility that supports conserving the **environment** and benefits

**Concordance 1: *environment* in the American sub-corpus**

The most frequent pattern *minimize the impact on natural environment* is also lexicalized through variation, *maintains low impact* and *without compromising*. Alternative linguistic choices are *protecting* and *conserving*. The American attitude shown towards the environment, mainly formulated through verbal forms, tends to be pro-active and a sense of control over the environment crops up. This perception of the environment is an example of the United States as a control-oriented culture (see Kluckhohn et al. 1961). According to this perspective, control is particularly important when dealing with natural phenomena and mastery over them is the dominant position in that people can overcome natural forces.

The same idea of promoting an environmentally friendly behaviour is visible in the British discourse, where the word *damage*, occurring more frequently than the seemingly neutral item *impact*, contributes to set up a contrast between the image of an ‘injured environment’ and the aim of ‘achieving’ a *clean, healthy, safe environment*:

1.. visitors with modern facilities within a quiet, beautiful, unspoilt rural **environment**. Guests are  
 2.class service in a relaxed and homely atmosphere in a non-smoking **environment**. As we  
 3....environmental performance and helps protect Scotland's stunning **environment**. We are  
 4.....policy. Seek to achieve a clean, healthy, safe and sustainable **environment** for our  
 5..... is supportive and in sympathy with the local communities and **environment**. This is in  
 6...habitats we hope we have also created a fascinating and beautiful **environment** where people  
 7.ine Code we ensure that your kayaking activities do not damage the **environment**, or disturb  
 8.tline, enabling you to take in the surroundings without damaging the **environment**. We use local  
 9. isposal of litter and relevant suggestions to minimise damage to the **environment**, wildlife and  
 10. rence Environment: We are proud to demonstrate our care for the **environment** by the  
 11.ce they arrive on site, to minimise the impact of their holiday on the **environment**. There is no  
 12. ture-based holiday which aims to have no negative impacts on the **environment** or local  
 13.cycling and properly disposing of litter, and reducing damage to the **environment**. During the  
**Concordance 2: environment in the British sub-corpus**

The negative item *damage* figures very prominently in the British collocational profile, as in the concordances, and it emphatically constructs the environment as a victim uncovering the negative axiology underlying the semantics of abuse. The unfavourable pragmatic meaning, built up by *damage* or adjectives such as *negative*, contrasts with the positive evaluative lexis which describes the *environment* (*quiet, beautiful, unspoilt, stunning*). The consequent contrasting effect might be seen as the promoters’ intention to trigger emotional reactions in the addressees such as guilt and a moral obligation to behave eco-friendly. The attention of the eco-promoters to the environmental issues is also apparent in the co-text surrounding the frequent collocation *local environment*, which highlights the multiple objectives of ecotourism, like education (*learning; appreciate*), but also financial benefit (*economy* is another rather frequent collocates of *environment* as in citations 14 and 16 below). This emphasis on the *local environment* may be seen as a reaction to the increasing globalization of tourism or better, a way of claiming local identities, in that travels “do contribute to

identity formation, if only in reinforcing awareness of difference” (Shaw and Williams 2004: 7). Being ‘internally-directed’ (Trompenaars et al. 2000) the two societies show their *commitment to local environment* and their resolution is the starting point for every action (*we encourage; we have a commitment to*):

14..... As a letting agency we also have a commitment to the local **environment**, economy &  
15...We encourage our guests to enjoy and appreciate the fragile local **environment**. We offer  
16 cabins are run as sustainably as possible and we support the local **environment** and economy  
17.. a short period. We aim to help them enjoy learning about the local **environment** and culture,  
**Concordance 3: local environment in the British sub-corpus**

14 opportunity to get out and explore on foot to learn more about the local **environment** and thus  
15 to 12 passengers. Smaller groups means a smaller impact on the local **environment** and our  
**Concordance 4: local environment in the American sub-corpus**

The remaining citations from the British sub-corpus, with *natural environment* as core, show how this aim of sustaining the environment is achieved through a merging between the ‘built and non-built environment’:

18 sedum green roofs which not only helps them blend into their natural **environment** but also a  
19 close interrelationship and intricacies between the geology, natural **environment** and the s  
20 barbed wire, bracken and alien plant species to allow the natural **environment** to return t  
21 ormer days and to ensure that the building blends in with the natural **environment** and coun  
22 of light and space and give a sense of being at one with the natural **environment**. In additi  
23 code of conduct to ensure they don’t cause any harm to the natural **environment** or disturb  
24 sing existing indigenous trees and shrubs to blend in with the natural **environment**. Green te  
**Concordance 5: natural environment in the British sub-corpus**

Despite apparent lexico-grammatical variation, a concept of ‘fusion’ is visible from the pattern: *(build) blend/s in(to) the natural environment*. Variance includes another formulation, *being at one with*, and nominalizations, though less frequent, such as *interrelationship* and *intricacies*. Unlike the American sub-corpus, the British collocation *natural environment* is embedded in a context of integration between man-made products and the natural surroundings. If the American promoters highlight their commitment to a type of vacation with minimal effects on *natural environment*, the British offer of this type of holiday goes beyond by emphasizing the continuity between the human products and the ‘natural’ as the enlarged concordances better demonstrate:

(25) The large windows and use of wood throughout the Loch Ness bed & breakfast accommodation help to enhance the feeling of light and space and give a sense of being at one with the **natural environment**.

(26) The lodges themselves have double-insulated walls and sedum green roofs which not only helps them blend into their **natural environment** but also acts as a second insulate to retain heat in the winter.

The tangible description of the built environment construes an objective vision of this concept of ‘fusion’ observable from the outside. The adjectival form of this lemma, *environmental*, behaves similarly in both sub-corpora and tends to classify abstract nouns such as *projects*, *initiatives*, *awareness* but no recurrent patterns are visible. On the contrary, the adverbial form, *environmentally*, is found to frequently cluster with *friendly* giving rise to longer phrases. The cluster, which in turn collocates both with items related to the typology of holiday (e.g. *nature-based*) and to accommodation equipment (e.g. *building*; *cleaning products*), confirms the ideological construction of the discourse of American and British ecotourism around the category of environment. Responsibility towards environment involves any layer of life:

- 1 .....The cabin is a show case of **environmentally responsible** building. Although there
- 2 As part of our continuing commitment to **environmentally responsible** holidays we are currentl
- 3 .....get creative with traditional, **environmentally friendly** and nature-based arts & craf
- 4 towels, cloths, recycled kitchen roll and **environmentally friendly** cleaning products are provi

**Concordance 6: *environmentally* in the British sub-corpus**

Summing up, both cultures present the *environment* by advocating values expressed by *healthy*, *clean* and emphasize their attitude to reduce (and thus to ‘control’) negative effects on *local/natural environment*. Whilst the British data stress the effort of ensuring the continuity between human artefacts and natural surroundings, the American counterpart neglects this aspect as far as the analysis of the search lemma is concerned.

### **3.1.1 *Environment* in the Italian discourse of ecotourism**

The prima-facie translation of *environment* was posited to be *ambiente* whose collocational profile shows no statistically relevant associated items, except for *cultura* (culture). A scan of the concordances helps to identify the semantic categories the search node is in company with and how it is ideologically positioned. *Ambiente* shares all the classifiers with *environment* (e.g. *rural*, *urban*) except for *local*. It also shows preferences for *naturale* (natural) embedded in a metaphorical formulation (*immersioni*/immersions), as can be noticed in citation (1) in the concordances below. Two main aspects are foregrounded in the Italian instances: firstly, the focus on the ‘being’ rather than on the ‘doing’, instantiated by ‘relation processes’ (Halliday 1994); secondly, the emphasis on relationships. Indeed, a relation is established

between man, who is ‘interpreted’ in his natural surrounding, and the environment itself. Expressiveness and elaborate style are also pervasive in the instances below, where a concept of integration emerges even though not collocated with ‘natural environment’. The colouring of relationship, with existential *be*, and with nouns like *contatto* (contact) and *rapporto* (relationship) highlights the more ‘collectivist’ standpoint of the Italian culture. The recurrent pattern observed, *rapporto/contatto diretto con l’ambiente ospitante* (direct relationship/contact with the host environment), conceptualizes the ideological attitude of the Italian promoters of ecotourism: high priority is given to ‘processes of beings’ (Halliday 1994:113), namely, emotional bonds and empathy:

- 1 gli spazi rurali, il vivere semplice fatto di piatti genuine ed immersioni nell'**ambiente** naturale.
- 2 in barca a vela rappresenta un viaggio che consente di "fondersi" con l'**ambiente** circostante
- 3 Una espressione dell'uomo e della natura. L'uomo vi è interpretato nel suo **ambiente** naturale
- 4 possibilità di stabilire un rapporto diretto e approfondito con la natura, l'**ambiente** e il territorio
- 5 Perchè entra a contatto diretto con l'**ambiente ospitante**, inteso come territorio, cultura e tradizioni, senza alterare l'ecosistema locale.
- 6 Perchè entra a contatto diretto con l'**ambiente ospitante**, praticando attività sportive a basso impatto ambientale, senza alterare l'ecosistema locale.
- 7 Perchè entra a contatto diretto con l'**ambiente ospitante**, visitando luoghi ed opere che sono parte integrante delle tradizioni locali senza alterare l'ecosistema locale.

The above citations do not provide us with much information; they include man as part of the environment and a more holistic vision features the Italian text in line with its ‘contexting’ orientation.

The pattern (*entrare*) *a diretto contatto con* is not new in the language of tourism. In her cross-cultural investigation of the item ‘natura’ (nature) in the language of Italian Agriturismo and British Farmhouse Holidays, Manca (2004) observes a frequent association of this multi-word phrase with the item ‘natura’. Nevertheless, she notices a lack of correspondence between the English language and the Italian language and she provides a functional equivalent phraseology with the pattern ‘set in the countryside’, where ‘countryside’ is pre-modified by a range of positive qualifying adjectives (e.g. ‘set in gently hilly countryside’; 2004: 35). The phraseology in our data also involves the variant *ambiente ospitante* (host environment). What is suggested here is the underlying axiology of ‘orientation towards others’, which features the Italian culture as highly contextual (cf. Katan 2004: 251). This emphasis would confirm that the Italian culture places a very high value on the communication of feelings and relationship rather than on information, or better, where the British language provides factual examples, the Italian language triggers feelings.

Two other aspects are worth discussing: the absence of *local*, of items which convey the meaning of ‘conservation’ and ‘appreciation’ in the vicinity of *environment*, and a very

low frequency of *impact*. The adjectival form of the lemma *ambiente* is found to co-occur with *impatto* in phrases such as *a basso impatto ambientale* (low environmental impact). In order to see how the Italian language expresses the meaning of ‘local environment’, of ‘protection’ and ‘appreciation’ a search via collocation of these items was made in the Italian sub-corpus and it brought to light the following results: the only word found in the cotext of *locale* expressing a meaning parallel to ‘environment’ is *ecosistema* as may be observed in instances (5) (6) and (7) above. The repeated phrase *senza alterare l’ecosistema locale* shows similarity via collocation with the American *without compromising the environment* or with the British *without damaging the natural environment*. Variation is thus preferred in the Italian interactional communication through the use of a hyponym of *ambiente*. This is one of the main results from contrastive linguistics: where English uses the same word to refer to the same entity, Italian prefers variation (Granger et al. 2003).

As far as the other collocates are concerned, *ambiente* clusters only twice with *conservazione* (conservation) and *rispetto* (respect) but no instances of ‘apprezzamento/valorizzazione’ and ‘protezione/tutela’, hypothesised as prima-facie translation of *appreciation* and *protection*, respectively, were found. Again, a search of these nouns via collocation showed *valorizzazione* in the company of *territorio* as in the two following examples:

- (1) In particolare operiamo incentivando la conoscenza, il rispetto e la **valorizzazione del territorio**.
- (2) L’ecoturismo è un strumento per una corretta **valorizzazione del territorio**.

The choice of this item shows the relevance of geo-political boundaries to Italian identity. The rich collocational profile of the word *territorio* in the Italian sub-corpus, a set of shared collocates with environment in the other two sub-corpora and its higher relative frequency (0.14%) lead us to think that the Italian discourse of ecotourism places emphasis on the value of the ‘territory’ rather than on *ambiente*. The exploration of concordances confirms this hypothesis supported by the fact that not even an occurrence of the assumed equivalent ‘territory’ was found in the British and American sub-corpora. The range of its semantic preferences goes from items related to the heritage of a country (*culturali, tradizioni*) to positively connoted abstract nouns (*valorizzazione, conoscenza, sviluppo*) to names of places (*aree, natura*). Guided by the criterion of frequency, we see *cultura, tradizioni, natura* and *storia* as very frequently associated with *territorio* which encompasses all the cultural human-products as we read in the following examples:

- (10) Tali escursioni sono organizzate secondo week-end tematici in calendario programmato di itinerari che consentano una lettura a 360° del nostro **territorio** della sua natura e della sua storia.  
(11) All'arrivo un referente locale darà il benvenuto al gruppo introducendolo nel vissuto del **territorio**.

The use of *vissuto* (its past) personifies the territory. Noteworthy again is the stress on relationship. The territory constructed as a container replete with traces of the 'past' (stress on the past rather than on the future; see Manca 2008) invites a shared discovery (*scoperta partecipata del territorio*) or to a different 'reading'. Examples (12) and (13) demonstrate the above observations in context:

- (12) Il Parco rivolge le proprie proposte ad un pubblico di lettori-viaggiatori, a cui far conoscere il **territorio** attraverso una lettura differente, interdisciplinare, attenta all'ambiente.  
(13) Il contatto personale con il visitatore è centrale, e le guide sono tutte altamente competenti e preparate per comunicare la loro conoscenza del **territorio**.

These citations uncover one of the main aspects of an eco-tour that is 'learning' while travelling. Put differently, the *territorio* is like a text and the notion of reading, which was found only in the vicinity of the Italian word, highlights an interest in the symbolic aspects of *territorio*. The last collocates worthy of consideration are again *contatto* (contact) and *natura* (nature):

- (14) Perché è un viaggio ecoturistico? Per il contatto con il **territorio**, la natura, la popolazione.  
(15) L'ecoturismo si fonda sulla possibilità di stabilire un rapporto diretto e approfondito con la natura, l'ambiente e il **territorio**.

*Territorio* shares many meanings with *ambiente* but it also encodes other aspects related to the cultural and historical heritage of a nation. The evidence speaks for itself: the concept of relation is pervasive in the Italian sub-corpus and facts are not clearly and explicitly written. Explicit is on the contrary the collectivist 'dressing' of the Italian culture: travellers are invited to spend their time with other people sharing the pleasures and cultural aspects of the *territorio*. As a result, the whole community is rigidly tied together with socio-economic and cultural images, feelings, stories, myths, values and tradition.

### 3.2 ...to the environment of *nature/natura*

The second item to investigate assumed as ideological category is the lemma *nature* and its posited equivalent *natura*. The lemma occurs 0.16% in the Italian sub-corpus, 0,04% in the British sub-corpus and 0.18% in the American data. The lower relative frequency of *nature* in the British sub-corpus seems to indicate its marginal relevance in the data and the

examination of the concordances confirms this hypothesis. *Nature* is frequently associated with *reserve* and carries an adjectival function. Only one citation seems to be relevant to this analysis since it conveys the concept of connection between the traveller and the *nature*, but again the union is between the node and the typology of accommodation:

1 The nature of the houseboat accommodation offers the visitor the unique opportunity to co-exist with **nature**. (from the British sub-corpus)

Unexpectedly for the American control-oriented culture, *nature* seems to convey a meaning similar to that in the Italian culture. The recurrent pattern, even though through variation, is: verb (*explore, connect, being, attuning, live*) + a noun (*connection, harmony, relationship*) which colligates through a fixed preposition (*with*) with the item *nature*:

2 bio diesel, this is truly a place to explore and connect with **nature** and your own inner vision.  
 3 bring you feelings of intense energy, love, oneness, and a connection with **nature**. Bring the  
 4 to help our visitors find peace and joy while being in harmony with **nature**. Serendipity  
 5 consciousness of alternative energy and living organically in harmony with **nature**. The luxuri  
 6 camp ground where you can enjoy pitching a tent and being "one" with **nature**. We strong  
 7 and also teaches you more advanced techniques for attuning oneself with **nature**. This cours  
 8 on a low-key eco-journey, or explore and celebrate your relationship with **nature** in an educa

#### **Concordances 1: *nature* in the American sub-corpus**

Despite the high ranking of the American culture on the individualistic dimension, the promotion of the harmony between visitors and nature highlights the more elaborate and expressive orientation of this culture with respect to the British culture. Moreover, an explanation may be due to the type of discourse, where nature represents a relevant category in the incitement to ecotourism. This orientation to harmony, which is not typical of the American culture, may be explained if considering the corpus analysed: promoters rely on the image of a close and benign nature to attract travellers, but this is envisaged only for the time of their holiday, then travellers go back to their dynamic control-based activities (Katan, personal communication).

Needless to say that in the Italian sub-corpus *natura* is found to frequently co-occur with nouns belonging to the semantics of relationship such as *contatto* (contact), *armonia* (harmony), *rapporto* (relationship), *connubio* (alliance), *approccio* (approach):

1.....marchiando come 'eco' attività che semplicemente si svolgono a *contatto* con la **natura**, co  
 2.....residence hotel di qualità per chi desidera un soggiorno a stretto *contatto* con la **natura** in  
 3..... luogo per una vita ritirata di preghiera e di meditazione, in *connubio* con la **natura**. Il P  
 4.....a tutti che un parco è lo strumento per garantire un corretto *approccio* con la **natura**, pr  
 5.....precedente, è stato effettuato secondo lo spirito scout in piena *armonia* con la **natura** circ  
 6.....proprio tempo libero al mare o in montagna, cercando un *rapporto* diretto con la **natura** e'  
 7.....ato e apre le porte a chi vuole trovare un equilibrio nuovo nel *rapporto* con la **natura**. CE

8 .....viaggio autentico e ricco di contenuto sia a livello di *contatti* umani che con la **natura**. Qu  
 9 .....vive ogni avventura quasi come un percorso spirituale di *comunione* con la **natura** da  
**Concordance 2: *natura* in the Italian sub-corpus**

These citations deploy intensely metaphorical meanings of marriage so as to offer a spiritual, synergic holiday package. In order to check if the adjective *natural* lends itself to convey a meaning of strong relationship with nature, the concordances of the adjective as node were examined. The occurrence of one citation in each sub-corpus is the exception that proves the rule. The meaning in both cases is encoded when *natural* collocates with *world*:

(1) The whole farm is managed sustainably for the benefit of wildlife and landscape and to encourage the understanding of our relationship - physical, spiritual and creative - with the **natural world**. (from the British sub-corpus)

(2) Partly a demonstration of technique, partly a sharing of philosophy, you'll love the way Kristen helps immerse you in the **natural world**. (from the American sub-corpus)

The investigation of the lemma *nature* seems to highlight a different tendency of the American culture, which does not fit Kluckhohn et al's theory of the American control over nature. Actually, this represents an individual case and as Hofstede (2009: 28) maintains "analysing society is a different thing from analysing individuals" and "individuals of course are variable".

Finally, in order to summarize results a table is provided for translation purposes. Findings seem to suggest that the Italian language prefers to use to word *territorio* to transfer the meaning encoded by the phrase *local environment* and again *territorio* is combined with *protection* at least in the data examined.

American English	British English	Italian
	blend/s into the natural environment  being at one with the <b>natural environment</b>  learning about the <b>local environment</b> and culture	rapporto/ contatto con l'ambiente ospitante  scoperta partecipata del <b>territorio</b>
conserving the environment	protect the <b>environment</b> conserve the <b>environment</b> appreciation of the <b>environment</b>	tutela del <b>territorio</b> difesa/tutela della <b>natura</b> valorizzazione del <b>territorio</b>
(help) minimize impact on the natural environment	minimise damage to the <b>environment</b>	senza alterare l' <b>ecosistema locale</b>

without compromising the environment	without damaging environment reducing damage to the environment	a basso impatto <b>ambientale</b>
connection/harmony/relationship with <b>nature</b>	relationship with <b>natural world</b> * (only one occurrence)	connubio/rapporto/simbiosi/ equilibrio/comunione/ approccio con la <b>natura</b>

**Table 4: Linguistic choices across languages**

#### 4. Conclusion

The main assumption in this work was that cultural orientations influence the way people perceive, relate to, and construct their ‘environment’ and ‘nature’ in the discourse of ecotourism and that languages resort to different linguistic choices and communicative styles to convey that particular ideological positioning. Thus, not only is human purpose guided by interior values, but those values and attitudes are transmitted by words, and linguistic choices may vary across cultures.

While little has changed in terms of the representation of ‘nature’ as unspoilt and beautiful, the major shift from other forms of tourism lies in the way companies promote ecotourism: they portray themselves as environment/nature’s caretakers, that is, *environmentally friendly*. In the American and British data in particular, what a business feels is attractive for the potential traveller is the demonstration that they share environmental sensitivity with a larger public. The analysis of the two lemmas *environment* and *nature* has confirmed them as ideological categories in the discourse of ecotourism but with some differences. *Environment* is central in the British and American sub-corpora and less in the Italian data where *natura* and *territorio* seem to ideologically prevail for frequency, regularity of patterning and the function they perform. The ideological positioning of *environment* is nourished by a response, which is more cognitive in the American and British sub-corpora according to their low context cultural orientation. Emotions and relationships in the Italian texts are the pivotal tools, which pervade the construction of *ambiente*, *territorio* and *natura*. Furthermore, the analysis of *territorio* has shown that the Italian sense of identity rests on fixed connections with cultural aspects and social structures and that there is no correspondence between ‘territorio’ and ‘territory’ in the texts under study.

The dominant cultural orientations determine the patterns of communication. Classified as HCC, in the Italian text expressiveness plays a crucial role in convincing people to take an eco-tour. The Italian stylistic sophistication is closer to the American type of

communication only as far as the ideological category of *nature* is represented, but this individual example confirms the general theory. Despite the obvious aim of the discourse of ecotourism of representing a benevolent ‘nature’, which meets man’s needs, the American, and even more the British language, tend to avoid expressing the strong relational value which underlies the Italian high context culture and that individual cases are due to discourse specificity.

Finally, the results show that cross-cultural studies combined with corpus techniques can provide far-reaching insights for translation not only at the level of linguistic choices but also at the overall metaphorical configuration of the text.

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American sub-corpus:

[www.ecotourdirectory.com/ecotours/united\\_states\\_of\\_america](http://www.ecotourdirectory.com/ecotours/united_states_of_america)

[www.responsibletravel.com](http://www.responsibletravel.com)

[www.nathab.com/america](http://www.nathab.com/america)

British sub-corpus

<http://www.ecotourdirectory.com/ecotours/england>

<http://www.responsibletravel.com>

<http://www.responsibletravel.com/holidays>

Italian sub-corpus

[www.fsnc.it](http://www.fsnc.it)

[www.ecoturismo-italia.it](http://www.ecoturismo-italia.it)

[www.pelagos.it](http://www.pelagos.it)