

Netvertising: content-based subgeneric variations in a digital genre

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Abstract

We have endeavored to define a new emerging digital genre in the world of Internet : netvertising. We present an analysis divided into two stages. An initial survey of 20 randomly selected netads reveals that texts in this genre are formed by very brief sentences and noun phrases, the systematic use of imperative and simple present tenses, second person personal pronouns, a higher use of punctuation marks, a combination of different types of images with various texts, and the use of diverse HT linkers.

A second survey, however, unfolds a significant series of subgeneric variations depending on the contents of the netad. These content-based variations seem to be directly related to the product advertised. We have carried out a linguistic study of a complementary corpus of 50 first page target ads, linked to those banner ads appearing while browsing through a good number of Internet servers (Infoseek, Webcrawler, AOL, and so on).

1. A dynamic conception of genre

There is new tendency in linguistics to re-define *genre* adding to the concept not just form or structure, but also content, situation, context and objectives or communicative purposes. Several authors [19, 2, 5, 1] support this new view as a better description of the term. Content, situation, context and the purpose of a text become as central to the new conception of genre as form, and if one of them is modified, this, in turn, implies a modification of the genre as a whole. Bhatia [3] underscores the importance of genre integrity. The fact is that situations, contexts and objectives vary according to the natural evolution of the discourse communities in which genres are realized. Therefore, genres change and evolve since they are not static but dynamic instances subject to transformation.

We believe that the appearance of Internet is creating a set of new generic forms of which we are yet to see which ones will prevail and which ones will simply be a flash in the pan. For instance, will html language become another necessary skill for professionals in such fields as

advertising? Or will html and web pages create a new profession altogether?

Among the new emerging genres in Internet, publicity—in its various forms—represents one of the leading discursive manifestations of this process of continuous generic change which is now taking place in this international computing agora. The significance of advertising in relation to sociolinguistic analysis has already been addressed regarding its more traditional forms of television, newspaper, magazine and other advertising media [12]. This study has been focused on the sociodiscursive analysis of *target ads (linked to banner ads)*—the most extended form of *netvertising*—as a representative genre of the new trend of textual manifestations which are to be encountered in the ever growing world of Internet.

2. Internet genres: constant evolution

According to the definition of genre, there must be a group of features that define a certain kind of discourse to consider it as a separate genre.

Internet is a new means of communication which has become popular only in recent years. Much of what can be found in it is not systematized yet. This new means of communication has led to new genres, such as the web page, or huge multimedia catalogues, but also to the application of existing ones, such as advertising or research articles. There are several features that all these genres have in common, among which we would like to highlight a few ones.

First of all, we can say that over 90% of the information you can find in Internet is in English, but many Internet users are non-native speakers—or even exclusively writers—of English, who do not use this language in their daily life, which means they are suffering continuous interferences from their different tongues creating a special type of *interlanguage*. Additionally, there is the special metalanguage that this new means of communication is producing, with expressions such as the following: *to link* (relate different parts of a document by means of hypertext), *cookie* (some kind of file that stores information), *communicon* (= communication + icon; combination of letters and

symbols used in Internet e-mail to provide emphasis or clarification), and similar expressions. The result of using English as the international Net language is an open problem that future sociolinguistic research will have to deal with.

Secondly, one special characteristic of Internet is the use of *hypertext*; this means that the information is distributed in layers to which the reader can have access just by choosing a word or icon and double clicking on it. In this way, readers of the same text may get different readings from it, depending on the layers of information they have opened and the order in which they have done it.

Thirdly, when using Internet, you do not only find text. Other communication elements are interlinked with the “traditional computer text”, such as movies and animation, moving graphics, sound files, database and catalogues, and programs that run directly on your computer [6]. Day after day new technologies appear that allow the designer to introduce new elements [6]. This has been referred to as the *multimedia effect* [10, 11].

Finally, the audience is not passive; Internet users have to take decisions and act, if they want to receive the message. Moreover, they can choose the message they want to receive as well as when and how to receive it. They can also decide if they want to respond to the message or not, and also when and how to do it. Of course, not all information is transmitted in the same way in Internet, but this will be a recurrent characteristic of the communication process within this new computer-based system.

All these characteristics make of Internet a new and peculiar means of communication which, as we said above, is leading to the creation of new genres and to new applications of traditional ones. These new genres and applications will deserve the special attention of linguistic researchers. In our case, we would like to give an example of how to analyze *netvertising*, that is, advertising in Internet.

3. First analysis : Internet advertising as a genre

3.1. Method of study

The language of advertising, together with the effectiveness of advertising as a marketing strategy, has been widely analyzed. However, these analyses have not yet been applied to specific Internet advertising, or *netvertising*.

Initially we used a corpus of 20 first web pages of ‘target ads’. Novak and Hoffman [13] define a ‘banner

ad’ as “a small, typically rectangular, graphic image which is linked to a *target ad*.(...) Banner ads typically provide little information other than the identification of the sponsor, and serve as an invitation for the visitor to click on the banner to learn more”. Banner ads, according to Chatterjee [4], are a form of *passive advertising exposure*. Once the reader/consumer decides to click on the banner ad, getting access to the target ad, s/he is *exposed to active advertising*.

We decided to choose first pages of target ads for our study because banner ads have little language material to be analyzed, and there is usually a very complex and constant change of text and image in motion, that makes an analysis very difficult. Additionally, we decided to limit the corpus to first page target ads because some of them have an unlimited number of hypertext linkers that lead the viewer to a never ending process of selecting paths to get more and more information.

As for the parameters, we decided that it would be interesting to observe the different elements of content (linkers, colors, images, text, sound clips, video files, etc.) that could be found in each advertisement, and the relationship established between them. We thought this parameter could be rather different from those used to study traditional advertising. After a thorough examination, we chose the linkers and the images for our analysis, paying special attention to their relationship with the written text.

Other parameters we have analyzed are:

- the length of the first page of the target ad ;
- the aim of the advert (to influence or change attitudes, to motivate the consumer to give information about him/herself, to lead the consumer to buy);
- the register (a colloquial, neutral, or technical register)
- the audience (to observe how the audience is addressed)
- the linguistic analysis of the text : number of words per sentence, use of punctuation marks, number of imperatives in relation to other tenses, and use of personal pronouns.¹

Next we present the results obtained after analyzing these parameters, and the taxonomies we propose for this and further research.

3.2. Analysis

3.3.1. Aims of netvertising

¹ Further analyses of these linguistic variables in other genres may be found in Fortanet et al. [8, 9], Posteguillo [17], Palmer and Posteguillo [15], and Palmer [14].

After paying attention to the 20 netads selected, we noticed that 16 aimed at changing the audience's opinions, 11 included elements of direct sale of a product, but only 5 took advantage of the technological possibility of the Net to obtain information from potential buyers. Whether this lack of full exploitation of all the capabilities of the new context in which these ads are being exhibited is due to a deliberate advertising strategy—i.e. publicists may regard the request of information from the buyer as a negative approach—or simply a matter of a not yet complete adaptation of the genre of advertising to a new technological context remains as an open question with relevant sociolinguistic implications for future research.

3.3.2. The audience of netads

In relation to the register of these netads, and making a general consideration about vocabulary and style, we have distinguished three different levels: a colloquial, neutral and technical register. A predominance of the colloquial register has been detected—with 10 advertisements in this colloquial level and 5 additional ones which showed a combination of a colloquial and a neutral register; meanwhile, 3 target ads were written in a neutral level and only 2 of them incorporated a technical style.

3.3.3. Linguistic features of netads

After analyzing this type of advertisements, we observed that most of them were fairly short, ranging from one to three pages. In fact, out of the 20 ads analyzed, 12 of them were just one page long, 2 of them could be printed in a couple of pages, whereas the other 6 were printed in three pages. It seems as if the first feature that we could see in our analysis was conciseness. When analyzing this type of ads, we noticed that most statements were very brief. In fact our data showed that, among the 20 ads observed, 453 sentences and/or noun phrases (out of a total of 808) were only 1, 2 or 3 words long. Most of these statements were either short noun phrases or brief imperative sentences designed to prompt possible customers into the buying habit. To be precise there were 461 noun phrases, equaling 57.05 % of the total, most of which coincided with HT linkers. On the other hand, we found 347 sentences within the 20 ads, from which 262 were simple sentences and 85 were compound sentences. From these, most sentences appear either in imperative (134) or in simple present (103), amounting for a total of 90.45 per cent of the total number of verb tenses used.

On the other hand, an analysis of the 85 compound sentences observed provided 33 different combinations.

Nevertheless, once again imperatives and simple present tenses were by far the most usual ones, appearing in 80 of those combinations. The most common compound sentence is that one following the *simple present+simple present* pattern (23 instances). In most cases, this pattern introduced either a conditional sentence (*If you need further information, you can call...*) or a judgment (*This is an offer you can't refuse!*). Additionally, in 15 of these 23 cases, at least one of the sentences appeared introduced by a modal verb.

Observing all these data, most advertisements were short texts created by either simple sentences or noun phrases, giving special importance to imperative messages, prompting readers to buy the products endorsed. Nevertheless, we also consider that this analysis should go further on, paying special attention to the type of punctuation marks most often used when designing this type of text. With the exception of the traditional punctuation marks (*period, comma, semi-colon*), we observed that netvertising authors used other kinds of punctuation in order to convey different feelings in possible customers, such as parentheses, question marks or inverted commas, among many others.

3.3.4. The use of images and HT linkers in netads

Nevertheless, as in most other advertising genres, text is only one of the multiple features that linguists should study. For instance, a complementary analysis of the images appearing in the 20 ads selected for our initial research provided additional information to better understand what each text was about.

After analyzing our corpus of ads, we observed a total number of 90 images. This number can be quite misleading, because there was nothing as a common average number: whereas 2 ads had got 12 images each, there were 5 ads with only 1 image. Although results did not show a common trend in usage, all the advertisements analyzed displayed images in at least one instance, showing the importance of graphical information in advertising.²

We also paid attention to the kind of images appearing within the texts analyzed. Results showed that there were three important types of images: pictures, cartoons and photographs. This initial analysis revealed that pictures were the most often used type of image (57%), with cartoons (18%) and photographs (15%) coming far behind.

Additionally, we observed that images were often interconnected with texts (in 56 instances out of 90, i.e.,

² We have also noted the relevance of visual information in other genres, especially in the relationship between graphics and texts in research articles [7], and textbooks [18].

62.2%). This seemed to show that publicists frequently resort to images as a means to convey their messages but that, at the same time, they decide to combine image with text, so that this combination becomes a characteristic of this genre. Besides, we also observed how hypertext plays an important part within this genre. Most linkers were side-linking devices, offering the option to access a new web page from a clearly defined position on the screen.

Results also seem to indicate that a good number of linkers appear on the side of the page, either in bold type or with different colors, making it quite explicit its web-page linking function. On the other hand, an average of 22.8 linkers per advertisement offers an idea of the never ending progression of the overall world of netvertising, and the huge commercial possibilities of this still underdeveloped genre.

4. Second Analysis : Content-based variations within CRTAs (Computer-Related Target Ads)

4.1. Method of analysis

For this second complementary analysis we have used a corpus of 50 first page target ads. Our attempt was to observe if there were any sub-generic variations among those ads endorsing computer-related technology, being by far the most used type of advertisements appearing in the Net, as Palmer (forthcoming) suggested, observing that they represented 36% of all the commercialized products within the World Wide Web. In order to do so we divided the advertisements in two groups: twenty-five ads had to do with computer-based products or services, whereas the other twenty-five introduced products that could be commercialized in traditional shops. This second group included very different goods, such as chocolates, cars, or hi-fi systems; henceforth, we will use the acronym NCRTAs (Non-Computer-Related Target Ads) to define this second group of advertisements.

As for the parameters analyzed, we have observed the existing differences between the two types of target ads considered, paying attention to a whole set of linguistic features, as well as to some other related aspects, such as objectives, register and audience. Additionally, we have also paid attention to the way specific Internet content units are used, such as hypertext linkers and diverse images, as well as the way text creators and web page developers preserve their work from possible copies. After observing the general trends on target ad design in our first initial analysis, we followed a similar layout to the one already used in previous research. The overall analysis, therefore, will follow this pattern:

- Objectives of the advertisement
- Register
- Linguistic analysis
 - Length of the ad
 - Length of the statements
 - Type of sentences and/or phrases
 - Use of verb tenses
 - Use of punctuation marks
- Content units
 - Images
 - Combination of images and text
 - HT linkers

In the next section we present the results obtained in our analysis, following the taxonomies proposed in previous papers on the subject. A brief discussion follows each analysis.

4.2. Analysis and discussion

4.2.1. Objectives of the advertisement

Our first analysis observed that there was a natural primacy regarding the idea of changing the audience opinions on the type of product endorsed, as it was pointed out in our research on target ads design. Comparing the two new sets of advertisements analyzed, we can see that there is a common commercial trend in both groups: a clear attempt to sell a product or to get money in exchange for a service. This tendency was already observed in our previous analysis.

Nevertheless, the most striking difference between these two types of advertisements regarding their objectives is that those companies endorsing computer related products try to get in touch with possible buyers throughout technology more often (17 instances within the 25 ads analyzed) than those web page developers creating ads concerned with real products (6 instances, as it can be seen in Table 1). In order to do so, they sometimes include either on-line personal questionnaires or talk-to-us icons, which allow the possible customer reading the page to leave a message to the webmaster in charge of the page maintenance, most times offering highly important information about prospective average consumers and/or users. In our opinion, and corroborating previous research on the subject, we consider that this possibility has not yet been completely developed, probably due to the experimental character of some of these pages. Following this hypothesis, Table 1 shows exact data regarding these different technological possibilities.

Table 1: Use of technology within the general objective of a target ad.

	CRTAs	NCRTAs
Use of technology to get in touch with customers	17 instances	6 instances
On-line registration forms	5 instances	0 instances
Change of the audience opinions	21 instances	21 instances

As Table 1 suggests, some CRTAs are created by web page designers to compile information from customers, in order to both improve their services and adequate them to the actual type of people interested in them. In fact, there is not a single case among NCRTAs in which we can find an on-line registration form especially designed in order to inquire about goods, while this specific request of information is sometimes used by those webmasters maintaining CRTAs.

4.2.2. Register

Regarding register, we have found relevant differences between both types of ads analyzed. As our previous initial analysis has already shown, there is a predominance of the colloquial register in commercial advertisements, no matter the product or service endorsed. Nevertheless, when we deal with computer-related products, this overall image changes completely (see Table 2).

Table 2. Register within the two types of ads analyzed.

	CRTAs	NCRTAs
Colloquial register	4 instances	15 instances
Combination of colloquial register + neutral register	1 instance	7 instances
Neutral register	9 instances	0 instances
Technical register	11 instances	3 instances

When dealing with CRTAs, most web-page developers have tried to use specific technical language, trying to express clearly the features implied by the different software or machinery endorsed. This is very different of what can be seen among NCRTAs web-page developers, who resort fairly often to a considerably more colloquial style. Assumingly, people using the Net to get informed about computer-related products will have the appropriate knowledge in order to understand technical language, something which will not be necessary when reading information on, for example, a refreshment or chocolate-derived product.

4.2.3. Linguistic analysis

After analyzing this second corpus of 50 ads, we observed that most of them were fairly short, ranging from one to four pages; this result corroborates the data commented above in our preliminary study. A further analysis showed us that there were not great differences between CRTAs and NCRTAs regarding the total number of pages used to print the ad. CRTAs show a total of 38 printed pages within the 25 ads analyzed (an average of

1.52 pages per ad), whereas NCRTAs are made up of 37 printed pages (an average of 1.48 pages per ad). As these data suggest that there are not great differences in the overall length of the text.

A more detailed analysis made us think that there could be a difference in the total number of statements appearing within the advertisements. After comparing all the first page target ads analyzed, we observed that the overall length of these texts was also fairly similar. In fact, exact figures show that the 25 CRTAs analyzed depicted a total of 767 statements, including both noun phrases and sentences, showing an average of 30.68 statements per advertisement. On the other hand, NCRTAs offered a fairly similar proportion, with a total number of 769 statements (30.76 per ad). As these two preliminary analyses suggest, there are no major differences in the basic layout of these first page target ads.

A third step in our analysis was devoted to observe the differences in the overall length of the statements within the CRTAs chosen for our study. The general trend observed in previous studies suggested that there should be an important display of short sentences and noun phrases. Both CRTAs and NCRTAs share a predominant use of short statements, in a fairly higher level of what can be observed in other types of advertising genres. Even so, those statements taken from CRTAs are slightly longer (averaging 6.34 words per statement, whereas NCRTAs only average 5.78 words per statement), probably due to the more precise objective of the advertisements.

A detailed analysis suggest that most statements are very brief, generally ranging from 2 to 5 words of length (62% among CRTAs and 71% among NCRTAs, approximately). However, the use of a higher number of explanations and brief definitions observed within the CRTAs increase the overall length average considerably, mainly when dealing with statements ranging between 6 and 20 words. Nevertheless, we should also analyze the different types of sentences and noun phrases appearing in these ads.

Our study supports previous analysis regarding the higher use of noun phrases within netads than among other more traditional forms of advertising [10, 14]. Nevertheless, we also observed a clear difference in the use of both noun phrases and complete sentences when comparing CRTAs with NCRTAs, as it can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Difference in the type of statements.

	CRTAs		NCRTAs	
	Number of instances	Percentage	Number of instances	Percentage
Noun phrases	403	52.24%	503	65.42%
Simple sentences	280	36.51%	188	24.42%
Compound sentences	84	10.95%	78	10.14%
Total	767	100%	769	100%

Table 3 seems to show a greater use of simple sentences within those advertisements endorsing computer-related products. On the other hand, that proportion is clearly lower among those texts endorsing other types of products. As a conclusion of this first major difference we can say that those statements appearing within CRTAs are not only slightly longer, but they can also introduce more information, mainly due to the use of complete sentences.

In previous papers [10, 11, 14], we have observed that most verbal tenses appearing within netads tend to be either imperative or simple present verbal forms. The reason is that most advertisement designers try to recommend their products by using very brief and direct orders, prompting the readers to buy the products endorsed. We want to keep on analyzing if there are any differences in the use of these or other verb tenses when comparing CRTAs with the rest of the first page target ads analyzed. In order to do so we have compared the use of verb forms within the simple sentences observed, as it appears depicted in Table 4.

Table 4. Verb usage.

	CRTAs		NCRTAs	
	Number of instances	Percentage	Number of instances	Percentage
Imperative	157	56.07%	118	62.76%
Simple Present	103	36.79%	54	28.72%
Simple Future	10	3.57%	4	2.13%
Present Perfect	2	0.71%	7	3.75%
Present Progressive	5	1.79%	2	1.05%
Simple Past	2	0.71%	1	0.53%
Conditional	1	0.36%	1	0.53%
Future Progressive	0	0%	1	0.53%
Total	280	100%	188	100%

Table 4 shows a very similar pattern to the one hypothesized above, though there is an interesting difference between both types of ads analyzed. Although CRTAs do resort to imperative sentences with a high frequency, the volume of simple present tenses is also quite noticeable, showing a clear interest in introducing features of the product or service endorsed. While cars, chocolates or refreshments can be easily explained with an image, this cannot be done with computer-related articles. The use of very brief explanations will offer an important overview on all the different possibilities of the software endorsed, something which is almost impossible to do by the mere use of images. Nevertheless, the display of imperative sentences prompting the reader to buy the product or use the service is still on top, as it could be expected to happen in any subgeneric instance of netvertising analyzed. These overall results are similar to the ones previously pointed out by Fortanet et al. [10], who observed that both imperative and present tenses amounted for over 90% of the total number of verbs used within first page target ads.

Our next analysis was based on the use of punctuation marks within target ads. As we commented above, previous research showed that netvertising authors used different punctuation in order to convey different feelings in possible customers. Table 5 shows our findings, with the exception of the traditional punctuation marks (period, comma, and semi-colon), which are not used to capture the readers' attention.

Table 5. Punctuation marks.

Punctuation mark	Purpose	CRTAs	NCRTAs
		Number of instances	Number of instances
--	To introduce authors' observations	25	9
:	To offer examples	75	16
(To offer examples and instructions	57	11
/	To offer options	9	27
!	To stress the importance of an offer	62	65
?	To imply rhetorical questions	18	18
...	To introduce special offers or funny comments	6	13
"	To introduce specific or newly-coined terms	24	8
[To introduce foot linkers	4	3

The predominance of netads authors' observations among CRTAs suggest their interest to emphasize all the different features assumed within the computer-related product. Those features have to be stressed by means of a brief explanation introduced by a dash. In order to offer those characteristics that most prospective customers cannot see through the Net, most companies resort to the use of exemplification and instructions on the possible functioning of that computer-related machinery. Additionally, the use of registration forms and other information devices, especially created to gather specific details from prospective customers, has also increased the overall results of both colons and parentheses. Regarding the higher display of inverted commas among the CRTAs, we should point out that they are frequently used in order to introduce specific computer-related terms, due to the more technical vocabulary used within this type of ads. Summarizing, CRTAs resort to a vast usage of different punctuation marks for different specific purposes, more often than what can be observed among other different types of first page target ads.

4.2.4. Content units: images and HT linkers

In most advertising genres, text is only one of the many features that linguists should study when analyzing how an advertisement conveys a message. We have observed the way the 50 ads analyzed use images to endorse a product or service. In order to do so we have differentiated three different types of images (pictures, cartoons and photographs), as in the case of our pilot initial study explained in section 3 above.

The difference in the use of images is extremely important; whereas CRTAs have an average of 1.72

images per ad, NCRTAs show an average of 7.44 images. Whereas those web developers creating advertisements for computer-related articles can only resort to the actual depiction of the machine or software itself, most other products are endorsed by means of the depiction of images of the whole range of products that the firm commercializes. This fairly high difference between the use of images in netads can also be ratified when analyzing in detail the three types of images observed within the advertisements taken from the Net. We should pay attention to the fact that most computer-related target ads do not use more than two or three images, whereas some of the NCRTAs analyzed show up to thirty-five images.

A deeper analysis of the images appearing within computer-related ads suggests that there is a logical tendency towards the use of written information, trying to specify the qualities of the product or service commercialized. Table 6 shows how netvertisers have used these different types of images.

Table 6. Different types of images observed.

	CRTAs		NCRTAs	
	Number of instances	Percentage	Number of instances	Percentage
Pictures	29	67.44%	135	72.58%
Photographs	13	30.24%	37	19.89%
Cartoons	1	2.32%	14	7.53%
Total	43	100%	186	100%

The main difference between the two types of advertisements analyzed is the proportionally higher use of photographs within computer-related target ads, mainly due to the importance of showing the product endorsed. It should be noted that most software and mainframe computers look very much alike: the main use of photographs in CRTAs simply show laptop computers and software boxes, as well as traditional “happy consumer” images. This use has nothing to do with what can be observed in most ads endorsing cars, chocolates or mobile phones, where authors do not only use photographs, but also different types of pictures improving the general layout of these specific advertisements.

Additionally, we have observed that these images are often interconnected with texts. Most publicists frequently resort to images as a means to convey their messages but they, at the same time, tend to interconnect those images with short chunks of text (either brief simple sentences or noun phrases, as we commented above), so that this combination becomes a characteristic of this genre of advertising. We have also considered if there are any kind of differences in the way most netvertising developers and webmasters introduce images and text within their advertisements. Table 7 offers an overview of these results.

Table 7. Relation between text and images.

	CRTAs		NCRTAs	
	Instances	Percentage	Instances	Percentage
Picture only	8	18.64%	27	14.54%
Picture + one text	15	34.88%	102	54.83%
Picture + different texts	6	13.95%	6	3.21%
Photograph only	3	6.97%	16	8.60%
Photo + one text	7	16.27%	14	7.53%
Photo + different texts	3	6.97%	7	3.80%
Cartoon only	0	0%	2	1.07%
Cartoon + one text	0	0%	6	3.21%
Cartoon + different texts	1	2.32%	6	3.21%
Total	43	100%	186	100%

Data suggest that most netad designers tend to use graphical information appearing on screen together with one or several texts. It is also a fact that the volume of visual information appearing without the aid of written words is considerably low in both CRTAs and NCRTAs. Nevertheless, most images are used to allow the access to following web pages. These results indicate that the use of words appearing together with those images can help any Internet user to understand all the different possibilities a specific advertisement implies.

Additionally, we have also considered how hypertext plays an important part within this genre. We have paid attention to the number of HT linkers appearing within these ads, following a taxonomy previously created to define them [10] which was also used for our initial analysis of netads as collected in section 3.3.4. Table 8 shows the predominance of side-linking devices among both types of ads.

Table 8. HT linkers

Type of HT linker	CRTAs		NCRTAs	
	Number of instances	Percentage	Number of instances	Percentage
Side linkers	180	41.95%	241	42.88%
Text-integrated linkers	122	28.43%	150	26.69%
Linkers within an image	23	5.37%	69	12.28%
Images as linkers	19	4.43%	55	9.78%
Foot linkers	85	19.82%	47	8.37%
Total	429	100%	562	1000%

As Table 8 seems to suggest, the use of HT linkers is higher among NCRTAs (22.48 linkers per ad, whereas CRTAs only average 17.16 linkers per ad). The reason may be the fewer number of images appearing within the text. Similarly, if we observe the exact percentages in the use of these linking devices, we can notice that the use of foot linkers is clearly higher among CRTAs, probably due to the lack of other more attracting ways to link prospective users to further commercial pages, such as photographs, pictures or cartoons. Following the general results observed in previous studies [10, 14], data seem to indicate that a good number of linkers appear on the side of the ad, either in bold type or with a different color, trying to make explicit its web-page linking function. Additionally, the possibilities of access implied by these

linkers offer a general overview on the overall benefits of this type of advertising.

5. Conclusions

Netvertising may be defined as a specific Internet genre. Representative texts of this genre focus on the direct sale of a product. These texts do not take, however, full advantage of the technology to obtain information of the customers. The audience is wide and general and, consequently, netads are written in a colloquial register. Conciseness is a common characteristic of these texts, which are written by means of short sentences and noun phrases. The imperative and the simple present are the most frequently used verb tenses. Punctuation marks such as question and exclamation marks are common. Images, mostly pictures, are reproduced in netads frequently interconnecting them with the text. Finally, hypertext linkers, mostly at the side of the web page, are a specific feature of this type of advertisements.

There are, however, subgeneric variations within the genre of netvertising, depending on the contents of the texts. Computer-related target ads represent a sub-genre of netads. CRTAs place more emphasis than general advertisements in the Net on obtaining information about their potential customers. There is a substantial shift in relation to register: CRTAs are mostly written in a technical style since they are addressed to a highly specialized target audience. Conciseness, in the form of brief sentences, noun phrases, and the use of imperative forms, remains as a specific characteristic of CRTAs. Additionally, there is a substantial reduction in the number of images used, a fact which may be explained by the lack of relevance when reproducing images of computer products, which are very much alike. Hypertext linkers at the side of the page are also common in CRTAs, but we have detected an increased use of foot HT linkers within this sub-genre. Therefore, CRTAs share a common set of features with netads in general but, at the same time, we can also find a series of significant variations which allow us to speak of CRTAs as a distinct sub-genre of netvertising.

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Appendix

1. Corpus of the first analysis (20 netads)

<http://www.ads.digital.com/world/>
<http://www.autobytel.com/>
<http://www.autotown.com/autoquote.html>
<http://www.prograde.com/nails/>
<http://www.clothesline.com/>
<http://www.novell.com/rockthenet>
<http://micro.sitespecific.com/Quicken/TurboTax/cgibin/tt.iv.09.tt.x.ncgi/>
<http://www.att.com/w3403/attworldnetservice/needforspeedc.html>
<http://www.intel.com/proshare/videophone/>
<http://www.buick.com/cgibin/homepage.pl?buick+homepage+Y+>
http://www.biztravel.com/V4/a20_a0.0age=000000&data=0&target=Main&dest=here
<http://www.sun.co>
<http://www.metlife.com/>
<http://members.aol.com/ucbooks/BG.index.html>
<http://www.securetax.com/>
<http://www.homearts.com/cgibin/metascipt.pl...e/05brazilf.1.htm%20/mktbanner/mbrasil.gif>
<http://www.register.com/nutek>
<http://www.globetrotter.com/>
<http://www.easports.com/fifa97/index.html>
<http://www.hardchannels.com/>

2. Corpus of the second analysis : 50 netads

CRTAs

<http://www.microsoft.com/siteserver/promo/eval20/>
<http://www.dnb.com/dbis/producc/secure.htm?ISK897RTLGO>
<http://www.safesell.com/>
http://frontpage.www.conxion.com/frontpage/download/default_202.htm
http://www.ans.net/ANS_Services/SecureT1/
<http://www.att.com/w3403/attworldnetservice/needforspeedc.html>
[http://www.netbuyer.com/smartdna/sc?C4/cgibin/nls_ax.dll/P_indexco.htm\\$419183137](http://www.netbuyer.com/smartdna/sc?C4/cgibin/nls_ax.dll/P_indexco.htm$419183137)
<http://www.newaol.com/netscape/adc00.html>
<http://www.novell.com/ROCKTHENET>
<http://www.pcworld.com/resources/subscribe/webcrawler.html?subs-gift5>
<http://www.netaddress.usa.net/NA/Subscribe/Step1>
<http://www.nb.rockwell.com/mcd/K56Plus/home.html>
<http://www.internetservice.net/>
<http://www.bonusmail.com/>
http://www.sprint.com/sip/sign_up.html
<http://www.rocketmail.com/py/RMail.py?stat=iseek>
<http://www.disneyblast.com/preview/index.html>
<http://www.bidnask.com/Main.html>
<http://www.datek.com/advert/banner.html?from=infsk.9742>
<http://www.ccsi.canon.com/special/4200rebate/>
<http://mmx.com/>
<http://www.mot.com/>
<http://www.sun.co/>
<http://micro.sitespecific.com/Quicken/TurboTax/cgibin/tt.iv.09.tt.x.ncgi/>
<http://www.ads.digital.com/world>

NCRTAs

<http://www.avis.com/>
<http://www.insuremarket.com/pr/smile.htm>
<http://www.cuc.com/ctg/cgibin/Travel/home/ref=cucwebcrawler07>
<http://community.zdnet.com/register/register.cgi>
<http://www3.elibrary.com/id/88/184/search.cgi>
<http://www.att.com/traveler/?q=901-35-exped-r-ros=uth>
<http://www.impactonline.org/>
<http://www.accountemps.com/infoseek>
<http://www.smithbarney.com/>
<http://www.blackanddecker.com/>
http://www.dreamshop.com/DreamShop/session...ate_godiva_session.htm
<http://www.pontiac.com/97montana/home.htm>
<http://www.nokia.com/>
<http://www.honda.com/cars/cr-v/index.html>
<http://www.aiwa.com/>
<http://www.duracellusa.com/>
<http://www.americangreetings.com/gorant.pd>
<http://www.mushkin.com/pg1.html>
<http://www.honda.com/cars/prelude/>
<http://www.saturncars.com/home.egi>

<http://www.clothesline.com/>
<http://www.intel.com/proshare/videophone>
<http://members.aol.com/ucbooks/BG.index.html>
<http://www.easports.com/fifa97/index.html>
<http://www.buick.com/egi-bin/homepage.pl?buick-homepage-Y->