Discourse strategies of Italian and English sales promotion letters

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Abstract

This article describes a contrastive study on rhetorical differences between Italian and English sales promotion letters. It is assumed that cultural differences affect discourse genres traditionally considered as standardized, ritual or even formulaic, written business communication being a case in point. It was our goal to investigate how information is presented and what rhetorical strategies are used in order to obtain compliance by a given readership in a given culture. To answer these questions of an essentially pragmatic and ethnomethodological nature, research focused on analyzing contrastively a corpus of authentic Italian and English business letters. Of course, within the genre ‘business letter’ it is possible to distinguish sub-genres or repertoires (chasing money, requesting, offering, sales promotion, etc.). The letters in the corpus were classified according to these repertoires, defined on the basis of their prototypical discourse features as well as the specific social action within the business organization that they were meant to perform. Once classified, they were analysed according to two criteria. At the macro-textual level the analysis focused on rhetorical structure, mainly drawing on the notion of move. At the micro textual level the analysis concentrated on the pragmatic use of mood, modality, reference system and metadiscourse. This paper, in reporting the findings of the research project, will focus on the cultural preferences that Italian and English writers show—both at the macro- and micro-textual level—when engaged in sales promotion letter writing. It will be shown that there are differences in the ways in which discourse patterns are organized as well as in the use of mood and modality for the expression of politeness.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, it is widely accepted that different cultures structure discourse in different ways. Indeed, research (Jenkins & Hinds, 1987; Kong, 1998; Lampi, 1992;...
Maier, 1992; Mauranen, 1993a; Nickerson, 1993; Valero-Garcés, 1996; Vergaro, 2002; Yeung, 1997; Yli-Jokipii, 1996) has shown that cultural differences affect discourse genres generally considered as standardized, ritual or even formulaic, written business communication being a case in point.

Business communication is a purposeful social activity. ‘Purposeful’ means that, as in any kind of communication, it serves to manifest a goal or an intent which, however ritual it may be, expresses a given community’s way of making things happen through language. Given the goal oriented nature of all human communication, the self-assertive character of manifesting intent verbally, and the manipulative character of business dealings in general, we may consider the common pragmatic function of a business letter to be persuasion, i.e. getting the addressee to comply in some way. Our research question becomes, then: how is persuasion achieved in different cultures through the medium of a business letter?

This article focuses on the results of a study aimed at analyzing contrastively the rhetoric of a corpus of Italian and English sales promotion letters. Rhetoric includes both the pragmatic disposition of the macro-textual level and the linguistic choices at the micro level. Text patterning, i.e. the pragmatic disposition at the macro level, was investigated using the notion of ‘move’. A move is a meaningful unit represented in linguistic (lexical-grammatical) forms and related to the communicative purposes of the activity in which members of the community are engaged. Analysing the move structure of a text thus means assigning a pragmatic function to a stretch of language and building the schematic structure through which its communicative purpose is achieved. According to Swales (1990), the schematic structure of a particular genre is the result of the conventions of a specific discourse community (e.g. legal departments or sales departments in international consumer goods industries). However, within the overall structure, writers can make specific rhetorical choices and thus cultural variation is possible.

Co-occurring with the macro-structure of the text are the discourse elements and the discourse relations in the text. Certain linguistic realizations are indeed a matter of choice and thus can be analyzed as belonging to the rhetoric of the text: the reference system, particularly the set of personal pronouns; mood and modality, through which the speaker manifests his/her perception of the addressee’s needs; and the use of metadiscoursal elements, i.e. those textual elements whose primary function is to make a contribution not to the propositional content of the text but to the processing of it.

The present article will first explain in more detail the theoretical background of the research. It will then present and discuss the results of the application of the macro and micro textual analysis on the corpus of Italian and English sales letters. It will be shown that uniformity of expression in the business community is limited to the conventions imposed by the genre used. Indeed, notwithstanding the existence of a recurrent schematic structure of sales promotion letters, rhetorical preferences still emerge because of cultural variables affecting writing at the level of the utterance or string of utterances.
2. Theoretical background to the research

Writing is one of the activities through which we construct social reality. In the words of Bazerman and Paradis (1991: 3–4):

Once established, professions maintain their organization, power and activity in large part through networks of texts... By understanding texts within the professions, we understand how the professions constitute themselves and carry out their work through texts.

In this perspective genres are viewed as social activities that both shape and are shaped by individuals’ communicative actions. They are not just made up of formal textual features (as traditional classification schemes, based on linguistic categories, seem to suggest), but are the enactment of a response to social needs.

In a purely formal approach, genres consist of regular groupings of stylistic and compositional elements. These configurational features are the means by which genres are defined, irrespective of the conditions under which the types come to exist and the social values attached to them in a given context. While formal features of the genre should not be discarded as meaningless, because they do in fact characterize each genre, it should be always kept in mind that they neither define nor constitute a genre. According to Devitt (1993: 575), “Historic changes in generic forms argue against equating genre with form...the form may change but the generic label stays the same.”

Instead, if we want to understand what a genre is, we should see it as a dynamic entity that evolves out of a recurrent rhetorical situation. As Yates and Orlikowski (1992: 301) explain:

The recurrent situation or socially defined need includes the history and nature of established practices, social relations, and communication media within organizations... The resulting genre is characterized by similar substance and form. Substance refers to the social motives, themes and topics being expressed in the communication... Form refers to the observable physical and linguistic features of the communication.

Thus writers respond similarly to recurrent situations, i.e. as writers we recognize a situation and we respond to that situation drawing on our past experience of similar situations, and the similarities among these responses become established as genre. Each genre can therefore be defined as a kind of rhetorical product designed to respond to a recurrent rhetorical need.

However, genres are not only the result of a recurrent situation; the construction of a genre also means to construct the situation for that genre. In other words, when writers select a genre, they also construct the social occurrence of the genre, the socially shared knowledge around it. This shared knowledge of the situation does not refer to the physical world. It operates within the human activities of the community situation and the relationships which come to be stabilized through the use
of genres. For example, given the task of writing money chasing letters, an employee will choose the sub-genre (threat, polite reminder) on the basis of her or his appraisal of the client (Is the client defaulting? Is the client probably just tardy?).

If genres are typified responses to recurrent rhetorical situations and if such rhetorical situations plus form and substance then come to be established as expectations of the genre, the issue is whether genres set constraints on the writer. Our argument is that they do, but within genre conventions there is still room for creativity. Indeed, if discourse types (genres) tend to be universal, utterances types are more variable. By utterance types we mean the rhetorical and stylistic figures that the writer chooses to achieve his/her purpose within a communicative event. By ‘rhetorical figures’ we mean the kinds of ploys that a writer chooses in order to persuade, while the term ‘stylistic figures’ refers to the kind of concepts and images used to render an idea or to create an emotional effect (see Aristotle, Rhetoric, Book III).¹

How do we apply all this to business communication? As we have already said, written business communication is generally considered one of the most ritualistic, formulaic and standardized types of communication. However, even if genre repertoires (chasing money, requesting, offering, sales promoting, etc.) are shared within the business community and are indeed the result of the activities and the conventions established by that specific discourse community, the communicative purpose of each of them can be achieved differently in different cultures.

To investigate such an issue, this article adopts a perspective that shows how macro as well as micro textual choices interact in contributing to the achievement of the communicative purpose of a genre. Indeed, the rhetoric of a text includes both the pragmatic disposition at the macro textual level and the linguistic choices at the micro level. Text patterning, i.e. the pragmatic disposition at the macro level, can be analysed using the notion of move, one of the identifying features of genres and thus a notion widely used in the analysis of discourse patterns (Bhatia, 1993; Longacre, 1992; Mauranen, 1993b; Swales, 1990). A move is a meaningful unit represented in linguistic (lexical–grammatical) forms and related to the communicative purposes of the activity in which members of the community are engaged. Analyzing the move structure of a text would thus mean to assign a pragmatic function to a stretch of language and to build the schematic structure through which its communicative purpose is achieved. Then, if this schematic structure is the result of the generic conventions developed by a discourse community in response to recurrent rhetorical needs, cultural differences are still possible in the way moves are organized to achieve the specific communicative goal of the text.

The overall argumentative scheme interacts with micro level choices such as those regarding the use of reference, mood and modality, and metadiscourse. The reference

¹ Mauranen (1993b: 34) offers a more modern definition: “Rhetoric is realized in language through choices … The selection that writers make can be said to indicate an underlying rhetorical strategy. A writer’s rhetorical strategy can be defined as a writer’s path through his or her text, made up of a series of choices.” In a persuasive genre of writing such as business correspondence, rhetoric covers and determines every linguistic choice.
system, particularly the set of personal pronouns, gives us information as far as the role relationships between the participants within the business interaction are concerned. The nature of this relationship can tell us a lot regarding the choice of text patterning. In fact, the reference system is not only concerned with the external reality, but also with the speaker’s relation to the other participants and the effect intended on them.

Even more meaningful from a pragmatic perspective is the analysis of mood and modality. The term mood has been traditionally defined either in semantic terms, i.e. focusing on the features that distinguish for example declarative sentences from imperative or interrogative sentences, or in structural terms, i.e. as a set of contrasts expressed in the verb morphology.

As for modality, it is generally accepted that it is the expression of the speaker’s stance towards the truth value of his/her proposition. Traditional approaches to the analysis of English modality (see Palmer, 1990; Perkins, 1983) have mainly relied on semantics to provide the whole array of meanings communicated by the modals. In the last 10 years research (Coates, 1990; Groefsema, 1995; Klinge, 1993 Papafragou, 2000) has mainly drawn on pragmatics (i.e. issues of politeness, illocutionary force, etc.) to account for modality.

However, mood and modality choices are also a resource for structuring the interpersonal relationship between the participants. They can have an addressee-oriented function especially when they are used for the expression of politeness.2

As far as politeness in business discourse is concerned, it has received scant attention (Pilegaard, 1997; Upton & Connor, 2001). Pilegaard’s paper is, however, seminal in the analysis of politeness within business discourse. She takes a holistic approach that sees politeness as the result of a number of acts intricately wound together in the text and at the same time subject to extra-linguistic constraints determined by the context. She analyses

...how strategies combine at the micro-level, i.e. within sentences, how they combine across sentences, and how they operate on the textual macro level, i.e. as clusters of strategies anchored in specific sections of the letters (1997: 224).

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2 As it is generally acknowledged, politeness is an important variable governing language production. Most work on politeness is based on the notion of face. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), face consists of two aspects: positive face, the positive self-image including the desire that this self-image be appreciated, and negative face, the claim to freedom of action and freedom from imposition. Three variables determine the weightiness of face-threatening acts in a communicative event:

1. Social distance between participants.
2. Power relation between them.
3. Weight of any imposition they are negotiating.

The interrelation of these three variables determines the use of positive and negative politeness strategies. Positive politeness strategies are those which aim at creating closeness, intimacy, and rapport between speaker and hearer. Negative politeness strategies are instead those which attempt to mitigate any inconvenience caused by a face-threatening act.
This same perspective will be used in the present article, and mood and modality will be analyzed from a pragmatic perspective as a means through which politeness is realized in the text. However, cultures also differ in the amount of politeness they require in specific communicative events and the weight they give to positive and negative politeness strategies (Maier, 1992). In this paper, the notion of politeness will be used in a broad sense to explain the range of linguistic choices at both sentence and text level. Indeed, politeness strategies operate within the sentence but they also combine at the macro-textual level of choice and distribution of moves. It will be shown that certain discourse organization patterns within the texts can be concerned with avoiding face-threatening acts.

Finally, metadiscoursal elements will be analyzed. By metadiscourse we mean the textual elements whose primary function is to make a contribution not to the propositional content of the text but to the processing of it. Vande Kopple (1985, in Mauranen, 1993a: 9) proposes the following classification of metatextual elements:

1. text connectives: first, next, however, but;
2. code glosses: \( x \) means \( y \);
3. illocution markers: to sum up, to give an example;
4. narrators: according to Einstein;
5. validity markers: perhaps, clearly, obviously;
6. attitude markers: surprisingly, it is fortunate that;
7. commentaries: you may not agree, dear reader.

This framework is further elaborated and used by Mauranen to explore cultural differences in economic texts written by Finnish and English writers. According to her, the use of more metatext by Anglo-American writers reflects a more reader-oriented attitude and a more positive notion of politeness compared with Finnish writers. These results are consistent with Hinds’ (1987) categorization of the rhetoric of various cultures. In fact, Hinds categorizes them according to the degree to which the reader is required to make inferences and to deduce meaning from a text, as opposed to the degree to which the writer goes to make the meaning of his/her text explicit (immediately obvious) to the reader. He claims, for instance, that English uses a ‘writer-responsible’ rhetoric whereas Japanese uses a ‘reader-responsible’ rhetoric. This classification may be compared with Hall’s (1977) more general distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low context’ cultures, that is, cultures in which both writers or speakers tend to allude, thereby leaving it up to their readers or listeners to guess meaning through context, versus cultures in which writers or speakers abundantly contextualize their affirmations to make them immediately clear (readers are not asked to infer from the situation, which is considered low in contextual clues). Anticipating Hinds’ findings, Hall concludes that English culture is generally ‘low context’ while Japanese culture is generally ‘high context’.

Valero-Garcés (1996) has used Hinds’ as well as Mauranen’s work to carry out an analysis of metatext in Spanish and English economics texts. Her research confirms
Mauranen’s conclusions concerning Anglo-American rhetoric and shows a prevailing 
reader-responsible rhetoric in Spanish writers.

The methodologies illustrated so far, i.e. those used for the analysis of the 
macro and the micro textual choices, will be applied to the analysis of Italian and 
English corpora of sales promotion letters with the aim of discovering whether any 
difference can be found in their discourse organization patterns.

3. Data collection procedure

The corpus used for the present research consists of authentic sales promotion 
letters, 43 Italian and 26 English. As for the English corpus, most of the letters were 
collected during a research stay in the UK. Some were sent to the author as part of 
her job, and some were collected from companies based in Italy. The letters in the 
Italian corpus were mostly collected from companies based in the area where the 
author lives. However, some of them were obtained through mail received by the 
author. The letters in both corpora thus represent different organizations—18 Eng-
lish and 34 Italian—and this was a decision made so as to arrive at valid general-
izations. In fact, as our native informants told us, a company tends to develop a 
model for every type of business letter, and this model is then copied by secretaries— 
with the necessary adjustments, of course—each time they have to write the same 
type of letter. Having the correspondence of just one company would lock us into 
the mindset and idiosyncratic rhetorical preferences of a single user (i.e. the com-
pany, constituting a micro discourse community) within the target culture. As for 
content, it was considered secondary. The primary criterion was indeed the com-
unicative goal to be achieved. In this we followed Bhatia (1993) and Connor and 
Mauranen (1999).

To identify the genre ‘sales promotion’ within the broader category ‘business let-
ter’, social and cognitive approaches to language comprehension and production 
have been used. The social perspective given to genre analysis (Miller, 1984; Swales, 
1990) has been integrated with the pragmatic view of genre proposed by Paltridge 

From a social perspective, what defines genres is their communicative purpose. By 
communicative purpose is meant the social activity that the genre is intended to 
contribute to producing and that is recognized as such within a culture. In this

3 By ‘English’ we mean both British and American. However, our corpus consists mainly of British 
(22) rather than American (4) letters. The difference in the number of letters in the Italian and English 
corpora is due to the obvious fact that it was more difficult to collect the English data. However, given the 
number of companies involved in the data collection procedure, we thought that 26 documents would be 
enough to arrive at a first valid generalization.

4 By ‘native informants’ we mean the employees working for the companies where the letters were 
collected.

5 “Sharing a similar communicative purpose, grant proposals can be likened to two promotional 
genres studied by Bhatia (1993), namely sales letters and job applications. They need to capture the 
attention of the reader, describe the idea, show the need, and establish the writer’s competence” (Connor 
& Mauranen, 1999:60).
perspective society functions through genres, i.e. societies establish discourse models that their members follow. Indeed, in the words of Miller (1984: 151), “A rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centered not on the substance or form of the discourse, but on the action it is used to accomplish.”

However, understanding genre as a social action requires that genres be recognized as such by their users. Indeed, meaning does not reside in the signs each text consists of. It is constructed by people through cognitive acts. There are thus cognitive reasons that lead users of a language to recognize communicative events as instances of particular genres, and to assign particular terms, or labels, to these events. As a consequence of their experience of the world

people categorize items and concepts in keeping with a prototypical image they built in their mind of what it is that represents the item or concept in question (Paltridge, 1995: 394).

Human beings will have built a prototypical image of a specific genre and, as a consequence, they will come to assign a particular text to a prototype genre. In the absence of a sufficient number of properties which match the stereotypical properties of the prototype, they will assign a text to a particular genre on a pragmatic and perceptual basis. According to Paltridge (1995: 395):

Within such a framework, instances of genre are assigned to particular categories, not on the basis of a response to a property that is internal to them, . . . but on the basis of pragmatic and perceptual, rather than linguistic, aspects of communicative events.

Therefore, we pragmatically and perceptually recognize a sales promotion letter as a type of business letter having a precise social role within a well-defined context, i.e. a business transaction. A sales promotion letter is in fact part of a business communication sequence, appearing typically at the initial stage of a business dealing, in what Pilegaard (1997: 225) calls ‘making contacts’ situations. Its social role is that of finding a buyer for a commodity or service the seller wants to sell. Of course the buyer is just a potential buyer and the seller has to praise the commodity or service to whet the buyer’s appetite and persuade him to respond favorably to the letter.

The overall rhetorical purpose of the text was taken into account when carrying out the macro- as well as micro-textual analysis. The research procedure is both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitatively, we took into account the rhetorical purpose of the text when assigning a pragmatic function to a stretch of language: this enabled us to tag the stretch of language as a particular move. Linguistic indicators were used to define the boundaries of each move (see Mauranen, 1993b). Quantitatively, the occurrence of the various moves in the two corpora were counted and their sequence established.

To make the results more reliable, the first analysis of the author of this article was compared to a second analysis by another researcher. The second researcher
Comparison of English and Italian sales promotion letters

4. Comparison of English and Italian sales promotion letters

4.1. Macro-textual level: move structure analysis

4.1.1. The Italian corpus

The communicative purposes of the Italian sales letters are realized by the following structural moves:

- SUBJECT
- OPENING SALUTATION
- (INTRODUCE THE PRODUCT/OFFER/SERVICE)
- ESTABLISH CREDENTIALS
- INTRODUCE THE PRODUCT/OFFER/SERVICE
- DETAIL THE OFFER
- ENHANCE THE OFFER
- SOLICIT/INVITE FURTHER COMMUNICATION, CONTACTS
- END POLITELY
- CLOSING SALUTATION

Fig. 1. Move structure analysis of Italian sales promotion letters.

reviewed individually the first researcher’s analysis. Although there was high agreement between the two researchers (approximately 85%), complete agreement was achieved only after some discussions, during which the results were reviewed together.

In the following sections the results of the analysis of the sales letters in the corpus will be presented and discussed.

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6 The moves used in the analysis are taken from Bhatia (1993).
7 See Appendix A for a sample Italian letter from the corpus.
However, such a device is not used as much, and very formal and deferential ways of address are instead the most recurrent. In other words, solidarity is signaled by duteously recognizing the gap between sender and receiver, not by attempting to close the gap by such linguistic strategies as a colloquial greeting (‘Hi!’, ‘Greetings’) or the use of the receiver’s first name or descriptor (‘Dear George’, ‘Dear Music Lover’). In the majority of Italian letters, solidarity is achieved by signaling the shared value of hierarchical deference: “We are similar, not because we are equal, but because we accept and respect our inequality”.

(1) Stimatissimo cliente  
[Dear (=highly esteemed) Client]

(2) Egregio dottore  
[Dear (=distinguished) Doctor]

After the opening salutation, some of the letters have a move that introduces the product, but in most of them credentials are established before the product is introduced, detailed and enhanced. When the introduce the product/offер/service move comes before the establish credentials move, it is characterized by the use of high-level modality markers to minimize the weight of imposition on the addressee and thus to redress what is perceived as a face-threatening act.

(3) Ci permettiamo di sottoporre alla Vostra attenzione il nominativo della nostra società  
[We are taking the liberty of submitting our company’s name to your attention]

Most letters, instead, have the establish credentials move right after the opening salutation

(4) Egregi Signori,  
FIP, da molti anni nella progettazione e costruzione di macchine ed accessori per impianti e materie plastiche, e grazie al costante sforzo nella ricerca e nello sviluppo, ha messo a punto una nuova gamma di...  
[Dear Sirs,

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8 Note that in the US, the non-medical title ‘Doctor’ is used just in addressing university professors to signal their status as PhD holders; moreover, it is used exclusively with their surname (‘Here’s my homework, Dr. Smith’, never ‘Here’s my homework, Doctor’). In Italy, on the other hand, all university graduates can be called ‘Doctor’ as a sign of respect, even without the surname. Note, too, that in Italy, at least up to present, belonging to the class of business executives and belonging to the class of university degree holders have been one and the same thing. A letter to business executives can therefore automatically begin with ‘Distinguished Doctor’, especially if the writer is of a lower social status, e.g. a sales representative.
FIP, for many years in the design and production of machinery and accessories for manufacturing systems and plastics, and thanks to its constant effort in research and development, has realized a new range of.

(5) Egregio dott. Petrini,
la nostra azienda, che probabilmente conoscerà, opera da circa 50 anni nella produzione di pasta alimentare secca

[Dear Mr Petrini,
our company, as you probably know, has been working for about 50 years in the production of pasta]

Of course, we also found examples like (6), where the level of formality seems to be lower and positive politeness is at work right from the beginning of the text, but these examples are rare in our corpus.

(6) Gentile Cliente,
ancora una volta abbiamo pensato a Lei

[Dear Client
once again we have been thinking about you]

If the product has not been introduced before, it is introduced after credentials have been established, and indeed this is what happens in most cases. However, what is noticeable is that somewhat less deferential language is used when the introduction comes after the establishment of credentials. Negative politeness strategies are always used, but less insistently.

(7) Pensiamo di farVi cosa gradita presentandoVi il nostro nuovo catalogo

[We trust you will appreciate our gesture of sending you our new catalogue]

The hedge at the beginning of the move is a sign of negative politeness, but it does not achieve the same level of deference of example (3).

After this, details of the product/service are given in the DETAIL THE OFFER move, and the product/service value is enhanced in the ENHANCE THE OFFER move. These two moves are the ones where nominalization and impersonal forms are mostly used in the Italian corpus, and both of them contribute to raising the level of formality of the letter.

(8) La cura riposta dalle Attrezzature F.P.A. nella soddisfazione delle esigenze dei clienti inizia sin dalla progettazione

[We at Attrezzature F.P.A. pay careful attention to satisfying our clients’ needs right from the design stage]

The level of detail whereby the product is presented is very often rather schematic, and cases like (9) are not so uncommon in the Italian corpus.
Intendiamo informarVi che la Messersì produce imballaggi in poliestere disponibili in qualsiasi misura e colore

Lexical boost, i.e. adjectives and phrases the writers use to positively evaluate the product, is certainly used in this central part of the text, but the tone is in any case very sober.
When the offer has been made, action from the reader is required, and this is done in the SOLICIT/INVITE FURTHER COMMUNICATION, CONTACTS move.

Nel caso la nostra disponibilità risultasse di Vostro interesse, saremmo ben lieti di poter valutare eventuali possibili accordi di collaborazione

Pressure tactics are almost never used in the Italian texts.
Then the letter comes to its conclusion with an END POLITELY move where the writer’s focus is in general on seeking cooperation on the part of the reader. The formulas used underline the sender’s hope in having done something the receiver recognizes as useful for him.

Certif di incontrare il Suo interesse, colgo l’occasione per porgerLe i miei più cordiali saluti

Furthermore, of course, this is the move whereby the writer mostly makes the receiver feel noticed and attended to by showing availability in offering solicitous assistance.

Rimaniamo a Vostra disposizione per quant’altro possa essere di Vostro interesse

Our staff will be at your disposal to give you all the necessary information and explanations concerning any possible need you might have]
All the letters in the corpus have a **CLOSING SALUTATION**.

4.1.2. *The English corpus*[^9]

The communicative purposes of the English sales letters are found to be realized by the following structural moves (Fig. 2).

All the letters in the corpus have an **OPENING SALUTATION**. The linguistic realization of this move clearly shows how positive politeness strategies are used right from the beginning of the text. In fact, in most cases the receiver is addressed through the use of salutations like

(15) Dear Colleague,

that is, through the use of in-group identity markers to realize the positive politeness strategy of claiming common ground right from the beginning of the letter.

This move is in some of the letters followed by a **SUBJECT**.

**INTRODUCE THE PRODUCT/OFFER/SERVICE** is the most recurrent move after the opening salutation and the subject, when there is one. These first moves serve the function of enunciating the context for the rest of the discourse chunks. They give the reader the background to set the scene for the text which follows. Sometimes the product or service is introduced through a bold written headline that draws the reader into the rest of the copy by grabbing his/her attention and telling him/her what the ad is about. The headline always has a benefit and makes a promise, thus words such as ‘special’, ‘new’, ‘try’, ‘free’, ‘enjoy’ are generally used:

(16) A new special report from Textiles Intelligence

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[^9]: See Appendix B for a sample English letter from the corpus.
After introducing the commodity, credentials are established. In general, the author refers to the firm’s well-known name or fame, and this occurs in a separate paragraph. There is one letter where credentials are established by means of a sentence that immediately follows the subject:

(17) **SUBJECT**

ESTABLISH CREDENTIALS

**The Oxford Shakespeare**

‘Not simply a better text but a new conception of Shakespeare.’ (TLS)

The author of the letter is reporting the comment of an authoritative newspaper, the *Times Literary Supplement*, and this by itself should be enough for the reader to recognize that the product is truly the way it is presented in the sales letter. In other words, instead of writing the usual two or three lines that in general any reader will skip, the author cleverly introduces a sentence in the middle of the page, of immediate accessibility, very short, reproducing not the writer’s personal thinking, but an authoritative comment whose source any target reader (academics in university English departments) will recognize, even if abbreviated. This is a clear example of the use of implication to realize the positive politeness strategy of claiming common ground.

After this move, in general the offer is detailed and enhanced by showing added value, stating advantages, etc. The product value is linguistically enhanced through the use of a lexical boost. What is emphasized is not so much this or that feature, but rather the benefits that the product or service offers the potential customer. Immediate proof is given to back up the claims the writer makes.

(18) Our product is an invaluable resource for everyone in this field of activity.

Features of the product are given in a very detailed way, rarely through a simple scheme. Sometimes a question and answer structure resembling oral conversation is used:

(19) Why do we offer this kind of membership? Because we want to share with you our enthusiasm for . . .

In a few cases pressure tactics are used to solicit a favorable response from the reader.

All letters in the corpus have a final solicit/invite further communication, contacts. This move calls for action and of course it is placed at the end of the letter after the introduction and the persuasion moves have taken place.

(20) I hope you will take the time to look through the enclosed brochure.

(21) We invite you to visit our website. Log on now!
This is the move where negative politeness strategies are mostly to be found, and the reason behind such a choice is clear: this is the part where the request is made and the author has to mitigate the force of it if he wants to minimize the imposition and save his/her addressee’s face. This is generally done by giving the buyer the freedom of action by not assuming that he will act. Thus freedom of action is given in a receiver-oriented fashion, i.e. basing it on the reader’s willingness. Example (20) is a case in point: the author mitigates the illocutionary force by reporting on his/her desires rather than making an explicit request and by giving himself/herself a very passive role. He introduces the request using the modal adjunct *I hope* leaving the reader the option to comply.

After having called for action, in the END POLITELY move the writer expresses his/her availability in assisting the potential customer in his/her choices. This final move mainly realizes the positive politeness strategies of attending to the reader.

(22) Our representatives are on hand to help you choose the right materials.

In addition, an appreciation of the receiver, used to realize the same strategy, can sometimes be found within the END POLITELY move:

(23) Many thanks for taking the time to read this letter.
All the letters have a CLOSING SALUTATION.

4.2. Discussion of the results of the move structure analysis

Given that the number, types and frequency of moves in the two corpora are the same, the differences between the letters can be illustrated mainly by discussing the order of presentation of the moves.

The only differences we could find are positioned at the beginning of the text. Almost all the letters in the Italian corpus have a SUBJECT, and it is always before the OPENING SALUTATION, whereas in the English corpus in general there is NO SUBJECT, and when the sender does introduce one, it is after the OPENING SALUTATION. How can this difference be explained? One possible explanation could be in the way the central moves in the text are organized. By ‘central’ we mean the moves that realize the propositional content of the sales promotion, i.e. the INTRODUCE THE PRODUCT/SERVICE/OFFER move, the DETAIL THE OFFER move and the ENHANCE THE OFFER move.

These moves are very detailed in English, whereas in Italian the product is mostly presented in a more schematic way. This makes us think about what Mauranen (1993b) says about reader-responsible and writer-responsible cultures when discussing rhetorical differences in Finnish and English academic writing. In reader-responsible cultures the claim is stated at the beginning and then it is expected that the reader make all the necessary inferences in the text to confirm the initial claim. What happens in writer-responsible cultures is that the claim can be made at the
beginning of the text, but the reader is then accompanied step by step through it to arrive at the confirmation of the initial claim. How can this be applied to our corpora? It is possible that this initial subject works as the initial claim in reader-responsible academic writing, i.e. a kind of hook the reader can use to go through the text. Of course, the English reader does not need one given the level of detail of the central moves.

However, this is just a tentative explanation; more research is needed to support such a claim. Moreover, with a corpus larger than the one we have been working with, it would be interesting to investigate whether in English the presence of an initial subject is in some way or another correlated to a different development of the central moves of the text.

The introduce the product/offer/service move is the first we find after the opening salutation in the English corpus. In Italian this pattern is not so common, and when the order is the same, there are still differences in the way the Italian and the English writer use the same move in the two cultures. In the Italian corpus this move mostly realizes negative politeness strategies, whereas it is exactly the contrary in the English corpus. However, there seems to be an explanation for this. The analysis of both corpora supports Pilegaard’s (1997) claim that in ‘making contacts’ documents, positive politeness strategies are mainly concentrated in the extra-propositional section of the letters, and indeed this is what we found in all the letters in the corpora. But there is still a difference. Whereas English writers use positive politeness right from the very beginning, Italians seem to need a bit more text to get to positive politeness, and indeed they start with negative politeness. Nothing similar to the following example could be found in the English corpus.

(24) Egregi Signori
con la presente ci pregiamo di rimettere alla Vostra cortese attenzione la presente lettera nella speranza che vorrete annoverarci tra i Vostri più stretti collaboratori

[Dear Sirs,
we have the honor to submit this letter to your courteous attention in the hope that you will be willing to include us among your closest collaborators]

This need for more text would also explain why in most letters in the Italian corpus the establish credentials move comes before the sections devoted to the presentation of the product’s benefits.

This presence of negative politeness and thus of a higher level of formality in the detail and enhance the offer moves of the Italian corpus supports this extensive use of negative politeness in this culture, whereas it is only rarely used by English writers in this type of letter and is mostly concentrated in the solicit/invite further communication, contacts move.

To sum up, even if it can be supposed that the two cultures share the same schematic structure of the genre ‘sales promotion’, they still show preferences in the way discourse patterns are organized, and these differences seem to be mostly related
to cultural preferences for positive or negative politeness strategies. The ‘Italian road’ towards positive politeness seems longer than the English one, and this could explain why the order of the moves at the beginning of the text is somehow inverted. The micro-level analysis supports this conclusion given that it shows that negative politeness tends to come out in every bit and piece of the Italian text, not in one part of it, whereas this is not the case in English. English writers look for solidarity and cooperation right from the beginning of the letter and try to achieve this in every possible way. Negative politeness is mostly concentrated in the SOLICIT/INVITE FURTHER COMMUNICATION, CONTACTS move, but it is very rarely if ever found throughout the text.

4.3. Micro-textual level: reference, mood, modality and metadiscourse

4.3.1. Reference

References to the sender and the receiver are always pronominal or lexical. As far as the writer is concerned, in both our corpora pronominal reference is mostly realized through the use of the first person plural pronoun. Therefore, in the case of the addressee there is a predominance of a vague use of the first person plural pronoun where “Vague use applies to specific individuals but they are not identified by the speaker” (Kitagawa & Lehrer, 1999: 742).

Indeed, sales promotion communication is centered on the addressee, and the sender tends to be shadowed. In fact throughout the text, references to the sender are located in specific sections of the letters, i.e. in the INTRODUCE THE PRODUCT/OFFER/SERVICE move and in the END POLITELY move. As it is expected in this type of business letter, the writer disappears to leave room for the benefits that the product can have on the addressee, this being the real subject of sales promoting. In the English corpus this process of shadowing is realized through the recurrent use of passive structures, e.g.

(25) To help you find what you are looking for quickly, the main highlights are listed below.

It is also reflected in the way in which the product is presented, i.e. with a you-orientation that is centered on an active receiver who is frequently called for action:

(26) You must act now.

In the Italian corpus this shadowing is mostly realized through the use of nominalization in addition to passive structures, and the receiver is rarely called for action as directly as the English addressee.

(27) La variegazza dei contenuti si rispecchia naturalmente anche nella varietà delle categorie di studiosi interessabili alla Rivista

[The variety of topics is of course reflected in the range of scholars who might have an interest in the journal]
As for the addressee, the options are between the T (familiar) and V (formal) modes of address. In Italian the choice is evident in the personal reference and extends to verb morphology. In English the level of acquaintance is inferred from the initial greeting: a T level is characterized by an opening salutation such as «Dear [first name]» or just «[first name]», whereas the V level identifies the reader by his/her surname, e.g. «Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms [surname]» or contains another formal address such as «Dear Sir/Madam» or «Dear Sirs» (Yli-Jokipii, 1996: 311).

The familiar T level is never used in either corpus. Instead, the more formal V level is used. However, especially in the English corpus, the addressee is identified with a proper name or, most often, with the use of a lexical item such as colleagues, lecturer, executive, delegate, etc.

In the Italian corpus reference to the addressee is more formal and deferential. The receiver is referred to with expressions such as ‘Egregio Signore’, ‘Stimatissimo Cliente’, ‘Gentilissimo dottore’, and only sometimes by the use of in-group markers. This use of reference supports our claim that Italian writers tend to use positive politeness later in the text, after some sort of negative politeness has been used to minimize the weight of imposition on the reader.

To sum up, the analysis of personal and lexical reference and of reference distribution patterns (Yli-Jokipii, 1996) shows that a reader-oriented perspective is preferred in all the letters in both corpora. The power position of the customer makes the text revolve around him/her, i.e. how the product or service being offered can make his/her life better. Readers are coaxed into buying on the grounds of what the product or service does for them.

As a consequence, the writer undergoes a process of shadowing mostly realized through the use of passive structures, nominalization and his/her disappearance from the text apart from the beginning and ending moves of the letters.

However, Italian and English writers show different preferences as for the way the receiver is addressed in the two cultures. For negative politeness reasons, Italians are more deferential, and when they address the reader they tend to use expressions that in a way humble the writer and put the receiver in a higher position. English writers are more oriented towards positive politeness right from the beginning of the text and tend indeed to appeal to sameness rather than show consideration through deference.

4.3.2. Mood and modality

The analysis of mood and modality shows that they are heavily used in the expression of politeness. Taking into account Brown and Levinson’s (1987) analytical framework for determining the weightiness of face-threatening acts in a communicative event (Distance, Power and Weight of imposition), we could say that, given that sales promotion letters mark the beginning (hopefully) of a new business relationship, the distance between the participants will be great and much effort will be put into reducing it. As for the distribution of power, it is asymmetrical in the sense that the buyer decides whether he wants to comply with the letter he receives and so is in a more powerful position than the seller. Besides, even if in sales no request is ever directly made, in a way we could say that one is implicit and thus a
certain degree of imposition will be always present. Thus it is expected that both positive and negative politeness strategies will be used in sales promoting.

In the Italian corpus, to begin with, mood is mostly indicative. However, subjunctives, conditionals, imperatives and gerunds are also used. When the author uses any of them, he is always realizing some sort of negative politeness strategy, particularly that of avoiding presumptions about the addressee and thus showing that he is not assuming that the receiver is willing to do something.

(28) ...pensiamo di farVi cosa gradita nel presentarVi la nostra societá
[... we trust you will appreciate the presentation of our company]

Here pensiamo (we trust) is a hedge the writer uses to mitigate the illocutionary force of the sentence.

Conditionals and subjunctives are widely used in hypothetical sentences, and when they are it is because the writer wants to suggest that the reader has freedom of action.

(29) Nel caso la nostra disponibilità risultasse di vostro interesse, saremmo ben lieti di poter valutare eventuali possibili accordi di collaborazione
[Should you be interested in dealing with us, we would be delighted to assess with you whatever form of collaboration you deem fit]

Gerunds are sometimes used in the END POLITELY move of Italian sales promotions and are very formal ways of closing the text. By using them the writer is conveying that the reader’s compliance is not taken for granted and thus he is emphasizing that the establishment of a satisfactory business contact is up to the receiver’s willingness to act. In example (31), tentativeness is also conveyed by the use of modality. The same sentence could convey almost the same meaning without the modal verb potere. However, the presence of this verb makes it even more tentative and thus more polite than it would have been with only the gerund.

(30) Augurandomi di averLe fatto cosa gradita, Le formulo i miei migliori auguri
[In the hope that the above offer will be appreciated, I extend to you my best wishes]

(31) Sperando che questa iniziativa possa risultare interessante per Lei, Le invio la brochure con la descrizione del programma e dei corsi
[In the hope that this initiative may be of interest to you, I am sending you the brochure describing the program and the courses]

For glosses of other sample Italian passages provided in this article, please contact the author.
Analysis of the Italian corpus shows that modality conveys both negative and positive politeness, but negative politeness strategies are more common within this corpus. Modals of possibility are used to minimize the weight of imposition in the INTRODUCE THE PRODUCT/OFFER/SERVICE move.

(32) Ci permettiamo di sottoporre alla Vostra attenzione la nostra società
[We are taking the liberty of submitting our company’s name to your attention]

And modals of volition are widely used in the END POLITELY move to imply that the action requested should be seen by the receiver as a personal, willing act, i.e. something that he does because he decides to do it and not because there is an imposition from outside.

(33) Vi ringraziamo fin d’ora per l’interesse e l’eventuale preferenza che vorrete accordarci
[We thank you as of now for your interest and the possible consideration you will give us]

Here the negative politeness conveyed by the modal of volition volere is also supported by the use of the adjective eventuale (possible) which stresses the active role the addressee has for the conclusion of the deal.

Positive politeness is sometimes used in the ‘end politely’ move but is far less common in the Italian corpus. Claiming common ground and focusing on cooperation are expressed in the corpus through modal adjuncts.

(34) Certi che apprezzerà questa iniziativa...
[We are confident that you will appreciate this initiative...]
(35) Certa di incontrare il suo interesse...
[I am confident that this will be of interest to you...]

In the English corpus mood is mostly indicative and in the present tense. Sometimes conditionals are used. When this happens, conditionals seem to be employed in order to realize the negative politeness strategy of giving freedom of action by being conventionally indirect in a receiver-oriented manner. As in the Italian corpus, this manipulation provides a kind of distancing in time and moves the writer from the here and now, distinguishing him from the threatening act his/her words perform.

(36) We would be very grateful if you would complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to our office.
(37) I wonder if you would be willing to circulate this note among your colleagues.
In particular, in sentence (37) negative politeness is realized by hedging with the conditional if-structure. Moreover, what is predicated is not a question about the reader’s future behavior, but the writer’s speculation about a possible question about the reader’s possible future behavior. In other words, the indirect imperative is twice removed. All this combined has the effect of minimizing the imposition of the request the sender is making.

Freedom of action as a strategy is also realized by modality. It is given in a receiver-oriented fashion, i.e. basing it on the receiver’s willingness to comply. At the end of the text, after what the product can do for the addressee has been explained, what remains to perform is a call for action in some way, i.e. ask the receiver to comply. However, the reader has to feel that he is not coerced and therefore, in the SOLICIT/INVITE FURTHER COMMUNICATION/CONTACTS move, freedom of action is given by the author reporting on his or her desires rather than making an explicit request and by giving himself/herself a very passive role. To create such a freedom of action, most sentences begin with a modal adjunct (I hope) followed by a will-sentence whose subject is the receiver.

(38) We hope you will take the time to look through the enclosed brochure.

(39) We hope that you will contact us.

Most of the negative politeness strategies illustrated so far are concentrated in the last part of the text, i.e. in the SOLICIT/INVITE FURTHER COMMUNICATION/CONTACTS move.

Positive politeness strategies are instead more recurrent at the beginning and end of the letter, and among them, ‘claim common ground’ is certainly the most widely used. However, modality contributes in the realization of positive politeness only in part, given that positive politeness is also realized by the use of in-group markers and of questions of the why+interrogative negative type to focus on cooperation.

To sum up, from the pragmatic perspective, both mood and modality play an important role in the expression of politeness in our corpus. However, mood plays this role especially in Italian where it is used to express negative politeness. This can be explained by linguistic more than cultural reasons. This preference permeates the language as a whole, of course, and not just business correspondence. Modality plays an important role in the realization of politeness strategies in both corpora. Given the letter typology, both positive and negative politeness strategies are used. However, if the distribution of positive and negative politeness strategies in the English corpus confirms Pilegaard’s conclusions (1997: 235), according to which “Both sellers and buyers ‘making contacts’, reserve the negative politeness strategies for the propositional section and the positive strategies for the non-propositional sections”, in the Italian corpus negative politeness is prevalent throughout the text. This rhetorical preference could be explained by noting that Anglo-Americans show a preference for strategies that aim at closeness between interactants immediately at the beginning of the business relationship, whereas Italians tend to maintain a certain distance even in these types of documents.
4.3.3. *Metadiscourse*

The analysis of metadiscoursal elements in our corpus is striking because of the absence of all the items classified as metadiscourse by Vande Kopple (1985, in Mauranen, 1993a). Even text connectives are not used, apart from *and* which is sometimes used in the English corpus as an interclausal connector when a list of benefits is presented to the reader. Perhaps this lack of metadiscoursal features could be due to the fact that in sales promotions information tends to be presented in chunks because this form of presentation might help the reader retain it. If this is true, the lack of metadiscourse would then be a genre-based, not a culture-based feature.

5. **Summary of the findings**

The results of the analysis can be summarized as follows:

1. A subject line is used in Italian to make an initial claim.
2. Based in a writer-responsible culture, the sales letter writer in English tends to lead the reader through the moves, whereas the subject line in Italian letters serves the same purpose in providing the background for the information presented.
3. Negative politeness strategies are mostly used in the Italian corpus, whereas positive politeness strategies establishing solidarity are mostly recurrent in the English corpus.
4. Mood and modality are used in Italian to express negative politeness.
5. Mood and modality are featured in English to achieve positive politeness.
6. Metadiscoursal elements are absent in both Italian and English texts.

6. **Conclusions**

The existence of a recurrent rhetorical structure in sales promotion letters confirms that the perception of genre depends on functional rather than formal elements—what counts is what a text does more than how the text is worded. However, once we go from the macro level (moves making up a genre) to the micro level (speech acts realizing the moves), cultural diversity begins to play a significant role.

As far as the English corpus is concerned, many of the discoursal features observed seem to tally with the contrastive studies made of other types of English writing. As for the Italian corpus, there is not much published research to use by way of comparisons. Italian business language is little studied, and this is particularly true of contrastive studies with English. However, our findings do confirm the results of a previous study we conducted on a corpus of money chasing letters (Vergaro, 2002) and thus they may furnish a number of useful starting points for further research.

Our conclusion is that uniformity of expression in the business community is limited to the conventions imposed by the genre used. Cultural variables still affect
writing at the level of the utterance or strings of utterances, i.e. within the genre constraints there is still room for creativity.

Of course, more research is needed to establish to what extent our conclusions can be generalized. However, if we agree that writing is the result of conventions established within a particular community, that discourse organization is basically a matter of choices which are inevitably intrinsically culture bound, and that

genre analysis is not principally about the English of Engineering, of Medicine, of Business, of Banking, but about the conventions of thought and communication which define these areas of professional activity, and, how, incidentally, these are given expression, or textualised, in English (Widdowson, 1998: 9)

In the teaching of professional genres, a contrastive analysis such as the one described in this paper can be used by ESP teachers to foster in students the development of a metacognitive awareness about their own culture’s writing conventions and thus help them observe and experience other cultures’ conventions.

More specifically, the results of this study will have an immediate application within a Computer-Based Training System for teaching business letter writing. The System uses a hybrid technology—case-based reasoning and a neural network—based on a constructivist paradigm and is designed to help Italian students write effective business letters in English (Boylan, Micarelli, Sciarrone, & Vergaro 1999; Boylan, Micarelli, & Vergaro 2000; Vergaro, 2002). ‘Effective’ means that what the System aims at is to help students define and attain communicative goals consonant with proven business discourse practice in the target culture. Working from the conviction that to make students aware of another culture’s rhetorical preferences is best achieved by making their own rhetorical tradition visible to them contrastively, the CBT System will foster such awareness by being enhanced with a Module that, consistent with the underlying constructivist paradigm, will help users to observe, notice, compare and contrast differences and similarities in the discourse patterns characterizing Italian and English business letters.

As of the writing of this paper, only a prototype of the System has been implemented; the final structure is yet to be defined. However, what we hope to achieve with the results of our analysis and the implementation of the Module is to help students become more attuned to the fact that writing in a specific community is a question of learning a set of established conventions developed by the members of that community which extend beyond the boundaries of nations but which, at the same time, still allow cultural as well as personal creativity. Writing in a rhetorically effective way means to learn how this creativity may be best used in a particular culture to achieve specific goals.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the reviewers for their very helpful suggestions.
Appendix A. Samples of letters

Italian

Oggetto: lettera di presentazione

[SUBJECT]

Egregi Signori

[OPENING SALUTATION]

Con la presente ci pregiamo di rimettere alla Vs. cortese attenzione la presente lettera di presentazione, nella speranza che vorrete annoverarci tra i Vs. più stretti collaboratori.

[INTRODUCE THE PRODUCT/OFFER/SERVICE]

A tale proposito si comunica che il titolare de “IL GIARDINO” è il Geom. ***, che ha un’esperienza nel settore della manutenzione del verde di oltre sei anni. Ha ricoperto anche la carica di Direttore Tecnico nell’ambito del Consorzio Verde Umbria che da oltre tre anni gestisce il settore del verde all’interno delle nove circoscrizioni della città di Terni.

[ESTABLISH CREDENTIALS]

IL GIARDINO è in grado di effettuare tutte le operazioni inerenti la manutenzione del verde e precisamente:

• manutenzione giardini
• progettazione giardini
• realizzazione e manutenzione impianti di irrigazione
• potature alberature e siepi
• fornitura e posa in opera di qualsiasi tipo di essenze
• realizzazione di manti erbosi

[DETAIL THE OFFER]

Inoltre, qualora ne abbiate bisogno, possiamo fornirVi preventivi gratuitamente, senza alcun impegno da parte Vostra.

[ENHANCE THE OFFER]

Nella speranza di una proficua futura collaborazione, restiamo a disposizione per ogni Vs. necessità

[END POLITELY]

E cogliamo l’occasione per porgerVi
Distinti saluti

[CLOSING SALUTATION]
Appendix B. Samples of letters

English

Dear Executive

[OPENING SALUTATION]

*Natural and Man-Made Fibres in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan: Forecasts to 2005*

A new special report from Textiles Intelligence

[SUBJECT]

China is the world’s most important producer and consumer of textiles and clothing. New fibre capacities are coming on stream at a rapid rate. Output of polyester textile filament more than trebled during the 1990s. China’s rapid expansion is threatening non-Chinese firms. But growth in Chinese demand will also provide market opportunities for foreign producers—especially once China joins the World Trade Organisation and the least efficient Chinese producers are forced out of business.

* Can growth be maintained in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis?
* Which fibre types will grow the fastest?
* What will be the impact of the phasing out of quotas on the industry and the market?
* Exports will grow rapidly when China joins the World Trade Organisation. But how quickly will China lower its barriers and open its own vast markets to the outside world?

[INTRODUCE THE PRODUCT/OFFER/SERVICE]

**Expert comment and authoritative forecasts**

*Natural and Man-Made Fibres in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan: Forecasts to 2005* has been compiled by a team of experts drawn from seven companies and other organizations based in five countries. It contains a wealth of data and forecasts not available elsewhere.

[ESTABLISH CREDENTIALS]

Inside *Natural and Man-Made Fibres in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan: Forecasts to 2005* you will find:

* an assessment of competitiveness compared with the USA and Western Europe;
* detailed forecasts of production and demand to the year 2005 for all major fibre types- natural and man-made- in three Asian economies;
* comprehensive data on production capacities by plant and company;
* comparison of costs; and
* lists of quotas.

[DETAIL THE OFFER]
No one in fibres, textiles, clothing, or machinery should be without this report!
If you are in a way involved in fibres, yarns, fabrics, clothing, dyestuffs or machinery—whether as a buyer or seller, manufacturer or merchant, agent or retailer, consultant or machinery maker—you can not afford to be without this unique report.

[USE PRESSURE TACTICS]

Credit card hotline
For the fastest service, please call with your credit card details on ***. Or fax your instructions straight away on ***. Or email us on ***

[SOLICIT FURTHER CONTACT/COMMUNICATION]

We look forward to hearing from you!

[END POLITELY]

Yours sincerely

[CLOSING SALUTATION]

References


