

Elevator Pitch: An English-Spanish Sociolinguistic Analysis

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Rhetoric has been a universal way of communication in the Western world since Greek times. Therefore, one of the goals of this study is to discover whether business persuasive discourses operate similarly in English and Spanish, analysing them according to the three Aristotelian methods of persuasive argumentation: *Ethos*, *Pathos* and *Logos*.

As the study of persuasion is multidisciplinary, I focused on Communities of Practice. In order to examine Elevator Pitch persuasive resources, examples were taken from *Dragon's Den* and *Tu Oportunidad*, British and Spanish TV programmes in which entrepreneurs pitch their ideas in a couple of minutes to five businesspeople willing to invest. For comparative purposes, monologues of both women and men were observed. Sociolinguistic variables have been measured following a mixed-methodology, where quantitative analysis will lead to a qualitative interpretation of the data. At a first stage, 4 English and 4 Spanish Elevator Pitches were analysed. At a final stage, those preliminary results have been corroborated by examining the same number of Elevator Pitches in each language.

Indeed, another objective of this research has been to verify if some women's speech features (i.e. using boosters, amplifiers, interrogatives, exclamatives, particular vocabulary, etc.) are similar to those found in the Elevator Pitch. In consequence, these features can be related to persuasive strategies. Even though women and men are supposedly treated similarly in families, schools and jobs, specific gender communication styles continue to persist. The issue is that Western societies still maintain linguistic discriminations, considering female communicative strategies less legitimised. Moreover, female speech features usually carry negative connotations, while men's language continues to be considered the "neutral" discourse. Although it is challenging to remove linguistic prejudices linked to social roles, it is crucial to revise contemporary gendered discourses, specifically in the corporate world. In fact, women's communicative style can be more persuasive.