



2018 HAWAII UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES  
ARTS, HUMANITIES, SOCIAL SCIENCES & EDUCATION JANUARY 3 - 6, 2018  
PRINCE WAIKIKI HOTEL, HONOLULU, HAWAII

‘FEEL REALY URUGUAYAN’: GROUP UNITY,  
RESPECT AND POLITENESS. FORMS OF  
ADDRESS IN ADVERTISEMENTS AND  
COMMERCIAL DOCUMENTS IN THE  
SPANISH OF MONTEVIDEO



UBER, DIANE R.  
DEPARTMENT OF SPANISH  
THE COLLEGE OF WOOSTER  
WOOSTER, OHIO

Dr. Diane R. Uber  
Department of Spanish  
The College of Wooster  
Wooster, Ohio.

## **'Feel really Uruguayan': Group Unity, Respect and Politeness. Forms of Address in Advertisements and Commercial Documents in the Spanish of Montevideo**

### **Synopsis:**

Following the concepts of politeness, power and solidarity, this paper presents the results of a study of the second-person singular forms of address (“tú”, “vos”, “usted”) in advertisements and business documents in the Spanish of Montevideo, Uruguay. “Tú” is the standard-Spanish informal address, while “usted” is the standard formal address. Uruguay is one of the areas of Latin America where “vos” is used as an informal, or intimate, form of address among other Uruguayans. “Tú” is used for foreigners, or to show somewhat more distance than “vos”.

Forms of address reflect the concepts of respect and courtesy in workplace settings. More respect is shown when speaking to older or higher-ranking interlocutors, expressed by the usage of “usted”, or to a lesser extent, “tú”. Strangers also are addressed with “usted”.

Norms of politeness dictate that the speaker should be accommodating to the hearer, which can be manifested by the respectful “usted”. On the other hand, politeness can be shown by the usage of the informal “vos” directed to those who share a similar social status, or to show confidence and solidarity toward the consumer.

Examples from marketing and advertising will be shown to illustrate these forms of address toward different audiences, as in the following examples:

- Technical instructions, financial and security advertisements use “usted” to deal with more serious topics. “Usted” is also employed in advertisements directed toward older clients or toward business executives, to show respect.
- The French cosmetics company, Lancôme, uses “tú” in an advertisement that contains several anglicisms. This ad can be used all over the Spanish-speaking world.
- The advertisements promoting a national (Uruguayan) credit card use “vos” (“Sentite bien uruguayo. Tené la Tarjeta D todos.” “Feel really Uruguayan. Have the card of all of us”) to address the consumer, with whom the company wishes to establish a recognition of national identity. “Vos” is used here as a marker of Uruguayan identity.

“Feel Really Uruguayan”: Group Unity, Respect and Politeness. Forms of Address in  
Advertisements and Commercial Documents in the Spanish of Montevideo

Diane R. Uber

The College of Wooster

## Introduction

During social or professional interactions, it is common to wonder how different individuals should be addressed. When is it appropriate to use the given name (“Susan”, “David”)? When should the title plus surname be used (“Miss/Ms./Mrs./Mr. Henderson”)?

In Spanish, as well as English, the title plus surname is considered a more formal type of address than the first name, which is more informal. Generally, the formal address is used with strangers, with people who are older than the speaker, and with someone worthy of respect.

In addition to first and last names, second-person pronouns are also forms of address. In English, there exists only one form, *you*, in both singular and plural (plus the dialectal variants “y’all”, “you guys”, and “yinz” in the plural). However, in Spanish one must choose between “tú”, “vos” (in some parts of Latin America), and “usted” for the singular. For the plural, in parts of Spain, a speaker must choose between “vosotros/vosotras” and “ustedes”, while only “ustedes” is used for the plural in Latin America.

Verbal forms corresponding to the second-person pronouns are as follows in the present indicative:

- “tú” + second-person singular (“estudias/comprendes/escribes/tienes”)
- “usted” + third-person singular (“estudia/comprende/escribe/tiene”)
- “vosotros/as” + second-person plural (“estudiáis/comprendéis/escribís/tenéis”)
- “ustedes” + third-person plural (“estudian/comprenden/escriben/tienen”)

Regarding the social meaning of second-person singular pronouns of address in Spanish, the formal “usted” could be characterized as showing more politeness than the informal “tú” and “vos”.

Following the theory of verbal politeness, and the concepts of power and solidarity, this paper will present the results of a study of forms of address in advertising and marketing documents in the Spanish of Montevideo, Uruguay.

A complete understanding of the culture and pragmatics of business must include the concepts of

- **respect**, and
- **politeness**,

as well as how these concepts are reflected in the forms used to address the customer.

Spanish-language address forms reflect these concepts of respect and politeness in the workplace. With **age** and **higher rank** comes **respect**, which would dictate usage of the more formal address: *usted*.

People with whom a worker is not acquainted are also addressed with *usted*, such as walk-in customers.

Norms of **politeness** dictate that one should be accommodating toward the addressee. (The idea is something like: “Be nice, so that the customer does not lose face.”)

**Politeness** can be manifested in the form of the respectful, deferential *usted* in the singular, plus the corresponding verb forms.

Alternatively, **politeness** can also dictate informal address: *tú* in the singular, plus the corresponding verb forms.

This informal address can be used:

- toward those sharing equal social status (in all types of usages and situations), or
- to show confidence and solidarity toward the consumer in business encounters, advertising and marketing, or
- to show **group unity** toward local customers from the area.

The popular version of the concept of politeness is shown in an advertising sign in front of the Cafe at the Salvo Palace in Montevideo (Fig. 1).

“Un café \$59. Un café por favor \$49. Buenos días, un café por favor \$39.”

‘A coffee, 59 pesos. A coffee, please, 49 pesos. Good morning, a coffee, please, 39 pesos.’

As the customer’s request becomes more polite, the price becomes lower.



Figure 1. Sign with coffee prices in front of Cafe at Palacio Salvo.

Norms of politeness dictate that the speaker should accommodate to the interlocutor, which could be manifested by the use of the respectful “usted”. On the other hand, in Montevideo, politeness can be shown by means of employing the familiar “vos”, or, less frequently, “tú”, when addressing those who share a similar social status, or to show confidence in, and solidarity toward, the consumer. For example, on the sign in front of the Cafe at Palacio Salvo (Fig. 1), the address is informal (corresponding to either “vos” or “tú”), to show solidarity with the client:

“Tu tienda de conveniencia y exquisiteces”

‘Your store for convenience and delicacies’ [“vos” or “tú” form]

This paper analyzes the use of forms of address in work environments in the Spanish of Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay. The second-person singular pronouns used in Montevideo include “vos”, “tú” and “usted”. The use of the pronoun “tú” is reduced, given that “vos” is of general use for informal, familiar address. Weyers (2009:837) finds that “tú” usage is disappearing in Montevideo, although the pronoun “tú” is used with the verb forms corresponding to either “tú” or “vos” by middle-aged speakers who wish to maintain a certain social distance. The use of the pronouns “tú” (as a subject) and “ti” (as an object of preposition), instead of “vos”, with verbal forms corresponding to “vos”, is called “verbal voseo”. The type of “voseo” that is used most commonly in Montevideo carries the verbal forms “estudiás”, “comprendés”, “escribís”, “tenés” in the present tense, and the commands “vení”, “sentate”, all accompanied by the pronoun “vos”. This is called “complete voseo”. See Uber (2008) for more information regarding the phenomenon of “voseo” in Spanish. Of course, “usted” is used for formal address, along with its corresponding verbal forms (present tense forms “estudia”, “comprende”, “escribe”, “tiene”, as well as commands “venga”, “siéntese”).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Studies of verbal politeness, such as Brown and Levinson (1987) and García (1992), identify two strategies used by speakers during a speech act: **positive politeness** and **negative politeness**. The speaker employs the strategy of positive politeness to indicate approval or affinity toward the interlocutor (García 1992: 208). One example would be the use of the first, or given, name. In contrast, the speaker uses the strategy of negative politeness to show respect toward the interlocutor (García 1992: 209). An example of negative politeness would be the use

of title plus surname. This negative strategy can be used in order to not offend the addressee. In professional contexts, the consequences can be more serious, such as losing a business deal.

With respect to the social meaning of the second-person singular pronouns in Spanish, “usted” is considered more formal and courteous than either the informal “vos” or “tú”. Therefore, “usted” usage shows deference and respect toward the interlocutor, and corresponds to the concept of negative politeness. Contrastively, the use of “vos” or “tú” demonstrates solidarity with the addressee, and corresponds to positive politeness (Brown y Levinson 1987: 292, note 51).

### **Methodology**

This paper forms part of a larger research project, carried out between 1995 and 2018, on the use of forms of address in workplace and business contexts. Through friends and colleagues, I made contact with individuals who permitted me to visit their workplace. I explained that I taught a course in Spanish for business, that I needed to learn more about the culture of the workplace in Latin America and Spain, and that I wanted to observe practical, normal, everyday activities. Thus, I was able to spend several hours observing interactions in workplaces, taking notes and speaking with some employees. The fieldwork was carried out in a variety of places and situations at work: offices, stores, hotels, restaurants, employee meetings, meetings between employees and consultants, and tourist excursions. In addition, I have gathered examples of advertisements, signs and other commercial documents that illustrate address toward the consumer or client. For more details and a complete discussion of earlier work from the project, see Uber (2010). For a discussion of the research project carried out in other cities of the Spanish-speaking world, consult Uber (2000, 2011, 2012, 2014, and 2018 to appear).

### **Analysis**

Forms of address reflect the concepts of respect and politeness in the workplace. However, politeness can be demonstrated by respectful “usted” address, or by familiar “vos” address to establish group unity with other speakers of the Spanish of the River Plate area (Uber 2012).

### **Respect**

More respect is shown when addressing older people or employees of a higher rank, expressed by the usage of “usted”. For example, an employee may address the boss as “usted”, or a student may use “usted” with the professor. If the speaker believes that the addressee holds

a higher rank or occupation, that speaker could use “usted” with such an interlocutor. Consult Uber (2010) for various examples of these usages, noted during fieldwork carried out in 2000 and 2005 in Buenos Aires.

Many employees tend to use “usted” with a colleague of the opposite sex if that person is not a friend. In Uber (2010), I found that women frequently prefer to address males older than they are with “usted”. “Usted” is also used with strangers, as well as with clients until one has established some degree of familiarity with them.

### **Politeness**

Norms of politeness dictate that the speaker should be accommodating to the hearer, which can be manifested with the use of respectful “usted”. On the other hand, politeness could also be shown by the use of the familiar “vos” or “tú” directed toward those who share a similar social status, or to show familiarity and solidarity toward the consumer. Different address may be used within the same industry. For example, newspaper ads for Mercedes automobiles use “usted”, but those for Nissan and Peugeot use “vos”.

Kaul de Marlangeon (2010) presents a study of advertising pamphlets collected in Córdoba, Argentina. She finds that “usted” is used in documents directed toward distinguished clients, to address the need of those clients to feel that they are being treated differently than the social masses (Kaul de Marlangeon 2010: 999). In contrast, “vos” indicates group unity, since it is used toward other Argentines as a guarantee of familiarity (Kaul de Marlangeon 2010: 999).

### **Results**

The fieldwork for this paper was carried out in 2015 in Montevideo. Following the methodology of Kaul de Marlangeon (2010), examples will be presented from marketing and advertising documents, in order to illustrate address usages toward different potential consumers.

Of the 128 examples that are documented with images, 102 (79.6%) show “vos” usage, 19 (14.8%) use “usted”, 2 (1.6%) use “tú”, 3 (2.3%) mix “usted” and “vos” in the same ad, 1 (0.8%) mixes “tú” and “vos”, and 1 (0.8%) employs the infinitive. It is important to note that “vos” forms predominate, representing almost 80% of the address forms used.

Of the 199 examples that are not documented with images, but rather with notes on observations and interactions for which the author was present, 132 (66.3%) show “vos” usage, 42 (21.1%) use “usted”, 16 (8.0%) use “tú”, and 9 (4.5%) are ambiguous, and it is impossible to

determine the type of address. Once again, we note the predominance of “vos” usage, in two of every three cases.

Combining all of the examples, 71.6% employ forms of “vos”, 18.7% use “usted”, and 6.8% show “tú” forms.

### Examples of “usted” usage

Technical/formal instructions, advertisements for financial institutions and ads for security services use “usted”, in order to deal with more serious topics. “Usted” is also used in ads directed toward older clients or business executives, to show respect.

For example, INDUMEX is a financial-services company regulated and supervised by the Central Bank of Uruguay. Their ad, shown in Fig. 2, appeared in the magazine *Caras & Caretas*, and “usted” is used:

“Más cambio a su favor”

‘More cash or change in your favor’ [“usted” form]

**Dedicación,  
Espíritu innovador,  
Buen trato.**

Una extensa red de servicios.  
Doce horas de atención continua.  
Locales en Ciudad Vieja,  
Tres Cruces, Portones;  
Gorlero, Punta Shopping;  
Salto y Rivera.

**INDUMEX**

Más cambio a su favor

CASA CENTRAL RINCON 473 / 477  
TELS: 9151615\*. [www.indumex.com](http://www.indumex.com)

31 de julio de 2015 / 720 Caras&Caretas | 43

Fig. 2. INDUMEX financial services magazine ad.

Another example is a sign in the window of a bank (Fig. 3), which illustrates the use of “usted” in a financial ad for loans:

“Préstamo ideal. Necesitó. Pidió. Se lo dieron.”

‘Ideal loan. You needed it. You asked for it. It was given to you.’ [“usted” forms]



Fig. 3. Sign in window of Discount Bank.

An ad for commercial security systems, shown in Fig. 4, uses “usted”:

“Conozca nuestro sistema integral de seguridad Eagle Cam”

‘Get to know our integral security system Eagle Cam’ [“usted” form]

CONOZCA NUESTRO  
SISTEMA INTEGRAL DE SEGURIDAD  
**EAGLE CAM**

www.ketlark.com.uy

**1 DETECCIÓN DEL INTRUSO**  
EL SISTEMA EAGLE CAM DETECTA Y ADVIERTE LA PRESENCIA DE UN EXTRAÑO EN EL PREDIO.

**2 ENVÍO DE DATOS A CENTRAL DE MONITOREO**  
UTILIZANDO TECNOLOGÍA GPRS Y FIBRA ÓPTICA, LA CENTRAL DE MONITOREO KETLARK EN TIEMPO REAL EL ALERTA.

**3 DISUASIÓN Y CONTROL DE LA SITUACIÓN**  
UN OPERADOR TOMA CONTROL SOBRE LA SITUACIÓN Y SE DIRIGE ORALMENTE AL INTRUSO DISUADIENDO SU PRESENCIA A TRAVÉS DE PARLANTES Y CÁMARAS KETLARK - EAGLE CAM.

**4 UN AGENTE KETLARK SE DIRIGE AL LUGAR**  
SI FUERA NECESARIO UN AGENTE ESPECIALIZADO KETLARK SE DIRIGE AL LUGAR Y EN SIMULTANEO SE ENVÍAN DATOS Y ESTADO DE SITUACIÓN A LA POLICÍA.

**5 ALERTA Y VIDEO CONFIRMACIÓN AL CLIENTE**  
REGISTRO FOTOGRÁFICO DEL INTRUSO Y AVISO AL CLIENTE. POSIBILIDAD DE SUPERVISIÓN CONSTANTE DEL PREDIO PROTEGIDO A TRAVÉS DE DISPOSITIVOS MÓVILES EN TIEMPO REAL.

**KETLARK**  
0800 8008 - www.ketlark.com

Fig. 4. Ad for commercial security systems.

A company advertising their hearing aids uses “usted” with potential clients, many of whom would be elderly, in an ad (Fig. 5) that is quite impressive visually:

“Más de 65 años desarrollando los mejores sistemas auditivos, para que en la vida no se pierda de nada.” “Consulte por audífonos de inserción profunda”

‘More than 65 years developing the best auditory systems, so that you won’t miss anything in life.’ ‘Consult with us for deep-insertion hearing aids’ [“usted” forms]

**AUDÍFONOS**

Más de 65 años desarrollando los mejores sistemas auditivos, para que en la vida no se pierda de nada.

Las mejores marcas...  
Excelente respaldo técnico...  
Extensa experiencia...  
Amplia gama de opciones...

18 de Julio 1026 Piso 2  
Tel. 2900 2100/ 2901 4430  
maicosa@adinet.com.uy

65 años  
1948 - 2013

Consulte por audífonos de inserción profunda (virtualmente invisible)  
Le prestamos un audífono para que pruebe sin compromiso





AUDÍFONO CONVENCIONAL  
 ADAPTACION PROFUNDA INVISIBLE  
**MAICO**

Fig. 5. Ad for hearing aids.

A store that sells fine ink pens (the brands Parker, Mont Blanc, Sheaffer, Cross), whose clients would be executives and wealthy professionals, uses “usted” in a window sign (Fig. 6) that offers free engraving:

“Gratis. Grabamos su nombre en el acto.”

‘Free. We engrave your name right now.’ [“usted” form]

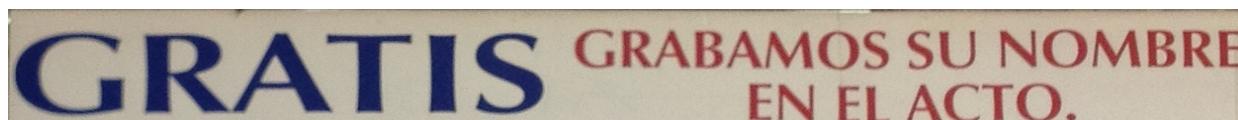


Fig. 6. Store window sign that offers free engraving on expensive ink pens.

Another advertisement, shown in Fig. 7, geared toward businesses that need to hire executives, uses “usted”:

“Ejecutivos y líderes para su negocio.”

‘Executives and leaders for your business.’ [“usted” form]



Fig. 7. Ad geared toward businesses that are hiring executives.

### Examples of “tú” usage

The French cosmetics company, Lancôme, uses “tú” in an ad, shown in Fig. 8, that appears in a pamphlet:

“Completa el look y enamora con tu mirada”

‘Complete the look and provoke love with your glance’ [“tú” forms]

COSMÉTICA

Completa el look  
y enamora con tu mirada

1 Delineador líquido Artliner

2 NUEVO Sombra en barra Ombre Hypnose Stylo

3 Máscara de pestañas Grandiose

LANCÔME PARIS

Mercadería sujeta a puntos de venta autorizados. Shine Lover \$980, Artliner \$1.380, Ombre Hypnose Stylo \$880 y Grandiose \$1.030.

PROMOCIONES, LANZAMIENTOS Y OFERTAS ESPECIALES.

Fig. 8. Pamphlet ad for Lancôme cosmetics.

However, this ad contains an Anglicism (“el look”), which could indicate that it was written for the Spanish-speaking (or bilingual) world in general, and not specifically for Uruguay.

A similar ad for Estée Lauder also uses “tú”:

“Esta noche, despierta la transformación”

‘Tonight, awaken the transformation’ [“tú” form]

This ad also contains names of products in English.

### Examples of “vos” usage

It was stated earlier that the vast majority of examples found here (71.6%) show “vos” forms. “Voseo” forms are found in many types of advertisements and commercial marketing documents, including those for banks and those directed toward executives and older clients.

The financial institution CréditoYa handed out flyers on the street that said:

“Solicita tu préstamo gratis al 0800 2120”

‘Ask for your free loan by calling 0800 2120’ [“vos” form]

In addition, an ad in the store window of CréditoYa used the pronoun “vos”:

“Como hace 15 AÑOS, estamos junto a vos”

‘Just like for the last 15 YEARS, we are beside you’

The ads for a national credit card, such as the one in Fig. 9, use “vos” with the potential consumer, with whom the company wishes to establish a recognition of national group identity:

“Sentite bien uruguayo, tené Tarjeta D, la Tarjeta D todos”

‘Feel really Uruguayan, hold Card D, the card of everyone’ [“vos” form]



Fig. 9. Store window sign for a Uruguayan credit card.

The Diners Club International card also uses a “vos” verb form on a sign, as shown in Fig. 10:

“Con tu tarjeta Diners tenés 10 pagos sin recargo”

‘With your Diners card, you have 10 payments without a surcharge’ [“vos” form]



Fig. 10. Store window sign for Diners Club International card.

An ad for cough medicine (Fig. 11) uses “voseo” verb forms:

“¿Tenés tos con flema? Tomá Bisolvon.”

‘Do you have a cough with phlegm? Take Bisolvon.’ [“vos” forms]

¿Tenés tos con flema?  
Tomá **Bisolvon**.

**Bisolvon**  
Expectorante Mucolítico  
**ADULTOS**  
Bromhexina  
Jarabe - 8 mg/5ml  
100 ml  
Venta libre  
✓ SIN AZÚCAR  
✓ SIN COLORANTES  
✓ SIN LACTOSA

**Bisolvon**  
Expectorante Mucolítico  
**Pedriático**  
Bromhexina  
Jarabe 4 mg/5 ml  
100 ml  
Venta libre  
✓ SIN AZÚCAR  
✓ SIN COLORANTES  
✓ SIN LACTOSA

Boehringer Ingelheim

Lea atentamente el prospecto y ante la menor duda consulte a su médico y/o farmacéutico. Principio activo Bisolvon: Bromhexina.

Prepará tu piel para esta Noche de la Nostalgia.  
CABINAS DE BELLEZA : VOS TAMBIÉN BELLA

Fig. 11. Pamphlet ad for cough medicine Bisolvon.

However, right below the ad, on the same pamphlet, the company's disclaimer, also shown in Fig. 11, uses "usted" forms, because it contains the technical instructions:

"Lea atentamente el prospecto y ante la menor duda consulte a su médico y/o farmacéutico."

'Read the information pamphlet carefully, and, in case of the slightest doubt, consult your physician or pharmacist.' ["usted" forms]

The Coca Cola Company, although it is a US firm, has plants in Uruguay. Therefore, it is not surprising that a television ad uses a "voseo" command, both orally and in writing on the screen:

"Destapá la felicidad"

'Open happiness' ["vos" form]

We see an example of verbal “voseo” in a pamphlet advertising L’Oréal lipstick, shown in Fig. 12:

“¡ELEGÍ EL QUE MÁS SE ADAPTA A TÍ [sic]!” “Seguinos en facebook: loreal paris uruguay” “Para más información llamá al . . . o visitá también [www.lorealparis.uy](http://www.lorealparis.uy)”

‘Choose [“vos” form] the color that adapts best to you [“tú” form]!’ ‘Follow us [“vos” form] on facebook: loreal paris uruguay’ ‘For more information call [“vos” form] . . . or visit [“vos” form] [www.lorealparis.uy](http://www.lorealparis.uy) also’

Fig. 12. Pamphlet ad for L’Oréal lip color.

In this ad (Fig. 12), four “voseo” commands are used (ELEGÍ, Seguinos, llámá, visitá), but the pronoun used for the object of the preposition “a” is “tí”, [sic--with an unnecessary accent mark], instead of “vos”. Therefore, although it is a French company, L’Oréal has a presence in Uruguay with an internet address. Since the ad is directed toward Uruguayans, the verbal “voseo” is used.

A Uruguayan chain of cinemas placed an ad in the magazine *Caras & Caretas* issue for August 7, 2015, which shows many examples of “voseo” commands:

“¡Hacete fan de Grupocine en Facebook y enterate de todas las novedades de tus películas favoritas, participá de increíbles sorteos y obtené descuentos especiales!”

‘Become a fan of Grupocine on Facebook and find out about all the news about your favorite movies, participate in incredible drawings and obtain special discounts!’ [“vos” forms]

A movie ticket reads:

“¡presentá este ticket en boletería [sic] y tu invitado paga la mitad!”

‘present this ticket to the cashier and your guest pays half price!’ [“vos” forms]

It is clear that the “voseo” is being used, because they took care to place the accent mark on “presentá”, although it was not used on “boletería [sic]”.

Similarly, when I went to the Museum of Pre-colombian and Indigenous Art in the Old City of Montevideo, the cashier, who was approximately 25 years old, asked me, using verbal voseo:

“¿Sos de acá tú?”

‘Are [“vos” form] you [“tú” form] from here?’

In all stores and restaurants, male employees addressed me with “usted”. Female employees in formal stores also used “usted” with me, but in more informal stores, they used verbal “voseo”. In a factory store of leather clothing, the female employee, who informed me that she was 80 years old, addressed me with “usted” at first, but later she changed to verbal “voseo”. For example:

“Sentate aquí.” “Esto es mejor para ti.”

‘Sit [“vos” form] here. This is better for you [“tú” form].’

However, in all of the stores, when female employees spoke among themselves, they used “complete voseo”. One example:

“Yo estoy hablando de lo que querés vos.”

‘I’m talking about what you want.’ [“vos” forms]

Thus, we see that the “complete voseo” indicates confidence and intimacy among Uruguayans, but that the “verbal voseo” can be used to address (potential) Uruguayan strangers.

### Examples of alternation

There are various examples of alternation between different forms of address in the same advertising or marketing document. Two ads for Scotiabank appeared in the national newspaper *El país* in the issue of August 24, 2015. One uses the verbal voseo in the ad:

“Hablemos de tu Negocio. ...tu empresa. .... Te ofrecemos...que te ayudarán...que necesitás en tu negocio. Acercate y conocé nuestras líneas de crédito para... Descubrí más información hoy en ...”

‘Let’s talk about your Business. ...your company. .... We offer you...which will help you...that you need in your business. Come by and get to know our lines of credit for... Find more information today on...’ [“vos” forms]

But the bank’s slogan, at the end of the ad, uses “tú”:

“Descubre lo que puedes lograr”

‘Discover what you can achieve’ [“tú” forms]

instead of using forms of the voseo (descubrí...podés).

Another advertisement for Scotiabank (shown in Fig. 13) says:

“Anotá en la lista del súper el premio que querés ganar. Sumá Puntos en tus compras de todos los días y canjealos por lo que quieras en Tienda Inglesa.

Pedí tu tarjeta Scotiabank Club Card hoy. Llamá al 1969 o en Tienda Inglesa.”

‘Sign up on the store list for the prize that you want to win. Accumulate Points on your purchases every day and exchange them for whatever you want at Tienda Inglesa. Ask for your Scotiabank Club Card today. Call 1969 or [get it] at Tienda Inglesa.’ [“vos” forms]

But the same slogan appears at the end of the same ad (also shown in Fig. 13) using “tú”:

“Descubre lo que puedes lograr”

‘Discover what you can achieve’ [“tú” forms]

**Anotá en la lista del súper el premio que querés ganar.**

Sumá Puntos en tus compras\* de todos los días y canjealos por lo que quieras en Tienda Inglesa.

Pedí tu Tarjeta Scotiabank Club Card hoy.  
Llamá al 1969 o en Tienda Inglesa.

**Scotiabank** **Tienda Inglesa** **VISA** **MasterCard**

**Descubre lo que puedes lograr**

™ Marca de The Bank of Nova Scotia, utilizada bajo licencia.  
\*Excepto otros supermercados. El otorgamiento está sujeto a aprobación crediticia de Scotiabank Uruguay S.A.

Fig. 13. Print ad for Scotiabank Club credit card.

Scotiabank is a Canadian multinational corporation that has a presence in Uruguay. One could suspect that the slogan was written for Spanish-speaking countries in general, but that the text of the ad was prepared specifically for Uruguayans.

Municipal garbage cans use “usted” forms on the top part of the trash receptacle, as shown in Fig. 14:

“Empuje su bolsa hasta el fondo. . . . Cuidando así su vida y su salud.”

‘Push your bag all the way in. . . . Thus, taking care of your life and your health.’

[“usted” forms]

However, on the lower part of the same trash receptacle, “vos” forms are used, also shown in Fig. 14:

“Lo que depositás aquí recibirá un tratamiento adecuado. Depositá aquí . . . No deposites aquí . . .”

‘What you deposit here will receive adequate treatment. Deposit here . . . Do not deposit here. . . .’ [“vos” forms]



Fig. 14. Signs on municipal garbage cans.

It is difficult to explain this alternation between “usted” and “vos” on the same trash receptacle, because both sections give instructions using command forms. However, the section that uses “vos” forms mentions the city twice, as shown in Fig. 14:

“MONTEVIDEO LIMPIO, NO TIENE DESPERDICIO”

‘A clean Montevideo does not have trash [on the ground]’

“Intendencia de Montevideo”

‘Government of the city of Montevideo’

It is possible that the section of the signs that uses “vos” was drafted in Montevideo, and that the section that uses “usted” was prepared in another country. Another possibility, according to a professional translator and language professor from Montevideo, is that it could be due to a confusion among the different forms of address, and that the editing of many texts is not carried out by a person with advanced knowledge of the rules of the language, but, rather, by anybody employed by the organization (C. Fraga, personal communication, April 19, 2017).

The other example of switching is in an ad for Johnson & Johnson, shown in Fig. 15. It begins with a command in the “tú” form:

“Consulta por la línea de invierno de Johnson & Johnson”

‘Consult about the winter line of Johnson & Johnson products’ [“tú” form]

However, in the section that advertises a cough medicine, also shown in Fig. 15, a “vos” form is used:

“¿Tenés tos?”

‘Do you have a cough?’ [“vos” form]

FARMACIA

Consulta por la línea de invierno de **Johnson & Johnson**

**EL ANTIGRIPAL MÁS ESPERADO AHORA TIENE UN PLUS**

Presentación en tabletas, ahora con una fórmula más completa que **no requiere receta**

Alivia los síntomas de:

**CONGESTIÓN Y GRIPE**

- Congestión Nasal
- Dolor de Garganta
- Malestar General
- Dolor de Cabeza y Fiebre
- Flujo Nasal y Estornudo

**¿Tenés Tos?**

**HAY UN EXPERTO PARA CADA TIPO DE TOS**

**COMANDO DRYL**

**COMBATE LA TOS CON FLEMA**

Facilita la expulsión de la flema y descongestiona las vías respiratorias.

**COMANDO DREX**

**COMBATE LA TOS SECA**

Calma la tos y alivia la irritación de la garganta.

**25% menos con tarjetas de crédito Itaú**

Fig. 15. Print ad for Johnson & Johnson, including ad for cough medicine.

It is clear that the Company wishes to direct the ad toward Uruguayans, using “vos” forms. It is possible that, in the first part, the accent mark was eliminated over the “a” of “Consultá”, but the presence of the accent mark in the word “línea” indicates that accent marks are used in the first part, in addition to the accent marks on the words “Más”, “Presentación”, “fórmula”, “CONGESTIÓN” and “Tenés” in the lower sections, as shown in Fig. 15. The explanation for the alternation could be that, since the ad is from a U.S. company, perhaps the different sections were written by different employees, or that the first line was drafted for the Spanish-speaking world in general, and the ad for the cough medicine was written specifically for Uruguay.

### Conclusions

Forms of address reflect the concepts of **respect** and **politeness** in the workplace. More respect is shown toward older addressees and toward those of higher rank, as expressed through the use of “usted” address.

Norms of politeness dictate that the speaker should accommodate to the hearer, which can be shown by the use of the respectful “usted”. Technical writing and formal instructions,

financial advertisements, and ads for security products may use "usted" to deal with more serious topics. It is also common to employ "usted" address in ads aimed toward older clients or to business executives, in order to show respect.

On the other hand, **politeness** may be shown by the use of "vos" or, to a lesser extent, informal "tú" directed toward those who share a similar social status, or to show **confidence** and **solidarity** toward the consumer. Especially if the potential consumer is Uruguayan, **group unity** is affirmed by the use of forms of the "voseo".

This paper has shown that more than 70% of all examples use "vos" forms, that almost 19% employ forms of "usted", and that less than 7% use "tú" forms. In addition, we can support the results of Weyers (2009), who indicates that the "tuteo" (whether it be verbal or pronominal forms of "tú") is disappearing from the Spanish of Montevideo.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the *Faculty Research and Study Leaves Program* of The College of Wooster for having granted me a one-year research leave (2015-16) to carry out this research Project. In addition, I acknowledge the *Henry Luce III Fund for Distinguished Scholarship* to pay the majority of the travel expenses. Many thanks are due to my research assistant, Matthew Woodward, for his work on re-sizing the images. Finally, my most profound thanks to Cecilia Fraga, for her assistance in Montevideo.

### References

- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: some universals in language usage* (Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics 4). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- García, C. (1992). Refusing an invitation: A case study of Peruvian style. *Hispanic Linguistics*, 5, 207-243.
- Kaul de Marlangeon, S. (2010). Voseo, ustedeo y cortesía verbal en folletos de propaganda argentinos. In M. Hummel, B. Kluge, & M. E. Vázquez Laslop (Eds.), *Formas y fórmulas de tratamiento en el mundo hispánico* (pp. 993-1011). México, DF: El Colegio de México.
- Uber, D. R. (2000). 'Addressing' business in Puerto Rico: Tú vs. usted. In A. Roca

- (Ed.), *Research on Spanish in the United States: Linguistic issues and challenges* (pp. 310-318). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.
- Uber, D. R. (2008). Creo que entiendo el uso de *tú, usted, ustedes, y vosotros*. Pero, ¿qué hago con *vos*? In J. Ewald & A. Edstrom (Eds.), *El español a través de la lingüística: Preguntas y respuestas* (pp. 50-60). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press.
- Uber, Diane R. (2010). Formas y fórmulas de trato en situaciones laborales en Santiago de Chile y Buenos Aires. In M. Hummel, B. Kluge & M. E. Vázquez Laslop (Eds.), *Formas y fórmulas de tratamiento en el mundo hispánico* (pp. 1051-1080). México, D.F.: El Colegio de México.
- Uber, D. R. (2011). Forms of address: The effect of the context. In M. Díaz-Campos (Ed.), *The Handbook of Hispanic Sociolinguistics* (pp. 244-262). Chichester, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Uber, D. R. (2012). La unidad grupal, el respeto y la cortesía: Fórmulas de tratamiento en los negocios en el español porteño. In A. M. Cestero Mancera, I. Molina Martos, & F. Paredes García (Eds.), *La lengua, lugar de encuentro. Actas del XVI Congreso Internacional de la ALFAL* (pp. 1783-1792). Alcalá de Henares: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alcalá.
- Uber, D. R. (2014). Spanish forms of address in advertising and marketing documents in Madrid: Respect and politeness. In *Proceedings of the 2014 Hawaii University International Conference on Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*. Retrieved from [http://www.huichawaii.org/assets/uber\\_diane\\_spanish\\_forms\\_of\\_address\\_in\\_advertising\\_ahs2014.pdf](http://www.huichawaii.org/assets/uber_diane_spanish_forms_of_address_in_advertising_ahs2014.pdf)
- Uber, D. R. (2015). Formas de tratamiento. In J. Gutiérrez-Rexach (Ed.), *Enciclopedia de Lingüística Hispánica*, vol. 1 (pp. 620-629). London and New York: Routledge.
- Uber, D. R. (2018 to appear). Respect and politeness in marketing and advertising documents in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico. In M. González-Rivera (Ed.), *Current Research in Puerto Rican Linguistics*. (Routledge Monograph Series in Hispanic and Lusophone Linguistics) (pp. 184-198). London and New York: Routledge.
- Weyers, Joseph R. (2009). The impending demise of *tú* in Montevideo, Uruguay. *Hispania*, 92, 829-839.