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**A linguistic analysis of board games rulebooks: a
case of a hybrid text type**

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Resumen

Cuando pensamos en un texto instructivo, es común que los primeros ejemplos que vengan a nuestra mente sean los típicos manuales de usuario o las recetas de cocina, que se utilizan ampliamente como modelos claros de instrucciones paso a paso. Sin embargo, en este análisis nos proponemos ir más allá de estas asociaciones tradicionales para abordar los reglamentos que acompañan a los juegos de mesa, que se suelen clasificar únicamente como textos instructivos. Nuestro objetivo es identificar los elementos lingüísticos que permiten clasificar estos reglamentos dentro de esta categoría textual pero, al mismo tiempo, explorar otros aspectos lingüísticos que hacen de estos reglamentos tipos textuales híbridos ya que en ellos se incluyen también elementos narrativos, descriptivos e informativos. Esta combinación de tipos textuales en los reglamentos de juegos de mesa contribuyen no solo a facilitar la comprensión de las reglas, sino también a mejorar la experiencia del jugador al contextualizar y ambientar el juego.

Palabras clave: Textos, Textos instructivos, Juegos de mesa, Reglas, Reglamentos

Abstract

When we think of an instructional text, it is common for the first examples that come to mind to be typical user manuals, such as those that accompany household appliances or guides for the installation of devices; or the most recurrent, cooking recipes, which are widely used as clear models of step-by-step instructions. However, in this analysis we propose to go beyond these traditional associations to address the regulations that accompany board games, considering them as authentic instructional texts. Our objective is to identify the linguistic elements that allow these regulations to be classified within this textual category. Although we will focus especially on the analysis of the instruction, since it is an essential and widely visible characteristic in this type of text, we will also explore other important aspects that enrich them. Among them, we will study how narration, description and informativeness are integrated into these regulations, contributing not only to facilitate the understanding of the rules, but also to improve the player's experience by contextualizing and setting the scene for the game.

Keywords: Texts, Instructive text, Boardgames, Rules, Rulebook

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1. Introduction

From a young age, we learn to play and use play as a tool for acquiring knowledge and skills. However, play is not limited to childhood; as adults, we continue to seek moments of leisure and different forms of entertainment that keep our minds active.

Throughout history, we have created a wide variety of games, tailored to all types of audiences and interests—games for children, educational games, sports games, word games, card games, strategy games, and more. In the present dissertation, we will focus on board games as they represent a world of creativity, strategy, and social interaction intertwined to create unforgettable experiences. In the creativity of board games, the instructions to be followed in order to play properly and achieve a specific goal play a fundamental role. These instructions, board games rulebooks (BGRs, from now on), explain the game procedures and resolve any questions that may arise, offering accessible manuals to anyone, which help promote the spread and commercialization of games. Today, almost all modern board games come with written rulebooks.

As generally agreed, BGRs are texts usually classified as a specific type of text, that is, instructive texts. However, BGR shares characteristics that set them apart from other types of instructive texts. With this premise as a starting point of our research, we intend to explore the linguistic characteristics of these texts in order to identify the BGR as a specific type of text or a combination of different text types.

2. What type of texts are board games rulebooks (BGRs)?

It is important to first describe the different most relevant textual typologies, especially in the field of linguistics, and the differences and similarities between them.

2.1 What is a text? Different text typologies

According to the RAE, the Spanish dictionary of the Real Academia Española, a text is an "Enunciado o conjunto coherente de enunciados orales o escritos". Therefore, a text is not only a set of letters or words but also different sentences that make sense individually and that united through linguistic elements obtain cohesion and coherence. Similarly, the definition from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary aligns partially with the Spanish one as a text is defined as "the original words and form of a written or printed work", where we assume that "form" alludes to cohesion and coherence as well but where the oral dimension is not considered. However, both approaches are useful for what is under analysis in this dissertation, as BGRs are considered a printed work that comes together with the board game when bought and which contains a set of coherent sentences grouped coherently and following a specific structure.

Taking into more particular consideration the twofold dimensions of texts, Stubbs (1996: 4) states that a text is "an instance of language in use, either spoken or written: a piece of language behavior which has occurred naturally, without the intervention of the linguist". Due to the wide scope of definitions like this one, not only linguists but also translators all over the world (e.g., Werlich 1975, Trosborg 1997, among others) have felt the need to classify texts and they have invested time and effort in the classification of text types, thus creating a more efficient tool for analysis and translation of those different types of texts.

From a translational viewpoint the classification of texts into different types has been the focus of translation studies as it facilitates the translation and interpretation of texts (Sager 1997), that is, it takes into account different issues which are central for the process of translating, i.e., the level of formality, the culture, and the different points of view of the sender, as well as the needs of the receivers that lead them to deal with the text.

Hence, Katharina Reiß (1970), a German linguist and translator internationally recognized for her contribution to the classification of text types, developed a classification based specifically on the function that texts fulfill. She distinguishes the following four text types: (1) informative texts, which aim to provide information and consider content over form (e.g., a reference work); (2) expressive texts, which have a phatic function, thus giving more value to form than to content (e.g., a poem); (3) operative texts, whose function is appellative, and aim to persuade the receiver to perform the action (e.g., an electoral speech); and (4) audio-medial texts, which incorporate images or audiovisual content to complement the information and enhance comprehension (e.g., a video tutorial).

From a linguistic viewpoint, some scholars like Colley (1987) classify texts into four types according to their function in the communicative process: (1) narrative texts, in which a series of events are narrated, either in verse or in prose (e.g., a novel, whose intention is to tell a story); (2) expository texts, those that inform the reader or listener about some event (e.g., a news item that appears in a newspaper); (3) descriptive texts, whose main objective is to describe in detail a place, an object or a person (e.g., a work on a painting); and (4) instructive texts, in which the intention is to give orders or instructions to accomplish a goal (e.g., a cooking recipe).

From a different linguistic perspective, Biber's (1989) approach is essential for the development of our topic, since, unlike previous typologies that focused on functional aspects, he incorporates a detailed analysis of the linguistic characteristics of the texts. In the same line, other scholars like Castellà i Lidon (1995) consider that the appearance in a text of certain grammatical elements depends on the communicative situation in which the text occurs. More specifically, Castellà i Lidon, reducing Biber's typology to only 4 types of texts and its respective linguistic characteristics, refers to 4 main types of texts as follows:

- (i) interactive (similar to Colley's (1987) instructive texts): present-tense verbs, 1^s and 2nd person pronouns; interrogative pronouns; discursive markers.
- (ii) informative (similar to Colley's (1987) expository texts): longer words, lexical variety, prepositional phrases, nouns, adjectives, place adverbs.
- (iii) narrative (Colley's (1987) narrative texts): past-tense verbs, 3rd person pronouns, perfect-aspect verbal forms.

- (iv) non-narrative (Colley's (1987) descriptive texts): present-tense verbs, attributive adjectives; long words.

Although it is very difficult to establish specific linguistic characteristics of every single type of text, BGRs are generally presented as examples of instructional texts. However, as will be explored in the following section, BGRs do not belong to a single textual typology and so it may be too ambitious to establish particular linguistic characteristics of these texts.

In this study we propose to carry out an analysis to identify general linguistic patterns in a corpus of BGRs, in order to explore linguistic variation in this type of texts. This analysis will be based on a simplification of the methodology developed by Biber (1989), reducing his proposal to focus on the most relevant aspects that provide lexical and semantic information. These dimensions will then be directly related to the four traditional types of texts (narration, description, instruction and exposition), which in turn correspond to the main categories identified by Biber: narrative, interactive, non-narrative and informative, although his proposal includes a broader and more detailed typology.

(i) Informative texts, of a more distant and objective nature, are characterized by a high use of nouns, adverbs of place and attributive adjectives.

(ii) Interactive texts ("instructive" texts from now on) are full of verbs that represent internal and mental actions (internal verbs), present-tense verbs, 1st, 2nd and 3rd person pronouns, specifically "it", and a great number of adverbs.

(iii) Narrative texts are usually characterized by the frequent use of past tense verbs, observable action verbs (external verbs), perfect aspect forms and 3rd person pronouns.

(iv) Non-narrative texts ("descriptive" texts from now on) present a greater predominance of verbs in the present tense and a significant use of attributive adjectives.

2.2 Board game rulebooks (BGR) as more than an instructive text

According to Reiß's (1970) classification (see section 2.1), in general, most of the rules of a board game fall somewhere between the operative text, the informative text and the audio-medial text; that is, in a BGR, we find not only a text with an appellative function (i.e., to persuade the gamer to win), but also, since the game designer intends to make the rules as clear as possible, not only explanatory or descriptive pictures but also drawings are incorporated to help the player get a mental idea of how to proceed in order to play the game.

Based also on the textual functions proposed by Colley (1987) (see section 2.1), BGRs would be instructional texts whose intention is essentially to direct the reader's actions to win the game; the most analyzed and translated instructive texts today are recipes and user manuals, but BGRs could also form part of these instructive texts as they are meant to give instructions to help the player know how to play.

BGRs are so many and so varied nowadays, and, at the same time, expanding so much internationally, that it is necessary to categorize them as a text type, even though, to the best of our knowledge, these are not mentioned as examples in any text classification. However, they seem to fit mainly with the instructive text characteristics and also with their key function, as they are meant "to explain to players how the given board game is to be played. In other words, the rules give people instructions for playing a game, or guide them through the course of the game. Rules are therefore a type of instruction." (Tomková, 2014: 36).

In this same vein, Prado (2011) points out that in instructive texts the instructions can be presented in the form of a list or in a narrated format. In this way, we see that in some BGRs the rules are described or narrated and in others, they are listed, and/or numbered.

From this viewpoint, even though a BGR could be initially classified as an instructive text, not all the sections or parts included in a BGR are related to only instructions but also to descriptive or informative content. In fact, this hybrid typology in the cases of BGR is supported by Beaugrande and Dressler (1994: 43) assertion: "Every text is at least somewhat informative: no matter how predictable form and content may be."

Additionally, Vandepitte (2008: 72) highlights that an instructive text, as an specialized text, contains an “ample use of visuals, such as figures, schemes, pictures, boxes, tables, different font types and sizes, page layout and ordering devices”; this is seen in all board games rules as well, to improve explanations.

As we observe, BGRs can be classified as instructive and audio-medial texts: informative, because these texts are produced to inform about how the game should be played; persuasive, because the board game is aimed at being attractive and/or interesting to play by the reader; (specially) instructive, as the main objective is to follow the instructions and achieve a goal; and audio-medial, because a BGR is not only a text with sentences, but it also includes images, maps, and visual aids, etc. Therefore, a BGR does not belong only to one textual typology but to different types simultaneously.

3. Objectives

The main objective of this dissertation is to demonstrate that BGRs belong to a hybrid text type, as these texts contain the functions and the linguistic characteristics of more than one typified text. That is, we intend to argue that BGRs are not limited to offering instructions, and therefore should not be classified exclusively as instructive texts. Instead, we will argue that these rules integrate elements from different textual types, which enriches their structure and communicative function.

In the proposed analysis then, we will evaluate how these grammatical categories (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and pronouns) contribute to specify each of the functions of BGRs (i.e., instructive, descriptive/expository and/or narrative).

4. Methodology

The following section illustrates the process carried out in this dissertation, covering everything from the data collection procedure to the classification patterns.

4.1 Selection of BGRs and lexical items extraction procedure

In order to identify the linguistic items related to BGRs a total of 45 BGRs have been compiled. The selected board games are all the winners of the German Award “Spiel des Jahres” (Game of the Year), a prize of great international influence since its creation in 1979. These awards not only evaluate the playability of the game, but also consider the correct structure and clarity of the rules, a central aspect for the present study.

The information of the 45 BGRs, displayed in Annex 1, has been obtained from the largest player’s forum on the internet (www.boardgamegeek.com) and downloaded in PDF version, as they came originally. This compilation covers a great variety of games as not only family and party games are included, but also strategy games in order to cover a variety of board games. Information about the date of publication, the title, the author, and the publishing house is also provided. The duration of the board games is different as well (from 15 to 120 minutes) and a wide age range for the target gamers is also covered (6-14 years old). Annex 1 illustrates this specific information from each of the selected BGRs, i.e., the titles of each BGR, author(s), editorial house(s), time of playability, number of players, minimum age to play and type of game.

Prior to the analysis stage, we proceeded with the text processing and words extraction categorization, carried out using the web program Sketch Engine (www.sketengine.eu). The documents have been converted to .txt format through the AntConc program so that the images have not been analyzed, resulting in the text in clean format.

Table 1 shows the information of our corpus, named “Spiel des Jahres_TFG” in Sketch Engine, related to the number of total tokens, words, sentences and documents. The Sketch Engine program was used, therefore, to extract the corresponding lexical items used in 45 BGRs and so, out of the total of 105,148 words.

Table 1. Corpus information

Tokens	125,479
Words	105,148
Sentences	5,718
Documents	45

4.2 Classification of lexical items

At this point, all the lexical items extracted were classified according to five main grammatical categories: nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives and adverbs. The other grammatical categories have not been considered as we assume that prepositions, articles and conjunctions do not contribute significantly to the lexical characterization of these texts.

Using the Sketch Engine web program, we have been able to analyze not only the grammatical categories in relation to the entire corpus, but we have also been able to analyze each category separately, being able to extract from them the 100 most frequent types of words and thus making a more specific analysis. In addition, this program has allowed us to obtain random samples, thus providing greater objectivity to the analysis.

The extracted lexical items have been organized according to their grammatical category, together with their absolute frequency and, in addition, their percentage of appearance in relation with the whole corpus has been calculated and registered.

Taking this way to proceed as a quantitative extraction process, in the case of the category of nouns, out of the 32,612 different nouns, the first 100 were selected for analysis, each with a minimum frequency of more than 40 times. The nouns were later qualitatively classified into different semantic categories using the UCREL API system (<https://ucrel-api.lancaster.ac.uk/usas/tagger.html>), a free online semantic tagger, which helped us to identify 21 categories of meaning, 18 of which are present in this corpus, and helped us in our semantic analysis. Then, they were grouped into broader types according to what they represent semantically, resulting in the reduction to 6 types nouns, depending to what entity they are referring to: people, objects, actions, events, places, or ideas.

For the analysis of verbs, the first 100 simple lexical forms were extracted and, using SketchEngine, grouped into simple past, gerund, participle, and present (also including third-person singular personal forms). Subsequently, the verbs were classified semantically into two types: external verbs, which represent external and observable actions (so more common in informative or descriptive texts), and internal verbs, which refer to internal and subjective mental states (so, more common in persuasive or instructional texts).

As for the first 100 adjectives analyzed, they were classified according to their function resulting in predicative or attributive (the latter being more frequent in informative or descriptive texts, according to Biber's (1989) textual typology, see section 2.1).

All the pronouns compiled from our corpus were ordered by frequency as well and classified according to their grammatical person (1st, 2nd or 3rd, all of them typical of informative or descriptive texts, see section 2.1), with an additional distinction for the pronoun "it" (more typical in instructive texts, according to Biber (1989)).

Finally, out of all the extracted adverbs, the first 100 were classified into 6 main categories: place (frequent in informative texts), time, manner, negation, quantity, and linking adverbs, allowing a better understanding of their use in the corpus.

Therefore, our linguistic analysis will take into consideration the frequency of lexical items and their semantic classification, in the line of Biber's (1989) and Castellà i Lidon's (1995) proposals, but focusing on specific grammatical categories that are repeated in the analyzed texts.

5. Results

Each of the following sections will present the main results of the present dissertation, showing the analysis of each grammatical category in order of frequency of appearance in the BGRs selected.

5.1. General results

Out of 125,479 tokens, the total amount of words in the corpus is 105,148. The absolute frequency and the percentage of each of the grammatical categories are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Grammatical categories representation in the corpus

Grammatical Category	Absolute Frequency	Percent of whole corpus
Common nouns	27,834	22.18%
Verbs	12,950	10.32%
Adjectives	6,904	5.50%
Adverbs	4,718	3.76%
Pronouns	5,537	4.40%

As we can observe, in terms of absolute frequency, most of the words compiled belong to the noun category (22.18%) followed by verbs (10.32%). The rest of the categories (adjectives, adverbs and pronouns) represent lower absolute frequency values.

5.2. The noun category

Based on a more quantitative analysis (see the Excel file provided to the examining board), in the corpus studied, 3,562 different nouns were identified, which together make up approximately 3.39% of the total corpus, which is made up of 105,148 words. For the analysis, we selected the 100 most frequent nouns (15,466 tokens), which represent around 2.8% of the total nouns in the corpus.

All the nouns are common names, being 82 of the 100 nouns singular (11,893 tokens), and 18 plural (3,573 tokens).

Regarding their semantic classification, it is observed in table 3 that almost half of these 100 nouns (48, 22.56%) refer to objects, such as: “piece”, “pile, and “point”. Other 14 nouns represent actions, for example, “movement”, “play”, “race”, “scoring”, etc., which sum 2,432 tokens (7.53%).

Table 3. Semantic analysis of nouns

Semantic	Items	Tokens	Examples
Person	12	2,958 (19.13%)	agent, knight, mister, player, rider, winner.
Place	14	1,401 (4.34%)	area, building, castle, city, habitat, location, place, region, settlement, terrain
Action	14	2,432 (7.53%)	action, game, move, movement, play, race, scoring, task, travel, turn.
Animal	1	61 (0.19%)	Camel
Event	7	890 (2.76%)	end, example, phase, round, start, transportation, victory
Idea	4	436 (1.35%)	order, rule, time, word
Objects	48	7,288 (22.56%)	board, box, canoe, card, case, clue, color, deck, die, floor, front, hand, hex, hexagon, level, line, marker, note, number, piece, pile, point, position, resource, river, road, route, side, space, stack, supply, table, tile, token, top, track, type, way
Totals	100	15,466 (100%)	

Some of the rest of the nouns are events (890 tokens, 2.76%) such as “end”, “phase”, “round”, etc.; places nouns as “area”, “building”, “castle”, etc., which represent 1,401 tokens (14, 4.33%), and then 13 cases of nouns denoting living beings ("player", "rider", "knight", etc.; 3,019 tokens, 19.32%). Finally, only 4 nouns represent abstract ideas (436 tokens, 1.35%) like “order”, “rule”, “time” and “word”.

5.3. The verb category

Regarding verbs, the corpus contains a total of 1,954 verb forms, and the 100 most frequent lexical verb forms were selected (a total amount of 5,925 tokens, 5.63% of the total corpus).

Of these verbs, as Table 4 illustrates, 10 belong to the group referring to internal and subjective mental states (see section 2.2). More specifically, this type of verbs denotes sensations, thoughts or mental activities, such as "chose", "determine", "want", "guess", "need" and "see". In contrast, external verbs, those that describe visible or external actions, represent the most frequent type of verbs, 90 are external verbs.

Table 4. External vs. Internal verbs

Type of verb	Inflectional forms	Types	Tokens	Examples
External	90	50	5439 (43.02%)	Complete, find, give
Internal	10	6	486 (3.84%)	guess, want, need

External verbs, which stand out in the corpus, include 90 verbal forms (44.12%) 19 appearing in multiple tenses and 31 only found in one verb form, aimed to create a more objective relationship with the reader. These verbs are mainly used to describe concrete, observable actions, essential for conveying clear information without the need to establish an emotional or interactive connection with the receiver, as the internal verbs do, which are represented in our corpus as well but used in a lower percentage (10 verbs, 3.84%).

External verbs represent external, evident actions carried out by the subject and perceptible to others. They typically describe activities that involve social interaction or that can be seen, heard, or perceived by others. It is therefore not surprising that the largest number of verbs is of this type in our corpus.

In the context of the BGR, these verbs are directly associated with clear actions and instructions shared by all players. In the rulebooks, the actions are observable because they are explained as precise instructions to follow; so, at the same time, they inform us. This approach aligns with that of Biber (1989) and Castellà i Lidon (1995), as they

associate the presence of public external verbs with informative texts, but they are also making them more suitable for instructional texts than for those seeking an involved interactional function.

In the analysis of the 100 verbs selected in the corpus, we found a total of 30 lexical forms in the present tense (1.392 tokens, 1.1%), of which 19 (959 tokens) correspond to the third-person singular. These forms represent 7.59% of the total number of verbs.

Out of these 100, 17 forms are identified in the past participle (1007 tokens), 13 in the gerund (992 tokens), and 38 are base forms (2436 tokens).

The past tenses are barely represented in the corpus; only 2 verb forms in the simple past (0.56%), which are "play" (45 tokens) and "put" (26 tokens), add up to an absolute frequency of 71 tokens. It should be noted that both verbs are expressing external actions.

Regarding the perfect aspect, a specific analysis was carried out to detect the combination of "have + past participle", the results show a total of 209 occurrences (0.17% of 125,479 tokens), a very low frequency compared to other verbal forms like the present tense. This result seems to be in line with the low representativeness of narrative elements in BGRs.

Table 5. Representation of verbs in the corpus

Tense/ Aspect	Types	Tokens	Examples
Past participle	17	1007 (0.8%)	Allowed, built, placed,...
Gerund	13	992 (0.79%)	According, including, scoring...
Past simple	2	71 (0.05%)	Put, played
Present-tense	30	1,392 (1.1%)	Begins, choose, gets,...

5.4 The pronoun category

As shown in Table 6, there are 28 different forms of pronouns in the corpus (a total of 5,537 tokens), representing 4.4% of the whole corpus, being 6 of them first-person pronouns (*I / we*, 114 tokens, 2.05%), 5 second-person (*you*, 2,182 tokens; 39.40%) and 11 third-person pronouns (*he, she, it*; 2,127 token; 38.40%*s*). Second-person pronouns are then the most frequent pronouns in the corpus, suggesting an intention to connect with the reader from a formal distance. At the same time, this intended addressing to the reader shows a clear relation with instructive texts.

Table 6. Personal pronouns representation in the corpus

Person	Pronouns	Items	Tokens
1st person	(I, we)	6	114 (2.05%)
2nd person	(you)	5	2182 (39.40%)
3rd person	Singular (he, she it)	11	2127 (38.40%)
	Plural (they)	4	1065 (19.23%)

Another important distinction was done in the use of the neutral pronoun “it” which appears in three different forms. Only this pronoun accounts for 756 tokens, representing 0.6% of the total corpus.

The prominence of the pronoun "it" stands out when compared to other pronouns, strongly reinforcing the descriptive and informative intent of the text. This not only enhances its objectivity but also creates a highly interactive context.

5.5 The adverb category

Adverbs in our corpus constitute only 3.76% of the total corpus (286; 4,718 tokens). When analyzing the 100 most frequent adverbs (92.34% of the total number of adverbs; 4,357 tokens), they were distributed in different categories, taking into account their semantic classification, resulting in 6 different types of adverbs including manner, time, place, degree, and negation, as Table 7 illustrates.

Table 7. The adverb representation in the corpus

Types of adverbs	Items	Tokens	Examples
Linking adverbs	13	793 (16.8%)	Then, however, instead, therefore, otherwise
Time and frequencies	23	867 (18.37%)	Now, always, never, soon, often, usually
Place and directions	20	578(12.25%)	Here, there, below, ahead, aside, back
Negation	2	748 (15.85%)	No, not
Quantity	11	596 (12.63%)	All, less, more, enough, much, only
Manner	30	775 (16.42%)	Horizontally, straight, openly, quickly, easily

The most frequent type of adverbs is that related to manner and temporal aspects, which is aligned not only with descriptions of the dynamics of the board game and the players' turns but also and especially, with instructions to guide the readers.

The next most common category of adverbs are those that indicate time or temporal frequency, that is, they tell us when an action must be performed. However, it is not until the third category that we find the true analysis; According to Biber (1989), adverbs in general are common in instructional texts, however, adverbs of place are the ones that have the most presence in informative texts.

Therefore we can say that these texts are more instructive than informative, although the appearance of adverbs of place is also very relevant since it appears 578 times.

5.6 The adjective category

As illustrated in Table 8 adjectives represent 5.5% of the total corpus (6,904 tokens), out of which 4,743 (3.78%) are attributive and 2,161 (1.72%) are predicative.

Table 8. The adjective representation in the corpus

Attributive	4,743 (3.78%)
Predicative	2,161 (1,72%)
Total	6,904 (5.5%)

The adjective category was also classified according to their semantic meaning, displayed in Table 9. According to this results, the adjectives denoting size and quantity (27 items, 734 tokens, 15,5%) and, especially, general qualities (50 items;1,409 tokens, 29.77%) were the most frequent adverbs in our corpus.

Table 9. The adjectives semantic analysis

Type of adjectives	Items	Tokens	Examples
Time adjectives	8	297 tokens (6.27%)	New, old, young, current...
Place and movement	9	363 (7.66%)	Top, adjacent, right, clockwise...
Size and quantity	27	734 (15.5%)	Empty, high, large, double...
Colors	6	341 (7.2%)	White, black, green, red...
General qualities	50	1409 (29.77%)	Special, different, available, mobile...

The meanings related to attributive general qualities and also size and quantity may imply an abundance of descriptive fragments in BGRs.

6. Discussion

BGRs seem to contain linguistic elements that significantly increase the informativeness of the text while, simultaneously, keeping their instructive function. One clear example of this is the abundance of nouns, therefore a great lexical variety.

This high percentage of words in the corpus could suggest a notable presence of proper nouns and brands due to the commercial nature of the text. However, we find that common nouns constitute 22.18% of the corpus, occupying almost a quarter of all grammatical categories, which reflects the importance of this grammatical class in BGRs as instructive but also as informative texts.

The fact that most of these nouns refer to objects reinforces the idea of these texts (or at least parts of them) being informative, and sometimes descriptive.

As for verbs, they represent the second category most present in the corpus. The prevalence of external and objective verbs in the results reinforces the informative character of the text, as these verbs tend to be explicit and align with the narrative nature of BGRs.

In addition, a large number of verbs are observed in the present tense, which favors an immediate connection between the text and the reader and underlines its interactive nature and so, the linguistic characteristics of BGRs as instructive texts. Therefore, this use of the present tense suggests that the function of these texts is not only narrative but also oriented toward the reader's interaction and engagement.

Some examples of perfect-aspect verbs also reflect this tendency towards external and observable actions.

Although we only identified two verbs in the first 100 verbs, they are related to the game dynamics and indicate actions that can be performed with the cards or with the different elements present in the game.

Concerning adjectives, these represent a less frequent category (5.5% of the corpus). According to and following Biber (1989) (see section 2.1), the presence of adjectives is higher in informative than in narrative texts, which supports the descriptive narrative nature of BGRs in some of the passages where the dynamics of the game is contextualized so that the player gets immersed in the narrative environment of the game board.

The semantic analysis of adjectives reveals that most of them define general qualities of nouns. This is evidenced by the greater presence of attributive adjectives compared to predicative adjectives. Attributive adjectives, when placed before the noun they modify, provide direct information about it. Therefore, this type of adjectives not only appears in descriptive texts, as might be expected, but also in informative texts. Therefore, in BGRs both description and information seem to be hand in hand especially at the beginning of BGRs, where we assume that the elements of the game are explained in detail, allowing the players to visualize the components and helping them to identify each of the components of the game before they start playing.

The presence of personal pronouns helps to create empathy with the reader, especially through the use of the pronoun “you”, which fosters closeness and direct connection between the narrative environment and the reader/player but which also shows the instructive dominance of the BGRs as a text product. Instructive production is also reflected in the frequency of the presence of first and second person pronouns, as well as the pronoun “it”.

Finally, adverbs constitute the less frequent of our grammatical categories, this is an indicator of the informativeness and descriptiveness of the text as the most frequent adverbs are those that indicate manner, that is, those that especially complement verbs and indicate the way in which an action should be carried out.

7. Conclusion

Board games have become an increasingly popular form of entertainment, with an expanding market and significant growth in the publishers that produce and distribute them. These publishers not only design and sell the games, but are also responsible for creating the regulations that accompany them. These documents, essential to enjoy the experience, often go unnoticed, ending up wrinkled at the bottom of the box. However, we always resort to them when we resume a game after a long time or when some essential doubt arises during the game.

Operating on nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns and adverbs used in BGRs in a systematic way according to Biber's (1989) and Castellá i Lidon's (1995) multidimensional approach the linguistic analysis of text types, has helped us to reveal how in BGRs not only typical instructive but also informative and narrative linguistic elements can be part of the featuring of BGRs as text products.

The abundance of nouns can be interpreted as a tendency for an informative style (where specificity and clarity are essential) and the prevalence of external verbs, typically depicting observable actions and facts, also lends credence to this informative quality. According to the results of the present study, we should not overlook other linguistic features that complement these texts. More specifically, frequent present tense verbs and the use of especially first-person and second pronouns signals an instructive (and also narrative) style of writing intended to address the reader directly in order to teach them how to play. The less representative presence of adjectives and adverbs does not contradict the combination of various text types in BGRs as the presence of mostly attributive adjectives, on one hand, and manner adverbs, on the other, point respectively to both descriptive and instructive characteristics of this type of texts.

As further research, it would be interesting to observe if these linguistic characteristics associated to certain text types could be refined depending on other variables of analysis like, for instance, the type of game (e.g., strategic, familiar, etc.) or the age of the players (e.g., if they are children, the BGR may be more instructive than informative, descriptive or narrative).

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Annex 1. Spiel des Jahres awarded Boardgames

File	Year	Game	Author	Editorial	Players	Time	Min. Age	Type
*001	1979	Hare and Tortoise	D.Parlett	Ravensburger	2 - 6	45'	8+	Family
*002	1980	Rummikub	E.Hertzano	Intelli	2 - 4	60'	8+	Strategy (Maths)
*003	1981	Focus	S.Sackson	Parker	2 - 4	45'	10+	Strategy
*004	1982	Enchanted Forest	A.Randolph & M. Matschoss	Ravensburger	2 - 6	30 - 60'	4+	Children
*005	1983	Scotland Yard	W. Schlegel, D. Garrels, F. Ifland, M. Burggraf, W. Scheerer & W. Hoermann	Ravensburger	2 - 6	45'	10+	Family
*006	1984	Railway Rivals	D. Watts	Schmidt Spiele	2 - 6	90'	10+	Strategy
*007	1985	Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective	R. Edwards, S. Goldberg & G. Grady	Kosmos	1 - 8	60- 120'	13+	Deduction
*008	1986	Top Secret Spies (Heimlich & Co.)	W. Kramer	Ravensburger	2 - 7	30'	8+	Family
*009	1987	Auf Achse	W. Kramer	F.X. Schmid	2 - 6	60'	8+	Family
*010	1988	Barbarossa	K. Teuber	Altenburger und Stralsunder	3 - 4	60'	12+	Party
*011	1989	Café International	R. Hoffmann	Mattel	2 - 4	45 - 60'	10+	Family
*012	1990	Hoity Toity	K. Teuber	F.X. Schmid	2 - 5	45'	12+	Family
*013	1991	Drunter und Drüber	K. Teuber	Hans im Glück	2 - 6	30'	8+	Abstract

*014	1992	Um Reifenbreite	R. Bontenbal	Jumbo	2 - 4	60 - 90'	8+	Strategy
*015	1993	Liar's Dice	R. Borg	F.X. Schmid	2 - 6	15 – 30'	8+	Party
*016	1994	Manhattan	A. Seyfarth	Hans im Glück	2 - 6	60'	8+	Strategy
*017	1995	Catan	K. Teuber	Kosmos	3 - 4	60– 120'	10+	Strategy
*018	1996	El Grande	W. Kramer & R. Ulrich	Hans im Glück	2 - 5	60 - 120'	12+	Strategy
*019	1997	Mississippi Queen	W. Hodel	Goldsieber	3 - 5	45'	10+	Family
*020	1998	Elfenland	A. R. Moon	Amigo Spiele	2 - 6	60'	10+	Family
*021	1999	Tikal	W.Kramer & M.Kiesling	Ravensburger	2 - 4	90'	10+	Strategy
*022	2000	Torres (1999)	W. Kramer & M. Kiesling	F.X. Schmid	2 - 4	60'	10+	Strategy
*023	2001	Carcassonne	K. J. Wrede	Hans im Glück	2 - 4	30'	8+	Family
*024	2002	Villa Paletti (2001)	B. Payne	Zoch Verlag	2 - 4	30'	8+	
*025	2003	Alhambra	Dirk Henn	Queen Games	2 - 6	45 - 60'	8+	Strategy
*026	2004	Ticket to Ride	A. R. Moon	Days of Wonder	3 - 5	30 – 45'	8+	Family
*027	2005	Niagara	T.Liesching	Zoch Verlag	3 - 5	30- 45'	8+	Family
*028	2006	Thurn and Taxis	A.Seyfarth & K.Seyfarth	Hans im Glück	2 - 4	60'.	10+	Family
*029	2007	Zooloretto	M. Schacht	Abacus Spiele	2 - 5	45'	8+	Family
*030	2008	Keltis	R. Knizia	Kosmos	2 - 4	30'	10+	Family
*031	2009	Dominion	D.X. Vaccarino	Rio Grande Games	2 - 4	30'	13+	Strategy
*032	2010	Dixit	J. L. Roubira	Libellud	3 - 8	30'	8+	Party
*033	2011	Qwirkle	S. McKinley Ross	Mindware Spiele	2 - 4	45'	6+	Abstract

*034	2012	Kingdom Builder	D. X. Vaccarino	Queen Games	2 - 4	45'	8+	Strategy
*035	2013	Hanabi	A. Bauza	Abacus Spiele	2 - 5	25'	8+	Family
*036	2014	Camel Up	S. Bogen	Eggertspiele	2 - 8	20 - 30'	8+	Family
*037	2015	Colt Express	C. Rimbault	Ludonate	2 - 6	40'	10+	Family
*038	2016	Codenames	V. Chvátal	Czech Games Edition	2 - 8	15'	14+	Party
*039	2017	Kingdomino	B. Cathala	Pegasus Spiele	2 - 4	15 - 25'	8+	Family
*040	2018	Azul	M. Kiesling	Next Move/Plan B Games	2 - 4	30 - 45'	8+	Abstract
*041	2019	Just One	L. Roudy & B. Sautter	Repos Production	3 - 7	20 - 60'	8+	Party
*042	2020	Pictures	D. & C. Stöhr	PD-Verlag	3 - 5	20 - 30'	8+	Deduction
*043	2021	MicroMacro: Crime City	J. Sich	Edition Spielwiese & Pegasus Spiele	1 - 4	15 - 45'	12+	Deduction
*044	2022	Cascadia	R. Flynn	Flatout Games /AEG/Kosmos	1 - 4	30 - 45'	10+	Abstract
*045	2023	Dorfromantik	M. Palm & L. Zach	Pegasus Spiele	1 - 6	30 - 60'	8+	Cooperative