

Promotional practices in mission and vision statements of corporate companies: A systemic functional linguistic analysis

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Abstract

Promotional strategies have become discursive practices in corporate companies' mission and vision statements. However, less focus was given to the role of grammar in shaping this text type as part of promotional discourse. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is arguably the most definite and certain linguistic analysis as a meaning-making resource. Hence, the purpose of this study was to use transitivity grammar theory in SFL to analyse the use of experiential processes in enacting promotional rhetorical moves. Following purposive sampling, mission and vision statements of hundred international companies, which were ranked by current market capitalization, were selected. Using textual analysis, we applied transitivity grammar theory to manually analyse promotional rhetorical moves. The results were quantified and presented in tabulation form. The findings revealed that mental and relational processes are favoured grammatical patterns used by corporate firms to write mission statements that focus on building public image and establish self-concept. The findings of this research can prove helpful for other corporate companies to use similar grammatical patterns to develop mission and vision statements.

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1. Introduction

The increasing demand of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the applied linguistics context has strengthened the role of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to define the linguistic characteristics of text types (Bateman, 2008; Bhatia, 1983; 2004; Swales, 1990). One aspect of SFL theory deals with transitivity system, which centres on how people construe reality and convey experiences by applying a wide range of syntactic structures (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). This approach is relevant to the discourse of mission-writing in professional practices. Mission and vision statement are generally identified as the most important steps to strategic planning; in the corporate sector, mission and vision statements can play a strategic role in guaranteeing the performance of the company (Hongwei, 2012; Koller, 2009; Pearce & David, 1987). Due to the enormity of this genre, the mission statements are continuously being researched regardless of being labelled as ambiguous and inconsistent in sustaining their communicative purposes (Boerema, 2006; Hayden, 2012; Drucker, 1974; Rozycki, 2004; Swales & Rogers, 1995). Although previous studies used content analysis as a method to explore the function of this genre (Bittencourt & Willetts, 2018; Breznik & Law, 2019; Hafferty *et al.*, 2019; Velcoff & Ferrari, 2006), transitivity theory of SFL was less used as a method of analysis. Therefore, analysing the grammatical clauses of mission and vision statements is deemed necessary to understand the linguistic nature and functional role of mission-writing in corporate discourse.

Although the discourse community of planning and management has remained consistent in monitoring how organisations develop mission statements, the influence of globalization and international marketization makes it difficult to study the same (Rego *et al.*, 2015). The inception of globalization instigated an inevitable competition between both nations and organisations, which has resulted in a drastic shift in the communicative purpose of mission and vision statements (David & David, 2014; Goertzen & Kristjanson, 2007). From substantiating purpose to informing strategic planning, this text type has become a prototypical example of brandization and marketing. Mission statements act as the basis for an organisation's priorities, strategies, and plans; in essence, these statements announce the existential purpose of organisations (Bartkuset *al.*, 2006; Christensen & Askegaard, 2001; Mason & Mason, 2012). According to Pearce and David (1987), the purpose of mission and vision statement should be to develop a unique purpose of the company and to inform a targeted audience about the tasks it executes and why it needs to execute them. Within the corporate context, mission statements simultaneously define the beliefs and values behind a company's profile while emphasising a set of products or services it offers, typically at a competitive price. Some researchers have opined that it is the "most visible and public part of a strategic plan" (Pearce & David, 1987, p. 109).

Mission statements seemingly carry the pulse of corporate realities, no matter the type of organisation; all kinds of institutions like private schools, healthcare facilities, and financial firms adhere to this rationale (David & David, 2014; Fairclough, 1993). However, to understand how promotional rhetorical moves are favoured by international corporate companies to write mission statements, there is a need to explore the transitivity system of this genre. The purpose of using SFL was to provide a comprehensive, goal-oriented approach for the linguistic description of mission statements used by international companies. Hence, by analysing the system of transitivity patterns of mission and vision statements, the objective was to identify how promotional rhetoric was enacted through transitivity patterns.

Following a textual analysis, hundred international corporate companies' mission and vision statements were manually analysed using transitivity theory of grammar to explore promotional rhetoric enacted through experiential processes. To understand the communicative purposes achieved through lexico-grammatical features, this research revealed the most frequent experiential processes associated with each rhetorical move of mission and vision statements. The interplay of rhetorical moves and their surface-level grammatical structures allows a more meaningful description on the use of specific lexico-grammatical resources and how they develop meanings. With this purpose, answers were sought to the questions: a) What are the transitivity patterns of experiential meanings used in mission statements of corporate firms? b) What rhetorical moves are reflected by the transitivity patterns of experiential meanings in mission statements of corporate firms?

Section 2 critically evaluates articles relevant to this research and establishes the niche of this study; section 3 situates the theoretical framework and section 4 outlines materials and methods used to carry this research; section 5 presents quantitative and qualitative analyses of experiential processes. The results revealed the grammatical patterns of transitivity used to enact promotional rhetoric in the selected mission and vision statements and demonstrated the value of employing SFL theory such as transitivity system, which allows for a thicker description of language as a meaning-making resource. Finally, section 6 outlines the conclusion of the findings and addresses the implications of this analysis.

2. Literature review

This research has attempted to explore how lexico-grammatical resources enact promotional rhetoric in mission statements of international companies. For this purpose, this research has relied on SFL as a grammar theory for the analysis. Mainly, the application of SFL theory created a new linguistic field to analyse how discourse communities constructed or construed meaning from texts (Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Li, 2010; Martin & White, 2007). SFL theory has largely dealt with how words were employed in a specific cultural or social context to enact communicative purposes (Halliday, 1978). This notion was also emphasized by Hasan (2009), who stated that contextual choices activate semantic choices, which further activate the lexico-grammatical choices. Although genre analysis focuses on macro-structures of the text (Bhatia, 2004; Swales, 1990), without studying text-internal properties, a comprehensive understanding of the genre is limited (Derewianka, 1990; Ravelli, 2000). Since the purpose of SFL is to analyse and explore the linguistic functions of text production, genre analysis and SFL are inter-connected in which the understanding of the genre is partially realized through grammar.

Arguably, the analysis of the lexico-grammatical resources reveals that the communicative purposes of promotional genres are partially influenced by the linguistic resources used to shape them (Askehave, 2007; Pho, 2008). Promotional genre is one in which prototypical texts comprise similar communicative purposes such as promoting products or services. Sometimes, the promotional purpose may be to market an 'idea' instead of products or services. As has been previously reported in the literature, mission statements carry corporate purposes as companies strive to build their public image and reinforce their self-concept (David *et al.*, 2011; Khalifa, 2011). Prior research suggests that mission statements were used by companies to build a public image by aligning their philosophies and values (Campbell *et al.*, 1991). Based on this notion, there exists a considerable body of literature which analysed the mission statements from a similar perspective.

For instance, Yurtseven (2003) carried a survey on five-star hotels' mission statements (as cited in Ozdem, 2011). He found that 52% of these mission statements focus on product and service promotion; 48% to state organization's philosophy; 64% to emphasize customers; 44% to reflect on environmental-social responsibility; and 56% to adhere to high quality and innovation. Henceforth, mission statements can be characterized as a sub-category of the promotional genre. A recent study by Lin *et al.* (2018) similarly concluded that the primary purpose of mission statements was to emphasize the company's qualities and values to attract customer. Drawing on seventy-nine passenger airlines, they found the most recurrent mission statement components focusing on the product or service, customers, location, and safety to ensure confidence among consumers. Ostensibly, this research suggests that promoting service or product is an important part of writing mission statements, which is also a recurrent rhetorical move in promotional genre.

Over time, an extensive literature has developed on the need to address the role of mission statements in corporate setting. Prior research suggested that mission statements help companies distinguish themselves as different from other corporate personalities (Kemp & Dwyer, 2003). Authors like Holland and Nichele (2016) have drawn further development of this genre. They devised an ideological content analysis (FDM) and examined the mission statements of Coca-Cola and Pepsico. Their analysis portrayed mission statements as corporate manifestos to provide statements of vision, value, and strategy. Koller (2009) similarly defined companies as social agents who maximize profit and shareholders' value. She opined that mission statements had become more like 'corporate brand' which are ideally suited to produce branding propositions to potential customers. This type of communication is characteristically market-oriented, which is understood as the type of communication in which the company reinforces itself through positive image (Christensen & Askegaard, 2001). Similarly, Allison (2017) studied seven hundred and ninety-eight vision and mission statements of corporate firms through text analysis to develop natural language taxonomy for vision and mission statements. He found that the common top ten words that categorized this genre were 'customer', 'deliver', 'service', 'shareholder', 'value', 'product', 'employee', 'meet', 'solution' and 'partner' asserting that vision and mission statements are used to deliver products or services, which was also identified as a recurrent rhetorical move of this genre.

In short, the literature pertaining to the genre of mission statements strongly suggests that this text type is a prototypical example of promotional genre. However, prior studies have almost exclusively focused on content analysis to examine mission statements. A recent study by Ahmad and Masroor (2020) brought a new perspective to mission statements. They explored the generic patterns of mission and vision statements of universities and revealed few existing promotional rhetorical moves such as "Expressing Institutional Aspirations" (p. 175). Although this study is a new contribution to the genre of mission statements, it has given little emphasis to lexico-grammatical resources. Because promotional rhetoric is ostensibly left implicit in the text and can only be revealed by unravelling the tactics of promotion employed (Bhatia, 2004), it requires the genre analyst to dissect the grammatical resources of the text as well.

Arguably, Fairclough's (1993) linguistic analysis of universities' mission statements remains a valid contribution to SFL. He opined that universities use pre-modifiers and modal verbs in their mission statements to advertise their services. Bittencourt and Willetts (2018) similarly explored international universities' mission statements and concluded that an ideological perception of internationalism drove their motives. However, their research work was based on the content analysis as a method of inquiry. Despite the increasing appearance of the

promotional rhetoric in mission statements, little research has been done to explore how transitivity patterns of grammar enact such purposes. We suggest that a broader analytic perspective is required for a fuller understanding of the functions of the promotional rhetoric in the mission statements.

SFL is arguably the most definite and certain linguistic analysis in dealing with meanings as it focuses on correlating language and context. SFL has proved to be a useful beginning point for the analysis of mission statements. For instance, the following studies were conducted on SFL. A recent study by Benelhadj (2019) examined academic genre by bringing prepositional phrase complexity to focus. The researcher found simple prepositional phrases (774 in frequency) as more common and recurrent than complex prepositional phrases (32 in frequency). The most common prepositional phrases were composed of the structure 'prep+noun+prep' such as 'in addition to'. Impersonality in research articles – often expressed through transitivity structures – was analysed by Martinez (2001). Using the SFL approach, the researcher selected twenty-one experimental studies from physics, biology and sociology. Martinez (2001) found material processes to be more frequent than relational. However, these processes were used variably in different sections of research articles. For instance, in results sections, authors tend to imply relational processes to maintain distance from the text, whereas mental processes were used to mitigate claims. A transitivity analysis of rhetorical moves in Thai and international dental research abstracts was conducted by Vathanalaoha and Tangkiengsirisin (2018) using a corpus-based method that compared tonal styles in rhetorical moves. Selecting one-twenty dental articles, they used Halliday (1994) SFL approach and Thompson's (2000) verbal choices of transitivity. The researchers found that verbal and existential processes were mostly used in methodological sections, whereas verbal processes were most frequently used in discussion sections. These studies have made seminal contributions to SFL theory by validating the potential role of grammar in shaping text types.

In general, it appears that majority of prior research based on genre analysis has applied SFL perspective to analyse text types. Although previous research provides insightful categorization of mission statements as a prototypical example of promotional genre, employing SFL theory to analyse promotional rhetoric has remained limited. We suggest that combining move analysis with SFL perspective might be a useful way to address mission statements that would also be useful for companies who wish to write persuasive mission statements. Using SFL theory to analyse mission and vision statements reveals how promotional linguistic practices can influence the ways international companies develop mission statements. The goal of this study is to, therefore, use the transitivity theory to examine the experiential processes used to enact the promotional rhetoric in the mission and vision statements of the international corporate companies.

3. Theoretical framework

Genre studies use a variety of frameworks to analyse a range of textual artefacts that are developed and used by disciplinary members (Bhatia, 2004; Swales, 1990). This research drew on genre analysis in particular to answer the research questions that revolved around the construction of a certain text type as a distinctive genre in specified professional discourse communities. Promotional discourse refers to a constellation of closely related genres with overlapping communicative purposes that include promoting products or services to potential customers such as advertisements, promotional letters and book blurbs (Bhatia, 2004). While some may not exactly appear as ads, however, Bhatia (2004) stated that their rhetorical moves

show promotional concerns. Moreover, sometimes the promotional text may not be about promoting product or service, but an idea. Mission and vision statements are becoming increasingly creative as they use rhetorical moves and lexico-grammatical structure that instigate a high degree of reader attraction. Sometimes, the purpose of these texts can be identified as introducing business proposition *per se*. Most popular promotional strategies are based on the rhetoric of description and evaluation of products or services by using positive evaluative lexico-grammatical forms. These genres that possess informative and commercial purposes have been defined as mixed genres and are known as ‘info commercial’.

As stated earlier, mission-writing has similar rhetorical moves to Bhatia’s (2004) model of promotional genre (see table-1). This rhetoric is evident in how mission statements are characteristically lengthy and captivating. For this purpose, we used Bhatia’s (2004) rhetorical moves of promotional genre to examine mission statements of international companies. In light of Bhatia’s (2004) theory, a study of language use in the world of professional culture would be required to understand the complex realities of discursive performances. This analysis requires the genre analyst to examine the surface-level linguistic properties of the text type. This gives significance to the lexico-grammatical forms that make up the text. Thus, the focus of this space is not primarily the context, but the co-text (Bhatia, 2004). Textual space deals with the knowledge of language structures and corresponding functions that are employed to construct the text in typified situations. The emphasis is, therefore, on properties linked to the construction of textual space. For this purpose, we identified transitivity patterns of grammar, which were used as linguistic resources to establish experiential meanings. We analysed those rhetorical moves by textually identifying the experiential processes through which texts are constructed in accordance with SFL.

Table-1: The model offered by Bhatia

Move 1	Headlines
Move 2	Targeting the Market
Move 3	Justifying the product or service Step 1: by indicating the importance or need of the product or service Step 2: by establishing a niche
Move 4	Detailing the product or service Step1: identifying the product or service Step 2: describing the product or service Step 3: indicating the value of the product or service
Move 5	Establishing credentials
Move 6	Celebrity or typical user endorsement
Move 7	Offering incentives
Move 8	Using pressure tactics
Move 9	Soliciting response

Source: Bhatia (2004, p. 74)

The current study focuses on exploring the rhetorical moves that help in producing the mission and vision statements of a company; hence, the grammar of clause as representation complimented the analysis. This grammatical choice is known as the transitivity patterns; it defines the experiential meanings of the world; of perception; of experiences and the reaction. By exploring the transitivity patterns in the texts of the mission and vision statements, we can

explain how the communicative event is being constructed; we can thus decipher what is being talked about. The clauses are generally encoded in the process types (material, mental, behavioural, verbal, existential, relational) which specify the action, relationship between the participants and events, and where the processes are situated circumstantially (for time, place, cause, etc.).

3.1. Transitivity analysis

Because the textualization of genre involves studying the lexico-grammatical features, SFL was followed by studying the transitivity patterns of experiential processes. Transitivity analysis offers a detailed description of the construction of clauses and the functions they perform; it offers an understanding of how meanings are encoded in experiential processes. By examining the transitivity patterns in text, we explained how the field of situation is being constructed, i.e., we described 'what is being talked about' and 'how shifts in the field' are achieved. Transitivity patterns of experiential meanings comprise: (i) material process which describe processes as doing, usually of concrete and tangible actions, "some entity does something, undertakes some action" (Eggins, 2004, p. 243); (ii) mental processes which define what we feel or talk about; they are clauses which encode processes of feeling or thinking; (iii) behavioural processes which encode processes of behaviour. The one who executes the behaviour is defined as 'doer' and the type of behaviour that is executed is defined as 'circumstance'; (iv) verbal process which contains three participants: Sayer, Receiver and Verbiage. The Verbiage is a nominalized statement of the verbal process: a noun expressing some kind of verbal behaviour; (v) relational processes, which encode meanings about state of being, are categorized in two types: attributive and identifying processes. Attributive process involves establishing a relationship between two processes. In the attributive process type, a quality or attribute – defined as the carrier – is assigned to the participant. Identifying processes are different from attributive in that the identifying clause is not about attributing or ascribing but defining. What can further differentiate between identifying and attributive processes is that the nominal group in attributive is an indefinite nominal group such as 'a healthy fruit' whereas the identifying process involves a definite nominal group such as 'the healthy fruit'; (vi) Causative relational occur with either Attributive or Identifying structures. The causation process is expressed either through a *make + be* (Process: intensive) structure, or, with Identifying Relational, through a causative process.

The purpose of using SFL theory as a method of analysis is to reveal how promotional rhetoric is enacted. For this purpose, we have analysed each rhetorical move's linguistic properties and lexico-grammatical structures. By identifying the typical lexico-grammatical structures, we were able to define how a certain rhetorical move is validated.

4. Research methodology

The purpose of this research was to explore and present the generic patterns of writing mission and vision statements by analysing the lexico-grammatical structures. Therefore, the methodology for genre analysis included qualitative research method. The qualitative research method relied on descriptive data with little emphasis given to numerical quantification (Jason & Glenwick, 2016). Because mission and vision statements are real texts that are socially constructed, and the meanings derived from such texts rely on the specific context of interaction; using qualitative research method allowed carrying an in-depth examination of the generic patterns of mission and vision statements.

This research has followed a descriptive method to analyse mission and vision statements of international corporate companies. A manual lexico-grammatical analysis of promotional rhetorical moves was carried out to identify the experiential processes used to enact the rhetorical moves. Purposive sampling was used, which is also known as deliberate sampling that involves “purposive or deliberate selection of particular units of the universe for constituting a sample which represents the universe” (Kothari, 2004, p. 15). Following purposive sampling, hundred international companies were selected from the list provided by Forbes Global¹ which provides an annual ranking list of top 2000 companies’ ranking based on four metrics: sales, profit, assets and market value. The technique of purposive sampling allowed us pick and choose the data according to a set criterion of requirements (Etikan *et al.*, 2015). It means that the data used for this study was deliberately chosen based on some required qualities/characteristics. The criterion for selecting sentence examples from the mission and vision statements is that they reflect any of the rhetorical moves of promotional genre such as ‘targeting the market’ or ‘establishing niche’.

First, the rhetorical moves of the selected mission and vision statements were manually explored using Bhatia’s (2004) model of promotional genre. An inter-coder reliability method was followed to assess the moves formally, and the obtained percent of the agreement was 88.5%. The model was then used to analyse the grammatical clause structure of the rhetorical moves existing in the data. Rhetorical moves of promotional genre were analysed to examine their lexico-grammatical structures.

Using transitivity analysis (Eggins, 2004), the clause structure of the moves was identified. Then, the experiential processes employed to structure the clauses were examined. For instance, mental process was used to enact move three i.e., ‘justifying the product or service’. Mental process as a lexico-grammatical structure was best suited for this particular rhetorical move as it fulfilled the function of persuading the targeted audience that they have a problem and that the service or product of the company is the best solution.

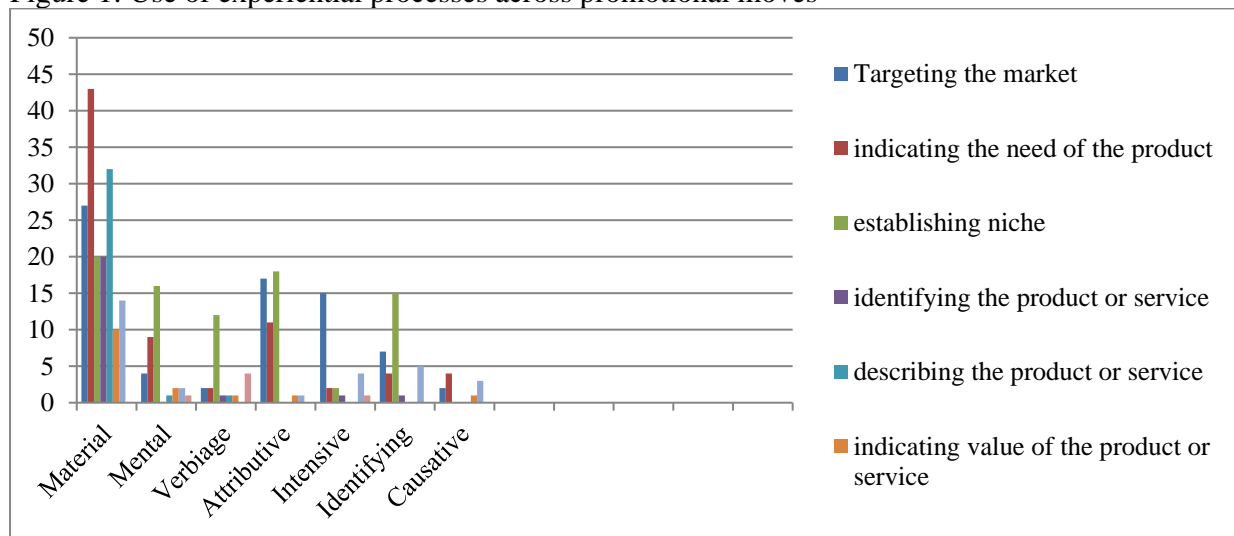
Following this method of analysis, transitivity pattern of experiential processes was quantified by counting the occurrences of each experiential process in every rhetorical move. Using this method, the results revealed the most typical transitivity pattern used to enact the promotional rhetorical move. First, results were quantified by presenting percentage of occurrence in tabulation form. Then, each experiential process was explained by identifying its prototypical move. Analysis of the grammatical clause was provided as an example, followed by a number of other listed instances fetched from the data. Each experiential process was defined and explained as to how and why one type was more common than the other in a certain rhetorical move.

The data gathered for this study was publicly displayed on the official websites of international corporate companies. No company was privately emailed to provide their mission and vision statements. The official web link of the selected mission and vision statement mentioned in the footnote can be publicly accessed.

5. Results and discussion

We first considered the range of transitivity patterns and their use with each rhetorical move, giving special emphasis to the most frequent experiential process occurring with each rhetorical move. Figure 1 shows the overall distribution of experiential processes.

Figure 1: Use of experiential processes across promotional moves



The analysis of rhetorical moves of international corporate companies from SFL perspective revealed significant results about the role of experiential processes used when writing mission statement. The study found that mission writing relies heavily on material process to enact most of the rhetorical moves. This could be due to the communicative purpose of writing mission statements. Generally, corporate companies wish to inform their customers about what they do and what their services or products are, which requires them to use concrete tangible clauses. The percentage of material process was 16.2% in M2, 25.9% in M3S1, 12.04% in M3S2, 12.04% in M4S1, 19.2% in M4S2, 6.02% in M4S3 and 8.4% in M5.

The analysis revealed that material processes were mostly used to enact M4 i.e., ‘describing the product or service’. Arguably, international corporate companies employ this move to inform the targeted audience about their services and products. This finding was also reported by Yurtseven (2003) who found that 52% of these mission statements focus on product and service promotion. Arguably, part of developing public image and establishing self-concept requires the professional community to integrate their plans, define products and service and indicate the value of the services or products. Moreover, material process was also frequently used with M3S1 i.e. ‘indicating the importance of the service’.

The percentage of mental process was 11.4% in M2, 25.7% in M3S1, 45.7% in M3S2. The analysis revealed that mental process was mostly used to enact M3S2 which is ‘establishing niche’. The percentage of attributive process was 35.4% in M2, 22.9% in M3S1, 37.5% in M3S2. The analysis revealed that attributive process was mostly used to enact M3S2 which is ‘establishing niche’ and M2 which is ‘targeting the market’. The percentage of intensive process was 60% in M2 and 16% in M5 which is ‘establishing credentials.’ The analysis revealed that intensive process was mostly used to enact M3S2 i.e. ‘establishing niche’. These results indicate that the selected hundred international corporate firms use mission statements as a distinctive text type primarily to reinforce their position in the market via the rendition of a positive image. Similar findings were established by Lin *et al.* (2018) who stressed on the significance of mission statements as they tend to connect international stakeholders and portray global careers and international competition.

The percentage of identifying process was 21.8% in M2, 12.5% in M3S1, 46.8% in M3S2 and

15.6% in M5 which is ‘establishing credentials. The analysis revealed that identifying process was mostly used to enact M3S2 i.e., ‘establishing niche’ significantly denoting that international companies rely on establishing a positive public image as a means to promote their presence within the established market. When a larger number of companies focus on ‘targeting the market’, it indicates that they generally strive for recognition in a market of competition. This finding was also evident in Koller’s study (2009), which concluded that mission statements were considered as ideally suited to act as branding propositions to various audiences. Furthermore, a market-oriented communication is generally understood as the type of communication in which the company reinforces itself through positive image (Christensen & Askegaard, 2001).

The percentage of verbiage process was 52.1% in M3S2 and 17.3% in M6. The analysis revealed that verbiage process was mostly used to enact M3S2 and M6, which are ‘establishing niche’ and ‘celebrity endorsement’ respectively. As defined by Campbell *et al.* (1991), mission statements are used by companies to build a public image while defining their philosophies and values. This definition seems to be the reason for which mission statements rely on Relational Identifying Process 72% to ‘establish niche’ as a means for building public image. Attributive process was also found to be recurrently used to ‘target the market’ used by the professional community to specify their position by defining their attributes.

Table-2: Percentage of occurrence of experiential processes across promotional moves

Description	MAT	MENT	VERBI	ATTR	INT	IDE	CAUS
Targeting the market	16.20%	11.40%	4.34%	35.40%	60%	21.80%	20%
Indicating the need of the product	25.90%	25.70%	8.69%	22.90%	8%	12.5	40%
Establishing niche	12.04%	45.70%	52.17%	37.5	8%	26.80%	0.00%
Identifying the product or service	12.04%	0.00	4.34%	0.00%	4%	3.12	0.00%
Describing the product or service	19.20%	2.85%	4.34%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Indicating value of the product or service	6.02%	5.71%	4.34%	4.34%	0.00%	0.00%	10%
Establishing credentials	8.43%	5.71%	0.00%	2.08%	16%	15.60%	30%
Celebrity endorsement	0.00%	2.85%	17.30%	0.00%	4%	0.00%	0.00%

In accordance with prior research, the present results have demonstrated similar findings. Stated that mission statements are becoming a prototypical example of branding and marketization, the analysis of lexico-grammatical structures corroborates this stance. As seen in Table 1, international companies heavily rely on attributive processes to describe their qualities as idiosyncratic and innovative. Similarly, international companies also focus on describing products and services, by using material processes to reflect their actions as concrete and tangible. It can, therefore, be argued that the analysis of mission statements from an SFL perspective revealed that this text type carries greater similarities to promotional genre.

5.1. Material process

This process was typically most frequent in M4 i.e., ‘detailing the product or service’. Material

process as a lexico-grammatical structure was best suited for this particular rhetorical move as it fulfilled the function of ‘identifying the service or product’ which required the companies to define it as a tangible, concrete and action-oriented practice. Material verbs such as *provide*, *use*, *craft*, *produce*, *discover*, *give* and *offer* identify the service or product that a certain company wants their customers to learn about. Examples of ‘detailing the product or service’ as a rhetorical move using material processes included:

- We *provide* quality, reliable and environmentally friendly energy
- *Crafting* great beer from the best natural ingredients
- *Provide* competitive high quality electronics manufacturing services
- *Produce* world class professionals
- *Discover, develop and commercialize* innovative therapeutics
- *Deliver* breath-taking innovations
- *Giving* our customers a unique competitive edge
- *Deliver* unmatched joyful vacations for our guests

Table-3: Transitivity pattern in material process

Actor	Process (material)	Goal	Beneficiary
We	Provide Craft Produce deliver	environmentally friendly energy quality electronics joyful vacations	for our guests

5.2. Mental process

Mental process was used to enact M3 i.e., ‘justifying the product or service’. Mental process as a lexico-grammatical structure was best suited for this particular rhetorical move as it fulfilled the function of persuading the targeted audience that they have a problem or need some assistance and that the service or product of the company is the best solution. This purpose can be best achieved by manipulating people’s thoughts, emotions, and perceptions about a certain idea or entity using verbs denoting mental process. Examples of mental verbs such as *strive*, *aware*, *see*, *imagine*, *aim*, *value* and *believe* help persuade people to feel, think, or believe in a certain service or product. Examples of ‘justifying the product or service’ using mental process included:

- We are fully *aware* that we are a global enterprise
- *See this nation* emerge as a competition
- *The way we see it*, the impossible is not impossible
- Never satisfied with the status quo, *we imagine* what’s next
- At Boeing, *they value* diversity because it is important
- *We believe* in taking responsibility
- *We believe* that good business means a better world

Table-4: Transitivity pattern in mental process

Senser	Process (mental)	Phenomenon act	Phenomenon fact
We We They	Aware Imagine Value	What’s next Diversity	that we are a global enterprise

5.3 Relational processes

5.3.1. Relational attributive process

This process was used in M3S2 i.e., ‘establishing niche’. Attributive process as a lexico-grammatical structure was a prototypical structure for this particular rhetorical move to fulfil the function of identifying institute’s beliefs and values. Companies define their public image through attribution and by identifying their beliefs and values to justify the service or product reflected in their mission and vision statements. Company’s firm beliefs, values, and aspirations are realised through attributive nouns and adjectives that reflect company’s self-concept. This purpose was best achieved by using attributive or identifying lexico-grammatical structures. Examples are given to show how employing attributive and identifying structures help establish the niche and self-concept of companies as a means of distinguishing themselves from others.

- Bizzard Entertainment *is what it is today*
- *Takuda is a patent focused, innovation-driven global pharma company*
- Everyone here *is a geek* at heart
- *We are leaders* in progress
- *It is a sense* of inspiration and mobility

Table-5: Transitivity pattern in attributive process

Carrier	Process (attributive)	Attribute
Bizzard entertainment	Is	what it is today
<u>Takuda</u>		patent focused
Everyone		a geek

Attributive process was also predominantly used to enact M2i.e. ‘targeting the market’. The typical lexico-grammatical structure denoting this move was to use attributive process ‘to be a’ or intensive attributive ‘to be the’ followed by the attribute. Using this particular lexico-grammatical structure was fundamental to achieve this rhetorical move which requires companies to define their geographic allocation and role within the market they plan to be a part of Typical lexico-grammatical structures to enact ‘targeting the market’ as a rhetorical move were: *to be the leading company, leading institute, world’s leading, and world’s best.*

- *To be a leading, competitive, Nutrition, Health and Wellness Company*
- Our vision is *to be earth's most customer-centric* company
- Our Vision is *to be the world's pre-eminent* life insurance provider
- *To be the most respected* Internet enterprise
- *Be a role* model for contribution to society

Table-6: Transitivity pattern in attributive process

Carrier	Process (attributive)	Attribute
Our vision	To be	A leading A role model

5.3.2. Relational identifying process

This move was typically realized in M5 i.e. ‘establishing credentials’. The most common lexico-grammatical features characteristically identifiable with M5 were largely dependent on relational intensive process (be+the+attribute) such as *world’s leading*, *is the major company*, and *is the top*. Above intensive processes, it is largely depended on circumstantial process by relying on dates, years and numbers such as: *adopted June 10*, *more than 100 years*, *two billion a day*, *in 2009*, *since 1954*, and *built over 150 years ago*.

- Nestlé is.....*the world’s leading nutrition, health and wellness company*
- Customer reviews, 1-Click shopping, personalized recommendations, Prime, Fulfilment by Amazon, AWS, Kindle Direct Publishing, Kindle, Fire tablets, Fire TV, Amazon Echo, and Alexa *are some of the products and services pioneered by Amazon*
- The following principles *guide* our relationship with our stakeholders
- *Two billion times a day*, P&G brands touch the lives of people around the world
- From carbon abatement to disaster recovery to bringing tech education to underfunded schools, *we’ve made some tremendous progress so far*.
- *AT&T has recorded 35 consecutive years of quarterly dividend growth and is a Fortune 10 company*.
- *After careful formulation and thorough discussion, the Board approved the Group’s Vision, Mission and Core Values (VMV), the bedrock of our corporate culture, in 2004*. With this initiative, we have embarked on building a coherent and bank-wide corporate culture and spirit that will motivate us and move us forward in the 21st century.

Table 7: Transitivity pattern in relational identifying process

Token	Process (identifying)	Value	Circumstance
Nestlé	Is	the world’s leading nutrition, health and wellness company	Two billion times a day
Customer reviews, 1-Click shopping	Are	some of the products and services pioneered by Amazon	the bedrock of our corporate culture, in 2004
following principles	Guide	our relation	

5.4. Verbal process

This process was typically used in M6 i.e., ‘celebrity or typical user endorsement’. Verbal process as a lexico-grammatical process was best suited for this particular rhetorical move to fulfil the function of affiliating a company’s name with other renowned companies or eminent philosophers by quoting their statements for the purpose of endorsement. This purpose was best achieved through direct or indirect quotations through lexico-grammatical structure that include a verbiage and a verbal process. Typical phrases are currently used with move six are: *Gilman Said*, *Reed Hastings says*, *said Jeff Silverman*.

- In October 2011, *co-founder and CEO Reed Hastings expressed a clear vision for the future of Netflix*: "We cannot close our eyes to the challenges that the world faces. Business must make an explicit and positive contribution to addressing them. I’m

convinced we can create a more equitable and sustainable world for all of us by doing so,” says *Unilever's former CEO Paul Polman*. “But this means that business has to change. The Unilever Sustainable Plan is a blueprint for sustainable growth.”

- *We frequently partner with leading industries*, and support and facilitate entrepreneurship among our students and faculty
- "My heart is in the work."
- *Andrew Carnegie*
- “It takes the same amount of energy to dream big as it does to dream small.”
Carlos Brito CEO of AB InBev

Table 8: Transitivity pattern in verbal process

Sayer	Process (verbal)	Verbiage
Unilever's former CEO Paul Polman	says	I'm convinced we can create a more equitable and sustainable world for all of us by doing so
Carlos Brito CEO of AB InBev		It takes the same amount of energy to dream big as it does to dream small

5.5. Causative process

This process was typically frequent in M3S1 i.e. ‘referring to its need for growth and survival’. Causative process as a lexico-grammatical process was best suited for this particular rhetorical move as it fulfilled its function of persuading the audience or customers that they have a problem and that their problem can be solved by causing change to occur. Typical phrases recurrently used to enact this step are: *make a difference*, *make life better*, and *make the world a better place*.

- *Make a difference* in the lives of people
- We innovate *to make the world* a healthier place
- *To make everyday* life just a little bit better

Table 9: Transitivity pattern in causative process

Process (causative)	Circumstance
Make	A difference the world a healthier place everyday life

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine how mission and vision statements of international corporate companies were rhetorically organised and to identify the transitivity patterns used for writing mission and vision statements. The data comprised hundred mission and vision statements of international corporate companies fetched from Global Forbes which provides an annual ranking list of top 2000 companies’ ranking based on four metrics: sales, profit, assets and market value. Two theoretical frameworks informed this research: (i) promotional

genre, and (ii) systemic functional linguistics. A move analysis was followed using Bhatia's (2004) proposed methodology for genre analysis. Then, transitivity patterns of moves' clausal structures were analysed.

The purpose of this research was to explore how promotional rhetoric is enacted through experiential processes. To understand the communicative purposes achieved through lexico-grammatical features, this research revealed the most frequent experiential processes associated with each rhetorical move of mission and vision statements. The interplay of rhetorical moves and their surface-level grammatical structures has provided a more meaningful description on the use of specific lexico-grammatical resources and how they develop meanings.

To recapitulate, transitivity patterns of experiential meanings in examples of mission and vision statements display the rhetorical moves employed by companies to position their public image, showcase who they are, and state what they intend to do. To construct a public image, companies rely on 'establishing niche' as a rhetorical move, which was predominantly conveyed through attributive and identifying processes. This may be considered as a further validation of Bhatia's (2004) idea of typical promotion. A further novel conclusion is that companies also try to 'target the market' because of the increasing competition between companies. This may be considered as a new contribution to the genre of mission statements, where companies can define their targeted customers by making their mission statements market oriented.

Essentially, writing mission and vision statements is part of the management and planning of an institute or company. The influence of policy guidelines and planning has certainly strengthened the establishment and practice of writing mission and vision statements to fulfil a number of communicative purposes. First, a mission statement orients the company to the needs of its community which includes the macro and micro communities. Second, having an ideal mission statement reflects the quality performance of an organisation by facilitating its employees, staff members, methodology and practices within the professional setting. The main conclusion that can be drawn is that writing mission statements is a prerequisite of policy guidelines offered by companies. However, promotional genre has become a practiced culture in this professional setting where companies constantly strive to build their public image as innovative and idiosyncratic.

Because companies aim to establish their social role in the corporate discourse community, they largely focus on promotional agendas. This requires them to write mission statements that define their nature, beliefs, and values. Using SFL theory, we conclude that mental and relational processes are favoured linguistic practices used by international companies to write mission statements that focus on building public image.

The positionality of rhetorical elements realised through certain types of experiential processes has helped in establishing a correlation between linguistic resources and their established communicative values within this genre. This analysis can be extended to inform research on other professional discourse communities. To gain a deep insight of this genre, research needs to be done into other discourse communities that use a similar genre. The analysis conducted in this research has generated deep understanding into how this genre is rhetorically organized and how the process of producing unique and idiosyncratic mission statements is negotiated through lexico-grammatical features. This analysis can also be applied to study 'About Us' section of companies' websites which are still under exploration. For instance, this model can

be used to examine their clause structures and how they conform to promotional rhetoric. The findings provide potential mechanism for the mission statements to be defined as a sub-category of the promotional genre. Using the SFL theory as lens to analyse the promotional rhetoric in mission statements, it can be argued that transitivity patterns of experiential processes may be considered as a promising theory to analyse the mission statements of other discourse communities.

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Notes:

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