

Exploring Modalities of Rhetorical Moves in Malaysian Travel Brochures Through Multimodal Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Rhetorical moves refer to text segments employed to communicate a specific purpose effectively. Despite the extensive body of research on the significance of rhetorical moves as a crucial strategy in various genres, the phenomenon of visual shapes such as texts, images, colors, logos, icons, and infographics of moves that sometimes replace the text remains unexplained. The study's objective is to uncover the interplay of visual modalities in the formation of the rhetorical moves found in Malaysian travel brochures. The study employs a multimodal analysis method: Bhatia's (1993–2004) model of Structural Move Analysis was employed to identify the moves in textual modes, and Bateman's (2008) Genre and Multimodality model was employed to identify the moves' visual and graphical modes. During the annual MATTA Fair event in Kuala Lumpur, a collection of 15 travel brochures was obtained, amounting to a total of 39 pages. The findings of the study demonstrate a complex interaction between textual and graphical components. Notably, the study revealed that both textual and graphical modes play a crucial role in shaping rhetorical moves, with a nearly equal proportion observed between the two. The findings presented in this study offer novel insights

into the visual presence and modern textuality of rhetorical moves.

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INTRODUCTION

Based on classical approaches to rhetorical moves analysis, such as Genre Analysis

and Move Analysis, this study explores the rhetorical moves in promotional genres through a linguistic approach, applying the modern concept of multimodality to these moves. In general, Genre Analysis is a linguistic approach that has three main schools of thought: English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS), and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). This study falls into the category of the ESP approach, targeting specific discourse, which, in this case, is printed media (travel brochures). Specifically, Move Analysis is a method that falls under Genre Analysis. Move Analysis is a text analytical approach developed by Swales (1990) as a fundamental method of Genre Analysis (Moreno & Swales, 2018). It depends on the concept of moves as “discoursal or rhetorical units performing coherent communicative functions in texts” (Swales, 2004, pp. 228–229), which are diverse in linguistic realizations according to the type of genre.

In terms of the promotional genre analysis of multimodal documents, researchers such as Bateman (2008) have used the general term “visual modalities” to refer to how meaning is conveyed through the visual shaping of text segments. It may include, but is not limited to, images, graphics, colors, layout, and typography. Textual and visual modalities play a significant role in the communication of texts as they can convey information, evoke emotions, and contribute to the overall meaning of a text or document in conjunction with other modes, such as textual or visual elements. Existing

research on rhetorical moves (Alhojailan, 2020; Chaidet & Pupipat, 2021; Dumlao & Pitichanoknan, 2020; Razak, 2019) has often neglected the visual aspects of rhetorical moves in promotional genres. This leads to an incomplete interpretation of the communicative purposes conveyed by these moves. This will also lead to not finding an answer as to why a move could be missing on a brochure in the form of text. The potential reason derived from this current study is that the absence of moves in the textual content could be interpreted as their occurrence in visual forms, such as images or logos, rather than in text.

In this study, texts are viewed as functional components that contribute to the overall meaning-making for promotional purposes rather than as semantic units at a micro level. Bateman (2008) argued that extending the Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST) to approach visual components need to consider the surrounding texts as contributors to the overall meaning rather than just verbal language: “The underlying intuition is that just as segments of a text contribute to that text’s coherence in systematic and specifiable ways, so can segments of a multimodal document, involving pictures, diagrams and texts, be related analogously also” (Bateman 2008, p. 144). The term “modalities” includes both visual and textual modes. The terms “visual mode” and “graphical mode” are often used interchangeably, but they can have slightly different meanings depending on the context. In general, “graphical mode” specifically refers to the utilization of images, charts,

graphs, and other visual representations to convey a communicative purpose. It is a subset of the broader category of "visual mode," which can include any type of visual element, including images, videos, animations, and other forms of multimedia (Bateman, 2008).

Thus, the main objective of this research is to reveal the various rhetorical moves that occurred in various modes to deliver meanings to the customer. The general significance of such a goal lies in enabling observations that could spark debates on multimodal phenomena. These inspiring assumptions could lead to further hypotheses regarding the materials and strategies of their content. The utilization of multiple analytical approaches (both linguistic and multimodal) in this study has elevated its level beyond what has been achieved by previous genre research studies. More specifically, the research benefits linguistic scholars by providing a potential answer to reported missing moves (Chen, 2017; Yoon & Casal, 2020) and demonstrating the applicability of using the Genre and Multimodality (GeM) model to visually identify moves by answering the study's main question, which is: What are the visual modalities of rhetorical moves that replace text-based moves and could explain the absence of certain moves in textual formats?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Underpinning works such as Swales' (1990) *Creating A Research Space* (CARS) model, the Generic Structure Potential (GSP) approach proposed by Halliday and Hasan

(1985), the move structural analysis model by Bhatia (1993, 2004), and the works of Moreno and Swales (2018) and Connor et al. (1995) have primarily focused on textual modes of writing and their rhetorical generic functions. Visual modes of moves have not received the same level of scrutiny as textual modes.

Despite the considerable body of research on the analysis of rhetorical moves in tourism discourse, a noticeable gap exists in the investigation of rhetorical moves in the context of their multi-mode formation. While previous studies, such as those by Hasan (2015), Ip (2008), and Jalis et al. (2014), have utilized linguistic approaches such as move analysis to examine the linguistic characteristics and functions of rhetorical moves, this current study acknowledges the significance of incorporating visual modes in conjunction with textual move identification.

The scholarly discourse on promotional genres, particularly that of tourism brochures, has delved into the intricate interplay between linguistic and non-linguistic components. Furnama and Rosa (2020) revealed the symbiotic relationship between verbal and visual elements, crafting a potent narrative that not only persuades but also entices readers to engage with tour and travel services. Hassan's (2014) study underscored the pivotal role of linguistic cues and visual imagery in depicting Malaysia's cultural richness, emphasizing the fusion of linguistic and non-linguistic elements for enhancing persuasion.

Visual modes of text hold equal significance to textual modes in facilitating

communicative functions within discourse (Amare & Manning, 2007). Sometimes, textual content is not fully displayed; instead, visual elements are used as a replacement. For instance, Chaidet and Pupipat (2021) found that the link button move replaces the soliciting response move. This move offers detailed contact information through hyperlinked markers rather than plain text. This point highlights the reason why a move could sometimes appear to be missing. In fact, textual modes are not always helpful in representing communicative ideas, especially when calling for action, such as seeking a response from customers. This can be effectively communicated through the logos of social media icons and usernames alone, without any further textual explanation.

Recent studies, such as Watanabe's (2021) study of Chinese newspapers, have emphasized the inseparable nature of visual and textual elements, underscoring the indispensable need to analyze both for a comprehensive understanding of promotional genre strategies. This critical review highlights the multidimensional nature of rhetorical moves in tourism discourse, particularly in brochures. It urges scholars to consider the complex integration of linguistic and visual elements within broader socio-cultural and economic contexts. In methodological terms, move analysis has been instrumental in dissecting the rhetorical strategies within promotional genres. However, this method of addressing moves with multimodal content has proven inadequate in explaining missing moves (Chen, 2017; Yoon & Casal, 2020) or in

elucidating moves in other modalities, such as images and logos. This method is meant for pure text analysis within one mode, mostly the textual mode. Thus, the present study aims to find out possible missing moves or missing moves in verbal mode that have been replaced by visual moves to accomplish the move's communicative purpose.

METHODS

Rhetorical moves are sentences or groups of sentences that serve typical communicative intentions that are always subservient to the overall communicative purpose of a genre. Moves are associated with communicative purpose and constitute the overall criteria of a given text genre in the organization of text segments into components (Bhatia, 1993). Several models have been proposed in the literature for analyzing moves in promotional discourse, including those by Fairclough (1993), Kathpalia (1992), and Swales (1990). However, the primary objective of the present study was to identify moves based on the modalities that lead to conveying the communicative purpose of the move. Therefore, 15 brochures (39 pages) were collected from the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) in Kuala Lumpur. The collection took place between 10 a.m. and 9 p.m., utilizing a purposeful sampling technique to select the brochures. Purposeful sampling is commonly regarded as a suitable method for qualitative research endeavors that aim to obtain data rich in information for a particular research question (Patton, 2002).

Next, a top-down approach was employed, using Bhatia's (1993, 2004) nine-move structural model of the promotional genre as a method for identifying the moves. This nine-move model, M1–M9, has been widely used in relevant studies such as L. Y. Yong and Mei (2018) and Chaidet and Pupipat (2021). M1 is the headline, which is typically featured as a catchy textual segment or a full sentence at the beginning of a promotional text, designed to grab the reader's attention and encourage continued reading. M2 targets the market and involves identifying and describing the target audience. Moreover, it often includes demographic details or specific characteristics of the intended market. M3 justifies the product or service, providing reasons why the product or service is beneficial or superior and highlighting key features, benefits, or unique selling points. M4 contains the details of the product or service and offers a comprehensive description, including specifications and technical details, giving the audience a clear understanding of what is being promoted. M5 establishes credentials that build credibility through awards, certifications, expert endorsements, or other forms of social proof. M6 is the typical user endorsement that enhances the product's appeal by sharing testimonials from satisfied customers. M7 offers incentives, including special offers or discounts, to encourage the reader to take action. M8 is where pressure tactics create a sense of urgency, often through limited-time offers or the implication of scarcity. Finally, M9, which

solicits a response, aims to provoke a specific action, such as making a purchase, contacting the company, or visiting a website.

Additionally, using Bateman's (2008) Genre and Multimodality (GeM) model to deconstruct the content of the brochure helps to meticulously deconstruct the moves and label them based on their contextual function, form, and position in the page layout. The visual formation of rhetorical moves can be identified using all linguistic and multimodal approaches possible. Bhatia's (1993, 2004) model was selected due to its extensive usage in the analysis of promotional discourse, as indicated by recent citations (Barabas, 2018; L. Y. Yong & Mei, 2018) and previous empirical studies on the identification of rhetorical moves (Henry & Roseberry, 2001; Huang, 2014). This selection is justified by the practical applicability and reliability of Bhatia's model in discerning rhetorical moves in promotional discourse through functional analysis, rendering it a suitable approach for the objective of this research. GeM was used in several current studies that involve analysis beyond merely pure texts with relation to visual identification, as in the studies of Bateman et al. (2001), Hiippala (2012), and Thomas (2014).

The rhetorical moves were categorized by the type of modality, textual or visual modes, and frequency of occurrence. The researcher then tabulated the analyzed data based on the move type and its mode of occurrence in percentages. Each move is labeled and categorized as textual or

visual and then coded accordingly. The outcome was quantitative data describing the frequency of each type of move and its corresponding mode. In doing so, the researcher could clearly see these modes' existence as a form of the moves themselves.

The concept of a "move" has been defined as a set of text segments with a communicative function. Similarly, visual elements can also be considered a move when they serve a communicative purpose. A sentence was considered a part of a move unless it contained italicized, highlighted, links, scan codes, shapes, contrasted colors, or bold words. The visual mode identification of each move involves a description of the Base Layer as found in the Genre and Multimodality (GeM) model. This layer is where all components on the page are taken into account. Textual and visual elements in moves can be labeled as moves. For example, in M1, as explicitly annotated in Figure 4, the "headline" is presented as the official logo, serving as the title of the hotel. Although the designer could have used the text "Lotus Hotel" as the title, they chose to use the logo instead, as it incorporates both a flower illustration and the word "Lotus." During the analysis, it was observed that rhetorical moves can manifest in both textual and visual modes. For instance, the occurrence of M7, which involves offering incentives, was observed in photos meant to motivate the reader as the primary communicative purpose.

Three coders participated in recording the agreement percentages for move identification and functionality. The researchers engaged in tasks of

segmentation, labeling, and identifying functions. Following these tasks, the agreement among coders was checked through the Kappa value to ensure the level of agreement and accuracy. The coders met the minimum qualifications, training, and knowledge required for this analysis. The coding annotation scheme was move + type. During the move analysis, the identification was based on three main criteria: the functionality of the move, the position of the move, and the typography of the move. As some degree of subjectivity is sometimes unavoidable (Holmes, 1997), inter-rater reliability procedures were implemented to minimize subjectivity in the rhetorical moves and relations coding process (Crookes, 1986; Pho, 2008). The inter-rater reliability process involved weekly meetings to discuss and label the raw data as part of a training and refresher exercise on the basic principles of the analysis. Data were regularly checked among the two raters and the researcher to record the level of similarity. The final draft indicated that the kappa value result of moves identification was 0.662, which falls between 0.61 and 0.80, signifying substantial agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The frequency of the modalities of rhetorical moves in linguistic and visual modes exhibited similarities in their presence and proportion. Table 1 illustrates that among the typical nine moves suggested by Bhatia (1993, 2004), only five were identified as presented on the pages of the brochures.

Table 1
Rhetorical moves modalities' occurrence (visual/textual modes) in the 39 pages as a sample of Malaysian travel brochures

Rhetorical Moves	Textual Modes			Visual Modes		
	No	%	type	No	%	type
M1 Headline	83	19	text	0	0	
M2 Targeting the Market	0	0		0	0	
M3 Justifying the Product or Service	0	0		0	0	
M4 Detailing the Product or Service	144	33	text	127	29	images, tables, diagrams, logos, slogan
M5 Establishing Credentials	42	10	text	139	32	logos, slogans
M6 Typical User Endorsement	0	0		0	0	
M7 Offering Incentives	70	16	text	48	11	images, lines
M8 Using Pressure Tactics	44	10	text	28	6	images, lines
M9 Soliciting Response	52	12	text	91	21	icons, numbers, maps
Total Move instances	435	100		433	100	

As illustrated in Table 1, there is a notable variation in the frequency of rhetorical moves within the selected travel brochures labeled B1 for brochure 1 to B15 for brochure 15. M1 (Headline) appears 83 times in the written textual mode, constituting 19% of all textually realized rhetorical moves in the dataset, but is entirely absent in the visual mode. M2 (Targeting the Market), M3 (Justifying the Product or Service), and M6 (Typical User Endorsement) do not appear in the analyzed data.

M4 (Detailing the Product or Service) is the most frequent, with 144 textual instances (33% of all textual realizations) and 127 visual instances (29% of all visual realizations), appearing in forms such as images, tables, diagrams, and logos. M5 (Establishing Credentials) is represented textually 42 times (10% of all textual instances) and visually 139 times (32% of

all visual instances), primarily as logos and slogans. M7 (Offering Incentives) appears 70 times textually (16% of total) and 48 times visually (11% of total), depicted through images and lines.

M8 (Utilizing Pressure Tactics) is observed 44 times textually (10% of the total) and 28 times visually (6% of the total), mainly in the form of images. Lastly, M9 (Soliciting Response) is present in 52 textual cases (12% of the total) and 91 visual cases (21% of the total), represented by icons, numbers, and maps.

In terms of missing moves, there is a noticeable absence of M2 (Targeting the Market), which constitutes 0%. Likewise, M3 (Justifying the Product or Service) and M6 (Typical User Endorsement) each constitute 0%, which can be attributed to a variety of reasons. For example, cultural differences can influence consumer behavior and attitudes toward advertising

(Hofstede & Bond, 1988). Social norms and conformity are often more effective in marketing (Dauber et al., 2012). Target audience preferences through television ads (Belch & Belch, 2017). In some cultures, certain marketing techniques may not be as effective or acceptable as in other countries. For example, M2 (Targeting the Market) is typically achieved through events, festivals, shows, or targeted advertising distribution. Regarding the findings of Teo (2008) and M. M. Yong (2001), targeting the market is a crucial step that focuses on a select group of individuals most in need of the advertised products or services. In this research, it was observed that this intention was not explicitly communicated through any linguistic statements in the brochures. For example, there was no clear identification of the target audience, no appeal to human self-perception, no use of second-person pronouns, and no highlighting of unique selling points. However, the promotion was achieved through social events at the fair, where agents distributed brochures to attendees searching for deals and promotions.

Table 1 illustrates that rhetorical moves in visual modes are similar to those in textual modes regarding their proportion and functional accomplishment. Specific communicative functions are also achieved through the visual mode. Bateman (2008) states that tables, slogans, and numbers are graphical text elements. While tables and numbers provide information through the organization and display of data, slogans often communicate messages or ideas

through creative or symbolic visuals. These textual forms can be utilized alongside written or spoken language to amplify the overall significance and influence of a message. It is important to note that the visual modes of the texts can sometimes be considered texts but in certain graphical forms. For example, the term "M7," which represents incentives, is commonly realized in written texts and numerical formats. However, according to Povoroznyuk (2022), print advertisements allow for the consideration that visual and verbal elements may have varying degrees of influence in conveying the intended message to the recipient. This suggests that the text can be regarded as a visual tool for delivering the message in advertising, establishing a strong connection with semiotics, and thus functioning as an independent means of transmitting information. Additionally, a control group of images in print ads was identified to demonstrate that the images alone can fulfill functions that entice the recipient to engage in specific actions. Figure 1 suggests that M1 (Headline) "Adventure Packages" is significant in capturing the customer's attention and generating interest in the material.

The stark contrast between the white color of M1 and the red background may enhance the visibility of the texts, thereby effectively capturing the viewer's attention. This deliberate choice of color scheme is crucial in drawing attention to the content. This statement aligns with L. Y. Yong and Mei's (2018) findings, emphasizing the significance of attention-

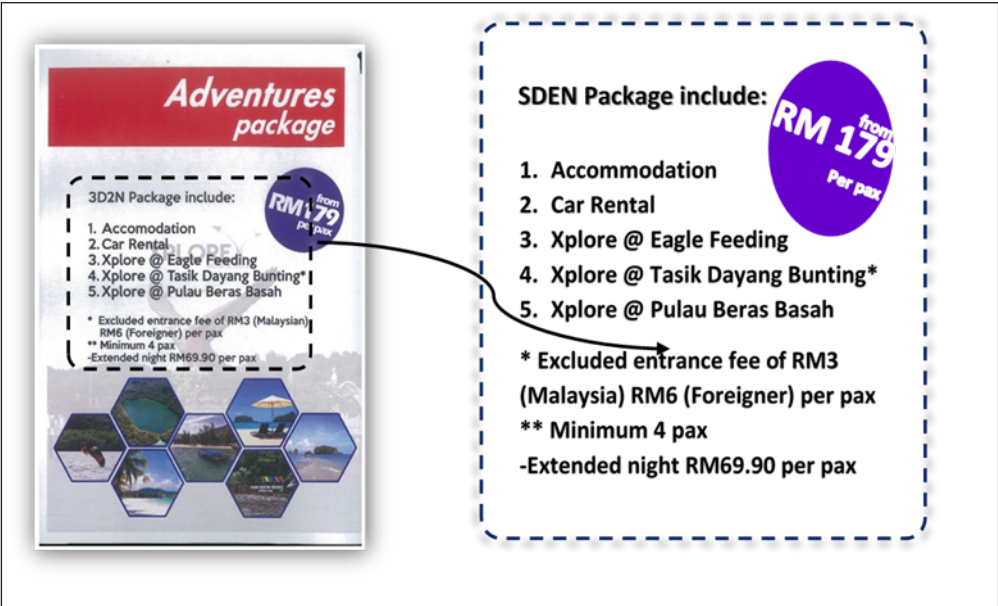


Figure 1. M1 and M4 in the B8 brochure in textual/graphical mode

grabbing and visually appealing taglines as headlines. The analyzed data found that M1 serves the purpose of naming places, emphasizing activities, promoting services, and showcasing products. Previous studies have labeled this action as “Overview of the Service Provider” (Barabas, 2018), “Titling” (Xiong, 2012), “Identifying Product and Purpose” (Labrador et al., 2014), and “Introductory Material” (Nodoushan & Montazeran, 2012). In addition, it was observed that logos sometimes accompany M1. The primary objective of the designer is to highlight the names of the featured destinations rather than solely focusing on showcasing the logo symbol.

Furthermore, Figure 1 illustrates the presence of M4 in both textual and visual representations, depicted in the form of polygon shapes. The textual mode showcases a package encompassing various

components, such as accommodation and car rental priced at RM 179, and opportunities to explore “Eagle Feeding, Tasik Dayang Bunting, and Pulau Beras Basah.” Additionally, the entrance fee for both Malaysian and foreign visitors is prominently displayed. Moreover, in this example, the visual modes of M4 consist of seven images depicting various destinations and activities. It is accompanied by a circular shape that displays the net price of the items included in the package.

The prevalence of M4, whether in textual or graphical modes, implies that the primary aim of the content in these brochures is to offer comprehensive and specific information pertaining to the travel packages and services provided by travel agencies. The prioritization of this action suggests that the designer considers the primary focus of the customer to be

to acquire comprehensive information regarding the various types of products or services offered. Hence, it is imperative to furnish comprehensive information to help potential customers understand the advantages and characteristics of the product. Such findings align with the results reported by L. Y. Yong and Mei (2018), who emphasized the importance of M4 in providing a comprehensive description of the product to customers. The move is referred to as the Enhancer (Nugroho, 2009) and Describing the Product (Labrador et al., 2014). The utilization of visual and textual modes was frequently observed in all of the brochures analyzed. Figure 2 provides an example of M7 (Offering Incentives) in textual modes, where users who register on the Cuti website will receive 800 free Cuti coins.

Incentives are rewards or benefits given to customers or potential customers to encourage them to take a specific action, such as purchasing or booking a trip. In marketing, incentives are commonly used to

motivate or persuade customers to purchase a product or service. This can include discounts, gifts, loyalty rewards, or other bonuses. In the context of travel brochures, incentives are often provided to attract customers and encourage them to select a specific destination, hotel, or tour package. This could include upgrades, free meals, or other perks that enhance the overall travel experience.

M9 (Soliciting Response) is another move found in the analyzed brochures. It seems to encourage the reader or listener to take action or respond to a particular request or offer. Its primary function is to elicit a response or reaction from the recipient, such as a purchase, inquiry, or engagement. Phrases such as "Contact us for more information," "Get in touch with us," "Do not hesitate to reach out," "Let us know your thoughts," "Feel free to ask any questions," and "Call us now" are commonly used in M9. Figure 3 shows M9 in a textual mode that encourages potential customers to contact the hotel for more



Figure 2. M7 (Offering Incentives) from B3 brochure in textual mode

information about wedding preparation details and prices rather than providing a direct contact number without adding any polite word of request or imperative to take action, such as “please.”

By using this move, the hotel indicates that they are available to answer any questions and provide further information, which can help build trust and instill confidence in potential customers. From the analyzed data, it has been noticed that

M5 (Establishing Credentials) is missing in textual forms, and instead, it has mostly occurred in graphical shapes such as logos and slogans. Establishing a brand identity can make the brochure more recognizable and memorable. Logos and brand colors play a crucial role in establishing the identity of a brochure, making it more recognizable and memorable. Figure 4 shows that M5 is presented on an orange and yellow background to attract attention.



Figure 3. M9 (Soliciting Response) from B4 brochure in textual mode



Figure 4. M5 (Establishing Credentials) from brochure B10 in graphical mode

Aaker (1991) found that consistent and distinctive logo colors may enhance brand recognition and recall. This compensates for the missing verbal presentation of this move and accomplishes its communicative purpose, which is gaining attention and understanding. van Grinsven and Das (2016) confirmed that the incorporation of visual identity elements, such as logos and color schemes, can improve brand recognition and enhance the perceived professionalism of a company or organization.

The data analysis reveals that the promotional genre of Malaysian travel brochures utilizes different modalities to present the missing rhetorical moves in textual form. Texts, contrasting colors, varying sizes, tables, logos, images, icons, shapes, and diagrams are used to accomplish the communicative purpose and to attract customers. According to Leong et al. (2010),

customer satisfaction is enhanced when images and graphical representations are used instead of plain text. From the analyzed data, Figure 5 displays the most common visual and graphical modes observed in the formation of rhetorical moves in Malaysian travel brochures. These modes are logos, images, tables, and diagrams for M4. Logos and slogans are modes of M5. Images, numbers, and lines are modes of M7. Bold fonts and bright colors are modes of M8. Finally, icons are the modes of M9.

CONCLUSION

The multimodal analysis of rhetorical moves in Malaysian travel brochures reveals a nuanced interplay between textual and graphical modes. Notably, the modes were integral in shaping rhetorical moves, with a nearly equal distribution. Rhetorical moves were strategically employed in textual modes

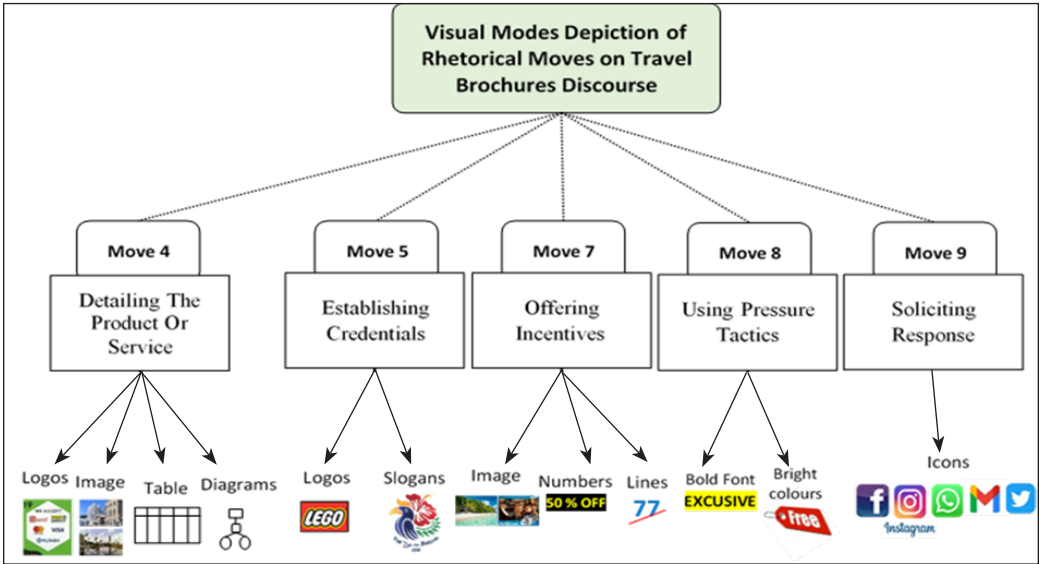


Figure 5. Visual modes depiction of rhetorical moves in Malaysian travel brochures

across M1, M4, M5, M7, M8, and M9. This mode manifests a richness of vocabulary and language expertise, demonstrating the careful crafting of persuasive messages.

In contrast, visual and graphical modes were prominently utilized in moves M4, M5, M7, M8, and M9. M4, a pivotal move, was particularly diverse, manifesting through a plethora of graphical mediums such as images, tables, diagrams, and logos. Similarly, M5 primarily utilized logos and slogans, showcasing a reliance on visual symbols and concise phrases for impactful communication. M7 utilized images and lines, combining visual elements to evoke specific emotions and associations. M8 relied solely on imagery to convey its message, emphasizing the power of visual storytelling. Finally, M9 creatively incorporated icons and numbers, leveraging symbolic representation and numerical data to engage the audience.

This study sheds light on the variation of modalities in the rhetorical moves within the marketing genre, specifically in travel brochures, and contributes significantly to the ongoing discourse analysis studies regarding contemporary printed communication. The findings challenge existing rhetorical move analysis, providing fresh perspectives on the visual formation of rhetorical moves. As the marketing landscape continues to evolve, understanding these dynamic interactions between textual and graphical modes becomes imperative for effective communication strategies, making this research a valuable addition to discourse analysis.

Recommendations for Future Research

The study provides an insightful description of several modalities used in rhetorical moves in Malaysian travel brochures. It shows that rhetorical moves occur in visual modes with quite an equal occurrence in textual modes. This work contributes to the ongoing research on multimodal documents and rhetorical move analysis. It opens up further discussions on various modalities of rhetorical moves beyond text. Overall, this study provides valuable information for researchers and practitioners interested in understanding how moves are formed in promotional materials and how these moves can be effectively designed when applied in various modes that make the texts even more attractive and understandable. Future studies could delve into how rhetorical moves differ in modality applications across cultures. Investigating cultural nuances in promotional materials can provide valuable insights into the diverse strategies employed in different regions.

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