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Original Article

Genre-Orchestrated Multimodal Persuasion in Corporate Recruitment Websites: Integrating Genre, Linguistic and Visual Analysis

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ABSTRACT: *The corpus consists of 30 online recruitment advertisements collected from the corporate career websites of five Fortune 500 companies in the United States of America (Walmart, IBM, UnitedHealth Group, BMW and Johnson and Johnson) across the sales, marketing, finance, and account management job families, comprising approximately 3,020 linguistic persuasive units and 105 visual units. The study adopts an integrated multimodal analytical framework combining genre analysis, Mulholland's persuasive strategies, and Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar. Genre organization was examined using a Move–Step model adapted for corporate career websites, while linguistic and visual persuasive resources were quantitatively coded and qualitatively interpreted. The findings reveal a highly conventionalized genre structure in which Employer Introduction, Job Description, Employment Value Proposition, and Recruitment Information constitute the core communicative moves across all advertisements. Linguistically, persuasion is predominantly realized through positive self-presentation of the employer (40.4%), followed by enhancing the persuadee's position or status (27%), offering benefits and incentives (19.9%) and building common ground/solidarity (4.7%). The most effective persuasive elements include visual conceptual representations (78.1 percent), eye-level perspectives (100 percent), and positive self-presentation using images of employees, workplaces, and technology (59 percent). Furthermore, there is a consistent relationship between verbal and visual persuasion when analyzing how each is used in different genre move categories. This indicates that persuasive messages are created with both verbal and visual elements working together, not independently.*

KEYWORDS: *Genre, Persuasive Linguistics, Multimodal Persuasion, Corporate Recruitment Websites.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation of the recruitment process has radically changed the way that employers interact with potential employees. Instead of being simply a place to find out about available jobs, employer career websites are now being used by organizations as strategic communication tools. They use these websites to advertise job openings, create their own organizational identity, and encourage job seekers who are qualified for the position to submit applications. In increasingly competitive labour markets, attracting qualified applicants is no longer achieved solely through salary offers or job descriptions; instead, organizations employ a combination of textual and visual resources to present themselves as desirable employers. Consequently, online recruitment advertisements have evolved into a distinctive form of persuasive professional discourse.

From a genre perspective, recruitment advertisements constitute a highly conventionalized communicative event with recognizable rhetorical purposes and organizational patterns. As per Swales' (1990) definition of genre as a category of communicative events with similar communicative objectives, research has demonstrated that recruitment advertisements demonstrate similar move-step structures regardless of variations among different industries, organizations, and/or communication methods (Bhatia, 1993, 2004; Łącka-Badura, 2015).

These genre conventions enable organizations to systematically introduce themselves, describe job requirements, present employment benefits, and encourage prospective applicants to take action. At the same time, the increasing use of corporate career websites has expanded the communicative resources available for recruitment discourse, allowing organizations to integrate visual design, photographs, icons, layout, and interactive website features into the overall persuasive process.

Recruitment discourse has always been seen as having a primary purpose to persuade. Recruitment advertising does more than provide information about available jobs; it provides information about available jobs, evaluates potential employees and attempts to persuade those who apply for jobs to change their attitude toward the position, perception of the company, and intended behaviors. Persuasive communication is therefore embedded throughout the recruitment process, ranging from positive organizational self-presentation and the construction of common ground with potential applicants to the presentation of employment benefits and explicit invitations to apply. Drawing upon Mulholland's (1994) taxonomy of persuasive strategies, persuasion in recruitment discourse may be realized through positive self-presentation of the communicator,

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building solidarity with recipients, enhancing applicants' professional status, offering benefits and incentives, and encouraging recipients to take the desired action. These strategies are not randomly distributed but are often associated with particular communicative stages within the genre structure.

This study investigates persuasion in online recruitment advertisements published on the corporate career websites of five Fortune 500 companies in the USA: Walmart, IBM, UnitedHealth Group, BMW and Johnson and Johnson. Specifically, the study adopts an integrated multimodal framework combining genre analysis, linguistic persuasion, and visual communication to address the following research questions:

- What Move–Step patterns characterize recruitment advertisements on corporate career websites?
- How linguistic persuasive strategies are distributed across different genre moves?
- How do visual resources contribute to persuasive communication across genre moves and website sections?

By integrating genre analysis, persuasive language, and visual communication within a single analytical framework, this study contributes to research on recruitment discourse in three respects. First, the work extends current research based on genres to show that there is a systematic relationship between the types of persuasive strategies used in each type of communication move. Second, the work expands upon existing multimodal studies of recruitment discourse to examine the way that linguistic and visual persuasive resources work together to persuade potential candidates. In doing so, the work moves away from analyzing the two resources separately. Finally, the work develops an integrated analytical model for studying persuasive communication used in corporate career websites. This model provides theoretical insight into multimodal recruitment discourse and offers practical implications for organizations looking to improve the effectiveness of their online recruitment communications.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. GENRE ANALYSIS OF CORPORATE RECRUITMENT WEBSITES

Genre analysis has become one of the most influential approaches in applied linguistics for examining how professional and institutional communication is organized to achieve particular communicative purposes. Swales (1990) defines a genre as "a class of communicative events" characterized primarily by a set of shared communicative purposes recognized by members of a discourse community. Swales' genre theory has subsequently become one of the foundational analytical frameworks in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), professional discourse studies, and organizational communication.

Bhatia (1993, 2004) has extended Swales' concept of professional genres by suggesting that professional genres are best viewed as dynamic communication practices, and not as rigid templates for writing. Bhatia views professional genres as having the potential to satisfy many different types of communicative functions at one time. They can be used to inform, promote, persuade, and even function as part of an organization's structure. Bhatia's view is especially important when considering the role of recruitment discourse in today's workforce. Recruiters use advertisements to provide prospective employees with job-related information. Advertisements are also used by organizations to promote their image and to persuade potential applicants to apply. Finally, advertisements help recruiters make hiring decisions. Therefore, recruitment discourse is considered a "hybrid" promotional genre which exists within three major areas of study: Professional Communication, Marketing Communication, and Organizational Discourse (Bhatia, 1993, 2004; Bargiela-Chiappini, Nickerson, and Planken, 2007).

The use of the concepts of moves and steps as a means for analyzing genres was developed by John Swales (1990). He suggested that all genres have a series of rhetorical moves. Each move has its own functional objective. Moves can be accomplished by the use of individual steps. Steps provide the more detailed rhetorical action necessary to accomplish each move. This type of analysis has been used in many different areas such as research article analysis, business communication analysis, promotional discourse analysis, and recruitment advertisement analysis.

Early genre studies focused on print job advertisements, identifying five common move sequences used by employers in these ads: Organization introduction, Job description, Qualification requirements, Employment terms/conditions, and Invitation to apply (Bhatia, 1993). Subsequent studies have used move analysis to examine recruitment communications in a digital environment. Among these, Łącka-Badura (2015) proposed one of the most comprehensive genre descriptions of contemporary online recruitment advertisements, demonstrating that corporate recruitment texts systematically combine organizational self-presentation with detailed employment information and application procedures.

The migration of recruitment communication from printed advertisements to corporate career websites has nevertheless expanded the communicative possibilities available to organizations. Unlike traditional newspaper advertisements, corporate recruitment websites integrate extensive organizational narratives, employee testimonials, visual storytelling, multimedia resources, hyperlinks, and interactive navigation into recruitment communication. Consequently, the genre has evolved beyond a single recruitment advertisement into a sequence of interconnected communicative sections distributed across webpages. Genre analysis allows us to understand the way that each part of a text contributes to the overall structure of how we persuade

people using our words, which are now being used more frequently than ever before in digital spaces (Askehave and Nielsen, 2005; Bateman, 2008).

The current research defines corporate job application sites as digital promotional genres, with their primary communicative objective being to influence potential applicants through a structured series of rhetorical moves. Building upon the genre frameworks proposed by Swales (1990), Bhatia (1993, 2004), and Łącka-Badura (2015), the present study adapts the Move–Step model better to reflect the organizational characteristics of contemporary corporate career websites. Rather than analyzing isolated webpages, the study treats each recruitment advertisement as a coherent multimodal communicative event composed of interconnected sections serving complementary communicative purposes.

Accordingly, five major communicative moves were identified for analytical purposes:

- Move 1: Vacancy Announcement, introducing the employment opportunity through job titles and vacancy information;
- Move 2: Employer Presentation, providing organizational identity through company profiles, achievements, mission, values, organizational culture, and corporate reputation;
- Move 3: Role Specification, describing job responsibilities, qualifications, required competencies, and candidate expectations;
- Move 4: Employment Value Proposition, presenting salaries, employee benefits, career development opportunities, workplace advantages, and additional rewards;
- Move 5: Recruitment Information, guiding applicants through application procedures, contact information, deadlines, and administrative instructions.

In the present study, genre analysis serves two complementary analytical functions. First, it identifies the rhetorical organization of corporate recruitment websites by examining the occurrence, sequencing, and realization of individual moves and steps. Second, and more importantly, it provides the structural framework for analyzing how linguistic persuasive strategies and visual communication are distributed across different stages of recruitment discourse. Rather than treating persuasion as randomly occurring throughout recruitment texts, the study assumes that persuasive meanings are systematically embedded within genre organization, enabling the subsequent integration of Mulholland's persuasive strategies and Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar into a unified multimodal analytical framework.

2.2. PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION IN RECRUITMENT DISCOURSE

Persuasion has long been examined across disciplines including rhetoric, psychology, communication, and discourse analysis. Classical rhetoric theories describe persuasion as the way a speaker or writer influences their audience. Persuasion can be done through the use of credibility (ethos), emotions (pathos), and logical thinking (logos). Hyland (2005) states that persuasion in a professional context can occur through both logical arguments and other means such as establishing relationships with the audience. Fairclough (1992) also believes that persuasion is a discursive process where institutions create identities, relationships, and social practices. Even though all three authors come from different theoretical backgrounds, they agree that persuasion is an interactive process instead of just transmitting information.

In 1994, Mulholland provided what is arguably one of the most complete linguistic frameworks for describing persuasion; he defined it as a goal-directed communicative process that utilizes identifiable rhetorical techniques. Mulholland stated that persuasion occurs when we manage our interpersonal relationships with others. There were many different types of persuasive strategies used repeatedly in Mulholland's framework, such as establishing common ground, building on the audience's perceived status, providing some benefit or incentive to them, and encouraging them to comply with an expressed request for action. The use of Mulholland's framework is very appropriate for use in recruitment discourses as organizations both create a positive image of themselves and develop relationships with potential recruits. These persuasive strategies correspond closely to the communicative purposes of recruitment discourse and therefore offer a systematic framework for analyzing persuasive language in corporate career websites.

Empirical studies further demonstrate that recruitment discourse relies heavily on evaluative and interpersonal language. The use of positive adjectives, evaluative expressions, modal verbs, inclusive pronouns, and action-oriented vocabulary is often used by companies to create positive images of themselves and encourage prospective employees to apply for positions within those companies (Lievens and Slaughter, 2016; Rodríguez-Sánchez, 2020). The research on which this study is based uses Mulholland's (1994) persuasive framework as the primary analytical model to investigate the ways in which corporate recruitment websites persuade prospective employees. Instead of examining the ways in which individual words or grammar are persuasive, the study will examine the ways in which persuasive strategies are employed throughout different sections of the website and how these persuasive strategies are integrated into the visual aspects of the website to form a single, coherent, persuasive message. In addition, the integration of persuasion theory with genre analysis and multimodal discourse analysis allows us to gain a greater understanding of how companies use persuasion techniques in modern-day corporate recruitment online.

2.3. VISUAL COMMUNICATION IN CORPORATE RECRUITMENT WEBSITES

The theoretical basis of multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) comes from Halliday's (1978, 1985) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), a model of language as a social semiotic system. SFL defines language as being capable of producing simultaneously three types of meaning: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. Building upon Halliday's functional model of language, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) have proposed that visual communication has a "grammar" similar to that found in language. Kress and van Leeuwen state that images are structured using culturally and socially accepted conventions, allowing the viewer to understand the represented participants, interpersonal relationships, and compositional structure.

In Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), they suggest that visual meaning is developed by using three metafunctions that are similar to Halliday's linguistic metafunctions: representational meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning. Representational meaning deals with how images portray people, objects, places, and events. Images can use either narrative processes to portray people/objects/places/events in motion and action, or conceptual processes to portray people/objects/places/events in a more general, classified, or symbolic manner. Corporate recruitment websites commonly utilize conceptual representations to portray corporate values, corporate identity, teamwork, innovation, and workplace culture, whereas narrative representations commonly portray employees involved in work-related activities or working together. Both types of representation help create an image of the corporation as a desirable place to work and also provide a clue as to what is expected of future employees.

The concept of interactive meaning addresses the way that represented participants and the audience interact with each other. The interaction can be achieved using visual resources including gaze, social distance, perspective and modality. When direct gaze occurs, it represents a "demand" relationship; however, when indirect gaze occurs, it represents an "offer" relationship. In other words, when direct gaze occurs, viewers are invited to engage with represented participants on an interpersonal level, whereas when indirect gaze occurs, viewers are observing represented participants on a less engaged level (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). Camera distance also affects how people perceive the amount of intimacy involved in interactions. Horizontal and vertical viewing angles can also indicate how much people feel like they are part of something, equal to someone else, authoritative over someone else, or have power over someone else. Corporate recruitment websites commonly use eye-level perspectives and medium social distances to help close the gap between organizations and those who may want to work for them, creating images of organizations that seem approachable, trustworthy, and care about employees.

The third meta function, compositional meaning, refers to the ways in which visual elements are combined together to create a single coherent unit of communication using the three components of informational value, salience, and framing. Informational value addresses where visual elements appear on pages and how this location indicates whether something is new versus old (or given), or if it represents an ideal state versus a practical one. Salience refers to how visual elements direct the viewer's eye by size, color contrast, focus, and position. Framing is the component that refers to whether visual elements are seen as being part of the same whole, or if they are viewed as separate entities. Digital recruiting uses compositional resources to help users navigate around websites, but at the same time emphasizes positive aspects of the company such as accomplishments made by employees, the physical work environment, opportunities for advancement, and overall company culture. Consequently, page layout itself becomes an important persuasive resource rather than merely a technical design feature.

The present study adopts Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar as the analytical framework for examining visual communication in corporate recruitment websites. Specifically, the study analyses representational, interactive, and compositional meanings alongside persuasive visual strategies across different genre moves. Rather than treating images as isolated visual artifacts, the analysis investigates how visual resources interact with genre organization and linguistic persuasion to construct coherent multimodal persuasive messages. By integrating visual grammar with genre analysis and linguistic persuasion, the study provides a more comprehensive account of how corporate career websites persuade prospective applicants through coordinated multimodal communication.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. THE PROPOSED ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The proposed framework therefore contributes to recruitment discourse research in three respects. First, it extends genre analysis beyond rhetorical description by examining the persuasive functions embedded within individual communicative moves. Second, it integrates linguistic persuasion and visual communication within a single multimodal analytical model rather than treating them as separate objects of analysis. Finally, it provides a systematic framework for investigating persuasion in corporate career websites, thereby offering new insights into how organizations strategically coordinate textual and visual resources in digital recruitment communication.



FIGURE 1 An Integrated Analytical Framework for Investigating Multimodal Persuasion in Corporate Career Websites
***(Source:** Author's analysis)*

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Methodologically, the study follows an embedded sequential analytical procedure in which three complementary analytical frameworks are applied successively. First, Genre Analysis identifies the rhetorical organization of recruitment discourse through an adapted Move–Step model. Second, Mulholland's (1994) persuasive strategies are employed to analyze the realization of linguistic persuasion within individual communicative moves. Third, Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar is applied to examine representational, interactive, and compositional meanings in recruitment images. Finally, findings from these three analytical stages are interpreted together in order to explain how multimodal persuasive meanings are constructed across corporate recruitment websites. This layered analytical procedure corresponds directly to the integrated analytical framework proposed in Figure 2 and ensures consistency between theoretical foundations and methodological implementation.



FIGURE 2 The Overall Research Design of the Study
***(Source:** Author's analysis)*

3.3. DATA COLLECTION

TABLE 1 Corpus Profile

Category	Description
Data source	Official corporate career websites
Companies	Walmart, IBM, UnitedHealth Group, BMW and Johnson and Johnson
Company type	Fortune 500 multinational corporations
Number of advertisements	30
Job categories	Sales, Marketing, Finance, Account Management
Language	English
Data collection period	2024–2025
Visual corpus	105 visual units
Text corpus	3,020 linguistic persuasive units (Recruitment webpage texts extracted into Excel)
Sampling strategy	Purposive samplings
Research approach	Qualitative Multimodal Discourse Analysis

*(**Source:** Author's analysis)*

3.4. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was conducted in four stages. First, each advertisement was segmented into rhetorical moves and steps. Second, persuasive strategies embedded within individual moves were identified and coded. Third, linguistic realizations were analyzed by grouping recurrent lexical items into semantic categories representing different persuasive functions. Finally, multimodal resources, including employee images, workplace photographs, corporate awards, videos, and hyperlinked employer-branding content, were examined to determine how visual and linguistic resources jointly contribute to employer branding. Frequencies were calculated to identify recurrent patterns, which were subsequently interpreted qualitatively through cross-company comparison. The overall data analysis is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2 Analytical Framework and Coding Procedures

Stage	Framework	Unit of Analysis	Analytical Focus	Output
Stage 1: Genre Analysis	Swales (1990); Bhatia (1993, 1994)	Recruitment webpage	• Genre moves • Genre steps	Rhetorical organization
Stage 2: Linguistic Persuasion	Mulholland (1994)	Sentence / discourse unit	• Linguistic persuasive strategies	Persuasive language patterns
Stage 3: Visual Communication	Kress & van Leeuwen (2006)	Images and webpage layout	• Representational meanings • Interactive meanings • Compositional meanings	Visual communication patterns
Stage 4: Integrated Multimodal Interpretation	Integrated Multimodal Framework	Entire recruitment advertisement	• Interaction between verbal and visual resources • Within genre moves	Multimodal persuasive meanings

*(**Source:** Author's analysis)*

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. RHETORICAL ORGANIZATION and DISTRIBUTION OF GENRE MOVES ON CORPORATE RECRUITMEN WEBSITES

The first research question sought to identify the rhetorical organization of corporate recruitment websites. Drawing upon the adapted Move–Step framework presented in Section 2.1, each recruitment advertisement was analyzed to identify five major communicative moves across the corpus:

- Move 1: Vacancy Announcement
- Move 2: Employer Presentation
- Move 3: Role Specification
- Move 4: Employment Value Proposition
- Move 5: Recruitment Information

Unlike traditional printed recruitment advertisements, multiple communicative moves on corporate career websites were frequently integrated through webpage layouts combining written language, photographs, icons, hyperlinks, and interactive design elements. Consequently, move identification was based primarily on communicative purpose rather than webpage position, consistent with Swales' (1990) and Bhatia's (1993, 2004) functional conception of genre.

Figure 3 summarizes the occurrence of communicative moves across the 30 recruitment advertisements.

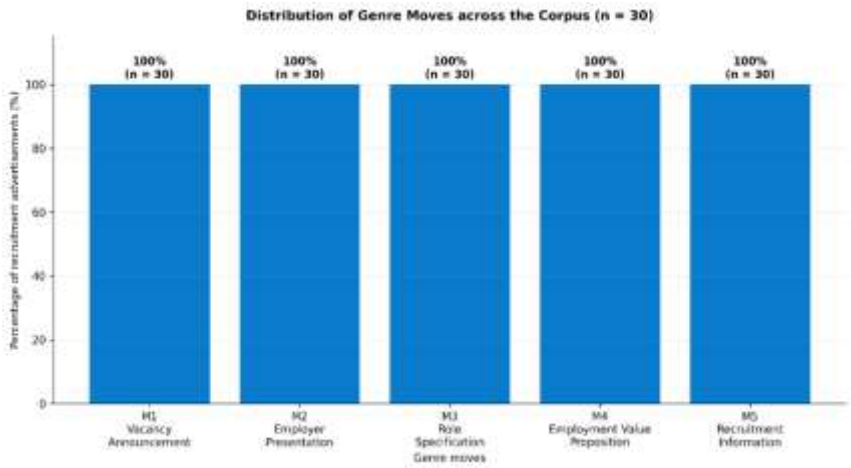


FIGURE 3 Distribution of Genre Moves across the Corpus

*(**Source:** Author's analysis)*

4.2. LINGUISTIC PERSUASION ACROSS CORPORATE RECRUITMENT WEBSITES

4.2.1. OVERALL DISTRIBUTION OF LINGUISTIC PERSUASION

The second research question examined how linguistic persuasion is constructed across corporate recruitment websites. Building off of Mulholland's (1994) persuasion model, this study examined how organizations utilize language to create organizational credibility, develop positive applicant images as an employer, highlight job openings, and motivate potential job applicants to apply for employment. Rather than functioning merely as informational texts, the recruitment advertisements consistently combined descriptive and persuasive discourse to influence applicants' perceptions of both the organization and the advertised position.

These findings provide the linguistic foundation for the visual analysis presented in the following section, where the interaction between verbal persuasion and visual communication is examined.

TABLE 3 Frequency of Linguistic Persuasive Strategies across the Corpus (N = 3,020)

Persuasive Strategy	Frequency	Percentage	Dominant Genre Move	Linguistic Realization
Positive organizational self-presentation	1221	~40.4%	Move 2 – Employer Presentation	global leader, innovative company, inclusive culture, world-class organization, industry-leading solutions, success
Enhancing the persuadee's position/status	815	~27%	Move 3 – Role Specification; Move 4 – Employment Value Proposition	You will lead, you will contribute, you will drive innovation, and you will have opportunities
Offering benefits/incentives	601	~19.9%	Move 4 – Employment Value Proposition	Paid time off benefits, competitive pay, health benefits, performance-based bonus
Encouraging the addressee to take action	241	~8%	Move 5 – Recruiting Information	Apply now! Join us! Ready to grow your career!
Building common ground/solidarity	142	~4.7%	Move 2 – Employer Presentation	We, our team, together, team-focused environment, internal and external relationships
Total	3,020	100%	—	

*(**Source:** Author's analysis)*

As shown in Table 3, positive organizational self-presentation is by far the most frequently employed persuasive strategy, accounting for 1221 instances (~40.4%) of all coded linguistic units. This finding indicates that the participating corporations

consistently prioritize constructing a favorable organizational image before encouraging applicants to engage with specific job opportunities. The advertisements do not just focus on the vacancy itself; they also spend time building the reputation of the organization (i.e., innovative, professional, supportive) and making it sound like a good place to work. The next most common way to recruit is to increase the value/position of the applicant. This strategy had 815 examples (27%), and its main focus was to show that the applicant is a professional who can help make the company successful. The third most common method of recruiting is to offer benefits and incentives. There were 601 examples (19.9%) of this strategy being used. When companies used this recruiting strategy, they highlighted the potential for career growth, learning opportunities, employee health, flexible hours, and complete compensation plans. By contrast, encouraging the addressee to take action accounts for only 241 instances (~8%), while building common ground/solidarity is the least frequent strategy with 142 occurrences (~4.7%). Their relatively lower frequencies do not imply lesser importance; rather, they perform highly specialized rhetorical functions within particular stages of the recruitment genre, especially employer presentation and recruitment information.

4.2.2. DISTRIBUTION OF LINGUISTIC PERSUASIVE ACROSS GENRE MOVES

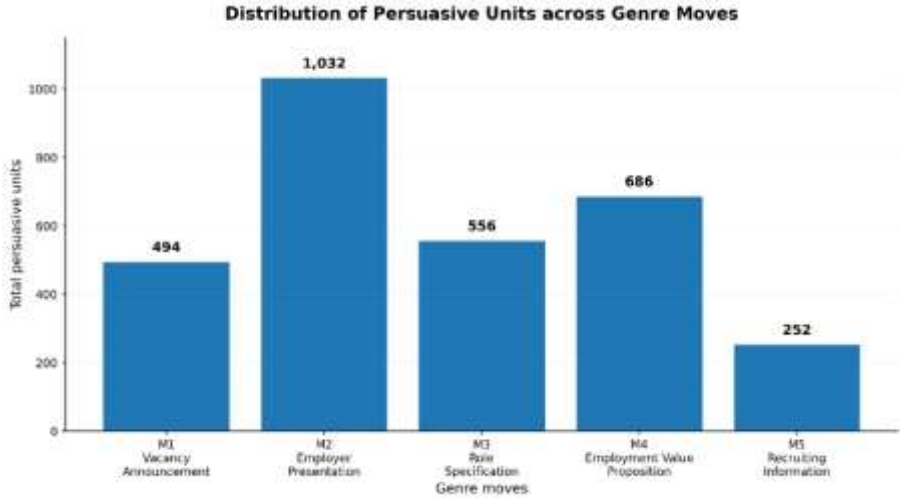


FIGURE 4 Linguistic Persuasive Units across Genre Moves

*(**Source:** Author's analysis)*

Figure 4 presents the distribution of persuasive units across the five genre moves identified in the corporate recruitment websites. Employer Presentation (M2) contains the highest number of persuasive units (1032), closely followed by Employment Value Proposition (M4) with 686 units. This shows us that companies are using corporate identity and benefits of employment to promote themselves. Role Specification (M3) and Vacancy Announcement (M1) contain 556 and 494 persuasive units, which indicates that although there are many pieces of job-related information being communicated during the recruiting process, there is also quite a lot of persuasive communication happening. On the other hand, Recruiting Information (M5) has the smallest number of persuasive units (252), as it functions primarily to guide applicants through the application process as opposed to convincing them to apply. The overall pattern of distributions demonstrates that persuasive communication is used mainly in the early stages of recruiting, i.e., establishing employer attractiveness prior to directing applicants to apply.

4.3. VISUAL COMMUNICATION ACROSS CORPORATE RECRUITMENT WEBSITES

The third research question examined how visual resources contribute to persuasive communication in corporate recruitment websites. Guided by Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar, the analysis investigated the representational, interactive, and compositional meanings realized through the visual resources embedded in the recruitment webpages.

Across the corpus, 105 dominant visual units were identified from the 307 archived webpage screenshots. The findings reveal that visual communication is not randomly distributed throughout the recruitment webpages. Instead, organizations employ highly systematic visual patterns that complement the rhetorical organization identified in Section 4.1 and the linguistic persuasive strategies discussed in Section 4.2.

4.3.1. REPRESENTATIONAL MEANING

The first analytical dimension examined the representational meanings realized in the visual corpus.

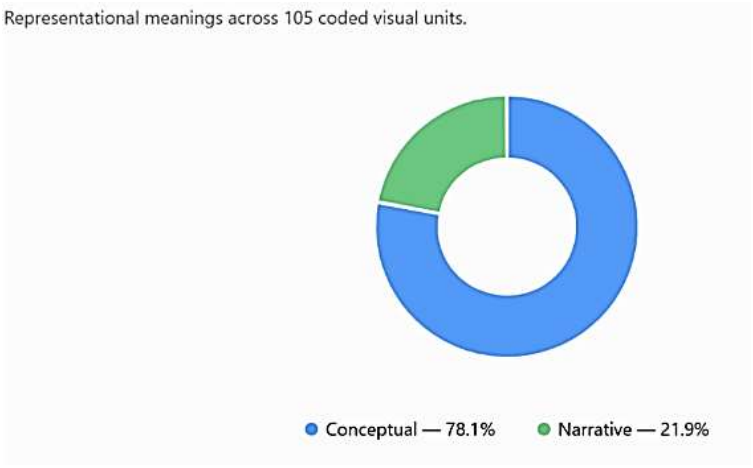


FIGURE 5 Distribution of Representational Meanings

(Source: Author's analysis)

As shown in Figure 5, conceptual representations overwhelmingly dominate the visual corpus, accounting for 82 of the 105 coded visual units (78.1%), whereas narrative representations account for only 21.9%.

This finding indicates that the participating corporations primarily employ images to represent organizational identity, workplace values, professional culture, and symbolic organizational attributes rather than to depict ongoing workplace actions. Instead of emphasizing dynamic activities, the webpages consistently portray stable organizational characteristics intended to shape applicants' perceptions of the employer.

Among the represented participants, employee portraits and testimonial images constitute the largest category (~46%). Rather than depicting anonymous workers, these portraits frequently introduce identifiable employees accompanied by quotations or short narratives describing their professional experiences. Such visual choices personalize organizational communication and allow prospective applicants to envision themselves as future members of the organization.



UHC_JA 02



UHC_JA 01

Other frequently occurring visual resources include employees interacting/ team scenes, benefit icons/ infographic, map and job-information icons, diverse employees/ professionals, brand/ organizational system values icons, employer awards, employee-story thumbnails and other workplace information graphics. Collectively, these visual resources emphasize organizational credibility and employee experience rather than the technical characteristics of the advertised positions.



Wal_JA 05



Wal_JA 06



Wal_JA 02



BMW_ JA 03



IBM_ JA 01

Narrative representations, although less frequent, typically occur in the hero sections of recruitment webpages, where employees are shown collaborating, interacting with colleagues, or participating in workplace activities.



Wal_JA 06



Wal_JA 02

4.3.2. INTERACTIVE MEANING

The second analytical dimension examined how interpersonal relationships are visually constructed between represented participants and prospective applicants.

TABLE 4 Distribution of Interactive Meanings

Visual Feature	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Contact	Demand	28	52.8%
	Offer	25	47.2%
Social Distance	Long	38	41.8%
	Medium	36	39.6%
	Close	17	18.6%
Horizontal Angle	Frontal	89	84.7%
	Oblique	16	15.3%
Vertical Angle	Eye-level	103	98.1%
	High	2	1.9%

*(**Source:** Author's analysis)*

The interactive analysis demonstrates that organizations consistently construct highly accessible interpersonal relationships with prospective applicants. Direct demand images account for 52.8% of all photographs where contact is relevant, suggesting that many employee portraits establish direct eye contact with viewers in order to encourage interpersonal engagement. Similarly, frontal viewing angles dominate the corpus (84.7%), while 98.1% of all visual units are presented from an eye-level perspective. These visual choices minimize psychological distance between organizations and applicants by portraying employees as approachable, trustworthy, and professionally equal rather than distant organizational representatives.



BMW_JA 03



BMW_JA 05

4.3.3. COMPOSITIONAL MEANING

In addition to representing and interacting with users, corporate recruitment websites have persuasive power based upon how their visual resources are organized. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) defined "compositional meaning" as the arrangement of visual components to create a unified multimodal message via three related concepts: information value, salience, and framing. Rather than functioning merely as decorative illustrations, the visual resources in the present corpus are systematically organized to direct applicants' attention, establish information hierarchy, and reinforce the rhetorical progression of the recruitment genre.

TABLE 5 Distribution of Compositional Meaning Features

Compositional Dimension	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Information Value	Left–Right	59	56.2%
	Centre–Margin	32	30.5%
	Top–Bottom	14	13.3%
Salience	High	66	62.9%
	Medium	39	37.1%
Framing	Strong (segmented)	62	59%
	Weak (integrated)	43	41%

(Source: Author's analysis)

As shown in Table 5, compositional meaning is systematically employed to enhance visual persuasion across the 105 coded visual units. Left–Right information value is the dominant compositional pattern (59/105; 56.2%), indicating that organizations typically position employee and workplace images before or alongside textual information to establish favorable first impressions and guide applicants' reading pathways. In comparison to the 30.5 percent of organizations that use a Center-Margin structure, which emphasizes the employees' image and the work environment in the organization's visual identification, the Top-Bottom structure is utilized less frequently (13.3 percent) and primarily to provide sequential job and benefit information. Regarding salience, 66 visual elements (62.9 percent) are highly visible due to their large size, position at the top/center of the page, and high color contrast. This suggests that organizations are deliberately placing emphasis on the visual aspects of being an employer of choice prior to having applicants read through the detailed textual descriptions. As far as framing is concerned, there appears to be a preference for strong/segmented framing (62 out of 105; 59 percent), compared to weak/integrated framing, which makes up the remaining 41 percent. This suggests that organizations have found a middle ground between organizing webpages in a modular fashion and using multimodal storytelling techniques. Collectively, these results show that the organization of information, value, salience, and framing all help direct applicants' visual attention and control the integration of both verbal and visual elements during the recruitment process. Overall, the compositional patterns complement the representational and interactive meta functions proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), demonstrating that webpage architecture itself functions as a persuasive multimodal resource in constructing employer attractiveness and guiding applicant engagement.



Johnsons_JA 05



Walmart_JA 02



UHC_JA 06

4.4. INTEGRATION OF GENRE, LINGUISTIC AND VISUAL PERSUASION ACROSS RECRUITMENT MOVES

TABLE 6 Integration of Genre, Linguistic and Visual Persuasion across Recruitment Moves

Genre Move	Dominant Linguistic Strategy (n)	Dominant Visual Strategy (n)	Persuasive Function
M1 Vacancy Announcement	Positive self-presentation (402)	Employer images / Job interface (28)	Capture applicants' attention
M2 Employer Presentation	Positive self-presentation (796)	Workplace, employees, corporate identity (34)	Build organizational credibility
M3 Role Specification	Enhancing the persuadee's position/status (496)	Employees performing professional tasks (10)	Construct professional identity
M4 Employment Value Proposition	Offering benefits/incentives (572)	Workplace facilities / Employee benefits (23)	Increase organizational attractiveness
M5 Recruiting Information	Encouraging the addressee to take action (178)	CTA buttons / Recruitment interface (20)	Facilitate application behavior

***(Source:** Author's analysis)*

As shown in Table 6, the dominant linguistic and visual persuasive strategies are systematically distributed across the five genre moves, indicating that each move fulfills a distinct persuasive function within the overall recruitment process. In Move 1 (Vacancy Announcement), positive self-presentation is the dominant linguistic strategy (402 units), accompanied by 28 employer images and job interface visuals, highlighting the role of this move in attracting applicants' initial attention. Move 2 (Employer Presentation) has the most units of self-presentation with 796; it is supported by 34 visual elements that are related to the workplace, employees, and corporate identity. These findings show how much effort organizations make to establish their credibility and project a positive employer image. Move 3 (Role Specification) is mainly about enhancing the applicant's position or status (496 units). It is also supported by 10 visuals showing employees carrying out professional duties, creating a professional identity that would be attractive to potential applicants. Move 4 (Employment Value Proposition) is primarily made up of 572 benefit-oriented units and 23 visual elements related to the workplace and employee benefits, which demonstrate why an organization may be appealing to work for, using both linguistic and visual expressions of employment value.

Finally, Move 5 (Recruiting Information) relies primarily on 178 action-oriented linguistic units together with 20 call-to-action buttons and recruitment interface visuals, facilitating applicants' transition from information processing to application behavior. Overall, the consistent alignment between dominant linguistic and visual strategies across the five genre moves suggests that persuasion is strategically embedded throughout the rhetorical organization of corporate recruitment websites rather than concentrated in isolated sections.

4.5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that corporate recruitment websites constitute a highly structured multimodal persuasive genre in which rhetorical organization, linguistic persuasion, and visual communication operate in a coordinated manner to construct employer attractiveness. Building upon these empirical results, the following discussion examines four interrelated issues: (1) the stability and evolution of the corporate recruitment genre, (2) the multimodal construction of employer attractiveness, (3) the theoretical implications for multimodal recruitment discourse, and (4) the practical implications for digital recruitment communication.

4.5.1. STABILITY AND EVOLUTION OF THE CORPORATE RECRUITMENT GENRE

The findings demonstrate that corporate recruitment websites constitute a highly conventionalized professional genre characterized by a stable Move–Step structure despite differences in organizations and industries. The stability of this type of communication reinforces the idea of "genre theory" as it relates to how the purpose of a group's communication remains constant while the way they communicate can change depending on whether they are using a traditional or digital/multimodal environment (Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 2004). This research also indicates that, as well as being used to organize the recruitment process, a genre will act as a framework for delivering persuasive messages through various modes of communication.

4.5.2. MULTIMODAL CONSTRUCTION OF EMPLOYER ATTRACTIVENESS

In summary, it appears that the way employers make themselves attractive to potential employees is developed through the integration of genre, language, and visuals rather than through one single type of semiotics. Employers' linguistic strategies for making themselves appear in a positive light and communicating benefits to their employees are consistently supported through the use of conceptual visual representations, applicant-focused interactions, and strategically designed web pages; all of which work together to create coherent multimodal persuasive messages. This study builds upon prior research on employer branding to demonstrate that organizational attractiveness is a multimodally developed discursive phenomenon rather than simply being a marketing result of the organization.

4.5.3. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR MULTIMODAL RECRUITMENT DISCOURSE

This study contributes to multimodal discourse research by integrating genre analysis, persuasive language, and visual grammar into a unified analytical framework for investigating corporate recruitment websites. The findings suggest that genre functions as a multimodal coordinating mechanism that regulates the deployment and interaction of linguistic and visual persuasive resources across communicative moves. Consequently, the study advances an integrated perspective on recruitment discourse that may be applied to other forms of digitally mediated professional communication.

4.5.4. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

In order to be considered an effective recruitment website, it is recommended to use the integration of coherent genre organization, persuasive linguistic strategies, and authentic visual communications instead of using only vacancy information. It is possible for organizations to create a stronger employer brand through the alignment of rhetorical structure, verbal messaging, and web page design to communicate consistently about the organization's values and employment opportunities. The proposed analytical framework may also serve as a practical resource for human resource professionals, employer branding specialists, website designers, and educators in business communication and English for Specific Purposes.

5. CONCLUSION

This study investigated how corporate recruitment websites construct employer attractiveness through the interaction of genre organization, linguistic persuasion, and visual communication. The findings demonstrate that recruitment webpages constitute a highly structured multimodal genre in which rhetorical moves systematically coordinate persuasive linguistic strategies and visual resources to achieve organizational communication goals. A single analytic framework to examine the persuasive strategies used by corporations to recruit employees on their digital platforms will be created from the combination of Genre Analysis, Mulholland's Persuasive Strategies, and Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar. In addition to creating an analytic framework, this research also supports the idea that the persuasive strategies employed by corporations on their digital platform are a genre-governed, multimodal process. This research will provide both theoretical insight and practical application for communicating with potential recruits via digital media.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest concerning the publication of this paper.

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