

**A GENRE ANALYSIS OF ONLINE CRISIS PRESS
RELEASES ON THE MH370 FLIGHT INCIDENT**

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ABSTRACT

A crisis press release is a piece of writing intended for the members of media and general public which specifically deals with a particular emergency case or incident. The use of press release in an event of crisis is crucial as a means of communication. This study aims to analyse the press releases on MH370 flight incident from a genre analysis perspective. 44 corporate press releases are collected from the Malaysia Airlines website and analysed. The findings of this study identify the communicative purposes of the crisis press release which are to disseminate information, to address issues and speculations as well as to assure and regain the reliability of the company. The mixing of informative and promotional genres is seen in the press releases through these communicative purposes as well as the rhetorical structure and strategies used to realise them. The findings and discussions may help the English for Academic Purposes teachers, researchers and novice writers in applied linguistics, crisis communication and public relation to write or further understand the online crisis press releases.

ABSTRAK

Siaran akhbar krisis adalah sekeping tulisan yang ditujukan kepada ahli media dan orang awam khusus untuk menangani kes kecemasan atau insiden tertentu. Penggunaan siaran akhbar dalam peristiwa krisis adalah penting sebagai salah satu langkah komunikasi. Kajian ini dilakukan bertujuan menganalisis siaran akhbar insiden penerbangan MH370 dari perspektif analisis genre. 44 siaran akhbar korporat diambil dari laman web Malaysia Airlines dan dianalisis. Hasil kajian memberikan tujuan komunikatif siaran akhbar krisis ini, iaitu untuk menyebarkan maklumat, untuk memberi respons kepada isu dan spekulasi serta bagi menyakinkan dan mendapatkan semula kebolehpercayaan syarikat. Pencampuran genre bermaklumat dan promosi dilihat dalam siaran akhbar ini melalui tujuan komunikatif serta struktur dan strategi retorik yang digunakan untuk merealisasikannya. Hasil kajian dan perbincangan boleh membantu guru-guru Bahasa Inggeris untuk Tujuan Akademik, penyelidik dan penulis baru dalam linguistik gunaan, komunikasi krisis dan hubungan awam untuk menulis atau lebih memahami akan siaran akhbar krisis ini.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

For examples:

CPR	:	Crisis Press Release
CPRs	:	Crisis Press Releases
ESP	:	English for Specific Purposes
MAS	:	Malaysia Airlines System
MAB	:	Malaysia Airlines Berhad
CEO	:	Chief Executive Officer

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the study. There are five parts. Section 1.1 contains background of study and section 1.2 covers the purpose of study. Subsequently research objective and research questions are derived from them in Section 1.3 and 1.4. Lastly, the significance of study is highlighted in Section 1.5.

1.1 Background of Study

This section provides the context of this study. It includes information on the case of Malaysia Airlines MH370 flight incident, press release and crisis press release (henceforth CPR).

1.1.1 The Malaysia Airlines MH370 Flight Incident

Among the many crises that hit Malaysia, airline crises have taken a major spotlight recently. Malaysia Airlines System (now known as Malaysia Airlines Berhad) as the national carrier operated its first flight in 1947. Since then, the airline has dealt with many different kinds of crisis such as financial, political, flight crashing, flight hijacking and many more. The most puzzling of all is the disappearance of flight MH370 that was bound for Beijing. In March 2014, the Boeing 777-200ER, left Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia at 12:41 a.m. local time. It was carrying 227 passengers from 14 nations and 12 crew members- all Malaysian. At 2.40 a.m., the flight went off the radar and was missing without any contact with the control tower. Ever since, the search for MH370 plane has been an international affair. There were even wild rumours and speculation circulated about the missing plane, from terrorist hijack to political conspiracy theory. Bearing the weight of this crisis is definitely the company, MAS together with the government of Malaysia.

The Malaysia Airlines MH370 flight incident has been listed as the most significant event in year 2014 globally (ABC News, 2014, MSN News 2014, The Wall Street Journal, 2014). The crisis attracted the attention of the press, public and the world as a whole. Airline crises are not unusual (Mason, 2001 and Ray, 1999). They tend to suffer great exposure around the world. Unlike nonviolent crisis like product tempering where nobody is immediately impaired by the incident (Newsom et al. 1996), airline crisis can be categorised as a violent crisis, especially when it involves a loss of life or property. When such crisis strikes, it challenges the management, particularly the organization behind it. In the need to communicate during a crisis, issuing press releases is one of the strategies employed by companies. Press releases on MH370 can be considered as a type of CPR because it disseminates news and updates to the members of the media and to the general public about the missing plane. The audience for this news includes not just the family, next of kin and friends of the victims but also the international media as a whole.

1.1.2 Press Release

A press release, a news release, a video release, a media statement, or a media release is generally a written and recorded communication intended for the members of the news media. The purpose is to publicise something supposedly newsworthy to the general public.

The press release is a common means of communication between public relation practitioners and journalists. In the traditional distribution method, a press release is originally written by a company or an institution, which is later preformulated by journalists (Jacobs, 1999) to release the information. When a company issued a press release, the goal is for the press release to be reproduced authentically like the original by the journalist. This will increase the credibility of the press release and the company. However, the newsworthiness of the press release must be convincing enough for it to be

picked up by the journalists and included in the news in the hope that it will be passed on to the general public (Pander Maat, 2008). The journalists will assess its relevance to the public according to their criteria, expectation, as well as to the editorial policy of the publication before it is included in news or mass media and reaches the general public.

The definition of press release is quite wide. There is no specific category of information that is automatically labelled as a press release. Usually, people will know a press release when the document is a self-claimed press release. Press releases are used for documents released under a variety of headings such as news bulletins or publication notices. According to a study by Walters et al. (1994), press releases in a wide sense include editorials, staff announcement, and book reviews. This extends the meaning of press release category outside the traditional range. Nonetheless, the style and the constraints placed by the newspaper editors as the gatekeeper make the identification of a press release easier. Nowadays, the advances in technology and the quick access to the internet bring another alternative which is the self-published press release or e-release. Many companies and institutions now prefer to issue their press release online to directly reach their intended audience.

1.1.3 Crisis Press Release

A press release is generally understood to cover a variety of topics and purposes (Pander Maat, 2004). CPR is an event-related release that deals with a particular emergency, case or incident which is different from the conventional product-based press release or the corporate activity press release.

A crisis is a critical event that may impact an organization's profitability and even threatens the operations, stakeholders and most importantly the reputation of the organization. It can be a dramatic event or even a rumour that requires urgent attention and usually attracts media attention. Miller and Heath (2004) defines crisis as "a

predictable event that occurs at an unexpected time and threatens the well-being of stakeholders and stake seekers (key publics)”. A critical event, if not handled in an appropriate manner may severely impact an organization. Scholars have long recognized the vital role communication plays in effective crisis management (Barton, 1993, Rice, 1990, Williams & Treadway, 1992, Winsor, 1990). Crisis management involves crucial planning that follows certain stages or phases which are usually layered by pre-, during and post- crisis. Lerbinger (1997), Feran-Banks (2001), and Coombs (2007) emphasized on media relations as an element of public relations that is to be a highly valued skill in crisis management. Therefore, the organisation needs to communicate with the public swiftly and effectively throughout a crisis which includes issuing press releases that are to be distributed to the media. All of the statements and information will be carefully examined by stakeholders. Hence, is undoubtedly important to carefully construct a press release to maintain an effective communication during a crisis.

1.2 Purpose of Study

Linguistic studies on various text types have been carried out within the framework of genre analysis. However, the study on press release in English for Specific Purposes (henceforth ESP) genre analysis perspective is less established and not much attention is given to specific types of press release, especially CPR. In the corporate and editorial world, a press release carries a lot of purposes and defining the communicative purposes of the press release is still a challenge for it is multiple. Moreover, different purposes are not given discrete textualizations (Catenaccio, 2008). Hence, this study explores the different communicative purposes of CRP together with the move structure and also the rhetorical strategies of the text.

1.3 Research Objective

The objective of this study is to analyse the press release produced by MAS on the specific case of MH370 flight incident from an ESP based genre-theory perspective (Swales 1990, Bhatia 1993). This study attempts to account for the schematic structure of CPR based on the models by McLaren and Gurău (2005) and Catenaccio (2008). It investigates on how the press release is constructed with additional moves, common and representing moves or deviation from previous move structure. It also identifies the different communicative purposes and the rhetorical strategies used to realize them.

1.4 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following research questions on Malaysia Airlines, MH370 CPR:

1. What are the communicative purposes of the MH370 crisis press release?
2. What is the rhetorical structure of the MH370 crisis press release?
3. How are rhetorical strategies used to realise the communicative purposes of the MH370 crisis press release?

1.5 Significance of Study

A press release is one of the crisis communication strategies employed by companies and institutions. Only a few studies were done on CPR from a genre analysis perspective. This study would be an important contribution to the field of public relation and crisis management discourse too. It is essential to investigate the press release to understand the management and communication when dealing with a certain crisis and how it is written to reach the intended audience. A study on the discourse in crisis management is important as it triggers interest of different parties and not much concern has been given in analysing this kind of discourse in relation to such critical issue. This study will provide a deeper understanding on the logic behind the text and why the press release is written

in such ways for the benefit of public relation practitioners, especially those who are involved with crisis management. The journalists and editors in the media field too would be able to understand the structure and this helps them to extract and place the press release appropriately in the news.

Most importantly, this study will be an important tool for the ESP practitioners for academic purposes. The findings contain pedagogical implication for teaching journalistic English and writing. Teachers and students will be able to get a better understanding of the distinctive structures and strategies, especially on how the text is being built up systematically through a series of moves. Analysis of rhetorical strategies explains how the information is presented in crisis related text and how it helps to disseminate news to the general public. This airline crisis is an important subject, especially when it involves commercial airlines and impacts the lives of many. The action and all communication pertaining the issue is bound to be scrutinised by not just the media and stakeholders but the public. The aftermath report in such crisis is also highly valued when there are so much to learn from the failures as well as positive lesson during and after the crisis. It invites public discussion as well as research as this crisis offers many important lessons for improvement on crisis communication by the public relation teams and for other academic purposes too.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the background information of this study together with the significance of study with three research questions put forth to achieve the purpose as well as the objective of study. Related literature on the subject of this study is further discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter further details and discusses the related studies on the subject concerning this study. This chapter contains four parts. Section 2.1 features the literature on genre and genre analysis, especially from ESP approach. Secondly, Section 2.2 details studies on press release. Section 2.3 addresses the genre mixing and the communicative purposes of press release respectively. Lastly, the research gap is highlighted in Section 2.4.

2.1 Genre Theory

Definition of genre in analysing spoken and written text varies according to its concept. The genre theory has developed in three significantly different schools or traditions. Genre analysts come from either North American New Rhetoric, Australian Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) or English for Specific Purposes (ESP) school. Although differences are noted in the theory, framework and goals, rather than contradicting, the three are indeed complementing, in the way they influence the development of each other.

The New Rhetoric approach concerns with L1 teaching. Instead of focusing on the substance or form of discourse, it focuses on the situational context in which the genre occurs and emphasized on the social purposes or actions that these genres fulfil within these situations (Bazerman, 1994 and Miller, 1994). From this, the functional relationship between text type and rhetorical situation can be derived (Coe, 2002). In order to capture the functional and contextual aspect of the genres, scholars in this field use ethnographic methods to analyse text. This gives a more detail description on the context surrounding the genres and the actions texts perform within these situations (Bazerman, 1988, Devit, 1999 and Schryer, 1993). As this approach concerns with L1 teaching among university students and novice professionals from variety of disciplines, language instructors can assist them to relate genres with the features of the rhetorical situation in their own disciplines and institutional settings. This approach also helps to express the dynamic of

a genre as non-static products and how genre evolves in developed sociocultural setting diachronically.

Australian Systemic Functional Linguistics approach is developed within a systemic functional linguistics theory, a theory by Michael Halliday (1994) on the relationship between form and its functions in social settings. Genre is defined as staged, goal-oriented social process (Martin, Christie & Rothery, 1987). This means different social situation will produce different forms to achieve various purposes. Using Hallidayan schemes of linguistics analysis, the generic structure and the linguistic features of the genre is associated with field (the activity going on), tenor (the relationship between participants) and mode (the channel of communication) (Martin, 1993). The analyses also help to show how lexico-grammatical choices are determined by topic and writer-reader relationships (Halliday and Martin, 1993). This approach has benefits the L1 and L2 readers and writers on academic and workplace text to understand the function and meaning of language in context (Hammond, 1987).

Genre theory in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) was developed by practitioners working in the field of ESP in the 1980s. Swales and Bhatia represent the ESP school. Definition of genre concerns both the social function and form (Bhatia, 1993 and Flowerdew 1993). In this approach, genre is used as a tool for analysing and teaching the spoken and written language required of non-native speakers in academic and professional settings (Bhatia 1993, Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1998, Swales 1990). Genre analysts have framed genre by their formal properties as well as their communicative purposes within social context. Move analyses is used to describe the pattern or structure in the genre. Further analyses on the rhetorical strategies, especially at sentence-level grammatical features are also included. This approach enables teachers to teach L2

learners to understand the functions and linguistics conventions of texts so that they are able to work effectively in the target context.

2.2 The ESP Genre Analysis

The two major genre analysis scholars are Swales and Bhatia. The following will highlight on the studies of genre by both researchers.

2.2.1 Swales' Genre Analysis

The pioneer in Genre studies, Swales (1990) investigates academic genre and comes out with a lengthy definition of genre as such:

“A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of a genre as here conceived narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action. In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience. If all high probability expectations are realized, the exemplar will be viewed as prototypical by the parent discourse community. The genre names inherited and produced by discourse communities and imported by others constitute valuable ethnographic communication, but typically need further validation.”

(Swales, 1990)

Swales' definition of genre highlights three important notions; communicative purposes, conventionalized features and discourse community. From the definition, a genre is characterized by its shared communicative purposes. These communicative purposes form the rationale for a genre (Swales, 1990). They shape the internal structure, style and content of a genre. For example, the purpose of a letter is different from a report, resulting in distinctions in structure, content and layout, including its lexical and grammatical choices.

The different communicative purposes place constraints on the formal features of the text, the discourse structure and the lexical and grammatical choices. It is important to recognize the communicative purpose as it is the common ground for the internal structure of text, its regularities of organization and its rhetorical strategies. This eventually means a genre has the same purpose(s) and the same text type while different genre has different purpose(s) and text type.

The constraints and conventions are what give rise to a genre. These are recognized and familiarized by the expert members or the discourse communities. The knowledge and understanding of these conventions are important to the discourse community as they carry along huge responsibilities in forming the basis that controls the content and style of a genre. After all, this discourse community is the socio-rhetorical network who owns a particular genre. These are the six characteristics of a discourse community according to Swales (1990):

1. A discourse community has a broadly agreed set of common public goals.
2. A discourse community has mechanisms of intercommunication among their members.
3. A discourse community uses its participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback.
4. A discourse community utilizes and possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims.
5. A discourse community has acquired some specific lexis.
6. A discourse community has a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discursal expertise

It is clear by the definitions that a discourse community is familiar to the text and its processes and has certain standard practices in order to realize their common community goal.

This concept of genre set forth the most influential ESP genre-analysis framework by Swales (1990). His move analysis was an interpretation from his definition of genre on the inter-dependency of three constituents: communicative purpose is realized by a move structure and in turn is realized by rhetorical strategies. The textual patterns or organization in a genre is analysed by breaking the text into moves. A move carries communication intentions that elaborate the overall communicative purpose of that genre. Rhetorical moves give the genre its cognitive structure and occur in predictable manner. The communication intention at the level of move is also realized using different rhetorical strategies. Therefore, apart from looking at this structure, genre analyst would also study the rhetorical strategies including the analysis of typical linguistic realizations of the particular genre to understand the text better. This model and framework are used to analyse familiar genre, genre colony, new genre or even linking them to the unfamiliar genre.

Genre analysis is used to reveal something of organization of a genre and language used to express them (Dudley Evans, 1986). It is to gain insight into the nature of the genre. The findings have pedagogical benefits and are used as materials for teaching and writing. It also helps the novice to understand the text or complicated text easily. For example, a study by Bhatia on legislative document based on 'easification' makes the text accessible to the learner and reader friendly as it helps the readers process the text appropriately without sacrificing its originality, authenticity or generic integrity (Bhatia 1993). Genre analysis is also used to classify genre and subgenre as similar genre may be different in their communicative purposes. This means the derived generic conventions

is not always used prescriptively as the purpose of genre analysis is to seek the pattern rather than imposing pattern (Hart 1986 as cited in Bhatia 1993).

The development in genre analysis has come so far for the past decades. The analysis has moved from not just textual but contextual too. As mentioned previously, here is where genre analysis from ESP approach is influenced by other schools like the New Rhetorical approach. Previously, as mentioned in Hyon (1996), many ESP scholars paid less attention on the specialized functions of text and their surrounding social contexts. Swales (1993) also mentions that putting context is not entirely necessary for a starting ground and text is sometimes enough and more enlightening, especially when researchers tend to go overboard and going beyond text would need specialist knowledge. However, that is not the case anymore. Although Swales was not in favour of contextualizing genre analysis, as he was so concerned with the standards in ESP research and the ESP's traditional anchor in linguistics (Swales, 1993), in 2004 he revisits genre and discusses on the role of environment, value, congruent and conflictive in understanding a text. Swales (2004) came out with six metaphors of genre which talk on the various perspectives on genre as follows:

1. Frames of social action → Guiding Principles
2. Language standards → Conventional Expectations
3. Biological species → Complex Historicities
4. Families and prototypes → Variable Links to the Centre
5. Institutions → Shaping Contexts: Roles
6. Speech acts → Directed Discourses

From these metaphors, Swales has included the social aspect together with the formal aspect of the text that would enlighten our understanding of genres.

Swales has conducted a study on introduction using the move analysis approach to define the structure of this important section in research article. Swales (1990) has introduced a three-move structure which he calls “Create a Research Space (CARS) model for a typical research article introduction. His CARS model includes three obligatory moves accompanied with steps to realize the moves, as follows;

Move 1: Establishing a territory

Step 1 – Claiming centrality, and/or

Step 2 – Making topic generalizations, and/or

Step 3- Reviewing items of previous research

Move 2: Establishing a niche

Step 1A- Counter-claiming or

Step 1B-Indicating a gap or

Step 1C- Question-raising or

Step 1D- Continuing a tradition

Move 3: Occupying the niche

Step 1A-Outlining purposes or

Step 1B-Announcing present research

Step 2-Announcing principle findings

Step 3-Indicating RA structure

(Swales, 1990)

Since then, many studies have adopted Swales’ CARS model to look not only at the patterns of this important section in research article in academic genres, but also the different sections in research article; abstract, methods, discussion and also for the analysis of dissertations. Furthermore, researchers also use this move-based approach to study different kinds of genre, within and across disciplines, culture and language. As

noted in Flowerdew and Dudley Evans (2002) drawing on Swales (1990), the resulting schematic structure are prototypes which can be subjected to different amounts of variations according to the degree to which the genre is conventionalized. In most genre, moves will be either obligatory or optional, they may be fixed, or in a variable sequence, they may be subjected to embedding one within the other and they maybe recursive.

For instance, a study on research article introduction was conducted by Briones (2012) of philosophy field, Mohamad & Amira (2012) of Islamic academic field and Samraj (2002) of Conservation Biology and Wildlife Behaviour field. As adaptable as the CARS model, according to Swales, regardless of disciplines, these researchers found similarities and differences in the structure, especially in different disciplines. This disciplinary variation in the structure of this genre has important pedagogical implications. A modified version of the CARS model based on the results was also presented accordingly. In application of this approach in different sections of research article across disciplines, Holmes (1997) has conducted an investigation of the structure of research article discussion sections in three disciplines; history, political science and sociology. The results show that although there were fundamental similarities to the natural sciences, social science Discussion sections also displayed some distinctive features and these features vary according to disciplines.

A study across language conducted by Chek & Evans (2010) on the introduction sections of English and Chinese research articles in the field of educational psychology shows similarities and differences between English and Chinese research article introductions in terms of the employment of moves and steps, reflecting some of the distinctive characteristics of the two different cultures. Another study by Martín (2002) on research article abstracts written in English and Spanish shows similarity in

conventional features with some degree of divergence found, mainly explained by the different expectations by the member of communities.

Flowerdew (2016) has also use the approach to help postgraduate students write research grant proposals, in which tasks where students match lexico-grammatical patterning to specific move structures are also outlined. Researches are done with this approach in a hope that the students are able to express ideas in the ways assumed by their discipline (Dudley-Evans, 1997) with each different and similar finding give effects on the teaching and pedagogy, especially in second language writing in ESP.

Apart from the study of academic genre, the move analysis is also used to study professional genre such as book reviews, business letter, sales promotional letters, legal documents and many more. It would be a good guideline to look whether the moves comply or deviate from the previous move structure model.

A study by Connor and Mauranen (1999) on European Union (EU) research grant applications draws on Swales genre analysis as well as a social constructionist theory of genre (Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995) has identified ten recurrent moves in the proposals, reflecting the generic affinity of grant proposals to both academic research papers (Swales, 1981 and 1990) and promotional genres (Bhatia, 1993), in addition to moves specific to the grant proposals genre.

When studies on press release as a genre was still new and attempts were made to suggest a move structure model that fits it all, McLaren and Gurău (2005) adopted the approach by Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993) in its analysis of move for them to be able to suggest on a move structure of press releases. The same thing was done by Catenaccio (2008) as she looked closely at the study done by McLaren and Gurău (2005) and

combined with Bhatia (2004) advertising genre for her to come out with a move structure model of press releases based on her data.

2.2.2 Bhatia's Genre Analysis

One of Swales' students, most notably Bhatia, broaden the studies to professional domain and gives a more comprehensive definition of genre (Bhatia, 1993):

Genre is a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalized with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and function value. These constraints however, are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purpose(s).

(Bhatia, 1993, p.13)

Bhatia defines genres by a set of communicative purpose(s), which is recognized by the discourse community and displays constraints on its standard practices. Bhatia's definition is no different to Swales' and he agrees that a construction of text is determined by its communicative purposes. Bhatia works include genres not just in academic but in professional settings as well. Using Swales move approach, Bhatia (1993) looks into the business and legal text. He has proposed promotional move structure model which has become a part of analysis in many advertising genres.

Both Bhatia and Swales link genre with the linguistics and sociology aspect. The linguistic aspect covers the analysis of text and the sociological aspects explain how the genre communicates with the social reality. However, there is extension to the steps and procedures by Bhatia in analysing genre. In his seven-step procedure, he extended the step, by including specialist informant. Moreover, there is an aspect that Bhatia incorporated in his genre analysis, which is the psychological aspect that details the tactical choices in genre construction. In 2004, Bhatia comes out with an extended

framework in genre analysis which include multidimensional analytical perspective from textual, ethnographic, socio-cognitive and socio-critical perspective. The framework is an addition to Swales' framework to look at genre in different angle comprehensively and starting to be used mostly in applied linguistics for an extensive study of genres.

In addition to that, Bhatia has included one important aspect in his definition, which is the 'private intention' where the discourse community has the specialties to manipulate these conventional features. The role of private intention has given rise to more notions by Bhatia such as sub-genres and genre mixing.

2.3 Studies on Press Releases

The history of press release in public relation started by Ivy Lee in 1906 when he was working with the Pennsylvania Railroad company. An accident occurred and as the representative of the company, Ivy Lee suggested the company to issue a statement to the public and even invited reporters to the scene. He wrote what was believed the first designated press release. The New York Times praised the openness and honesty of the company and was the first to include the press release, 'Statement from the Road' in the newspaper, verbatim. Following this, Ivy Lee in his Declaration of Principles marked the beginning of a general policy of public relations in the United States. His plan was "to supply to the press and public of the United States prompt and accurate information concerning subjects which it is of value and interest to the public to know about" (Ivy Lee 1906, quoted in Harrison & Maloney, 2004).

The studies of press releases grow in the domain of linguistics, business communication and public relation. Jacobs (1999a) described the preformulation in press releases that makes it easier for journalists to copy them in their news reporting, in order to serve the purpose of retelling the information as accurately as possible. Sleurs, Jacobs & Van Waes (2003) and Sleurs and Jacobs (2005) studied on the construction of press

release, from cognitive psychology approach and ethnographic approach. The former explained how press releases are written while the latter brought in far more content, giving more attention to some of the practical as well as political concern in the writing. Lassen (2006) conducted a discourse analysis study of form and content of press releases and suggested that it is almost impossible to fairly agree on the communicative purpose of a press release, especially when the discourse is seen to be multi-dimensional. A press release may be seen as a genre at a broad level when view as form but in a more specific level, the genre may be characterized by different levels in different cultures and at different times of the rhetorical situation. Although there are common features which may categorized various types of press release under one genre, some differences in form and style may occur.

Other studies include the use of press release in news reports. Pander Maat (2007) showed that promotional language is a regular component in corporate press releases and is dealt with differently in different sectors of the press. Jansen (2008) addressed the quality of the press release text as text as he looked at how appositions in source texts are dealt with by desk editors. Although press release writers aim to produce text that can easily be re-used by journalists, his study points to a number of stylistic mismatches between the press release style and the stylistic needs of the general audience which result in editorial intervention. Other than that, in order to develop writing expertise to initiate novice writers into the conventions of corporate writing, particularly in Public Relation contexts, a recent study was done on interdiscursivity and the process of interdiscursive collaboration by Bhatia et al. (2013). The study explained the interdiscursive character of Public Relation discourse, be it an advertisement, a press release, a podcast or a proposal.

Wei and Gampper (2014) studies on fixed expressions or prefabricated adjective and verb collocations in online smartphone press releases alongside the communicative purposes. They found that press release carries an implicitly self-promotional purpose as the press releases in the study gives not only product-related facts but also aims to promote the product. Choi (2012) also investigated the different frames used by British Petroleum's (BP) press releases, which dealt with the Gulf oil spill crisis that happened in April 2010. A content analysis was conducted and the study found five main frames that were primarily used in the press releases which are informational, philanthropic, social responsibility, defensive, and official BP updates. Most of the press release were used as official updates and the second most common frame utilised is the 'social responsibility' frame with reference to insurance activities and local relief programs prepared by BP in handling this crisis. The study shows that BP made all effort to manage the crisis and inform the public on what the company was doing to resolve the crisis. Similar study was done by Choi and Lee (2017). They studied the press releases by Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPC) which dealt with the Fukushima nuclear crisis that occurred in March 2011. The company attempted to restore its reputation by using mostly official update frame and also attribution frame.

The noticeable study of press release from a genre theory perspective was done by McLaren and Gurău (2005) and Catenaccio (2008). McLaren and Gurău (2005) sought to identify the key characteristics of company press releases as a genre. They found typification in the move structure of the press releases that imitated news reporting, with little variation. The findings showed that the genre was highly conventionalized and indeed a static genre. The study also supports the occurrence of certain textual features noted in Jacobs (1999). Catenaccio (2008) explores the generic features of press releases while addressing the hybrid position along the promotional and information continuum. The study draws on the work of Bhatia (1993 & 2004), highly on the advertising genre

and on Jacobs (1999a) preformulation features. In this study, she concluded that the identification of press releases relies much on the core as well as the peripheral textual features, for it to be recognized as a press release.

The use of online press release is very significant nowadays. One of the crucial aspects in the strategies of crisis response is for the public relations in the affected organization to develop messages for various publics. A part of the challenges is in ensuring that the communication reaches its intended audience. The organization has to be quick, accurate and consistent in delivering such messages (Coombs, 2007). Therefore, it is important to choose an appropriate communication channel. The number of communication channels available to crisis communicators has increased significantly in recent years with the company website now one of the most prominent (Grundy & Moxon, 2013). The incorporation of the Internet in crisis response is now increasing. With the Internet, creating a web-site or a designated section in the current web of the organization is a best practice (Taylor and Kent, 2007) and a great platform for communication in crisis. Stakeholders and media will refer to the Internet as a source of information and more. In crisis management, the role of Internet is very crucial, especially for an organization to present its side of the story and not using it creates a risk of losing how the crisis story is told (Taylor and Kent, 2007, as cited in Coombs, 2007). An organization's attempt to maintain relationships with its various publics via the Internet while under intense scrutiny may minimise the potential damage of a crisis with its stakeholders and maximise recovery.

On the other hand, the relationship between press release writers and journalists which was known for years has changed with the use of online press release. The previous concern of the writers was to always make sure that the releases were taken up by the media, resulting in a stable form and style of press releases (Jacobs, 1999 and Sleurs et

al., 2003). The role of journalists as gatekeeper has constrained the freedom of press release writers. Journalists would edit the releases to match their publication style and stylistic requirement (Pander Maat, 2008, Walters et al., 1994). However, development in technology and the quick access to the Internet has affected the writers of press releases and the journalists. The Internet enables companies and institutions to include their press releases in their website, online (also known as e-releases). Most companies now have established a press room (also labelled as news room) in their website to assist them with media relation. Online press release has a little bit shaken the relationship between the press release writers and journalists and opened up a new research area.

In 1990 Swales mentioned about the changes genre will experience by the context surrounding the discipline and that genres are living and continually involving. When texts belonging to a genre system enter into a new communication medium, like the Internet, we can see its development and changes (Yates & Orlikowski, 1992). The same goes for the self-published press release. It makes identification of communicative purposes more complex. It also brings changes in the participation framework of the genre and also the structure of the press releases. For example, some textual conventions seem to shift allowing more promotional language in the e-releases (Strobbe and Jacobs, 2005, Catenaccio, 2007). Lassen (2006) claimed that with the Internet, companies have gained unprecedented freedom as to what they write in their press releases because they no longer depend on the opinion of a journalist to disseminate the information. As journalists has also begun to increasingly use the Internet as a source of stories (Callison, 2003), the purpose of press releases in pre-formulating the news in order to assist the journalists in their writing is still clearly seen.

2.4 Genre Mixing and the Communicative Purpose of Press Release

Bhatia has broadened the definition of genre and include new perspective, which involves genre colonization. The integrity of a genre is often bounded territorially but with the development in information technology, all the genres has invaded the territorial integrity of many professional and academic genres. The expert members of the professional discourse communities now tend to mix the communicative purposes, resulting in mixing and bending of genre. According to Bhatia (1995, 2004), phenomenon of mixing private intention with socially recognized communicative purposes is characteristics of and widely used in a number of professional domains. They tend to exploit generic conventions to communicate their private intention within the context of socially accepted communicative purposes that a particular genre is meant to serve (Bhatia, 1995). This process has given rise to coined terms like *advertorial*, *infomercial* and *infotainment*. The resources may be lexico-grammatical, rhetorical, discoursal or other generic conventions. Bhatia (1995) already addressed the factors behind the complexity of the professional communication that might be due to the increasing use of multi-media, exposition of information technology, multi-disciplinary context of the world of work, increasingly competitive professional environment and the compulsive nature of promotional and advertising activities.

Appropriation of linguistics and discoursal can be found across genres like in the socio-political and diplomatic context such as consultation papers (Bhatia, 1997), diplomatic communiques, memoranda of understanding (Bhatia, 2000) and also press releases. An example is on food and restaurant reviews. As informative as it can be in giving recommendation and review, most of it is used to recommend and promote the product and services too. This itself inclines towards promotional already and is no different from an advertisement. We might even find some of the promotional move in

the structure. This claims sometimes create conflicts but is often a natural socio-rhetorical option to the genre writers.

Generally, press releases seem to adopt certain genre conventions from news report, especially in their move structure (Pander Maat, 2007). A press release is regarded to be purely informative with a little bit persuasive. However, as a press release might seem to be informative in nature but one cannot leave out the fact that there is always intangible purpose or private intention displayed in between the conventional textual resource of the reporting genre. A press release is said to be in the middle ground between advertising and news reporting (Jacob, 1999b). It is a form of 'mediated discourse' (Jacobs, 1999) where the organisation communicates newsworthy information to the media and general public. According to Catenaccio, (2008) a press release is an example of a typical mix of informative and promotional genre. There are similarities between press releases and advertisement in both the core and peripheral features which carries both the information as well as promotional intent.

The general purpose of a press release is to publish news about the company and to bring information and the development of the company into public domain. It is a written communication, reporting specific but brief information typically tied to a business or organization. Thus, a press release is usually placed primarily under reporting genre. The word *reporting* tells us that it is clearly an informative text, designed to inform its audience about a particular event, issue or simply something newsworthy. A press release is informative because it contains facts and information to its audience. This is similar to other variations of report such as news report, business reports and accident report, which are very common, under this genre. An informative discourse like this serves to disseminate newsworthy information to its readers.

Even though the strategy to a good press release is to provide facts (Marken, 1994) and avoid promotional language and self-promotional elements, in corporate press releases, the idea of a press release is not just to inform, persuade or else, but more importantly according to Jacobs (1999a) to shed good lights on the organization that issues them. In McLaren and Gurău (2005), the communicative purposes of the press releases include projecting a positive corporate image, persuading investors to invest and reassuring existing investors that their funds are safe. When a text is tied to the word business, it is indirectly reflected to marketing and commercial activities. A press release has indeed become one of the marketing tools. A difference in press release compared to other discourse in the reporting colony is that it does not just aimed to distribute information. The original nature of press releases is for it to be picked up by journalists and used in the news reporting. When reproduced in news it indirectly enhance the credibility of the press release as well as the company. This already suggests that press release is promotional. A product press release for example aims at promoting product or services as well as portraying positive result and evaluation of the company or institution. This means having it placed in a promotional genre. Press release is also promotional in a sense that it announces and justifies the object of release to the public using media, at the same time hoping that it would attract the journalist to use it and lastly has helped to promote the organisation, especially with the use of the Internet. The press release is promotional in a way that it promotes the company's product or services and tries to portray positive result and evaluation of the company or institution. This is highlighted in Catenaccio's move structure model for Move 5 and 6 and can be clearly seen in product-based press release. A press release on a product launching will publicly and directly inform people about the product. This includes justifying the need of the product, the advantage for potential beneficiaries and the positive result it tries to portray. The press release is written in a hope that the information will be passed around and even picked up

by other means or people such as journalist ultimately (to be include in mainstream media) or the people on social media (blogs, Twitters, Facebook)

With this, we can summarize that press release can be promotional in two ways. First, it is certainly promotional in its aim to make sure that it is reproduced in the news and secondly the present of implicit or explicit promotional element in the text that is intended for the end-users.

In order to further understand the purpose of CPR, references must be made to the use of online press release for communication in crisis management. In crisis management articles, crises are described as negative and it creates attributions of responsibility. With its many definition, a crisis is understood to be “a major occurrence with a potentially negative outcome affecting an organisation, company or industry, as well as its publics, products, services or good name” (Fearn-Banks, 2002). Various researchers around the world has proposed crisis management theory for organisations in times of crisis (Fink (1986), Lagadec, 1993, Levitt, 1997, Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992, Coombs, 2007). It is a guideline which includes a detailed action plan and the allocation of responsibilities recorded in a manual setting which are also the procedures for managing the crisis. A specific attention is given to an effective communications mechanism (Bland, 1998, Gonzalez-Herrero & Pratt, 1998, Ten Berg, 1990, Hale, Dulek & Hale, 2005). One of the four important steps in crisis communication is the dissemination that informs those involved in implementing the decisions, that further involves information exchange with the public (Hale et al., 2005). This is where press release comes in the picture. According to Toni & Joost (2014), the general purpose of crisis communication in the crisis management strategies is to provide information to help stakeholders make sense of the situation. This is where a CPR tend to be informative in nature. On the other hand, Ray (1999) classifies the five different communication strategies open to organisations in

times of crises as denying responsibility, hedging responsibility, ingratiation, making amends and eliciting sympathy. According to Coombs & Holladay (2002) the key purpose in crisis communication is also to repair the corporate image or prevent reputation damage. People might blame the organization in crisis or the situation, which creates anger and negative reactions such as increased damage to an organization's reputation, reduced purchase intentions and increased likelihood of engaging in negative word-of-mouth (Coombs, 2007 and Coombs & Holladay, 2006). This would be an important aspect that might imply the mixing of promotional or other elements in CPR. Generally, the purposes might be multiple and timely distinctive such as to inform, to persuade, to apologize, to response to a speculation or to bring back trust on the companies or institutions.

2.5 Research Gap

McLaren and Gurău (2005) studied the press release by biotechnology companies in the UK using the similar approach adopted by genre analysts such as Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993). They came out with a typical text-organization of a press release which partly imitated a news article. Although McLaren and Gurău's (2005) has come out with a move structure model, it was noted in their study that it is possible, although unlikely, that their findings reflect the patterns for the British biotechnology company press releases only and further research would be needed to other English language corporate press releases to see whether the generic norms found in their study is also seen in other press releases.

Catenaccio (2008) studied the textual features of press release based on the generic features of reporting and advertising genre. The data used in the study included different types of press release. She stated that defining the communicative purpose of the press release is difficult because it is multiple. In addition, the generic integrity of the press

releases relies on the peripheral features as much as on the component in their body. The steps identified in the study mainly points in common with the advertisement structure described by Bhatia (2004).

Therefore, this study narrows down the press release to crisis press release in attempts to identify the communicative purpose(s) of this type of press release as it may vary from the others. This study uses McLaren and Gurău (2005) framework that is modelled after a reporting genre and also Catenaccio (2008) framework that includes advertising moves and peripheral features in order to build a schematic structure of an online CPR. The rhetorical strategies are later identified. Analysis of discourses is added as part of the rhetorical strategy analysis to see how the discourses are used to effectively communicate the intended messages.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed on the previous studies done in relation to the subject matter of this current study. Following this, the analytical framework and methodology are detailed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the analytical framework and methodology employed in this study. Section 3.1 and 3.2 explain the data selection and collection as well as the justification for the choice of data. The following section details the data analysis which includes analysis of move and rhetorical strategies.

3.1 Data Selection

The online press releases are selected and collected for analysis. The selection of data is based on two criteria. The first one is that the online press release would be on the case of MH370 flight incident. Secondly, this study will focus on the press release by Malaysia Airlines System.

The reasons for this data selection are based on the significance of the event and the accessibility of the data. As mentioned previously, MH370 flight incident is the biggest recent crisis in Malaysia with multifarious audience. A crisis as such has never happened to Malaysia in decades and it was actually one of the worsts in the history of commercial airline crisis in Malaysia. These are the factors that has elevated the newsworthiness of its press releases. Airline crashes is particularly an acute form of crisis and their analysis enlightens the dilemmas and difficulties in confronting those responsibilities. It is a discourse to explore and understand. Such knowledge can be used to improve tools and techniques for dealing with conditions of crisis by public relations practitioners, adding to the wider literature on both crisis management and public relations.

Moreover, the collection of press release by MAS on MH370 is made available to the public, making it accessible for data collection. Accessibility is important, especially when the analysis in this study involves all the press releases throughout the crisis. This enables us to see the different communicative purposes in CPR.

This study will focus on MAS press releases as a corporate press release. In MH370 crisis, the collection of web-based CPR comes from corporate and government agencies. This includes Malaysia Airlines Berhad, Malaysia Department of Civil Aviation, the Prime Minister Office, Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defense. The press release from Malaysia Airlines System (MAS) is chosen as it is the airlines company which managed the flight and is the corporate agency that is involved directly in the crisis and received direct impact from it. The press releases by government agencies are not taken for analysis, simply because the references for this study are mostly on corporate press releases. Moreover, it is also because there are differences found in the press releases when written by two different institutions (Jacobs et al., 2008). Based on a study by Lindholm (2008), political press releases may serve other purposes than those issued by business organization. Therefore, taking them both does not provide an accurate analysis, especially on determining the specific communicative purposes in order to have a better understanding on how the press releases are written by the corporate community. It is also understood that Malaysia Airlines Berhad is a government-link agency where the process and decision on their media releases might be influenced directly or indirectly by the government. Nonetheless, they still carry corporate motives and therefore taken for main analysis.

3.2 Data Collection

This study is conducted on web-based press releases collected from Media Statement & Information on Flight MH370, a Malaysia Airlines webpage that hosts all the press releases on MH370 by Malaysia Airlines including some other related agencies. The link to this webpage is available on Malaysia Airlines website. An initiative has been made to contact and confirm with Malaysia Airlines that the mentioned webpage is the official online source that compiles all the original press releases issued by Malaysia Airlines regarding MH370 flight incident. There are forty-four (44) media statements made to

public from the first press release in March 2014 until the latest post on March 2016 as stated in the table below. Note that the analysis done is only onto the reading mode and the interface (what appears on the website) excluding others like the navigation features or layout. Additionally, there is Chinese language used in the press release and on the website (the translation of page title and contact details, with a few of the press releases being translated to Chinese) but only the English language is analysed. All the forty-four media statements are selected and viewed for analysis.

Table 3.1 Number of CPR Published by MAS on its Website

Month & Year	Number
Mar-14	27
Apr-14	1
May-14	5
June-14	1
Nov-14	1
Jan-15	1
Feb-15	2
Mac-15	1
Apr-15	1
May-15	2
Aug-15	1
Mar-16	1
Total	44

3.3 Data Analysis

The data will be analysed based on the communicative purpose, rhetorical structures and rhetorical strategies.

3.3.1 Communicative Purpose(s)

The construction of texts is largely shaped by its communicative purposes and this forms the basis for analysing a genre. These communicative purposes will be recognized by analysing the move structure and rhetorical strategies as stated below.

3.3.2 Move Structure

This study builds on previous attempts to account for the schematic structure of press releases. Attempts are made to analyse the texts for moves. A move is a semantic unit of analysis that is shaped and constrained by a specific communicative function. It is used to identify the textual regularities. The length and size of a move can vary from a single sentence or more to paragraphs. Often, one sentence will be considered as a move, even though there are also chances that there will be embedded moves, meaning having two moves in a single sentence.

In order to realize a particular communicative intention at the level of move, different 'steps' or 'sub-moves' are used as a lower level text unit. A move may have several steps or no step at all, but most importantly, these steps have a schematic and semantic function to support the moves as to achieve the communicative goal. The boundaries of moves will be marked by a double stroke (//). The boundaries of steps will be marked by a single stroke (/).

For this, linguistic clues such as lexical and synthetic choices are used. While not all moves are presented in all the CPR, additional moves and steps, especially in the core features are identified and added to the list. The functional labels are provided along the margin and a table is created to list down all the moves including new moves.

The occurrence for these moves is also calculated and classified based on Howe's (1995) four grade system. A separate table is made to tabulate the occurrence of each moves. 100% of occurrence means the move occurs in all the press releases. 50% frequency of occurrence and above is deemed as obligatory move. From here, suggestion on the move structure of CPR is made. The occurrence for a particular move, is calculated as follows:

$\frac{\text{Number of occurrences}}{\text{Total number of press release (44)}}$	X	100%
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Figure 3.1 Calculating the Frequency of Occurrence (%)

From this frequency of occurrence, the type of move can be determined based on Howe's (1995) four grade system. Occurrence of 50% and above will be deemed as obligatory move and less than it will be an optional move.

Table 3.2 Howe's (1995) Four Grade System

Frequency of occurrence	Level of Prominence	Type of Move
75 % $\leq f \leq$ 100 %	Most Strong	Obligatory
50 % $\leq f \leq$ 75 %	Quite Strong	Obligatory
25 % $\leq f \leq$ 50 %	Slightly Strong	Optional
0 % $\leq f \leq$ 25 %	Not Strong	Optional

3.3.3 Analytical Framework

For move analysis, the identification of moves and steps is made with reference to McLaren and Gurău's (2005) and Catenaccio's (2008) move structure model.

In order to determine the rhetorical structures of the online CPR, the features of promotional and reporting discourse are looked into respectively. This is the same way adopted from Catenaccio (2008) when she uses McLaren and Gurău's (2005) move structure model and Bhatia's (2004) advertising genre to come out with her move structure model. The focus on Analysis using McLaren and Gurău's (2005) move structure model enables us to understand the quasi news-article like structure of a press release that has accentuated its component as a reporting genre. The additional promotional element of a press release whether in the core or peripheral features can later be identified using Catenaccio's (2008) move structure model. If this informational component is taken into consideration, alongside identification of the advertisement-like

features, the possible shift of a press release from a reporting genre to a mix of informational and promotional genre can also be clearly seen.

Therefore, the analysis will be done first using the McLaren and Gurău's (2005) move structure model of press release. Later, the press releases will be analysed based on Catenaccio's (2008) move structure model. Additional move will be identified along the process. Lastly, a new move structure model will be proposed based on both move structure models.

3.3.3.1 McLaren and Gurău's (2005) Move Structure Model

The figure below shows the move structure model by McLaren and Gurău (2005). According to their studies, the typical press release begins with announcement, followed by elaboration, comments and contact details. One optional move is editor's note. The first and second moves are mostly packed with information while the third move is usually more evaluative.

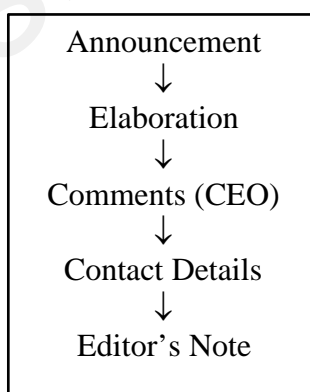


Figure 3.2 McLaren and Gurău's (2005) Move Structure Model

The first move, announcement usually appears in the first sentence and has become the standard feature of all press release. It usually occupies the first paragraph. As noted in Jacobs (1999a), the semi-performative verbs, such as “announce” and “report” are used to express this move. The announcement is subsequently detailed in the next move, elaboration. It is packed with information on the subject being discussed and accounts for

the largest portion of the press release. A lot of facts and technical details are presented to develop and support the first move.

The third move is comments and they are usually from the CEO or other important figures of the company. This move uses self-quotation where the company quote itself or any member of the managerial or staff. The comments and most of the self-quotations are generally positive. The move structure finally ends with contact details. By providing contacts or means of communication such as the company's phone number or related agencies, information can be further obtained by readers. In addition, Editor's note is an optional move where addition background information is included in the press release. This part which can run to several pages contains information such as the company's profile, definition of terms and others. This information is supplied in the hope of assisting journalist to use and adapt it in their writing.

3.3.3.2 Catenaccio's (2008) Move Structure Model

The move structure model by Catenaccio was built on the features of reporting and advertising genre (Bhatia, 2004). It can be seen below, in Figure 3.3.

In the structure, some of the features of news article reporting which are headline and, lead and elaboration can be seen through moves 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8. On the other hand, features of advertisement structure described by Bhatia (2004) can be seen through moves 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

The press/news release caption, "For immediate release" formula, contact details, company logo and boilerplate description(s) (the brief company description) are considered as peripheral features. These moves have nothing to do with the story or body. According to Catenaccio (2008), these advertisement-like features provide framing of a press release as a genre where one can easily identify a press release through these

features. They are also the important features that distinguish press release from news report and are usually omitted in the reproduction of press releases in news by journalists.

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Press/News Release caption (frame)2. Headline3. [Summary of main points]4. ["For immediate release" formula]5. Lead: Announcing newsworthy information<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Launching a new product/service• Announcing results and other company-internal information• Describing other types of company's activity6. Justifying the product or service or simply the newsworthiness of the information<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indicating the need for the product/service etc.• Referring to the advantages for potential beneficiaries• Qualifying the result as positive7. Detailing product/service/company/other event which is the object of the release8. Explicit promotional component: Attributed to company official, standard user<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasizing positive results• Indicating reliability of company/product• Independently endorsing company results• Independent expert opinion9. Boilerplate description(s) / establishing credentials10. Contact details11. Company logo |
|--|

Figure 3.3 Catenaccio's (2008) Move Structure Model

Moves 5, 6, 7, and 8 are the expansion part that make up the core features of a press release. Move 5 is lead which is similar to announcement in McLaren and Gurău (2005). This move is realised by the announcement of the company's product, service, results, information or activities. Move 6 is justifying the product or service or simply the newsworthiness of the information in move 5 by relating it to the importance and the benefits of the product/service/information as well as the positive outcomes of it. In move 7, the product/service/information is detailed or described.

In move 8, the promotional language is rather apparent. This move is realised with four steps where the positive outcome of the product/service/results/information is accentuated, the dependability of the company or product/service/results/information is pointed out and independent endorsement as well as expert opinion are used, all leading

to positive evaluation of the company or the users. Move 9, similar to editor's note in McLaren and Gurău (2005), is about giving background information about the company using boilerplate description(s) or by establishing credentials. Credentials are usually established by highlighting the qualifications of the company, for example, by stating any form of recognition received by the company or its certification.

3.3.4 Analysis of Rhetorical Strategies

Understanding the rhetorical strategies and how these strategies are structured help to confirm and support the moves and the communicative purpose(s) of the press release. In this study, analysis of rhetorical strategies includes identification of common linguistic features and professional discourses in the text. To begin with, the linguistic features that are analysed are verbs or specialized vocabulary as well as the use of pronoun, self-reference and semi-performatives structure. According to Jacobs (1999), these are the most prominent features found in the press releases and this is a good guideline to analyse the linguistic features. The analysis of professional discourses later starts from looking at the related discourses, especially in crisis management and public relation.

3.4 Inter-Rater Reliability

In order to establish reliability and validity in move classification, an inter-rater from the field of genre studies is consulted inter rate a set of move analysis samples. The inter-rater is a lecturer in genre studies who is familiar with the literature on genre analysis and has the experience and expertise to inter rate the analysis of moves. The role of this inter-rater is to verify the consistency in the analysis as well as to provide insight to reduce inconsistencies in analysing and determining the moves.

5 sample analysis of press releases with a variety of length are randomly selected for inter rating. The press releases were already coded based on the move structure models. They were inter-rated in order to identify the level of agreement. The results and feedback

acquired showed a high level of accuracy in the analysis of moves. Following this, only a few minor changes were made.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodology used for the analysis of move and rhetorical strategies in CPR. Both analyses are important to study this particular genre. The results after this data analysis are presented and discussed in Chapter 4.

Universiti Malaya

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the data from the analysis done on the online CPRs. The findings are also discussed in this chapter in accordance to the three research questions:

1. What are the communicative purposes of the MH370 online crisis press release?
2. What is the rhetorical structure of the MH370 online crisis press release?
3. How are the rhetorical strategies used to realise the communicative purposes of the MH370 online crisis press release?

4.1 The Communicative Purposes of the MH370 Online CPR

While press release is known mainly to disseminate information, throughout the analysis, it can be seen that the online CPRs produced by MAS are not only informative but carry promotional intentions in them. In table 4.1, a summary of the communicative purposes of MAS online CPR is provided.

Table 4.1 The Communicative Purposes of the MH370 Online CPR

Communicative Purposes	Type of Genre
To disseminate information	Informative
To address issues and speculations	Informative & Promotional
To assure and regain reliability	Promotional

The MH370 online CPR is informational as MAS issued the press release to disseminate news and reports pertaining the crisis. Commencing the crisis, the airlines understood the need to reach out and communicate with stakeholders including journalists and the general public about the devastating incident. The information given by the airlines are on the state of the crisis, the results of the search operations and the potential whereabouts of the missing plane. The press releases also informed readers about the actions taken by the airline, in particularly what the company was doing to handle the

crisis as well as the services established to aid the situation. All this information is valuable and highly sought after by stakeholders during a crisis.

The needs of reaching out throughout a crisis and managing relationships and interactions with the stakeholders make a press release an important piece of text in crisis communication. The MH370 flight incident was one of the most devastating crises that happened to Malaysia and was covered comprehensively by the local and international media. MAS published its press releases online, apart from sending hard copies to the media agencies, on a website dedicated to host these press releases. According to Coombs and Holladay (2009), in time of crisis, organizations should “deliver their messages in a variety of media as a means of reaching more people”. This shows that MAS is committed in establishing communication throughout the crisis. Ledingham and Bruning (1998) also stress that an organisation should focus on building and managing relationships with key stakeholders. These key stakeholders may include the organisation’s investors, employees, customers, suppliers, the media and a wide range of special interest groups. Interaction between an organization and a stakeholder is important because this can influence stakeholders’ thoughts, emotions and behaviours towards the organization (Brodie et al., 2011), especially in critical time like this.

The need to deliver information also resulted in frequent dissemination of press releases by the airlines, especially in the initial stage of the crisis. On the first day, six press releases were issued and regular releases were published every day for almost a month. MAS repeatedly said in the CPR that “the airline will provide regular updates on the situation”. MAS clearly understands that effective and ethical engagement in crisis situations is crucial. This is because disseminating the latest information to the public in a timely manner resulted in fewer secondary crisis reactions (Schultz, Utz, & Göritz, 2011). Moreover, organisations that deal with crisis in a timely and honest manner can

minimise damage to their reputation and regain public trust (Coombs, 1999). However, as nothing progresses in the next few months, the MH370 press releases had decreased in number. It is unfortunate that the crisis has no closure up to the point of writing this report and as no further information is available, the press release on the matter became less.

Apart from disseminating information, the communicative purpose of MH370 online CPR is to address issues and speculation. Issues and speculations are usual during a crisis. It's important for MAS to respond to concerns revolving the crisis, especially to negate and deal with false accusations towards the airline. MAS addressed the issues and speculation by confirming or clarifying them. Words associated with this communicative purpose are mostly 'speculation', 'claim', and 'allegation'. In the analysis, 23 out of the 44 press releases are used to confirm and clarify issues. During a crisis, a company is susceptible to accusation, speculation, rumours, allegation, assumptions, claims and other uncertain issues. If not treated properly, these issues may threaten the organisation. Therefore, it is important for MAS to counter those threats to avoid any further damage to its credibility, reputation and image, especially as a national carrier. Addressing these issues opened up opportunities for MAS to insert some projections of positive image in its press releases. This is an important strategy in crisis communication and is considered as an explicit promotional element. A brand with a positive brand image is more likely to successfully weather a brand crisis or downturn in the brand's fortunes (Keller, 1998). This suggest this communicative purpose to be both informational and promotional. MAS was being defensive by responding directly to some, if not all, of the allegations or claims made towards the company in its press releases, especially by the news media. Some examples are the allegations made against the First Officer, Fariq Ab Hamid, the claim that MAS has abandoned the families that seek legal help and the speculation about the official declaration of the loss of the flight. In response to all these, MAS uses keywords such as 'clarify' and 'confirm' to rebut or deny the accusations and speculations.

Crises are known to disrupt on-going operations and cause financial as well as reputational damage (Coombs, 2007 and Pattriotta, Gond & Schultz, 2011). Following this, it's important for an organisation to take measures in order to assure stakeholders and the public that the company is able to handle the crisis and contain the effects well. It can be clearly seen that the CPR in this study served as a tool by MAS to assure and regain the reliability of the company. Throughout the press releases, the airline showcases its commitment in managing the crisis by maintaining contact with the public, cooperating with authorities in all activities revolving the crisis and providing support and care: both emotionally and financially.

In order to assure the public that the company is trustworthy and dependable, MAS stated its reliability in maintaining communication with the public by constantly issuing its press release in order to disseminate as much information as possible. Regester and Larkin (2005) explain that in crisis situations, it is imperative to tell your own story, to tell it all and to tell it fast. The company also maintains its collaboration with the authorities by working closely with the local and international authorities. This includes the government of Malaysia and the international search team in their effort to find the missing plane. Maintaining communication and collaboration are important and should be an outmost priority for any company involved in an incident like this. It is to assure transparency and to assure the public that the airline is supportive and does not flee from its responsibility.

The airline also publicly showed its support in the CPR to those affected by the crisis by meeting the needs of the stakeholders, especially the families and next of kin of the victims. Once the incident commenced, MAS immediately tended to the needs of these people. Failure to meet the needs of stakeholders in reasonable time can result in these groups intensifying the crisis for the organization (Ulmer and Sellnow 2000). These

people can be the 'accuser' that can heighten the situation, starting a new crisis. Supports given by MAS include setting up centres, assigning caregivers to the victims' families and much more. The kinds of support given also include emotional and financial support. MAS was constantly expressing its condolences, hope and gratitude in its CPRs. The airline conveyed its sympathy towards the victims, family and friends and was being hopeful that it had the answer to the crisis. It also expressed its thankfulness towards the agencies and personnel who had helped the airline during the crisis. Emotional appeals were seen through the constant expression of condolences by the airline as well as hope that the crisis will resolve soon. MAS communicated to the public emotionally in a hope to influence the public and improve or reduce reputation damage caused by the crisis. This is evidenced by the repeated use of emotion-driven keywords such as 'thought', 'condolences', and 'sympathy' in the press release. These words were used to express great concern for the affected victims and are abundant, especially in a press release by the CEOs of MAS. Wesseling, Kerkhof and Van Dijk (2006) found that communicated emotions by top managers in times of crisis inform impressions of integrity which indicates that "the person's behaviour is consistent with espoused values, and that the person is honest and trustworthy" (Yukl & Van Vleet, 1992). To assist the family and next of kin of the victims, MAS set up services and gave financial help such as flying those who were in Beijing to Malaysia for free, to the extent of offering compensation to the victims' families. In a crisis, "expressing concern for victims and reinforcing this compassion through compensation and/or full apology serves to blunt feelings of anger" (Coombs, 2007). Bradford & Garrett (1995) and Dean (2004) study shows apology to be the preferred strategy in crisis management as it is believed that this strategy had the strongest positive effect on perceptions of an organization's reputation. Although MAS never literally apologise on the incident, at its core, an apology is marked by the organization accepting responsibility for the crisis (Benoit & Drew, 1997 and Fuchs-

Burnett, 2002). A variety of additional components can be added to this definition including expression of remorse/sympathy, expression of regret, preventative measures, and reparation (Benoit & Drew, 1997, Cohen, 1999, Fuchs-Burnett, 2002 and Patel & Reinsch, 2003). This includes giving compensation. MAS offered compensation as an initiative to lessen the burden of the affected families and relatives and this offers victims something to counterweigh the suffering. These help in influencing the people's perceptions of the organization taking responsibility for the crisis because these strategies focus on the victims' needs (in this case the family and next of kin). Accepting responsibility, making amends and offering reassurances were also some of the strategies applied by Singapore Airline in its press releases in an incident when one of its planes crashed. This is in a hope to regain the airline's credibility and restore its image (Henderson et al., 2003). This can be related to Benoit's (1995) image restoration strategies that are used by crisis managers to communicate during a crisis. Reducing offensiveness of the event is one of the strategies where the organisation neither admit nor deny but reduce incident impact. This is done by bolstering and giving compensation. Bolstering is when the organisation uses its good traits to help bring back trust while the victim is reimbursed as a way to compensation them. This helps to emphasize the positive qualities and actions of the organization in order to strengthen the audience's positive impression of the organization.

From the communicative purposes, it can be clearly seen that the MH370 online CPR is a mix of informational and promotional discourses, thus contributing to hybridized genres. Before, a press release was written by an organisation and issued to journalists who later adopt or adapt it to suit their needs. The publication of a press release is mainly to deliver news to the target audience. It is basically informative in nature with some persuasiveness. This is understood when it needs to be newsworthy enough to be picked up by journalists. The public will later get to read them in the news report. Nowadays,

with the use of the Internet, the document once designed for journalists is able to be published by the organisation directly to its reader. The readers, professional or non-professional, get to read the press release directly from the source. As corporations have the ability to communicate directly with readers, this change in the rhetorical situation may change the communicative purposes, rhetorical structure and rhetorical strategies of the press release. The organisation has a greater control on what it can include in the press release and how much it can promote the organisation interests through it. Harlow, Brantley & Harlow (2011) suggest that press releases in particular are an “important means of creating and repairing or restoring corporate image, since they are the documents most explicitly associated with issue framing and agenda setting”. Catenaccio (2008) said that by extending the “primary readership beyond the members of the journalistic profession, press release writers can convey promotional messages couched in a report-like form which may make them more easily acceptable than plain and blunt advertising”. Moreover, press release in general is arguably persuasive in nature and this might not be clearly seen as the “persuasive intention can be taken for granted” (Jucker, 1997).

Therefore, in answering the first research question, the communicative purposes of the online CPRs in this study are to disseminate information, to address issues and speculations and to assure and regain reliability.

4.2 Rhetorical Structure of MH370 Online CPR

The press releases in this study were analysed using McLaren & Gurău’s (2005) and Catenaccio’s (2008) move structure models. Below are the findings according to both models along with details and discussions. These findings are taken into consideration when finalising the rhetorical structure of the MH370 online CPR.

4.2.1 Based on McLaren and Gurău's (2005) Move Structure Model

Based on the analysis using the move structure model by McLaren and Gurău (2005), the press releases in this study contain the following moves, shown in Table 4.2. The frequency of occurrence and type of each move are also included.

Table 4.2 Move Structure Based on McLaren and Gurău's (2005) Move Structure Model

Move	Total Number of Occurrences	Frequency of Occurrence (%)	Type of Move
Move 1- Announcement	44	100	Obligatory
Move 2- Elaboration	44	100	Obligatory
Move 3- Comments (CEO)	6	14	Optional
Move 4- Contact Details	44	100	Obligatory
Move 5- Editor's Note	0	0	Optional

According to the analysis, Move 1- Announcement, Move 2- Elaboration and Move 4- Contact details are obligatory moves with 100% occurrences. On the other hand, Move 3- Comments (CEO) has a low occurrence while Move 5 is not realised in the online CPR. Below are the details and discussions on the moves.

Move 1- Announcement

From the analysis, this move is an obligatory move with 100% occurrence. Announcement is usually straight forward and carries the purpose or highlight of the text. This move is identified through the use of semi-performative verbs, as noted in Jacob (1999) like 'to announce', 'to clarify, and 'to update'. They also serve as indicators for the various communicative purposes of the press release. The following are the examples of this move in the online CPR.

- *We regret to announce that Subang Traffic Control lost contact with flight MH370 at 2.40 am today. (CPR3)*

- *The purpose of this statement is to update on emergency response activities at Malaysia Airlines. (CPR10)*
- *Malaysia Airlines wishes to clarify the claims that some families of the passengers were flown to India instead of Malaysia. (CPR16)*

The placement of this move is usually at the beginning of the press release, followed by elaboration. This is why a press release is said to imitate one of the features of the news report, which is the inverted pyramid- an illustration of how information should be prioritised and structured in a text. In an inverted pyramid, the top and widest part contains the most important information that the writer means to convey that should head the article. The lower part, tapering the tip would be the other materials with lesser importance.

Most journalists and editors believe that this move should come in the first sentence or first few sentences of a hard news article. However, there are also instances where the press release in this study begins with expressing sympathy and regret on the crisis before announcement comes in. Reporters use the term ‘burying the lead’ or ‘delayed lead’ to describe the one placed later in an article. Moreover, this move may sometimes appear more than once. It can be seen at the beginning of the text and at the latter part of the press release too. This marks the different issues addressed in the same press release.

Move 2- Elaboration

Another obligatory move in McLaren and Gurău’s (2005) move structure model with a high occurrence is elaboration. This move is realised by giving details to further explain the first move. It is presented to describe and give explanation regarding the main issue, in detail, in order to support it. It is usually structured in the second part or paragraph

following the first and everything that precedes to the end of the release. This means it can take up most of the paragraphs in the text. The following are some examples:

- *Malaysia Airlines wishes to clarify that it will be making arrangements to fly family members to Perth, only once it has been authoritatively confirmed that the physical wreckage found is that of MH370 (Move 1). Arrangements will be made as soon as the relevant government agencies have provided clearances for Malaysia Airlines to bring family members to the site where... (Move 2) (CPR27)*
- *Malaysia Airlines confirms that flight MH370 had lost contact with Subang Air Traffic Control at 2.40am, today (Move 1). Flight MH370 was operated on a Boeing 777-200 aircraft. It departed Kuala Lumpur at 12.41 am earlier this morning bound for Beijing... (Move 2) (CPR3)*
- *Malaysian Airline System Berhad (Administrator Appointed), ("MAS") together with Malaysia Airlines Berhad ("MAB") today held a private remembrance ceremony at KL International Airport (KLIA) in memory of MH370 (Move 1). The event was attended by the airline's employees as well as family members of the 13 staff onboard... (Move 2) (CPR44)*

Move 3- Comments (CEO)

According to McLaren and Gurău, this move appears in the text generally as quotations. The comments and most of the self-quotations are mostly positive and promotional. The objectives of this move are to give positive evaluation, persuade investors as well as to express that the company is indeed in good hands.

However, in MAS online CPR, the comments made by the highest or important personnel are not inserted as quotations or excerpt in the press release. Instead, it can be the single individual press release itself. From the 44 press releases, six of them are

produced by the Chairman/CEOs of MAS with the person's name written at the top section of the press releases. The statements were written to express concern and assure MAS stakeholders on its strong position despite the tragic incident. Figure 4.1 shows an example of the CPR written by the Chairman of Malaysia Airlines.

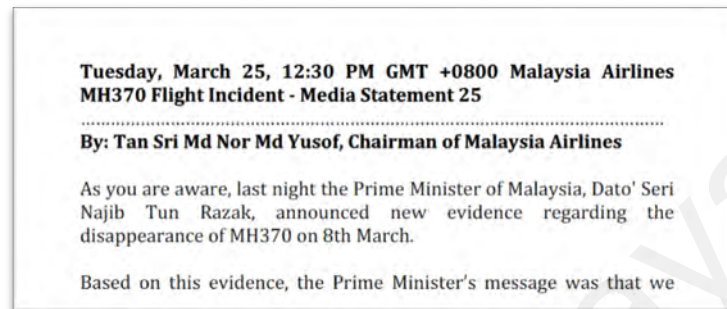


Figure 4.1 A Press Release by the Chairman of MAS

Move 4 - Contact Details

Another important move is contact details. In the press releases, contact details is another unchanging feature that is visually separated from the text. Contact details are listed clearly and constantly at the right section of MAS website. Figure 4.2 shows an example of how it is positioned on the website.



Figure 4.2 Contact Details on MH370 Website

As it appeared alongside each press release on the website, this unchanging feature is an obligatory move with the occurrence of 100%. The contact details shown are a list of phone numbers dedicated to connect the readers to the airline's Family Support Centres and its media relations, available for direct communication. However, there were also instances where contact details were included in the text. These press releases were mostly the initial press releases which were also distributed in hard copies to media or other agencies. This shows how important this move is and the need for this move to be emphasized especially at a critical phase of the crisis.

Move 5 - Editor's Note

From the analysis, it is noted that this move is not utilised at all. As explained in the previous chapter, it is an optional move in McLaren and Gurău's (2005) move structure.

However, another feature that is similar to this move is the use of note in the press release. The differences are in its content, length and target readers. While an Editor's Note in McLaren and Gurău's (2005) move structure model is an extra information about the company for journalists that they can opt to include in the news, note in this study is rather short and are intended for general readers to further understand the press release. This move is going to be further explained in the additional move section.

The findings above confirm the standard features of the press release based on McLaren and Gurău's (2005) move structure model. The press release is basically structured based on the reporting genre. With the high occurrences of Move 1 (announcement) and Move 2 (elaboration) that are indeed informational, the press release contains many information and details for its target readers. However, it is noted that there are other patterns or recursive features that cannot be neglected. The analysis using Catenaccio's (2008) move structure model helps us to further look into these moves.

4.2.2 Based on Catenaccio's (2008) Move Structure Model

Analysis of the press releases based on Catenaccio's (2008) move structure model was carried out and the findings are shown in Table 4.3. The table also includes the frequency of occurrence and type of each move.

Table 4.3 Move Structure Based on Catenaccio's (2008) Move Structure Model

Move/Step	Total Number	Frequency of Occurrence (%)	Type of Move
Move 1- Press/News Release caption (frame)	44	100	Obligatory
Move 2- Headline	1	2	Optional
Move 3- [Summary of main points]	1	2	Optional
Move 4- ["For immediate release" formula]	0	0	Optional
Move 5- Lead: Announcing newsworthy information	44	100	Obligatory
• Step 1- Launching a new product/service	12	27	Optional
• Step 2- Announcing results and other company-internal information	32	73	Obligatory
• Step 3- Describing other types of company's activity	16	36	Optional
Move 6- Justifying the product or service or simply the newsworthiness of the information	12	27	Optional
• Step 1- Indicating the need for the product/service etc.	5	11	Optional
• Step 2- Referring to the advantages for potential beneficiaries	8	18	Optional
• Step 3- Qualifying the result as positive	0	0	Optional
Move 7- Detailing product, service, company, other event which is the object of the release	43	98	Obligatory
Move 8- Explicit promotional component: Attributed to company official, standard user	35	80	Obligatory
• Step 1- Emphasizing positive results	0	0	Optional
• Step 2- Indicating reliability of company/product	35	80	Obligatory
• Step 3- Independently endorsing company results	1	2	Optional
• Step 4- Independent expert opinion	2	5	Optional
Move 9- Boilerplate description(s) / establishing credentials	0	0	Optional
Move 10- Contact details	44	100	Obligatory
Move 11- Company logo	0	0	Optional

Based on the analysis, the press/news release caption (frame), lead, and contact details are obligatory moves with 100% occurrence. Other obligatory moves with high occurrences are Move 7 (detailing product/service/company/other event which is the object of the release) and Move 8 (explicit promotional component: attributed to company official, standard user), particularly Step 2- indicating reliability of company/product. Other moves/steps were used with low occurrences while certain moves were not realised at all. These moves are Move 4 (["For immediate release" formula]), Move 9 (boilerplate description(s)/establishing credentials) and Move 11 (company logo). Below are the details and discussions of the analysis based on Catenaccio's (2008) move structure model.

Move 1 - Press/News Release caption (frame)

From the analysis, the press release/news release caption is an obligatory move with the occurrence of 100%. Figure 4.3 shows a caption from the website:



Figure 4.3 The Press Release Caption on the Website

The caption 'Media Statement' in the text was written with an ordinal number and did not stand alone. It was preceded with and followed by release details: day, date, the name of the crisis (MH370 Incident) and time that reflect the distribution for the release, which was important, especially when there were multiple releases in a day. If the press release is written by a particular person in the company, the name of the writer is also stated with this caption. These details serve to orient the press release so that readers can understand the press release better, especially in term of its timeline. This move is positioned at the top of each press release. Despite being reproduced accordingly; this caption is a standard, unchanging feature of the press release. This means it is constantly showing on the website and is usually visually separated from the rest of the text. As mentioned in Catenaccio (2008), it is a peripheral feature that frames the acclaimed press release. It is used as the main and initial indicator that distinguishes a press release from a news report that usually appears almost the same in term of the reporting structures.

Move 5 - Lead

Lead is indeed an essential main part of a press release. In crisis management, it is mostly on results or updates, responses of the company on a particular issue, actions taken by the company, services or product established or changed, activities carried out by the company and etcetera. Lead is basically similar to the first move (announcement) in McLaren and Gurău's (2005) move structure model. However, Catenaccio (2008) further divided this move into three steps. They are launching a new product/service, announcing results and other company-internal information and describing other types of company's activity.

From the analysis, the Step 1 which is launching a new product/service has 14% of occurrence. This step refers to the services that start immediately with the crisis and are usually non-existing during other time. This step occupied most of the press release at the

beginning and throughout the crisis where services were established to facilitate, support and cater to the needs of the family and relatives of the victims as well as the media. For example, MAS introduced avenues such as the Family Support Centres (FSC), Family Assistance Centre (FAC), the MH Team, the Go Team and dedicated hotline numbers and email address right after the crisis started. Other services also include compensation and financial aids to the family and relatives of the victims. In addition to this, there were instances where the services were not launch but rather set up, stopped or revised. These were considered under this move too. 'Established', 'assigned' and 'set up' were some of the words used to indicate this step. MAS needed to show their ability to manage and handle the crisis through their actions. According to Choi and Park (2011), press release is primarily used to inform the public through the news media of what the company is doing and how they are going to resolve the crisis situation. Essentially, it is a great way to calm and convince the anxious audience that the company is doing something to manage and resolve the crisis instead of taking the back seat. Below are the examples:

- *We have established dedicated hotline numbers and email address for...* (CPR40)
- *... Malaysia Airlines will set up a command centre at ...*(CPR7)
- *We have deployed teams of caregivers consisting of trained MAS staff...* (CPR14)

The second step for this move is announcing result and other internal information. Step 2 occupies most of the lead in the press release and is considered a very significant information in a CPR. Results are the outmost important, sought-after material in this MH370 crisis. The family of the victims as well as the media and public were keen to know the results and any information pertaining to the whereabouts of the airplane and most importantly what had happened to their loved ones. Therefore, the status of the crisis had to be updated, results had to be confirmed and information had to be given frequently.

- *Malaysia Airlines is still unable to establish any contact or determine the whereabouts of flight MH370. (CPR4)*
- *As we enter into Day 4, the aircraft is yet to be found. (CPR11)*
- *As a mark of respect to the passengers and crew of MH370 on 8 March 2014, the MH370 and MH371 flight codes will be retired from the Malaysia Airlines' Kuala Lumpur- Beijing-Kuala Lumpur route. (CPR17)*

Step 3 is describing other types of company's activity. Apart from services, results and other internal information, some of the activities carried out by MAS were highlighted in the CPR. For example, meeting with the stakeholders, holding a fund dinner, cooperating with the authorities and more. The following are some examples:

- *Malaysia Airlines is working closely with the government of China to expedite the issuance of passports ... (CPR9)*
- *... the airline has been updating family members with news from JACC and the Malaysian Government as...(CPR33)*
- *Malaysian Airline System Berhad (Administrator Appointed), ("MAS") together with Malaysia Airlines Berhad ("MAB") today held a private remembrance ceremony ... (CPR44)*

Move 6 - Justifying the product or service or simply the newsworthiness of the information

McLaren & Gurău (2005) uses elaboration to further explain the object of release. Catenaccio (2008) specifically divided the elaboration part by breaking them into a few moves. This is where many embedded moves occurred as these moves occupied most of the text. Justifying the product or service or simply the newsworthiness of the information is a move associated with the lead- launching a new product or service. This move is

usually used in a product press release and is important and highly relevant to the aforementioned lead. Moreover, this move is used to convince not just the journalists but readers as a whole about the newsworthiness or why an information given in the CPR is valuable.

This move is realised by three steps which are: indicating the need for the product, service or etcetera, referring to the advantages for potential beneficiaries and qualifying the result as positive. Steps 1 and 2 were used occasionally but Step 3 was not used at all in this CPR. As mentioned previously, in CPR, launching a product or a new service means introducing helps and assistance during the crisis that are usually absent during other time. To indicate the need for the product/service etc, the purpose of the products or services and why these products or services are needed are highlighted. Advantages for potential beneficiaries is realised by stating the benefits that the person/people will get through the products or services introduced by MAS during this crisis. The following are some examples:

- *The Family Support Centre will continue to proactively provide relatives waiting for news at home with daily updates...* (indicating the need for the product/service) (CPR21)
- *The centre will also have Mandarin speaking personnel...* (referring to the advantages for potential beneficiaries) (CPR21)
- *All travel arrangements, accommodation, meals, and medical support are also absorbed by the Airline...* (referring to the advantages for potential beneficiaries) (CPR15)

Move 7 - Detailing product/service/company/other event which is the object of the release

Catenaccio (2008) further elaborate the announcement in the text with this move, which is detailing the product, service, company or other event which is the object of the release. The following are some examples of this move in the online CPR:

- *As of now, we have 115 family members in Kuala Lumpur and they are taken care of by 72 different caregivers...* (detailing about the new service launched by MAS). (CPR14)
- *With effect from 14 March 2014, the new flight number to replace MH370 and MH371 will be...* (detailing on the information given about the new flight code) (CPR17)
- *The gathering of the Malaysia Airlines family was led by MAB's Chairman, Tan Sri Md Nor Yusof...* (detailing the company's activity) (CPR44)

The online CPR in this study is mostly half a page. The shortest is only a paragraph long with a few sentences. The long ones are between two to three pages. There are not many long press releases but when it is long, it is usually to clarify, detail and justify not one but a few of the announcements made.

Move 8 - Explicit promotional component: Attributed to company official, standard user

This move is usually related with the promotional intent of the press release. Its purpose is basically to shed good light on the company when it associates the positive result/aspect of the information to the company officials or standard users. There are four steps in realising this move which are emphasizing positive results, indicating reliability of company/product, independently endorsing company results and independent expert opinion.

From the analysis, MAS did not utilise Step 1 of this move and minimally use Step 3 and 4. Instead, MAS focused a lot on Step 2 which is indicating reliability of its company or product. This step is an obligatory step with an occurrence of 75%. In the press releases, MAS indicated its reliability by stating its promise and reiterating its commitment to maintain three important aspects which were its support, cooperation and communication. These applied to the family and next of kin of the victims, related authorities and the media. Crises threaten to damage reputations because a crisis gives people reasons to think badly of the organization (Coombs 2007). In maintaining support, MAS repeatedly reassured the audience that their stakeholders, especially the victims and their family members, were their top priority and were cared for. Ogrizek and Guillery (1999) also recognise that such commitment is essential to 'victim management' which itself is a key aspect in dealing successfully with crises. Being considerate about the feeling of the victims, the airline showed that it cares and is ready to provide comfort to the affected people. This is indeed a well-played strategy in crisis communication. The following are some examples from the online CPR:

- *Malaysia Airlines' **primary focus** at this point in time is to care for the families of the passengers and crew of MH370. This means providing them with timely information, travel facilities, accommodation, meals, medical and emotional support. (CPR9, CPR10, CPR14)*
- *Malaysia Airlines **will continue to provide regular updates** to the general public... (CPR18)*
- *Our absolute **priority** at all times has been to **support the authorities** leading the multinational search for MH370, so that ... (CPR19)*
- *... we have assured them that locating the aircraft and recovering the flight data recorders remain **the key priority**. (CPR35)*

Step 4 is realised when other organisation or personnel independently endorses the company results. Here are some examples when a third party is using MAS's results in their report or speech:

- *This has been confirmed jointly today by the French Authorities, Bureau d' Enquetes et d' Analyses pour la Securites de l'AviationCivile (BEA), the Malaysian Investigation Team, (CPR42)*
- *This includes, which the Prime Minister referred to today. (CPR19)*

Move 10 - Contact details

As explained earlier in the findings based on McLaren and Gurău's (2005) move structure model, this is a prominent move in the online CPR.

Contact details are important, especially at the beginning of a crisis where the crisis is still new and communication is critical. It is crucial for the public to go to the right person for information and gain it from a trusted and reliable source as any false information can devastatingly affect the victims and most importantly the organisation. It is also important for MAS to control the information circulating the crisis, especially to deter speculation and issues which might bring a more negative impact to the current critical situation. Not just that, feeding the right information to avoid misinformation is imperative because a consistent message, whether delivered by one or more spokespeople, supports believability (Coombs, 2006, Small, 1991 and Ulmer, 2001). This is very much important to indicate that MAS is a valid and reliable source that gives accurate information to its reader. The accountability of the company is important to make sure not only it is reliable and trustworthy but also that its press release is newsworthy. This can elevate its chances to reach a bigger audience.

Headline, Summary of main points, For immediate release, Boilerplate description(s) and Company's logo

Some features in Catenaccio's (2008) move structure model that were minimally or not found in this online CPR are "For immediate release" formula, summary of main points, boilerplate description(s)/establishing credentials, company logo and editor's note.

These 5 moves are amongst the least- to non- utilised moves in the press releases with only 2% occurrences for headline and summary of main points while "For immediate release", boilerplate description(s) and company's logo were not used at all.

The use of Move 2-Headline in a press release is actually very common. A press release would have this feature as an opening line towards the rest of the text. It has a key role in a company's communication strategy because it can affect the thoughts and feelings of readers, consequently influencing their opinions. An opening line will encourage the audience to read the rest of the text or even turn them away as it describes the content of the story. Unfortunately, almost all of the press releases in this study do not have any headlines except one. This was when MAS tried to clarify an accuse made towards the company. In this case, MAS was actually adopting the headline of a news report and changing it into a negative statement. Below is the headline used:

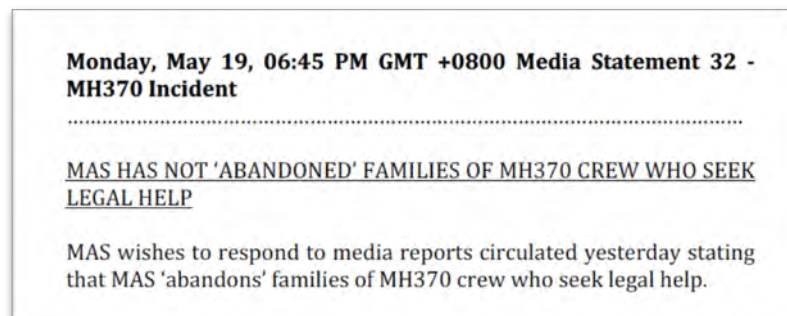


Figure 4.4 A Headline in the MH370 Online CPR

This move is highly associated with Move 4- Summary of main points. Summary of main points is a bracketed feature that according to Jacobs (1999) and Goffman (1974) should be considered as ritual openings and closings. It's mainly for establishing and concluding certain kinds of participations. It is also usually positioned after the headline and in the first paragraph. Generally, it is anywhere from one to four sentences and it concisely tells the reader the main idea of the story. According to Catenaccio (2008) this move is realised with headlines and lead. Therefore, as there is only one press release with a headline in this study, the frequency of occurrence for this move is obviously low. It was not clear why headline is not utilised in the press releases. A possible reason is because some of the press releases have multiple announcements/leads. Therefore, the use of headline might not help to fairly justify the content of the text.

The three moves that have 0% occurrences are “For immediate release”, boilerplate description(s) and company’s logo. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996), the changing visual layout of press releases published online is in itself of interest, and is to be considered in the context of the changing literacies prompted by the advent of the internet and the rise of multimodal approaches to communication. Therefore, the reason for these moves to be excluded in the press releases might be due to the changing means of the press release. Online press release has the privilege to take out and insert some features in order to deliver its communicative purposes. For example, “For immediate release” formula is another peripheral feature of a press release according to Catenaccio (2008) that is usually omitted if the press release is offered in electronic format. It is because online press release is not bounded by time of release as once it is uploaded onto the website, it is already public. Therefore, embargo such as ‘Hold for release until...’ or “For immediate release” is considered unnecessary in an online press release. This is the same with Boilerplate description(s). In Catenaccio’s (2008) move structure model Boilerplate description(s) is basically the last section of a press release with general

company information. It comes together with the printed press release and may or may not be manipulated by journalist to be included in the news. Boilerplate description(s) includes information about the company in a positive way and can also be used to tell its credentials. This move is quite similar to Editor's Note move in McLaren and Gurău (2005) which states the additional information about the company. The difference is that this chunk of text is usually reused for each press release and across other marketing channels without change. The inclusion of background information on the company seems unnecessary for a press release is already a public facing document. This makes the additional information on the company unnecessary and would not be useful for journalists or the public as the online CPR focused mostly on the crisis. Thus, it's comprehensible when both these moves are exempted in the online press release. Moreover, if background information on the company needs to be used in the hard news by journalists, details about the company is available and easily found on the company's website itself. Therefore, it seems redundant to place it together in the online CPR website.

The last move in Catenaccio's (2008) move structure model is Company's Logo. Logo are usually placed as a part of letterhead in the printed copy as an identification of the organisation. A logo can make a press release looks like an official business document. This move is also not realised in the press releases as none of the press releases, including the website, has the MAS logo. The website which hosts the press release was directed from and linked to MAS official website. Therefore, it seems that no further identification was needed on the website.

Based on the findings it can be seen that the online CPRs hold promotional intention in them. Catenaccio's move structure model can be used to see how the moves are used to realise the promotional and informational communicative purposes.

4.2.3 The Additional Moves

Apart from the moves and steps above, there are also “new” moves identified in the press releases. These additional moves are listed in the table below.

Table 4.4 Additional Moves Found in the MH370 Online CPR

Move/Step	Total Number	Frequency of Occurrence (%)	Type of Move
Establishing Context	8	18	Optional
Confirming or clarifying issue	23	52	Obligatory
Expressing Condolences, Gratitude and/or Hope	22	5	Obligatory
Enclosing Document/Link	44	100	Obligatory
Note	2	5	Optional
Soliciting Response	8	18	Optional
‘End’	10	23	Optional

Establishing Context

After the Press Release Caption, the first paragraph usually started straight away with announcement. However, there are times where context needs to be established. Therefore, this move is inserted most of the time before the third move- announcement. Establishing context is important to make sure the reference is done correctly. In times where speculations or claims need to be clarified, reference must be made to which and what speculations or issues the press release is referring to.

Confirming or clarifying issue

In realising Move 5 (Lead) in Catenaccio’s (2008) move structure model, there are instances that did not include announcing result, other internal information, product/services or other activities which is confirming and clarifying issue. This move is prominently used in the press release to address an issue that needed confirmation or

clarification, especially the false accusations, claims and speculation so that the crisis is under control. Below are some examples of this step:

- *Malaysia Airlines wishes to clarify the claims that some families of the passengers were flown to India instead of Malaysia. This is not true. (CPR16)*
- *Malaysia Airlines wishes to clarify that the lithium ion batteries carried on board MH370...(CPR22)*
- *Malaysia Airlines confirms that its lawyers have had discussions with the US lawyers engaged by the families of some of its crew. (CPR33)*

Expressing Condolences, Gratitude and/or Hope

An additional move that is used in MAS online CPR is expressing condolences, gratitude and/or hope. This move is realised when MAS used these emotional expressions in its press releases. Some of them were also used as a holding statement. This move usually dominates the writing at the end of the text and occasionally at the beginning of the text. It is also abundant, especially in the press releases by the CEOs of MAS. Below are some of the examples:

- *We regret and empathise with the families and we will do whatever we can to ease their burden. (CPR14)*
- *Once again, we humbly offer our sincere thoughts, prayers and condolences to everyone affected by this tragedy. (CPR23)*
- *We expect and hope that there would be more objects to be found which would be able to help resolve this mystery. (CPR42)*
- *We thank the Governments and agencies of Malaysia, Australia and China, and the many nations that have come forward to search for MH370. (CPR34)*

Continuous expression of condolences, hope and/or gratitude is one of the initial responses used by the airline in the press release. In crisis management, public relations practitioners are advised to select crisis response strategies that match specific type of crises (Coombs & Holladay, 2002). Two prominent frameworks on crisis management that are widely used by companies are the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) by Coombs & Holladay (2002) and Image Restoration strategies by Benoit (1995). For example, using emotional appeal in the press release helped to connect the company with the public emotionally through these stories of support. This shows the company effort in improving the damage caused by the crisis. MAS continuously expressed its sympathy and concern for the victims of the crisis. These are referred to as highly accommodative strategies (Coombs, 2006 and Fediuk, 2002). Coombs and Holladay (1996) found that reputational damage was diminished when organisations incorporated expressions of concern into their response, even though expressions of concern can sometimes be used by lawyers as an admission of guilt. Showing concern, according to Coombs & Holladay (2002), can lower the expressions of anger from the public. Experimental research shows the importance of reducing a recipient's anger because anger drives (negative) secondary crisis communication and secondary crisis reactions and is negatively related to corporate reputation (Utz, Schultz, & Glocka, 2013). However, Sturges (1994) argues that an expression of sympathy is more of an adjusting information strategy than a reputation repair strategy. Nonetheless, it does reflect a high level of accommodation and expression of sympathy and/or compensation is an important and practical option to an apology when responsibility is unknown or ambiguous. British Petroleum (BP) had once faced a critical crisis about an oil spill that had major impact on the environment and the organization itself. BP chose to accept responsibility by showing great concern for victims and displaying an effort to mend the problem. This lowered expressions of anger from the public (Coombs & Holladay, 2002) and in return BP

succeeded in minimizing further damage by showing how it was going to take responsibility and focusing on what it was doing to correct the oil spill problem within its press releases. This shows the importance of expression of emotions in CPR to improve the perception of public towards the organisation.

Enclosing document/link

Another unchanging feature at the right side of the website comprises not only contact details but also documents and links for the public. This makes enclosing links/documents an obligatory move with 100% occurrence. Moreover, 16% of the CPR includes enclosing documents/links within its text. It is usually inserted at the end of the press release. In the online CPR, enclosing documents and links includes attaching both anchor text links and active URL hyperlinks or additional document that further explains the issue or details the object of release. Based on the analysis, the attached links and documents were updates from different official channels, passenger manifest, other press statements by related agencies, operation document and even audio recording from MAS: all those of interest to journalists and public.

One clear benefit of online press release is its ability to attach documents and direct links to its presentation, a facility an offline press release cannot afford. The use of links to other websites, article written by third party journalists, key documents such as feedback form, letters, audio recording and pictures are the new media tactics in crisis communication. This unique feature of online communication, made possible by the Internet, grants readers access to other relevant sites, additional information and other resources to improve understanding and furthermore demonstrate a good effort by the company to fully inform the stakeholders. The inclusion of audio recording by MAS, a classified material, for example, ensured the public that MAS was being transparent and

true in handling the crisis. The following are examples of document/link within the text and Figure 4.6 shows the document/link at the side of the website.

- *Regular updates will continue to be available on the official website of MH370 via the URL <http://www.mh370.gov.my> (CPR40 & CPR42)*
- *Below statement and attached documents were made public and shared with NOKs at 8:27pm (Malaysia local time), 1 May 2014: (CPR29)*
- *Here is the PDF version of Press Statement by Director General of Department of Aviation... (CPR36)*



Figure 4.5 Document/Link Enclosed in the MH370 Online CPR

Note

As mentioned earlier, the additional information for journalists or reader comes in ‘Note’ and it is different from editor’s note in McLaren and Gurău’s move structure model (2005) or boilerplate in Catenaccio’s (2008) move structure model. This move was used as an annotation or footnote and there were a few CPR with this move. Instead of information about the company, it is a short piece of extra information given at the beginning or bottom of the press release that serves as a reminder to the journalist or readers to help them understand the text better or how to handle the press release. Below are the examples:

- *Note: Please attribute to Malaysia Airlines (CPR25)*
- *Note: The communication below was shared with the family members of passengers and crew of MH370 (CPR23)*

There are two occurrences of ‘Note’ on the press releases where one was found at the bottom the text and another one at the top of the text. Though the usage is minimal, it is somewhat important to help journalists in the insertion and reproduction of the press release in news.

Soliciting response

Eight of the press releases in this study with 18% occurrences contains soliciting response. It is not strange for this move to appear in the CPR as some of the press releases were circulated in hard copy to other agencies apart from uploading it onto the website, leaving them with no contact details. The press releases with this move were usually the first few, published at the initial phase of the crisis. The following are the examples of this move:

- *Meanwhile, the families may contact +603 7884 1234 for further info. (CPR1)*
- *The pubic may contact +603 78841234... (CPR2, CPR3, CPR4, CPR5)*
- *For media queries, kindly contact +603 8777 5698/ +603 8787 1276. (CPR6)*

‘End’

There is 23% of the press releases in this study with the word ‘END’ in the text. This is basically to indicate that the release has ended. This word is written at the bottom of the text to note that the readers have come to the final part of the writing and nothing else follows. It is a choice to mark the end of the online press release so that it was clear to the readers that the entire text had been dispensed as there are sometimes a lot of other texts

displayed on the user interface. Although it is rather archaic but this is a standard way of finishing a press release and some other formal documents such as news article. This can be related back to the usual method of transmitting press release, which is via fax. In the traditional method, the writer usually type "END" after the text is completed. If the release goes over one page, "MORE" will be used at the bottom of the first page. Then, the title and the date are retyped on page two, so there is no question which release the second page goes with. Writing 'END' is the best way to let journalists know that they have received the entire release and this move is minimally utilised by MAS in its online CPR. This move was rather an optional move with lesser important and most probably retained because of the use of the same press releases in hard copies.

4.2.4 The Rhetorical Structure of MH370 Online CPR

According to McLaren & Gurău (2005) and Catenaccio (2008), press releases has a fairly standardized textual organisation with clearly recognisable recursive moves. Identifying these recursive moves will help to finalise the rhetorical structure of MH370 online CPR.

In order to finalise the rhetorical structure of the online CPR, McLaren and Gurău's (2005) move structure model was used as a basis where the press release is initially placed under a reporting genre. Later, the additional patterns of the press release can be seen with the use of Catenaccio's move structure model. This include how far off it is from the reporting genre and how close it has eventually been hybridized with the promotional genre. The development of the rhetorical structure can be seen, from a reporting genre to informational and promotional genre, especially with a new medium that leads to the establishment of a new rhetorical structure of the online crisis press release.

In McLaren and Gurău's (2005), three obligatory moves identified are Announcement, Elaboration and Contact Details. Comments and Editor's note moves can be taken out

from this consideration as Comments in this online CPR was not place as a part of the text but the text as a whole and Editor's note is not utilised at all.

On the other hand, the following shows the moves/steps utilised in the online CPR based on Catenaccio's (2008) move structure model.

1. Press/News Release caption (frame)
2. Lead: Announcing newsworthy information
 - Launching a new product/service
 - Announcing results and other company-internal information
 - Describing other types of company's activity
3. Justifying the product or service or simply the newsworthiness of the information
 - Indicating the need for the product/service etc.
 - Referring to the advantages for potential beneficiaries
4. Detailing product/service/company/other event which is the object of the release
5. Explicit promotional component: Attributed to company official, standard user
 - Indicating reliability of company/product
 - Independently endorsing company results
 - Independent expert opinion
6. Contact details

On top of these are additional moves that are worth considering, which are:

1. Establishing Context
2. Confirming or clarifying issue
3. Expressing Condolences, Gratitude and/or Hope
4. Enclosing Document/Link
5. Note
6. Soliciting Response
7. 'End'

In order to finalise the rhetorical structure of the press release, the occurrences of the moves, the structure in which they are utilised in the online press release and how they help to realise its communicative purposes are looked into. Renaming some of the moves is also done to suit their use in online CPR. Henceforth, in answering the second research question, the rhetorical structure of MH370 online CPR is as follows:

- Move 1 Press/News Release caption (frame)
- Move 2 Establishing Context
- Move 3 Lead
 - Step 1 Announcing results or other related information
 - Step 2 Publicising products/services
 - Step 3 Confirming or clarifying issues
 - Step 4 Describing activities
- Move 4 Detailing and/or justifying the object of release
- Move 5 Indicating reliability of the company
- Move 6 Expressing condolences, gratitude and/or hope
- Move 7 Enclosing document/link
- Move 8 Contact details

The online CPR starts with an unchanging feature which is Move 1- Press/News Release caption (frame). The next move is establishing contact. This additional move, although optional in the analysis, is important as it is highly related to one of the important leads in the press release that is confirming and clarifying issue. It is also used to realise one of the communicative purposes of the press release which is addressing issues and speculations.

Move 3- Lead follows and there are four important steps used to realise this move. They are announcing results or other related information, introducing or revising products/services, confirming or clarifying issues and describing activities. These are the main leads found in the online CPR. The lead is later detailed and justified in Move 4.

Move 5 is indicating reliability of the company. This is originally a step in Catenaccio's (2008) move structure model. It has become a move on its own because of

its high occurrence in the press release. It also has become an essential move to realise one of the communicative purposes of the press release which is to assure and regain reliability. Another move added in the move structure model related to the same communicative purpose is Move 6 - Expressing condolences, gratitude and/or hope. These two moves are indeed promotional in nature. Lastly, another two moves, which are obligatory, are Enclosing document/link and Contact details. These are another unchanging feature that can be found in the online CPR.

4.3 Rhetorical Strategies of MH370 Online CPR

Analysis of rhetorical strategies was also carried out to analyse the linguistic features and discourses used by the airline and how they are used to realise the communicative purposes of the online CPR.

4.3.1 Linguistic Features

In this study, third person self-reference, present tense, modals and adverbs of certainty and passives are the linguistics features identified. The table below shows these linguistic features and the communicative purpose(s) they realised.

Table 4.5 Linguistic Features in the MH370 Online CPR

Linguistic features	Communicative Purpose(s)
Self-reference	Informative & Promotional
Tenses	Informative & Promotional
Modals and adverbs of certainty	Informative & Promotional
Passives/Actives	Informative

Self-reference

According to Jacobs (1999) a press release has metapragmatic features designed to assist the copying out of (possibly large) chunks of text for use in news articles. Some of these features are third person self-reference, the use of semi-performatives and the use

of pseudo quotes. From the analysis, third person self-reference dominates most of the CPR with occasional use of first self-reference. The use of 'Malaysia Airlines', 'MAS' (abbreviation) and 'the airline' (referential noun) can be seen throughout the text. This self-quotation usually comes in pseudo-direct speech (Bell, 1991). Some of the examples in the online CPR are:

- *Malaysia Airlines wishes to clarify that the lithium ion batteries carried on board...* (CPR22)
- *The airline shares the pain and anguish of family members in...*(CPR35)
- *MAS wishes to respond to media reports...*(CPR32)

Third person self-reference is a standard feature of a press release (Catenaccio (2007), McLaren and Gurău (2005) and Jacobs (1999)). In most of the press releases, MAS position itself as a subject by using this self-reference, especially in announcement/lead. The use of third person self-reference serves a preformulation purpose (Jacobs, 1999). This means journalists do not have to make any changes in term of reference and point of view when the writers already switch out their prospective to the journalists, making the press releases easier to reproduce. Without having the journalist to rewrite it in their own words, this encourages the press release to be copied by them directly in news reports. Jacobs (1999) refers this to 'tellability', a formal requirements of news reporting. The speaker can be clearly identified and this reporting look eventually increases the chances of the press release to be included in the final article by journalists. Moreover, according to Jacobs (1999), third person self-reference gives the text an air of objectivity, of neutral detachment, and hence may be interpreted by all audience groups as carrying a degree of authority and reliability. This is something important for MAS in order to assure its reliability in times of crisis like this. The use of third person self-reference also makes

press releases look impersonal, disinterested and neutral rather than self-interested or promotional (Jacobs 1999b).

On the other hand, the use of first self-reference in press release is rare (Jacobs, 1999). However, it is noted that some of the press releases in this study use the first person self-reference such as 'I', 'we', 'us' and 'our'. The following are some examples where first person self-reference was used:

- *We share the same very feelings and have been doing...*(CPR29)
- *We have also set up an email address for...*(CPR21)
- *Our thoughts and prayers are with the passengers and our colleagues on board...*(CPR2)

In McLaren and Gurău (2005) the first person was used mostly in Move 3- Comment (CEO) where there are abundant of positive evaluation. The same goes with the press releases in this study where many of the first-person self-reference is found in the writing by the CEOs of MAS. 'I' is mostly used in the writing which generally denotes to his personal opinion. In many major crises such as this, the CEO's visibility and the role he plays is considered vital. According to Hemus (2010), the chief executive must be the main spokesperson and consistently present in the public eyes when the business is in the middle of a crisis. The attention given by the CEO to this high-scale crisis as a senior management shows respect and indicates the company's reliability. On the other hand, in some crises, especially the non-violent crisis, the role of chief executive as a spokesperson seems to be unnecessarily amplified and extended. The public may associate these communicated emotions by these spokespersons with the entire organization, as these members are considered to represent the organization as a whole (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011). The statements of the CEOs are mostly seen as an intentionally and clearly promotional piece of writing. From the analysis, the language used is personal and

it represents the company and its team members. The use of 'we' by MAS CEOs do not solely represent him as the writer of the press release nor the readers but it collectively represents the viewpoint of MAS as a company.

In another instance, 'we' and 'our' were also typical in Move 8, when the company was trying to express sympathy, hope and gratitude. The press releases were filled with expressions of condolences, hope and gratitude to people, especially the victims, families and relatives. The statements also highlighted the reliability of the company- a very apparent promotional element in this study. The best justification on the use of first-person self-reference in this CPR are firstly because MAS tried to directly influence the feelings and views of the readers with the emotional expressions and this is usually associated with promotional intention. Secondly, it may be due to the Internet as a medium that has bypassed the role of journalists. As mentioned in previous chapter, the use of 'we' to refer to a business organisation has been called an advertising device..." (Jacobs 1999) and is usually used in different genre. As much as 'tellability' and preformulation are important for the selection of self-reference, the airline is able to communicate directly to the end users and does not solely depend on the journalists to include it in the news report. Therefore, the amount of promotional element, implicitly or explicitly can be controlled by the company, keeping in mind the standard features of the press release.

On the other hand, there were instances where the first and third person self-reference are used in a single press release. Regardless, the use of third person self-reference is seen more dominant. Table 4.6 shows the use of self-reference in the online CPR.

Jacobs (1995) found it awkward to combine both first- and third-person self-reference in the press release as there was only a small number of cases in his corpus. The situation where the self-references are interchangeable is called 'referential switch' (Thompson & Thetela, 1995). This referential alternation appears to be a strategic device that MAS

employed to praise itself and the commitment it placed in time of the crisis and for solidarity. Generally, MAS wanted to convince its stakeholders of its commitment in order to gain their trust. This serves multiple organisational purposes, including the improvement of corporate image and reputation.

Table 4.6 Number of Press Releases with First, Third and Both Self-Reference in a Single Press Release

Self-Reference	Number of Press Releases	Percentage (%)
Third person	16	36
First person	4	9
Mix of third person and first person	24	55
Total	44	100

Modals and adverbs of certainty

In McLaren and Gurău (2005), the texts present no modality and the writer choose to avoid the expression of certainty, desire or necessity. This use of non-modalised categorical assertions is another typical feature of press release. However, it is not the case in this study. The use of modals, positive verbs and adverbs of certainty in the CPR are clearly seen. The assuring and reassuring words are also noteworthy in the press release. The rhetorical aspects of language that are used to express certainty in the CPR are the modal auxiliary verb and adverb of certainty.

Modal verbs are usually used to say for instance, that a situation is certain, probable, possible or impossible using the most definite degree of certainty (e.g. will, must, should and their negative forms) or the least definite degree of certainty (e.g. may, might and their negative forms). The occurrence of the word 'will' in the press release is 82% and is usually used to state the action that is highly probable, with a significant degree of commitment by MAS who is held responsible for the crisis. The following are some examples:

- *The assurances given to us are that the ongoing search and recovery operations will remain and will not be discontinued...* (CPR35)
- *Moving forward, Malaysia Airlines' priority will continue to provide latest updates to the families ...* (CPR42)
- *... Malaysia Airline will fully cooperate with the relevant authorities on the investigation and recovery of this tragic accident.* (CPR42)

Positive verbs and adverbs of certainty expresses how certain one feels about an action or event. The following are some examples from the CPR in this study on the use of the words 'confirmed', 'indeed' and 'reiterates' in giving assurance to the reader:

- *This has been confirmed jointly today by the French Authorities, ...*(CPR42)
- *... the flaperon found on Reunion Island on 29 July was indeed from Flight MH370.* (CPR42)
- *Malaysia Airlines reiterates that it continues to be transparent ...*(CPR7)

Modal gives the reader a level of certainty, especially the commitment and action that MAS is going to take. This expresses high confidence in what is being said when events and actions are presented as facts: unquestionable and certain. The words 'confirm' and 'indeed' in this CPR ascertain the public that the information given was true and reliable. This is crucial in realising the communicative purpose of assuring and regaining the reliability of the company. Though it is something that the press release writer usually avoids, the use of modal shows MAS commitment in their actions. Added with the use of present tense, MAS was trying hard to assure the public that the airline is making efforts and taking ongoing actions in order to resolve the crisis and find the answer to the missing plane. For instance, MAS said that the company 'will continue to update', 'reiterates its commitments' and 'the family is at every attention'. The word 'reiterate' was also used multiple times to disseminate established information with certainty and also to satisfy

the journalists and affected parties with regular updates. This suggests that MAS was active in engaging and responding to the crisis as well as taking charge of the problems even though it was not clear who was responsible for the incident.

Tenses

On the contrary of the use of past tense in press release, present tense is more prominent in this study. Past tense is understood to be used when the press release reports on events/actions that had taken place. However, as the press releases were issued during a crisis phase, not post crisis, where all action was still ongoing and taking place, the press releases used mostly present tense. This is apparent when the airline is giving ongoing responses, updating the progression of the crisis and stating actions that are being taken and will be taken, even if solutions were not necessarily imminent. The use of present tense was also apparent when MAS is indicating the reliability of the company. It is also relevant to note that MAS was not working alone but was in constant collaboration with other authorities like the Malaysian Government and the international search parties. Therefore, when MAS keeps mentioning about its commitment in maintaining contact and collaboration with these relevant parties, the use of present tense in the CPR is evident.

Passives/Actives

Passives are usually found in this press releases. This is common as a press release reports about a particular news and it serves a preformulation purpose so it can be lent straight away in news report. However, in this study, the texts use more present tense instead of past tense with the passive sentence structures. Below are some examples of these features:

- *Next-of-kin in China were notified via text messages by Malaysia Airlines' Family Communications and Support Centre (CPR37)*
- *Malaysia Airlines has already provided initial financial assistance of...(CPR25)*

4.3.2 Discourses Used in the MH370 Online CPR

CPR is a public relation discourse. In the construction of this CPR, other discourses are inserted to help the public relation practitioners write a better piece of writing and deliver the message clearly. Another analysis on the rhetorical strategy of the online CPR and how it helps to realise the communicative purposes of the online CPR is done by looking at the professional discourses used in the press releases. Two prominent professional discourses used in the press releases are the Crisis Communication Discourse and Aviation Discourse. Other discourses like legal or political discourses were expected to be in the online CPR but there was not enough evidence to support this. The table below shows the professional discourses used in the CPR and the communicative purpose(s) they realised.

Table 4.6 The Discourses in the MH370 Online CPR

Discourse	Number of Press Releases	Number of Press Releases (%)	Communicative Purpose(s)
Crisis Communication Discourse	23	53	Informative and Promotional
Aviation Discourse	7	16	Informative

Crisis Communication Discourse

The most notable discourse in the press release is the crisis management discourse and a type of crisis communication discourse that is regular in this study is a holding statement. It is a message designed to be used immediately after a crisis breaks and is usually developed in advance to be used for a wide variety of scenarios to which the

organization is perceived to be vulnerable. It is used as a buffer before the company has any hard, actual information that can be shared with the audience. The following are some of the consistently used holding statements in the online CPR:

- *Malaysia Airlines' thoughts and prayers remain with the families of all those onboard MH370. (CPR29 and more)*
- *Our top priority remains to provide any and all assistance to the families of the passengers and crew. (CPR15 and more)*
- *The airline will provide regular updates on the situation. (CPR1 and more)*
- *Malaysia Airlines reiterates that it will continue to be transparent in communicating with the general public via the media in all matters affecting MH370. (CPR7 and more)*

Public relation practitioners especially the press release writers are accustomed to holding statements during crisis. Crisis is unpredictable, in a way it does not follow a clearly delineated pattern of theoretical models because of their unpredictability and the speed at which they unfold (Henderson et al., 2003). This is apparent in airline crashes that call for a quick attention with no time for avoidance. Therefore, the need to have an immediate statement when information cannot be fully released is crucial. Public relation practitioners usually have a holding statement prepared before any crisis hits the organisation. The commonly used holding statement by MAS is in the form of expressing their sympathy and concern as well as reiterating its commitment. Effective holding statement is needed when the organisation needs more time to understand the crisis and in order to issue a better detailed press release. This will also help prevent the spread of rumours, speculation and unwanted false information which can worsen the crisis.

Aviation Discourse

In presenting information about the crisis, MAS employed some aviation discourses in its releases. As the company is dealing with an airline crisis, it is expected that aviation discourses are included in the writing of the press releases. Some aviation terms and jargons are unavoidably and heavily used in the CPR. The examples below show how the airline is using this discourse to present the technical information related to the crisis.

- *We are also preparing to upgrade our flight tracking application **using the SITA system**. Once implemented, every aircraft will be tracked **using ADS-B, Ground Radar and ACARS**. (CPR39)*
- *...the **B777 fleet ACARS position report intervals** have been changed from **30 minute ACARS protocol** previously in place to match the recent **ICAO mandated 15 minutes reporting interval**. (CPR39)*
- *When **KL-ATCC (Kuala Lumpur Air Traffic Control Centre) Watch Supervisor** queried **Malaysia Airlines OPS (Operations)** on the status of **MH370**, **Malaysia Airlines OPS** informed **KL-ATCC Supervisor** that **MH370 was still sighted over Cambodian airspace in the Flight-Following System, which is based on a flight- projection**.(CPR30)*

Some of the terms are comprehensible and some are not clearly defined by the airlines. The usage of highly technical and professional languages in press releases is usually avoided because they are less adopted by journalists (Pander Maat, 2008). Moreover, in public facing document, such things should be minimised because it may become a hindrance to lay readers and it's important for the public to understand the details of the text without any problem. However, in these releases, this kind of information was placed usually when the company intended to clarify claims made by certain parties on issues related to aviation. For example, MAS needed to clarify on the system it used in tracking

their planes. Therefore, technical terms and language are used in the writing. It is also expected that some of those who are interested in the CPR are the people who are familiar with aviation discourses. That may be the reason why a small number of aviation discourses are inevitably used in the CPR.

In conclusion, the rhetorical structures of the online CPR in this study in term of its linguistic features are the use of third person self-reference, present tense, semi performative structure, passiveness and model of certainty. The professional discourses found are the aviation and crisis communication discourse. All these are used to realise the communicative purpose of the online CPR.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the findings of the analysis done on the online CPR as well as the discussions behind it in order to answer the three research questions.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This chapter provides a brief overview of this study with a summary of the three research questions as well as the limitation of study and recommendation for future research.

5.1 What are the communicative purposes of the MH370 crisis press release?

From the analysis, three communicative purposes of the press releases are to disseminate information, to address issues and speculations and to assure and regain reliability. It can be noted that the online CPRs produced by MAS are not only informative in nature but also promotional.

5.2 What is the rhetorical structure of the MH370 crisis press release?

The rhetorical structure of the online CPR has been finalised in reference to McLaren and Gurău's (2005) as well as Catenaccio's (2008) move structure model. The findings suggest that the quasi news-like structure in McLaren and Gurău's (2005) move structure model still applies to the online CPR with moves from Catenaccio's (2008) move structure model which is to communicate the informational and promotional intention of the press release. New moves such as expressing condolences, gratitude and/or hope and enclosing document/link are also identified and included.

5.3 How are rhetorical strategies used to realise the communicative purposes of the MH370 crisis press release?

The rhetorical strategies that are used in the MH370 online CPR are the third person self-reference, present tense, modals and adverb of certainty as well as passives. This include crisis communication discourse and aviation discourse as two of the major professional discourses used in the online CPR. The rhetorical strategies identified help to realise the informative and promotional communicative purposes of the press release.

5.4 Limitations of Study

This study has focused on the structure and rhetorical features of the CPR. An aspect that this study did not consider is the use of computer to analyse the data, which is for corpus analysis. This analysis would enable extractions of the common lexis used in the CPR and further confirm the findings. Moreover, only a minimum aspect of the online medium was analysed. Other features of the website like the navigation button or the layout of the website are not taken into consideration. Another limitation in term of the data itself is that the press release was no longer issued even the crisis has not yet resolved. Therefore, a thorough analysis on the full phase of the crisis starting from the beginning until the end cannot be done. Due to time constraint, this study focuses on the initial to middle stage of the MH370 crisis. Having the possibility to study the releases until the resolution or post stage will offer more accurate and richer data for the analysis.

5.5 Recommendation for Future Research

This study was done on a specific crisis which is MH370 flight incident. It is recommended to look at other types of crisis to verify the communicative purposes, rhetorical structure and rhetorical strategies of an online CPR. Extending the research using different crises will provide deeper understanding, especially to see whether the genre convention changes when different crisis management strategies are applied by the different public relation practitioners in the writing of their CPRs. Moreover, it is also good to include analysis on both corporate and government press release to clearly indicate the differences, especially in term of communicative purposes between the two institutions. The knowledge from this genre analysis is beneficial for ESP and public relation practitioners, beginners and professionals, to familiarise themselves with the

language of the discourse community and help them write a better, newsworthy press release.

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