A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL GENRE ANALYSIS OF TOURISM HOMEPAGES AND WEB-MEDIATED ADVERTORIALS

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ABSTRACT

The tourism industry, which is now a global enterprise promoting tourist destinations in both domestic and international markets, has captured the relevance of the Internet as a new mass medium in attracting potential tourists from all over the world. In order to promote a country as a holiday destination to foreigners as well as locals, governments and advertisers have now resorted to creating websites in an attempt to advertise their countries, places of interest and attractions via the Internet.

The present study is a multidimensional investigation of the web-mediated promotional genre of tourism advertorials from a two-pronged analytical approach of genre analysis and multimodal discourse analysis. It investigates how tourism homepages and web-mediated tourism advertorials are composed to attract potential tourists to visit the country and its places of interest through the web genres in which the persuasive and communicative features are used together with multimodal features. This is achieved by examining the organisational patterns of sixteen official Malaysian tourism homepages from the macro-genre level based on Marco's (2002) analytical model for corporate homepages, and forty-nine advertorials from the micro-genre level based on a combination of Kathpalia's (1992) and Bhatia's (1993 & 2004) analytical models for promotional texts. The study also investigates how multimodal features are used in the tourism homepages and online advertorials to serve the informative and persuasive communicative purposes based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996, 2006) multimodal discourse analysis framework.

In order to obtain a more comprehensive contextual view and to provide a thicker description of the cyber genre, this study also investigates the online tourism genre from

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a multi-perspective viewpoint which goes beyond the textual data to include the investigation of a number of socio-pragmatic aspects of construction (socio-critical perspective), use (ethnographic perspective) and interpretation (socio-cognitive perspective) of the discourse as proposed by Bhatia (2004). These were accomplished via interviews with specialist informants, and disseminating a questionnaire to tourists.

Web-mediated advertorials are considered an effective tool of mass communication where they can reach a huge target audience. Therefore, it is vital that such texts need to be produced and communicated effectively in order to be successfully promotional, and also to convey a positive image of the tourism products and services as well as its provider or advertiser. The analyses of the web genre and findings have shown that there are certain obligatory rhetorical structures that are pertinent in Malaysian online tourism advertorials. This contributes to a better understanding to the web-mediated genre. The specialist informants interviewed in the study have also shed light on how such online promotional materials are produced. Their views and findings from the tourists' questionnaire have been incorporated in developing a guideline for producing effective promotional materials, specifically online tourism advertorials that can achieve the objectives of promoting, advertising and marketing or selling a product, brand or service via the Internet.

This study enhances knowledge specifically in the areas of genre analysis and multimodality, and online communication in general, as these areas are continually evolving in this era of globalisation.

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ABSTRAK

Industri pelancongan di mana sekarang adalah satu perusahaan pemasaran sejagat yang mempromosikan destinasi-destinasi pelancongan tempatan dan antarabangsa, telah menawan perkhidmatan Internet sebagai satu media massa yang baru dalam menarik pelancong-pelancong dari merata-rata dunia. Untuk mempromosikan sesuatu negara sebagai destinasi percutian kepada pelancong-pelancong asing serta tempatan, kerajaan-kerajaan dan pengiklan-pengiklan telah mengambil langkah untuk menghasilkan tapak-tapak sesawang dalam usaha untuk mengiklankan negara dan tempat-tempat tarikan pelancongan mereka melalui Internet.

Penyelidikan ini adalah satu kajian pelbagai-dimensi genre promosi pengantara-jaringan dari pendekatan analisis dua-serampang iaitu analisis genre dan analisis wacana pelbagai-modal. Kajian ini menyiasat bagaimana laman-laman utama dan rencana-rencana pengiklanan pengantara-jaringan pelancongan digubal untuk menyebarkan maklumat serta menarik pelancong-pelancong supaya melawat sesuatu negara dan tempat-tempat tarikan pelancongannya melalui genre jaringan ini di mana ciri-ciri pemujukan dan komunikasi digunakan bersama-sama ciri-ciri pelbagai-modal. Penyiasatan ini dicapai dengan memeriksa corak organisasi enam belas laman utama pada tahap makro-genre berdasarkan model penganalisaan Marco (2002) untuk laman-laman utama korporat, dan empat puluh sembilan rencana pengiklanan pada tahap mikro-genre berdasarkan gabungan model-model penganalisaan Kathpalia (1992) dan Bhatia (1993 & 2004) untuk teks-teks pempromosian. Kajian ini juga menyiasat bagaimana ciri-ciri pelbagai-modal digunakan dalam laman-laman utama dan rencana-rencana pengiklanan pelancongan atas-talian yang bertujuan menyasarkan komunikasi

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secara informatif dan menyakinkan berdasarkan rangka analisis wacana pelbagai-modal Kress dan van Leeuwen (1996, 2006).

Sebagai langkah untuk mendapat pandangan dari konteks yang lebih menyeluruh dan memberikan penerangan yang lebih tebal tentang genre siber ini, kajian ini juga mengkaji genre pengiklanan atas-talian dari pelbagai perspektif yang melebihi tahap data tekstual dengan merangkumi huraian dari berbagai aspek sosio-pragmatik iaitu dari segi pembinaan (perspektif sosio-kritikal), penggunaan (perspektif ethnografi) dan pemahaman (perspektif sosio-kognitif) yang disarankan oleh Bhatia (2004). Ini dicapai melalui temuduga-temuduga bersama pakar-pakar pemberi-maklumat, dan penyebaran satu soal-selidik kepada pelancong-pelancong.

Rencana-rencana pengiklanan pengantara-jaringan adalah dianggap sebagai satu alat komunikasi massa yang dapat berhubung dengan sasaran pembaca yang luas. Maka, adalah penting untuk menghasilkan teks-teks ini secara berkesan supaya dapat mempromosikan dan memberikan imej yang positif mengenai produk-produk dan perkhidmatan-perkhidmatan pelancongan, serta pembekal dan pengiklan produk dan perkhidmatan pelancongan tersebut. Analisis-analisis genre jaringan tersebut dan dapatan-dapatan yang diperolehi dari kajian ini telah menunjukkan bahawa terdapat struktur rhetorik rencana-rencana pengiklanan pelancongan atas-talian tertentu yang wajib. Ini akan menyumbangkan kepada pemahaman yang lebih jelas tentang genre pengantara-jaringan ini. Pakar-pakar pemberi-maklumat yang ditemuduga telah memberikan penerangan tentang bagaimana bahan-bahan promosi atas-talian ini dihasilkan. Pandangan mereka serta pendapat pelancong-pelancong daripada soal-selidik telah digabungkan dalam membangunkan satu garis panduan untuk menghasilkan bahan-bahan promosi yang berkesan, terutamanya rencana-rencana

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pengiklanan atas-talian yang dapat mencapai objektif promosi, pengiklanan, pemasaran dan jualan sesuatu produk, jenama atau perkhidmatan melalui Internet.

Kajian ini juga dapat meningkatkan pengetahuan khususnya dalam bidang-bidang analisis genre dan pelbagai-modal, serta komunikasi atas-talian pada amnya, kerana bidang-bidang ini akan terus berkembang dalam era globalisasi ini.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Tourism has become an extremely important industry in Malaysia as it is the country's second largest economic contributor after manufacturing. It is regarded as an important economic activity and source of income for the country, as reflected in the vision of the Ministry of Tourism of Malaysia,

> "Marketing Malaysia as a destination of excellence and to make the tourism industry a major contributor to the socio-economic development of the nation".

The tourism sector contributes to about 7 per cent or RM48bil to Malaysia's gross domestic product. In its seriousness to develop the tourism industry, the government, in the 2002 Budget, has doubled the funds for tourism from RM200 million to RM400 million, while the exemption of income tax for foreign and local tourism acts has been extended for another five years. Hence, the government has taken various steps to attract more tourists to visit Malaysia by organising carnivals and festivals (The Star, 23 Jan. 2001) and offering Multiple Entry Visas (New Straits Times, 24 Jan. 2001).

The Malaysian government has also made all possible efforts to encourage its citizens to visit places of interest in Malaysia with campaigns such as "*Cuti-cuti Malaysia*", the full adoption of the five-day working week for the civil service since July 2005, special discounts for Malaysians in terms of hotel accommodation and entry fees for exhibitions, etc.

In addition, the various promotions and strategies undertaken by the Ministry of Tourism and the private sector, such as the thrice yearly shopping campaigns – the

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Malaysia GP Sale, the *Malaysia Mega Sale Carnival* and the *Malaysia Year-End Sale* - have also contributed to the increase in number of domestic and foreign tourists (http://www.bnm.gov.my). These shopping and sales promotion campaigns not only improve retail receipts, but the retail industry also employs half a million workers, which translates to a significant number of jobs.

Besides generating employment, the tourism industry in Malaysia contributes to a significant amount of revenue for the country. Despite the challenging global economic scenario in the year 2008 and 2009, the receipts from the tourism industry were encouraging. Table 1.1 and the graph in Figure 1.1 below show Malaysia's statistics of tourist arrivals and income received from the tourism sector for the last fourteen years as reported in Tourism Malaysia Corporate, the official homepage of Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, the Malaysian Ministry of Tourism's corporate website.

Table 1.1

Tourist Arrivals and Receipts to Malaysia

Year	Arrivals	Receipts (RM)
2011	24.7 Million	58.3 Billion
2010	24.6 Million	56.5 Billion
2009	23.6 Million	53.4 Billion
2008	22.0 Million	49.6 Billion
2007	20.9 Million	46.1 Billion
2006	17.4 Million	36.3 Billion
2005	16.4 Million	32.0 Billion
2004	15.7 Million	29.7 Billion
2003	10.5 Million	21.3 Billion
2002	13.2 Million	25.8 Billion
2001	12.7 Million	24.2 Billion
2000	10.2 Million	17.3 Billion
1999	7.9 Million	12.3 Billion
1998	5.5 Million	8.6 Billion

(Source: *Tourism Malaysia*, 3 Mac 2012)

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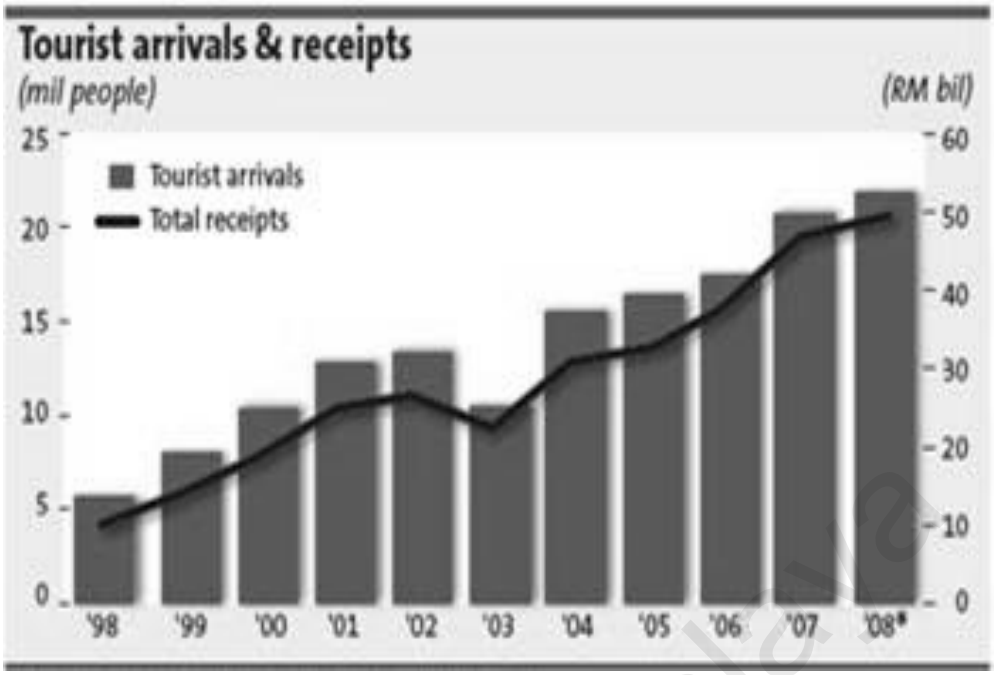

Figure 1.1

Tourist Arrivals and Receipts

(Source: *The Star*, 21 February 2009)

Deriving income from the tourism sector is not something new for Malaysia. Malaysia's tourism industry has come a long way since 1998 to where it is today. In the Malaysian tourism context, the country has achieved tremendous progress. Malaysia is second only to China in terms of tourist arrivals in Asia (Tee, 2009). As can be seen in Table 1.1 and Figure 1.1, the total tourist arrivals and receipts had grown from 5.5 million people and RM8.6bil, respectively, in 1998, to 24.7 million tourists with total receipts estimated at RM58.3 billion in 2011, which is an increase of 449% and 678% respectively over the years.

Under the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006 – 2010), the tourism target was to achieve 24.6 million tourists with RM59.4 billion in tourism receipts by the year 2010. It is reported that although 2009 was not a good year for the global tourism industry, the number of tourist arrivals to Malaysia stood at 23.6 million (The Star, 13 March 2010) with tourist

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receipts of RM53.4 billion; while in 2010, there were 24.6 million foreign tourists generating tourism revenue of RM56.5 billion. This indicates a growth of 5.8% in income generated by the tourism sector from the previous year. Thus, this goes to show that tourism can be a lucrative economic activity in spite of the global economic slump. With the rising positive trend in tourism, the Tourism Ministry is optimistic that Malaysia can achieve its target of generating RM60 billion in revenue out of 25 million foreign tourist arrivals in 2011 (The Star, 7 February 2011).

On the local front, the Malaysian government has not ignored the potential revenue of local tourism, but was also looking at boosting domestic tourism. Datuk Dr. James Dawos Mamit, the Deputy Tourism Minister of Malaysia revealed that in 2009, the domestic tourism industry contributed RM25.98 billion. This is an increase of 23% from RM21.11 billion received in 2008 (The Star, 21 May 2011). In 2010, the government received more than RM25 billion in receipts from domestic tourism. It was expected that there would be 100 million domestic trips for the year 2011 (The Star, 17 March 2011).

Looking at the current positive trends in the Malaysian tourism industry, a future plan for the industry is reflected in the Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011 – 2015) which aims to further expand the tourism industry over the next five years. The Government had pledged RM50 million worth of funding for 2011 and 2012 respectively, as part of the Tenth Malaysia Plan (The Star, 23 November 2010: N22). The plan targeted annual tourism revenue of RM115 billion and to receive 36 million tourists by the year 2020. This target is also expected to generate two million jobs.

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1.1 Malaysia as a Tourist Destination

Since the Malaysian tourism industry contributes to a significant amount of revenue for the country besides generating employment, the Malaysian government aspires to promote Malaysia as an outstanding tourist destination. The Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (*Tourism Malaysia*)[1], an entity under the Malaysian Ministry of Tourism, was established in 1992. *Tourism Malaysia* is the national tourism organisation (NTO) responsible for promoting Malaysia as a tourist destination. Their mission is to promote Malaysia as a leading tourist destination and to make the tourism industry a major contributor to the nation's socio-economic development. This is reflected in the mission statement of *Tourism Malaysia*.

> *Tourism Malaysia*'s objective is to promote Malaysia as an outstanding tourist destination. We aim to showcase Malaysia's unique wonders, attractions and cultures; develop domestic tourism and enhance Malaysia's share of the market for meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE). Our ultimate goal is to increase the number of foreign tourists to Malaysia, extend the average length of their stay and so increase Malaysia's tourism revenue.
>
> *Tourism Malaysia* aims to encourage tourism and its related industries in Malaysia. It is hoped that this would help promote new investments in the country, as well as provide increased employment opportunities. The growth of tourism would also contribute positively to the country's economic development and quality of life.
>
> (Source: *Tourism Malaysia Corporate* website)

According to the Malaysian Minister of Tourism in her speech at the opening ceremony of the March 2010 Malaysian Association of Tour & Travel Agents (MATTA)[2] Fair,

[1] The Tourist Development Corporation of Malaysia (TDC) was established on 10 August 1972 as an agency under the former Ministry of Trade and Industry by an Act of Parliament. With the inception of the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism on 20 May 1987, TDC was moved to this new ministry; and became the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB) through the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board Act 1992. Popularly known as *Tourism Malaysia*, its full focus is on promoting Malaysia domestically and internationally.

[2] MATTA comprises local tour and travel organizations as well as numerous overseas affiliations. It is also the national umbrella representative body for the entire travel industry in Malaysia. MATTA's objective is to promote the interests of the travel and tour industry in Malaysia. MATTA works closely with the Ministry of Tourism (Motour) as well as Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB), help organise fairs, seminars, convention and workshops, both to create public awareness of the tourism industry as well as to benefit its members.

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the expectations of travellers have changed with the years and today's tourists want "experiential holidays filled with action, adventure, fantasy and exotic touches" (Ng, 2010). Malaysia has many strong points to draw from. Some two decades ago, Malaysia was already being promoted as the mystique destination of Asia; and in 1999, the country's tagline or slogan of *Malaysia, Truly Asia* was launched. The Malaysian calendar is always filled with cultural festivities and celebrations that highlight the unique heritage of the various communities. Its melange of culture, food, friendly faces and beautiful beaches makes it an attractive tourist spot (Tee, 2009).

The first *Visit Malaysia* campaign was held in 1990 with a budget of RM100mil. Back then, it was said to be one of the most expensive campaigns organised for the industry. Nonetheless, it accomplished its mission and boosted tourist arrivals by 53.6% to 7.445 million. Tourism receipts also surged 60.5% to RM4.5bil. Subsequently, a *Visit Malaysia 1994* was held. In the more recent *Visit Malaysia 2007* campaign, the government proposed a budget of RM200mil for the campaign, and again succeeded in increasing tourist arrivals by 20% to 20.97 million that year. 2008 was another good year for the tourism sector. It registered 22.05 million tourists – a 5.1% increase over the previous year and exceeding its target of 21.5 million tourists as per the Ninth Malaysian Plan. The average per capita spending per tourist stands at RM2199.80. Thus, with more tourist arrivals, revenue from the services sectors will be multi-fold.

From 5.5 million arrivals in 1998, tourist arrivals in Malaysia have more than quadrupled to 24.7 million in 2011. Table 1.2 shows the latest breakdown of tourist arrivals to Malaysia by country in descending order. Singaporean tourists make up the largest number of tourists in Malaysia, representing more than half of the tourists who visited Malaysia. This can be regarded as a natural tendency, given the close proximity

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and easy access to move between both countries as it is a neighbouring country. This is followed by tourists from Indonesia (8.6%), Thailand (5.8%), China (5.1%) and Brunei (5.0%).

Table 1.2

Breakdown of Tourist Arrivals to Malaysia

Country of Residence	2010	2011	Growth (%)
Singapore	13,042,004	13,372,647	2.5
Indonesia	2,506,509	2,134,381	-14.8
Thailand	1,458,678	1,442,048	-1.1
China	1,130,261	1,250,536	10.6
Brunei	1,124,406	1,239,404	10.2
India	690,849	693,056	0.3
Australia	580,695	558,411	-3.8
United Kingdom	429,965	403,940	-6.1
Japan	415,881	386,974	-7.0
Philippines	486,790	362,101	-25.6
South Lorea	264,052	263,428	-0.2
Taiwan	211,143	233,783	10.7
U.S.A	232,965	216,755	-7.0
Vietnam	159,271	173,783	9.1
Iran	116,252	139,617	20.1
France	111,175	127,980	15.1
Germany	130,896	124,670	-4.8
Netherlands	114,887	90,590	-21.1
Saudi Arabia	86,771	87,693	1.1
Canada	91,701	86,015	-6.2
Myanmar	72,792	81,946	12.6
New Zealand	66,152	81,387	23.0
Cambodia	48,618	49,472	1.8
Sweden	48,971	44,138	-9.9
Italy	47,068	43,864	-6.8
Russia	32,075	38,918	21.3
South Africa	26,395	31,441	19.1
Laos	38,111	29,520	-22.5
Switzerland	27,894	25,802	-7.5
UAE	25,645	24,212	-5.6
Denmark	24,869	22,269	-10.5
Finland	21,355	19,969	-6.5
Norway	22,773	19,891	-12.7
Austria	n.a	13,082	n.c
Turkey	9,149	8,577	-6.3
Others	680,178	792,024	16.4
TOTAL	**24,577,196**	**24,714,324**	**0.6**

(Source : Research Division, Tourism Malaysia, & Immigration Department, Malaysia)

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Twenty-five thousand readers of *Global Traveller* magazine, which caters to luxury business travellers, who participated in a survey voted Malaysia as the second *Best International Destination* after Spain, with Italy in third place, Thailand fourth and Fiji, fifth (Lim, 2010). Datuk Dr. Victor Wee Eng Lye, The Chairman of *Tourism Malaysia* and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Programme Committee, cited data from the *World Tourism Organisation* at the March 2010 MATTA Fair press conference that "despite Malaysia's small population of 28 million, it had done well to be among the top ten most popular destinations in the world" (Wee, 2010). Malaysia is recognised globally as a leading tourism destination. Malaysia was ranked the ninth most travelled destination in the world according to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (Ong, 2010); while more recently, Lonely Planet listed Malaysia as one of the top ten countries for 'Best in Travel 2010' and one of the 'Best-value Destination for 2010' (Mazita, 2011).

1.2 Background of the Study

It is undeniable that countries strive to reinvent themselves and their market strategies to pitch their appeal to tourists. The increasing importance of tourism to boost the economy of the country has called for a need to conduct researches in this field. Literatures on marketing mainly deal with general business marketing and are not specific to tourism marketing (Morgan, 1996) or the linguistic perspectives of tourism advertising and promotion. The availability of literatures in tourism marketing is timely because of the growing interest in the travel and tourism industries and the increase in the number of tourists worldwide. Tourism is important not only in Malaysia but all over the world. These literatures would be a good source of reference for those in this business.

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In tourism marketing, like in business marketing, there are four important principles known as the 4Ps, as in price, product, place and promotion. Among them, promotion can be considered as the centre of all activities. Promotion can take many different forms. An indispensable tool used in promoting tourism is advertisement. Advertisement, which includes advertorials, is considered a tool of mass communication where it can reach a huge target audience. Kotler et al (1999) define advertisement as a form of presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified source. This means, advertorials are a one-way communication where the advertiser conveys his message without getting any direct responses from his audience. As such, the advertiser has to make sure that he advertises his product or service, in this case in the form of an advertorial, so effectively that his audience gets and understands his message, and thus purchase the product or service.

The dynamic nature of advertising discourse is due to the fact that it is designed to be persuasive. The primary purpose is to persuade people to purchase the product or service it advertises. Due to its persuasive purpose, advertising has much in common with promotional materials such as sales letters and job applications, in which its purpose is to make a sale: in sales letters, a service or product; in letters of job applications, a person's abilities; and in advertising, a service or product (Bhatia, 1993). Thus, it is crucial that the texts need to be communicated effectively in order to be successfully promotional, and to convey a positive image of the product or service and its provider or advertiser.

Investigation in tourism advertising and promotion, specifically from the linguistic perspective, has not been widely done although a lot of research on tourism and hospitality has been carried out. Furthermore, not much research in this particular genre

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of advertorial has been conducted from a linguistic point of view, in spite of there being studies in similar or related genres, such as newspaper and magazine advertisements of other products and services. Even where advertorials are studied, they are mostly conducted by advertising and public relations scholars. Thus, the existing analyses of advertorials mostly reflect their research interests, such as the type of violation of external recognizability of advertorials as commercial texts – the presence and absence of labelling, the type size, its typeface, title and sponsorship information (for example researches by Armstrong et al, 1980; Cameron et al, 1996; Cameron and Ju-Pak, 2000; Foxall and Goldsmith, 1994); and the effects of advertorials on readers (for example researches by Balasubramaniam, 1994; Cameron and Curtin, 1995; Cameron et al, 1996).

Although a variety of sub-genres of persuasive genres have been investigated in the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in traditional media, not much has been written about Internet advertising. Moreover, very few studies have analysed how this genre is constructed to attract potential tourists through investigating tourist online advertorials. There is a significant lack of research in this professional discourse probably because online advertorials are relatively new.

In relation to this study, online advertorials are created in recent years because consumers are now more computer savvy and technologically inclined as these hardwares are now more affordable and easily available, especially with the existence of cyber cafes ubiquitously. Moreover, consumers in this day and age have become more sophisticated in how they source a product; and in this case, tourism. They want immediate information and feedback, and the Internet can fulfil this need.

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1.3 Statement of the Problem

The effects of the 1997 global economic downturn and the challenging global economic scenario in the years 2008 and 2009 on the tourism industry are unavoidable. Even though the world is now seeing some recovery, some kind of force is needed to ensure that the tourism industry regains its momentum. Promotional texts, for instance, can play a crucial role in influencing potential tourists in deciding their holiday destinations. There are many places around the world to visit. Consequently, texts which promote a destination in various forms of media actively compete with each other to impress and persuade potential tourists. There are many factors that contribute to an effective tourism promotional text. Some of these factors are discussed below.

1.3.1 Tourism as a Profession

Never before has travelling been so convenient and diverse that a simple click of the mouse can send a person hopping onto a plane to travel to a destination of his/her choice, in an instant. There is an ever-increasing number of globe-trotters, and economic experts have predicted that the tourism industry will continue to expand rapidly throughout the world. This translates into a large and varied number of job opportunities for professionals around the world.

The world's largest and fastest growing industry today is probably the hospitality and tourism industry, which employs ten percent of the global labour force. Tourism is a highly specialised intricate business that provides diverse job opportunities for professionals in areas such as travel management and marketing, airline marketing, tour planning and packaging. New sectors in the industry like medical, adventure and sports

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tourism have also emerged to change the traditional scene of the tourism industry (The Star, 25 March 2009).

Colleges and universities all over the world now offer advanced diploma and degree programmes in Tourism Management. A degree in Tourism Management, says Sharmilla Vijayan, a lecturer at the Nilai University College's School of Hospitality and Tourism, equips students with the technical knowledge, conceptual framework and decision-making skills required to succeed in the tourism industry (The Star, 24 February 2010)

1.3.2 Advertising as a Profession

Advertisements are ubiquitous and thus form an inevitable part of our everyday lives. Advertising is a powerful industry that shapes our lives. It is a way that creative communicators grab people's attention by using stylishly crafted messages made up of a combination of catchy words and impelling visuals. Today's corporations and organisations acknowledge the need for this special group of people to enhance their effectiveness and productivity. Some of the job opportunities for professionals in the advertising industry include managing advertisements and promotions, advertisement consulting, copywriting, art and film directing and film producing.

1.3.3 Modes of Advertising

Advertising can be divided into two main categories, the print and electronic media. The mode of print advertising can be found in media such as newspapers, magazine,

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fliers, brochures and posters. Electronic advertising includes television, radio, and the Internet.

An advertorial is an advertisement written in the form of an objective opinion editorial, and usually designed to look like a legitimate and independent news story. However, it is not strictly objective as it has a promotional intention behind it. They are generally found in the print media, especially in magazines and newspapers. Advertorials are becoming more popular nowadays because the public are not easily influenced by mere advertisements.

Advertorials could play a crucial role in influencing potential tourists in deciding their holiday destinations. Tourism is not just to attract the local citizens to visit a country's places of interest, but more so to attract foreigners to visit the country.

1.3.4 The Internet as a Tourism Advertising Tool

The Internet is a global computer network that provides a vast array of information resources and services. It consists of inter-connected networks, using standard Internet Protocol Suite to serve billions of users worldwide. Up till the year 2005, the primary role of the Internet was communication. Searching for information only grew strongly the following year with 85% of users reported to getting information online. This trend continued into 2008 when it was found that information search and communication were the main reasons users went online. According to the 2005, 2006 and 2008 Malaysian *Household Use of the Internet Survey* conducted by the Statistics & Knowledge Resource Department, Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, there are increasing numbers of Malaysian Internet users acquiring

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information from the web. The statistics on Malaysian Internet users rose from 41% in 2005 and 85% in 2006, to 94% in 2008. This mirrors the worldwide trend that sees the world turning to the Internet as a primary information source.

With the digitisation of information, the promotion and marketing of products within global markets is increasingly prominent on the Internet. This new form of communication via the Internet has naturally attracted the interest of companies and organizations around the world. The combination of the computer and the Internet has created an incredible marketplace. They see it as a source or tool for advertising. With new developments in information and communication technology, the Internet is now a very quick and effective source and media of advertising that can reach the global market almost immediately. As a result, websites have mushroomed overnight to tap the overseas markets.

A website can be produced with ease and it is relatively not expensive if compared to advertising in the print media. Other benefits of the Internet as an advertising tool are that the website can be updated periodically; it is fast in spreading the message or information; and it can be received throughout the world. Due to the interactive nature of the internet, it combines the characteristics of mass communication and interpersonal communication. This is because although the information addresses a mass audience, it also allows for a reciprocal exchange between sender and receiver via electronic mail and newsgroups.

The tourism industry, which is now a global enterprise promoting tourist destinations in both domestic and international markets, has also captured the relevance of this new mass medium in contacting potential tourists all over the world. In order to promote a

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country as a holiday destination to foreigners, governments and advertisers have now resorted to creating websites in an attempt to advertise their countries, places of interest and attractions via the Internet. Malaysia has not been left out in her attempt to promote her country to the world. The Ministry of Tourism has a budget of RM200 million yearly for advertising in the print and electronic media (Bedi, 2009).

According to a survey by *Nielsen China Outbound Travel Monitor*, the Internet has become the most important medium for China's growing number of tourists to plan vacations. Most Chinese visit travel websites for research before going on their holidays. Online advertising is also having more influence on Chinese travellers than advertising in more traditional mediums, like television and print. The study states that almost 70% of those surveyed, looked at travel ads on the Internet. The Manager of *Ctrip.com*'s, the largest online travel service in China, holiday department was quoted that online destination exploration channels receive 1.1 million page views every day (Farrar and Xin, 2009).

The online trend has also implications for foreign tourism businesses trying to tap into a growing market of Chinese tourists planning trips abroad although the market remains relatively underdeveloped. Many international tourism businesses are trying to find ways to cater to the tastes of Chinese consumers as China is regarded as a huge market. According to the Nielson report, less than two percent of the total media advertising expenditure on destinations goes to Internet advertising. However, many countries did not spend any money on online ads. The report also found that while tourism bodies in South Korea, Singapore, New Zealand and Australia utilised all major media to promote destinations to Chinese consumers, tourism organisations in many European countries only used magazines and newspapers (Farrar and Xin, 2009).

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Jennifer Cronin, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, for hotel chain *Dusit International*, states that "advertising in China could be horrendously expensive". Nevertheless, *Dusit* is planning to open an office in Shanghai as part of future plans to expand further into the Chinese market. One of the things they are doing is just getting comparative quotes on doing their website in the Chinese language. She believes that the online market is probably having a better return on investment for the company in the future (Farrar and Xin, 2009). Malaysian Association of Hotels vice-president, Ivo Nekvapil also concurs that "there ought to be more emphasis on targeting the right markets if Malaysia wants to draw better quality tourists" (Tee, 2009).

In short, the Internet or broadband usage in various sectors has spurred the increment of the Growth Domestic Product in many countries, including Malaysia. Broadband is borderless. One can communicate with people all around with just a click of a button. The use of the Internet, with the help of fast broadband, can strengthen the nation. As such, the ninth Malaysia plan (2006 – 2010) emphasised information communication technology (ICT) and its related services as it enables businesses and individuals to grow.

The importance of tourism for the country and online information as revealed above has justified the necessity of creating online advertising texts or advertorials that disseminate relevant and interesting information in order to effectively promote a destination and persuade potential tourists in and to Malaysia.

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1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study is conducted using the framework of genre analysis to explore the communicative purposes, generic structures, multimodality, and text-audience relations of the online tourism advertorial as genre.

When a genre enters into a new communication medium, it can change. A genre's performance in a new medium depends, among other things, on its arrangement and the viability of the genre in question. Thus, the main objective of the study is to examine what happens when a genre enters into a new medium, in the case of the present study is the World Wide Web, and how this new environment affects the texts and the genre system as a whole.

Specifically, this study analyses web-mediated tourism advertorials which promote Malaysia and its places of interests to potential tourists. It will analyse the various contents of tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials to determine the communicative purposes and multimodal features in producing effective online advertorials to attract tourists to visit Malaysia.

The study attempts to examine the tourism homepages and advertorials based on the following specific objectives:

1. To identify the communicative purposes of the genre of tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials, and determine if these purposes are factors that influence how the generic structure of the web genre is shaped.
2. To identify the elements that constitute the generic structure of tourism homepages and provide a detailed description of the rhetorical structures of online tourism advertorials.

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3. To analyse the non-linguistic and multimodal features related to the generic structures of tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials.
4. To determine potential tourists' preferred communicative features of Malaysian tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials which can attract them to and in the country.

1.5 Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives as stated in the previous sub-section, the present study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the communicative purposes of tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials and whether these purposes are the factors that influence the shaping of the generic structure of the web genre?
2. What are the elements that constitute the generic structure of tourism homepages and the principal rhetorical structures of online tourism advertorials?
3. How do the non-linguistic and multimodal features support the generic structures found on Malaysian tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials?
4. What are the communicative features of the Malaysian tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials that attract potential tourists to and in the country?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Few studies have examined online advertorials published on Malaysian websites, especially tourism websites. There is a lack of research conducted on the discourse of Malaysian online tourism advertorials from the genre and multimodal perspectives. Therefore, this study attempts to reduce this research gap by analysing the homepages

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of tourism websites and online tourism advertorials from the two approaches as mentioned above.

Commercially, this study will be significant to the discourse community or stakeholders in particular the advertisers and also the people related to the tourism industry, such as the Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board and the state tourism boards; writers and potential consumers of the tourism products and services, and in general the public due to the situational context in which they are published. It is hoped that by highlighting and identifying the generic structures of tourism homepages and advertorials, those concerned will be more proactive in advertising and promoting the country and specific places of interest globally. This hopefully will attract more tourists to and within the country. The move structures identified in the advertorials and multimodal analysis can serve as a basic guideline for advertisers to effectively design strategies to appeal to the target audience. Academically, this study will benefit the Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) teacher and students of the Language for Advertising course.

In short, the study is significant to the discourse community or stakeholders, in particular the advertisers, writers and potential consumers of the products and services; and in general the public.

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1.7 Definition of Terms

A few extensively used terms are defined in this section to ensure clarity of the topics and issues being discussed in the study.

1.7.1 Advertorial

The term '*advertorial'* is a portmanteau or hybrid of '*advertisement'* and '*editorial'* (Bhatia, 2004). Advertorials commonly advertise new products or techniques. *Dictionary.com* defines an advertorial as "an extended newspaper or magazine text advertisement that promotes the advertiser's products or services or special point of view but resembles an editorial in style and layout". From the linguistics perspective, Bhatia (2004) categorises advertorials as a mixed genre, which incorporate the bending and mixing of genres such as reviews, opinions and editorials.

A more detailed definition of advertorial will be presented in Chapter Three whereby the results of a brief study conducted by the researcher (Cheong, 2008) on this emerging advertising strategy in Malaysia will be presented.

1.7.2 The World Wide Web

The World Wide Web was created by computer scientist Tim Berners-Lee in 1990 to share data with no common machines and no common representative software. It is a full collection of all the computers linked to the Internet which hold documents that are mutually accessible through the use of a standard protocol (the HyperText Transfer Protocol, or HTTP). It is usually abbreviated to *Web* or *W3* and; in site addresses, presented as the acronym *www*. The creator of the Web has defined it as "the universe of network-accessible information, an embodiment of human knowledge" (Berners-Lee, 1999). It was devised as a means of enabling high-energy physicists in different institutions to share information within their field, but it rapidly spread to other fields, and is now all-inclusive in subject-matter, and designed for multimedia interaction between computer users anywhere in the world. It has many functions including

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encyclopaedic reference, archiving, cataloguing, 'Yellow Pages" listing, advertising, self-publishing, games, news reporting, creative writing, and commercial transactions of all kinds, with movies and other types of entertainment becoming increasingly available (Crystal, 2001: 13).

1.7.3 Protocol

This is a set of rules which enables computers to communicate with each other or other devices. The Transmission Control Protocol (TCI) or Internet Protocol (IP), was made the Internet standard in 1985. Hale and Scanlon (1999: 159) call it "the mother tongue of the Internet". Much has been made of its ability to transcend the limitations of physical environments, cultural differences, and time-zones, thereby allowing people from anywhere to communicate with people anywhere else about anything at all (Crystal, 2001: 59).

1.7.4 Website

A Website is an individual computer which holds documents capable of being transferred to and presented by browsers, using one of the standard formats (usually HTML or XML). Websites are identified by a unique address, or *Uniform Resource Locator* (URL), with different pages of data at the site distinguished by means of labels separated by forward slashes (Crystal, 2001: 198); for example, http://www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my/.

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1.8 Scope of the Study

This study analyses the homepages and advertorials available on the official Malaysian tourism websites. Due to the comprehensiveness and complexity of the study, constraints of time and the large volume of web pages of tourism websites, this study will only focus on advertorials from the official tourism websites of the top four most visited destinations in the country as reported by Tourism Malaysia for travel arrivals. The top four travel destinations in Malaysia in terms of tourist arrivals (according to the statistics on tourist arrivals to the Malaysian states in 2009) are:

1. Kuala Lumpur – 15.7 million
2. Pahang – 9.7 million
3. Penang – 6.0 million
4. Sabah – 5.4 million

This study selects all the advertorials related to these four destinations' main tourism attractions found in the official webpages of the Malaysian tourism portals, *Tourism Malaysia*, its corporate website, and the above identified top four most visited states in Malaysia. In the attempt to identify the communicative purposes of the genre of online tourism advertorials, this study analyses the moves and sub-moves (or steps) of the advertorials found in the above-mentioned six official tourism web pages that relates to the four most visited states listed above and their main attractions. It also focuses on the visual elements used in the advertising genre although references will be made to audio and graphic elements where applicable. The socio-cultural context of the production of these advertorials is also considered so as to identify the communicative purposes and multimodal features from the advertisers' and producers' point of view. The study has also not ignored the viewpoints of the recipients of this web-mediated genre, because in

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order for a discourse to achieve its communicative objectives, the recipients' opinions are vital.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

Due to the constraints of time and the large volume of web pages of tourism websites, this study is not able to analyse every webpage and every advertorial found in the tourism websites of Malaysia. Hence, the study only analysed the mainpages or homepages of official Malaysian tourism organisations (NTOs) and online tourism advertorials pertaining to the top four most visited destinations or states in the country as stated above.

It must also be mentioned here that web pages change very often in order to be current and to incorporate the ever-changing information and latest news, although the general layout and facts may be more permanent.

1.10 Organisation of Thesis

The thesis is organised in the following manner: Chapter One provides the introduction, background and purpose of the study. Chapter Two reviews the literature of the research area, discusses the theoretical frameworks and presents the conceptual framework of the current study. Chapter Three establishes the definition of the genre of homepages and online advertorials. In Chapter Four, the methodology used in the study is stated. Chapter Five reports and discusses the findings gathered from the socio-cultural context of the ethnographic and socio-critical perspectives in producing the

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online tourism advertorial genre. Analysis of the findings from the textual perspective of the web-mediated tourism genre are presented, analysed and discussed in Chapter Six. Next, the findings from the multimodal discourse analysis of the genre are analysed and discussed in Chapter Seven. In Chapter Eight, findings from the socio-cognitive perspective are presented and discussed. Finally, concluding remarks and directions for further research can be found in Chapter Nine.

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CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

The basic model of communication contains three important elements: SENDER – MESSAGE – RECEIVER. Communication is what goes on when a 'sender' sends a 'message' to a 'receiver'. This linear model of communication actually indicates the direction of the communication process in the communication of writing, sound and pictures. However, not all forms of communication convey simple, unambiguous messages or information. The meaning of the communication depends on how the text, as in the writing, sound or pictures, is expressed. Therefore, both interpersonal and media communication are complicated. As a consequence, we need a more complex understanding of what goes on.

Text is a constitutive part of some meaning-making event or activity in which the text participates (Halliday, 1989). Texts are a complex system of relations involving many interacting systems of different kinds on different levels of textual organisation, as well as the lingkages across levels. These systems and relations include sounds, visual tracings, lexicogrammatical units, visual transitivity frames, images, gestures, phases, discourse structures, genre structures, social activities, users' plans and goals, etc. (Baldry and Thibault, 2005: 173). Texts are resources which we use to make meanings in different contexts, to create links with other times and places, with other texts (intertextuality), and so on.

Halliday's functional definition of text considers texts to be meaning-making events whose functions are defined by their use in particular social contexts. As Halliday points out below, texts are not just limited to the spoken or written media of language,

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but there are other resources that can be used to create texts in addition to the spoken and written word:

> "... texts ... is a language that is functional, doing some job in some context. ... So any instance of living language that is playing some part in a context of situation ... [is] called a text. It may be either spoken or written, or indeed in any other medium of expression that we like to think of."
>
> (Halliday, 1989: 10)

Halliday's definition of text extends to multimodal texts and even to texts in which there is no language at all. Texts are embedded in the contexts in which they function. A functional and semiotic definition of text seeks to understand the ways in which the intrinsic properties of texts and their organisation enable them to be coupled to their context which is created when text users' knowledge of culture and society interact with the internal features of the text's organisation during the making and interpreting of texts (Baldry and Thibault, 2005). Furthermore, different semiotic modalities adopt different organisational principles for creating meaning. This means that different semiotic modalities make different meanings in different ways according to the different media of expression they use.

2.1 Discourse

Everyday, we are exposed to discourses because reading texts and/or listening to others are part of everyone's life. We perform these actions through all kinds of media such as books, newspapers, magazines, television, film and radio; and through a variety of genres such as poetry, articles, advertisements, documentaries, dramas and so on. With new technologies such as the Internet and wireless communications, we are bombarded with so much discourse that we now live in what is often referred to as the 'Information

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Age'. Fairclough (2004: 104) notes that the modern society is "knowledge-based" or "knowledge-driven". In short, all that we read or hear are called discourses.

'Discourse' is a term that is used in a variety of ways in linguistics and other social science. We can distinguish between two main uses of the term. One, predominant in language studies, sees discourse as 'social action and interaction, people interacting together in real social situations' (Fairclough, 1995a: 18). The focus here is on language as it is used. The second use of the term is associated with the work of Michel Foucault (1926 – 1984) and has very little to do with linguistics. This second use understands a discourse as "social construction of reality, a form of knowledge" (Fairclough, 1995a: 18) which determines what is knowable, say-able and do-able in a particular historical context. Fairclough's approach to discourse subsumes both these uses and is intended to bring them together by analysing language use in some detail (in conformity with the first use of the term), but always in relation to social and cultural processes (the emphasis in the second use) (Hesmondhalgh, 2006: 122).

Fairclough (1989:22; 1992: 63; 1995b:7) and Wodak (1996) describe discourse as a form of social practice, where language is used to "be imbricated in social relations and processes, which systematically determine variations in its properties, including the linguistic forms, which appear in texts" (Fairclough, 1995b:73). Lemke (1995:20) further defines discourse as "not only reconfirms and re-enacts existing social relationships and patterns of behaviours, it also re-negotiates social relationships and introduces new meanings and new behaviours". Wodak (1996) concurs with Lemke in that discourse is historical as no discourse exists by itself. It is connected to discourses that came before it and is affected by the people and events around it. Thus, discourse can only be understood by taking its context into consideration.

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2.2 Professional Discourse

According to Gee (1999:1),

> "the primary function of human language is to scaffold the performance of social activities and to scaffold human affiliation within cultures and social groups and institutions … these two functions are connected. Cultures, social groups, and institutions shape social activities. At the same time, though, cultures, social groups, and institutions get produced, reproduced, and transformed through human activities"

From Gee's view of discourse and the earlier discussions, a movement from a more linguistics and textual view of discourse to a more social view of discourse could be seen in the following diagram.

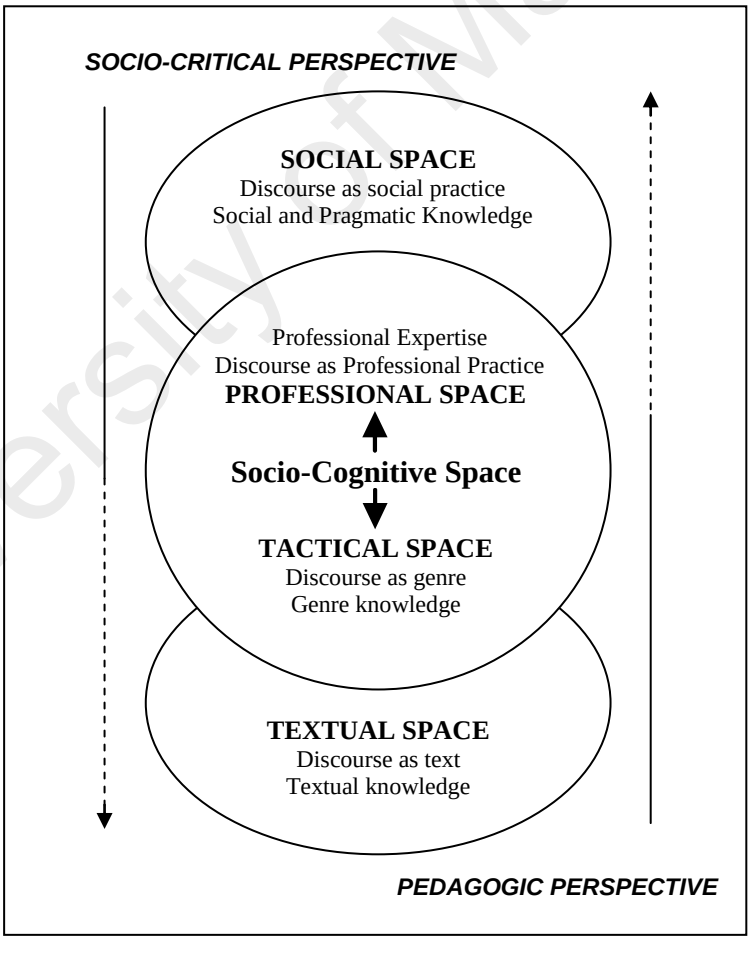

Figure 2.1

Research and Practice in Professional Discourse

(Source: Bhatia, 2004: 19)

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One of the most important questions in analysing professional discourse is 'why do the professionals use the language the way they do?' In order to understand the implications of this question is to integrate the analysis of professional genres with professional practices and cultures. This is because professional genres are not simply textual artefacts (Bhatia, 1993, 1994, 2008; Swales, 1990).

Professional discourse could be seen as one of the most inspiring and recent developments in multi-disciplinary applied linguistics, which includes socio-psycho-linguistics. According to Bathia (2002: 42-52), Professional discourse research is becoming increasingly multidisciplinary and multidimensional and the main goals of professional discourse research and practice are:

- To represent and account for the realities of the professional world.
- To understand and account for the "private intentions" in professional genres.
- To investigate language as action in socio-critical environment.
- To investigate the relationship between professional discourse and social structures, social and professional identities and professional practices.
- To understand how professional boundaries are negotiated through discourse practices.
- To investigate integration of discourse analytical procedures and professional practices.
- To offer effective solutions to pedagogical and other applied linguistic problems.

These goals could bridge the gap between discourse analysis and professional practice. They could also contribute to the discursive competence and disciplinary knowledge, which in turn contribute significantly to professional practice (Bhatia, 2002). This can be represented in the following diagram.

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Figure 2.2

Development of Professional Expertise

(Source: Bhatia, 2004: 146)

Professional discourse analysis works towards a multi-dimensional research methodology through analytical procedures by integrating interdisciplinary variation or tensions in research methodologies and analytical frameworks. This kind of integration will bring in a much greater level of delicacy and intricacy in the recontextualization and hybridization of discourses, including mixing, embedding, appropriating and bending of professional genres in a much more interesting and exciting manner (Bhatia, 2002: 54-55).

2.3 Promotional Discourse

It is undeniable that we are all constantly subjected to promotional discourse. Today's contemporary culture has been characterised as 'promotional' (Wernick, 1991) or 'consumer' (Featherstone, 1991) culture. Wernick (1991) defines 'promotion' as a process whereby "favourable information" about the organisation, its products and services is encoded into promotional messages or texts, such as press releases and

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advertisements, which lead the consumer to buy the product or use the service. Promotional discourse can thus be defined as the process of the linguistic construction of texts, depicting the subject in question in a favourable light to influence the audience/reader for commercial benefit.

The concept of promotional culture is understood in discursive terms as the generalisation of promotion as a communicative function across directions of discourse, whereby discourse is a vehicle for 'selling' goods, services, organisations, ideas or people (Wernick, 1991), given that much of our discursive environment is characterised by more or less obvious promotional intent as experienced in today's modern society. The result of this generalisation has led to an extensive restructuring of boundaries between discourse and discursive practices (Fairclough, 1995b). This is demonstrated by the genre of consumer advertising which has been colonising professional and public service discourse, and generating many new hybrid promotional genres.

2.3.1 Advertising Discourse

Although there are many types of promotional discourses as briefly mentioned above, the focus of this research is on advertising discourse. Hence, it is deemed appropriate to now discuss advertising as a discourse type.

Advertising discourse must first be recognised as a form of communication with a persuasive intent that is paid and non-personal. This discourse is used by identified sources through various media. It is persuasive because the advertiser strives to alter the consumers' behaviour, levels of awareness, knowledge and attitude in a manner that would benefit them. As advertisements are paid forms of communication, they are different from other varieties of publicity (such as press releases) and "public relations"

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(such as news conferences) which are covered by the media without any charge. This form of persuasive communication is also different from other promotional and publicity forms of communication published in the media, such as "news" or "feature" material supplied by a particular source, in that the advertiser is "identified" (Rotzoll, 1985). Lately, advertisers are convinced that an editorial format can be more effective than the traditional advertising format in influencing audiences for commercial benefit. Hence, they have begun to advertise in the form of advertorials because consumers/audiences today want more substantial information and an objective opinion on a product or service.

Advertising in this day and age is a world-wide phenomenon especially with advances in technology and the advent of the Internet. Many advertisers use advertisements, which include advertorials, for different purposes with many different effects. Rotzoll (in van Dijk, 1985) provides eight forms of advertising discourse that reveal different communicative purposes. (Examples of businesses or services that advertise each of the eight forms of advertising below are taken from the researcher's survey.) They are advertisements by:

(a) Producers of consumer goods or services to reach individuals

This "general" advertising involves advertising from a single company (the "producer" of the good or service) to an audience. The purpose is generally an attempt to encourage preference for a particular brand. (Examples of businesses or services that advertise in this form of advertising discourse include health care and pharmaceutical companies, tourism boards, etc.)

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(b) Producers of consumer goods to reach retailers

The companies that advertise to retailers may be the same as those that attempt to reach individual consumers. They also often encourage retailers to stock the product in order to sell to individuals. This is often a very important form of advertising because the competition for retailer "shelf space" is quite strong. (Examples of this form of advertising discourse include computers dealing in Information Communication Technology, event management, products storage and materials handling businesses, etc.)

(c) Producers of business goods and services to other businesses

The producers of business goods and services used by other businesses for their own use, advertise to them in an attempt to secure sales for their particular brand. (Cranes manufacturers and telecommunication cable companies are examples of businesses that use this form of advertising discourse).

(d) Producers for public relations purposes to individuals, special interest groups and their own employees

This increasingly prevalent type of advertising is meant to influence important "publics", such as the government, financial community, employees, etc, on matters of concern to the company. (Examples of this form of advertising include education benefits by the *Social Security Organisation (SOCSO)*; employee reviews by *Shell*, a petrol company; *Honda Dreams Fund*, a community project by an automobile company; companies dealing in computer servers which consume less electricity and thus conserve the environment, etc.)

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(e) Producers of consumer and/or business goods and services for international distribution

Marketing today is increasingly multinational. Firms that distribute their products and services to countries other than their own increasingly utilise advertising to influence appropriate audiences. (Examples of organisations or companies that advertise their products or services to consumers and business audiences around the world include government ministries, credit card companies, tourism boards, etc.)

(f) Retailers to reach individual consumers

This form of advertising emphasises patronage of a particular store or company products and services. Unlike "general" advertising, the message is usually not "buy this brand" but "buy here". Often, the appeal of this form of advertising is the price. (An example for this form of advertising taken from the pilot survey is the one by a departmental store, *Jaya Jusco* advertising skin care and cosmetic products.)

(g) Individuals to reach other individuals

This is known as "classified" advertising, where individuals are attempting to persuade others to buy or trade. (An example would be an individual trying to sell a property).

(h) Governments, social institutions, and special interest groups

This classification encompasses advertising that attempts to influence the position of the governments, social institutions, and special interest groups. In virtually every country, this is now a growing area for advertising. (Examples of this form of advertising are Public Service Announcements by the government on road safety, smart consumerism, and recycling.)

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2.4 Media Discourse

The mass media usually utilises discourse to "construct versions of reality" to the public. News is produced based on its "tellability" and "newsworthiness" to the masses, thus involving the inevitable "processes of selection and transformation" (Stamou, 2001: 653). Sacks in Coulthard (1985: 79-80) acknowledges the importance of conveying information that is both interesting and relevant so that it would not bore the audience. Media discourse, which comes in the form of text, is co-produced by both the writer and reader based on their shared knowledge of the world, society and language (Fowler, 1999). This is because a text consists of raw material for multiple interpretations, and the ways in which they are read depend upon the purposes, commitments and strategies of readers. Texts also express the social identities of their producers and address the assumed social identities of their addressees and audiences. (Fairclough, 1995a: 123 - 128).

In media discourse, readers have "the active role of audiences in interpreting the messages they receive" (Croteau and Hoynes, 2000: 262). Readers are also considered "active readers" as they do not simply swallow the messages presented in the Media (Croteau and Hoynes, 2000). In other words, different people will have different interpretations of the same content or report (Sorlin, 1994). Downes and Miller (1998) state that the meanings and sense made by the reader from their readings are in accordance with their existing knowledge. They also state that media audiences interpret what they already know and what they learn from other sources. The interpretation of media discourse also depends on their social position and experience (Granham, 2000). Croteau and Hoynes (2000) concur with Granham (2000) in that readers' interpretation is based upon social position, broader cultural codes and discursive resources. Since media texts are governed by rules and meanings of

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discourse and genre (Kress, 1989), Fairclough's (1995b) framework for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) seems to cater to the needs of media discourse. Fairclough (1995a, 1995b) suggests that the analysis of media discourse should be multidimensional because texts are related to the discourse practice and to the social practice of which they are part.

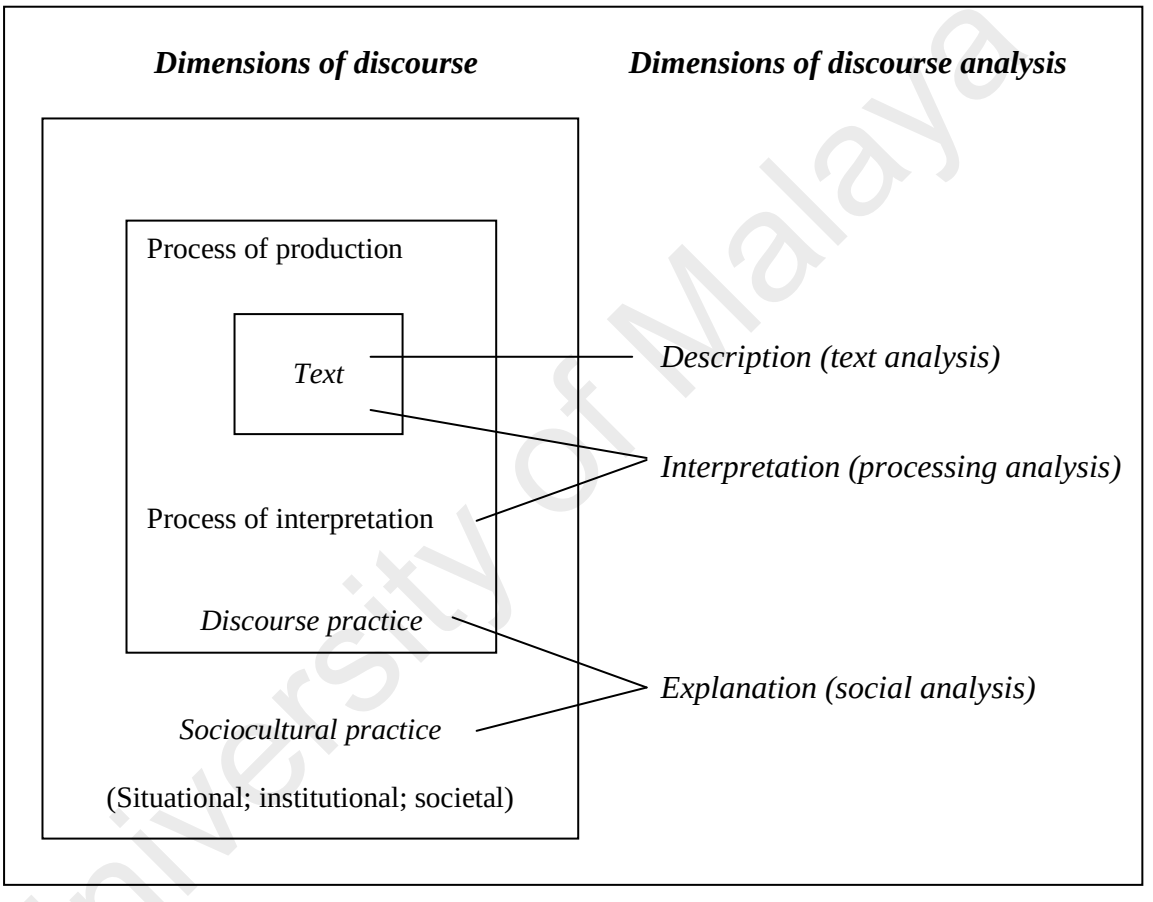

Figure 2.3

Dimensions of Discourse and Discourse Analysis

Media discourse can basically be divided into two main categories – the print media and electronic media. The print media consists of newspapers, magazines, annual reports, letters, brochures, leaflets, flyers, etc. Television, radio, computer/Internet and mobile telecommunication are examples of the electronic media. Advertisements are most commonly associated with the mass media of newspapers, magazines, billboards,

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posters, direct-mail, television and radio, although lately they are frequently flourished in other forms such as the Internet and mobile telecommunication.

2.4.1 Computer-Mediated Discourse

Dot com [*.com*] is now a common heard phrase, as well as appearing ubiquitously in writing in all kinds of advertising and promotional material (Crystal, 2001: 20). In fact, written English shows developments well beyond the stage of the literal use of *.com*. This suffix is one of several domain names showing what kind of organisation and electronic address a website belongs to:

.com - commercial organisations

.edu or *.ac* - educational organisations

.gov – governmental organisations

.mil – military organisations

.net – network organisations

.org or *.co* – everything else

The estimates for languages other than English have steadily risen since the mid-1990s, with some commentators predicting that before long the Web and the Internet as a whole will be predominantly non-English as communications structure develops in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America (Crystal, 2001: 217 - 222). A *Global Reach* (which offers web site translation services) survey estimated that people with Internet access in non-English speaking countries increased from 7 million to 136 million between 1995 and 2000. In 1998, the total number of newly created non-English Web sites exceeded that for newly created English Web sites, with Spanish, Japanese, German, and French the chief players. According to a Japanese Internet author Yoshi Mikami, 90% of Web pages in Japan are now in Japanese. The Web is steadily reflecting the distribution of

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language presence in the real world. They range from individual businesses doing their best to present a multilingual identity to major sites collecting data on many languages. In other words, a single language site is "useless", because the owner has nobody to link to.

The Web is an ideal medium for minority languages, given the relative cheapness and ease of creating a Web page, compared with the cost and difficulty of obtaining a newspaper page, or a programme or advertisement on radio or television. As Thomas (2000) reflects on the reduced dominance of English on the Internet: "... there will be a great demand for multilingual Web sites, for multilingual data retrieval ..."

This is what a very popular Australian blogger, Karen Cheng (2009) who has a large readership and has written 1,313 posts in the last six years, has to say about the Internet. Back in 1999, the Internet was small, but growing rapidly. There was no spam or advertising on the Internet then. After a decade, the Internet is "huge". Now, the Internet and blogs are part of the "social-media" phenomenon where everyone is connected to everyone else and everything by so many different software and devices that it feels like everyone in the whole world is shouting out at the same time. Advertising is now everywhere.

Cheng (2009) adds that the Internet is fast now. Back in 1999, most of her posts did not have a picture at all, and if they did, the picture was the size of what is now called a "thumbnail" image. Digital cameras, combined with faster bandwidth, have made high quality photos an important part of the Internet because digital is so easy and cheap compared to film. As a result, the standard of photography has improved a lot over the years. Moreover, one can store images on *Flickr*, which does not charge anything for serving out all the images. However, Cheng (2009) cautions that one should choose

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images very, very carefully because "one good image is worth a thousand words, but fifty well chosen words are much better than any bad picture".

2.4.1.1 Features of the Internet

According to Crystal (2001: 7 - 8) the distinctive features of a language variety are of several kinds. Many stylistic approaches recognise five main types, for written language:

a) Graphic features: the general presentation and organisation of the written language, defined in terms of such factors as distinctive typography, page design, spacing, use of illustrations, and colour; for example, the variety of newspaper English would be chiefly identified at this level through the use of such notions as headlines, columns, captions.

b) Orthographic features: the writing system of an individual language, defined in terms of such factors as distinctive use of the alphabet, capital letters, spelling, punctuation, and ways of expressing emphasis (italics, boldface, etc.); for example American and British English are distinguished by many spelling differences (e.g. *colour* vs. *color*), and advertising English allows spelling modifications that would be excluded from most other varieties (e.g. *Beanz Means Heinz*)

c) Grammatical features: the many possibilities of syntax and morphology, defined in terms of such factors as the distinctive use of sentence structure, word order, and word reflections; for example, religious English makes use of an unusual vocative construction (*O God, who knows* ...) and allows a second-person singular set of pronouns (*thou*, *thee*, *thine*).

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d) Lexical features: the vocabulary of a language, defined in terms of the set of words and idioms given distinctive use within a variety; for example, legal English employs such expressions as *heretofore, easement, and alleged*, as well as such phrases as *signed sealed and delivered* and Latin expressions such as *ex post facto*.

e) Discourse features: the structural organisation of a text, defined in terms of such factors as coherence, relevance, paragraph structure, and the logical progression of ideas for example, a journal paper within scientific English typically consists of a fixed sequence of sections including the abstract, introduction, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion.

Although the Internet is largely text-based (Wilbur, 1996: 6), the presence of spoken language, through the use of sound clips, film, video, interactive voice dialogues, speech synthesis (to provide a spoken representation of what is on screen or to give a vocal support to a graphic presentation), and automatic speech recognition (to enable users to interact verbally with sites) is growing. Therefore, Crystal (2001: 9) suggests that we need to recognise two more features of language variety:

- Phonetic features: the general auditory characteristics of spoken language, defined in terms of such factors as the distinctive use of voice quality, vocal register (e.g. tenor versus bass), and voice modality (e.g. speaking, singing, chanting); for example, in TV commentary, different sports make use of different vocal norms (e.g. the loud enthusiastic crescendos of football versus the hushed monastic tones of snooker).
- Phonological features: the sound system of an individual language, defined in terms of such factors as the distinctive use of vowels, consonants, intonation, stress and pause; for example, distinctive pronunciation is a notable feature of such varieties as news-reading, preaching, and television advertising.

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Computer-mediated communication is more than just a hybrid of speech and writing, or the result of contact between two long-standing mediums. According to Deegan (2000) electronic texts display fluidity, simultaneity (being available on indefinite number of machines), and non-degradability in copying. They transcend the traditional limitations on textual dissemination, and they have permeable boundaries because of the way one text may be integrated within others or display links to others via hypertext links. These properties, combined with those associated with writing and speech, make the Internet language a 'third medium' (Deegan, 2000: 48).

As the Internet is a medium almost entirely dependent on reactions to written messages, awareness of audience must hold a primary place in any discussion. The core feature of the Internet is its real or potential interactivity, a medium which is electronic, global and interactive (Crystal, 2001: 18).

A 'page' on the Web often varies from encounter to encounter for several possible reasons:

- its factual content might have been updated
- its advertising sponsors might have changed
- its graphic designer might have added new features

Thus, the writing is not necessarily static, given the technical options available which allow texts to move around the screen, disappear or reappear, change colour, and so on (Crystal, 2001: 44).

Market research companies are investing a great deal to discover how people react to different Web page configurations. Web page designers constantly talk about the importance of 'clear navigation' around a page, between pages in a site, and between

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sites, with the aim of providing unproblematic access to sites, clear screen layouts, and smoothly functioning selection options for searching, help, further information, etc (Crystal, 2001: 57). As such, the cost of designing a high-quality website can be considerable.

Web pages often provide visual aids to support texts, in the form of photographs, maps, diagrams, animation, and the like. The Web is also factually communicative and graphically rich. The richness of the Web's graphics has increased along with technological progress, in that it has a range of typographic and colour variation that far exceeds the pen, the typewriter, and the early word processor, and allowing further options, such as animated texts, hyperlinks and multimedia support (sound, video, film) not available to conventional publishing. However, not everyone can use it well, where examples of illegibility, visual confusion, over-ornamentation and other inadequacies abound. They are compounded by the limitations of the medium, which cause no problem if respected, but which are often ignored as when we encounter screenfuls of unbroken text, paragraphs which scroll downwards interminably or texts which scroll awkwardly off the right-hand side of the screen. The problem of "graphic translatability" (Twyman, 1982) is only beginning to be appreciated and that it is not possible to take a paper-based text and put it on a screen without rethinking the graphic presentation and the content of the message (Crystal, 2001: 46-47).

Anything that can exist as a computer file can be made available as a Web document – text, graphic, sound, video, etc. There is no theoretical limit to the size of the Web, and new sites are being added to it so rapidly that no conclusive statistics are available, but growth in the late 1990s was about 40% a year, with the number of pages rapidly approaching more than a billion (Lawrence and Giles, 1999: 107-109).

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'Graphic' refers to all aspects of written (as opposed to spoken) language, including typewritten, handwritten (including calligraphic), and printed texts. It includes much more than the direct visual impression of a piece of text, as presented in a particular typography and graphic design on the screen. It also includes all those features which enter into a language orthographic system (i.e. its spelling, punctuation, and use of capital letters) as well as the distinctive features of grammar and vocabulary which identify a typical 'written', as opposed to 'spoken', medium of communication. (Crystal, 2001: 195)

There will be large quantities of interrupted linear text – texts which follow the uni-dimensional flow of speech, but interrupted by conventions which aid intelligibility – chiefly the use of spaces between words and the division of a text into lines and screens (Crystal, 1997). This is the normal way of using written language, and it dominates the Web as it does any other graphic medium. But there will also be large quantities of non-linear texts – texts which can be read in a multidimensional way. In non-linear viewing, the lines of a text are not read in a fixed sequence; the reader's eyes move about the page in a manner dictated only by the user's interest and the designer's skill, with some parts of the page being the focus of attention and other parts not being read at all. A typical example is a page advertising a wide range of products at different prices. On the Web, many pages have areas allocated to particular kinds of information and design, through the use of colour, flashing, movement, and other devices to attract the attention and disturb any process of predictable reading through the screen in a conventional way. On a typical sales page, a dozen locations compete for our attention (e.g. search, help, shopping basket, home page, etc.). The whole concept of hypertext linking is perhaps the most fundamental challenge to linear viewing (Crystal, 2001: 196).

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However, there are other kinds of graphic organisation. The Web displays many kinds of *lists*, for example, sequences of pieces of information, ordered according to some principle, which have a clear starting point and a finishing point – such as items in a catalogue, restaurant menus, filmographies, and discographies. As the whole basis of linguistic organisation of a search-engine responds to an inquiry to provide a series of hits in the form of a list, it would seem that the organisation list is intrinsic to the structure of the Web. Matrices are also very much in evidence – arrangements of linguistic, numerical, or other information in rows and columns, designed to be scanned vertically and horizontally. They will be found in all kinds of technical publications as well as in more everyday contexts such as sites dealing with sports records and personal sporting achievements. And there are *branching* structures, such as are well-known in family tree diagrams, widely used whenever two or more alternatives need to be clearly identified or when the history of a set of related alternatives needs to be displayed. In an electronic context, of course, the whole branching structure many not be visible on a single screen, the different paths through a tree emerging only when users click on relevant 'hot' spots on the screen (Crystal, 2001: 197).

The Web is graphically more eclectic than any domain of written language in the real world. The same eclecticism can be seen if we look at the purely linguistic dimensions of written expression – the use of spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and other properties of the discourse (the ways that information is organised globally within texts, so that it displays coherence, logical progression, relevance, and so on). Whatever the variety of written language we have encountered in the paper-based world, its linguistic features have their electronic equivalent on the Web. Among the main varieties of written expression are legal, religious, journalistic, literary and scientific texts. These are all widely present in their many sub-varieties, or genres. Each of these genres has its

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distinctive linguistic character, and all of this stylistic variation will be found on the Web (Crystal, 2001: 197-198).

2.4.1.2 Hypertext and Interactivity of the Internet

The Web is noticeably a colourful medium. Probably the most use of colour in a well-designed site is to identify the hypertext links – the jumps that users can make if they want to move from one page or site to another. The hypertext link is the most fundamental structural property of the Web, without which the medium would not exist. It has parallels in some of the conventions of traditional written text – especially in the use of the footnote number or the bibliographical citation, which enables a reader to move from one place in a text to another – but nothing in traditional written language remotely resembles the dynamic flexibility of the Web (Crystal, 2001: 202).

The Internet is a medium which is electronic, global and interactive (Crystal, 2001: 18). A distinctive feature of an increasing number of Web pages is their interactive character. The Web is no longer only a purveyor of information. It has become a communicative tool, which will vastly grow. Doubtless, the trend is being much reinforced by the e-commerce driver, with its 'subscribe now', 'book here' character. Web owners have now come to realize that, as soon as someone enters a site, there is a greater chance of them staying there if the site incorporates as e-mail option, or offers a discussion forum (Crystal, 2001: 204).

Pring (1999) believes that "Web screens may blossom with movies and be garnished with sound tracks, but for the moment, type is the primary vehicle for information and persuasion. Its appearance on screen is more crucial than ever. Immense competition

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for the user's attention means that words must attract, inform (and maybe seduce) as quickly as possible. Flawless delivery of the message to the screen is the goal".

2.5 Text Analysis

As this study attempts to research on the genre of tourism advertorials posted on the Internet, it is also necessary to identify text analysis as it is related to mass communication and mass media research, since genre study is commonly identified with the analysis of texts. Swales (1990: 6) states that it is necessary to use texts and analyse them in order to understand how those texts "organise themselves informationally, rhetorically and stylistically".

Van Dijk (1985: 2) states that Content Analysis, which is a type of text analysis, is "not just a theoretical approach of mass communication research, but an interdisciplinary method for the objective, replicable and quantitative description of texts". In addition to Content Analysis, Grounded theory procedures can be applied for analysing media discourse, such as interview transcripts and newspaper articles (Titscher et al., 2000:75). Stillar (1998) proposes a system of textual analysis combining critical tools from three areas of interest – functional linguistics, rhetoric and social theory. This system is also known as the Discoursal, Rhetorical and Social Action.

This study also attempts to look at the online tourism advertorials from the multimodal perspective. Multimodal texts integrate selections from different semiotic resources to their principles of organisation. These resources are not put together as separate modes of meaning making, but are combined and integrated to form a complex whole. The organisation principles of the whole should be understood in terms of the combined resources used. This resources integration principle refers to the ways in which the

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selections from the different semiotic resource systems in multimodal texts relate to, and affect each other, in many complex ways across many different levels of organisation. A semiotic resource system refers to the possible meanings and forms typically used to make meanings in particular contexts (Baldry and Thibault, 2005: 18). According to the resource integration principle, texts are never monomodal. In practice, all kinds of texts are always multimodal, making use of, and combining, the resources of diverse semiotic systems (Baldry and Thibault, 2005: 19). Thus, multimodal texts are composite products of the combined effects of all the resources used to create and interpret them.

2.6 Discourse Analysis

Historically, language for specific purposes analyses began with quantitative studies of the linguistic properties of functional varieties or registers of a language (Barber, 1962; Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens, 1964 in Swales, 1990). An example of this type of study involves investigating the occurrence of verb forms in scientific English in order to provide a descriptively adequate account of distributional frequencies in the target language variety and thus offer a basis for teaching items in specialised English as a Second and Foreign Language (ESL & EFL) materials. These discrete-item surface feature studies included investigations into sentence length, voice, vocabulary and so on.

Since those early days, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) analyses have developed in various directions to become narrower and deeper. There is now an awareness in providing a deeper or multi-layered textual account. As a result, there is a growing interest in assessing rhetorical purposes, in analysing information structures, and in explaining syntactic and lexical choices (Swales, 1990). The findings are increasingly viewed in terms of the contributions they make to communicative effectiveness. These

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have contributed to our understanding of discourse in educational and professional settings.

Discourse analysis (DA) is only one of a number of approaches which offer the means to analyse language in social use. DA refers to the study of naturally occurring written and spoken forms of discourse. It can be distinguished in terms of theoretical orientation (Bhatia, 1993). In the past, DA was usually an extension of grammatical formalism, which focuses on formal and functional aspects of language use. These types of theoretical studies usually focused on a particular theoretical framework in linguistics such as the systemic linguistic framework. According to Bhatia, Flowerdew and Jones (2008), though often seen as located within the discipline of linguistics, DA is in fact an interdisciplinary field of inquiry.

More recently, DA deals with the use of language or actual communication in an institutionalised socio-cultural context. DA has moved to focus more on "language in use", drawing on insights from sociology, psychology, semiotics, communication studies, rhetoric, as well as disciplines such as business and marketing, law and information technology, just to name a few. In this regard, DA has evolved as a way of understanding the use of language in a variety of institutional, academic, workplace and professional settings (Bhatia, Flowerdew and Jones, 2008). Furthermore, discourse analysts are now faced with a variety of new media of communication including computer-mediated communication, SMS messaging and other new communication technologies.

DA can also be viewed on a general-specific scale. General discourse studies concentrate on written discourse analyses with a focus on the features that distinguish a narrative text from descriptive and argumentative texts. In contrast, specific discourse

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analyses focus on texts such as research article introductions, legislative provisions and doctor-patient communications. Bhatia (1993) also distinguishes DA's parameter as that of surface-deep analysis or thin-thick description of language in use. Identification of this parameter is useful in distinguishing applied discourse analysis, which may range from surface-level formal analysis to deeper functional analysis. In short, there is a gradual shift from an emphasis on theoretical, formalistic and surface-level analyses to an emphasis on deep and functional analyses, which are closely related to socio-cultural settings.

Therefore, as a general term, DA refers to the study of naturally occurring written or spoken discourse focusing on:

1. lexico-grammatical and other textual properties,
2. regularities of organisation of language use,
3. situated language use in institutional, professional or organisational contexts, or
4. language use in a variety of broadly configured social contexts.

Apart from the above analyses, many researches have been conducted using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) since the last decade. CDA emerged as a result of contemporary pragmatics and quantitative-correlative sociolinguistics of William Labov. It is also based on Louis Althussser's theories of ideology, Mikhail Bakhtin's genre theory and the philosophical traditions of Antonio Gramsci and the Frankfurt school (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Titscher et al., 2000:144). The interdisciplinary approach of CDA allows us to consider a wide variety of communicative methods and media from different perspectives in a way that does justice to the complexity of linguistic, extralinguistic and contextual components of authentic, real-life communication (Anthonissen, 2003). In identifying CDA as a typically interdisciplinary approach to analysing discourse, there is recognition of the value that advances made in

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these disciplines may have improved understanding of the functioning of language in society.

There is a range of studies revolving around CDA which are advocated by various analysts in their respective studies. Some of the better known CDA researches are the French Discourse Analysis, Critical Linguistics, Social Semiotics, Socio-Cognitive Studies (van Dijk), Discourse-Historical Method (Wodak) and Fairclough's framework which includes the concept of intertextuality.

Approaches in discourse analysis developed by British linguist Norman Fairclough and Dutch linguist Teun van Dijk attempt to draw connections between the use of language and the exercise of social power. For this reason, their works are often labelled as 'Critical Discourse Analysis' (CDA) because it claims to be more critical of language as it is used socially than are some types of discourse and linguistic analysis (Hesmondhalgh, 2006: 122). However, the analysis of the present research is not from the CDA but genre analysis perspective.

2.7 Genre Analysis

In the past, Register Analysis and Grammatical-Rhetorical Analysis were used in discourse analysis whereby limited emphasis was given to "socio-cultural, institutional and organizational constraints and expectations that shape the written genre in a particular setting, particularly in the case of highly specific academic and professional genres" (Bathia, 1993:10). In relation to the problem, Genre Analysis (GA) was introduced to study the "situational linguistic behaviour in institutionalized academic or professional settings" (Bhatia, 1997:181). In other words, GA describes the conventional aspects of language use. According to Bhatia (1993: 1), it focuses on "the

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specific realizations of conventionalized communicative purposes". The study of genre can be viewed from three different traditions (Hyon, 1996). Each of the tradition differs in its approach to genre. The following sub-section explains the three traditions of genre analysis.

2.7.1 Traditions of Genre Analysis

Literature on genres had been conceived of in three distinct ways by researchers and practitioners with different backgrounds and from different parts of the world (Hyon, 1996). The three schools of genre analysis are the international ESP Tradition, North American New Rhetoric and the Australian Systemic-Functional School. Each tradition differs in its approach to genre. This section explains the three traditions of genre analysis.

On the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) tradition (i.e. Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993; Dudley-Evans, 1994), genres have been framed as text types defined by their formal properties as well as by their communicative purposes within social contexts. According to Hyland (2003), the ESP approach is more linguistic in direction and sees genre as a class of structured communicative events employed by specific discourse communities whose members share broad social purposes (Swales, 1990: 45-47). These purposes are the rationale of a genre and help to shape the ways it is structured and the choices of content and style it makes available (Johns, 1997).

Genres in the ESP tradition are often associated with "discourse communities" of academic disciplines or particular professions, and often use the classification of these communities, such as 'research articles' and 'annual reports', to identify their genres (Johns, 2003). This approach focuses on the structural move analysis to describe the

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organizational patterns in genres. ESP researchers do not only examine a text at the textual level but may also analyse at the lexico-grammatical level. Hyon (1996: 695) notes that "many ESP scholars have paid particular attention to detailing the formal characteristics of genres while focusing less on the specialized functions of texts and their surrounding social contexts".

The New Rhetoric approach (i.e. Bakhtin, 1981; Miller, 1984; Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1993) which was influenced by port-structuralism, rhetoric and first language composition (Hyland, 2003), studies genre "as the motivated, functional relationship between text types and rhetorical situation" (Coe, 2002: 195). The focus in this approach to genre analysis is mainly on the rhetorical contexts in which genres are employed, rather than detailed analyses of text elements (Freedman and Medway, 1994).

In contrast to the ESP tradition, New Rhetoric scholars "have focused more on the situational contexts in which genres occur than on their forms and have placed special emphases on the special purposes, or actions, that these genres fulfil within these situations" (Hyon, 1996: 696). The New Rhetoric tradition focuses on the situational contexts in which the genres occur and their social significance. Miller (1984) describes genre as a social action and insists that the study of genres can only be accomplished by studying the ethnography of the community in which the genres occur.

The Australian Systemic-Functional tradition (i.e. Martin, 1989, 1993; Halliday and Hasan, 1985) is based on Halliday's theory of systemic functional linguistics. It is also known as the 'Sydney School' in the United States. This model of genre stresses the purposeful, interactive and sequential character of different genres and the ways language is systematically linked to context through patterns of lexico-grammatical and rhetorical features (Christie & Martin, 1997). Its approach to genre is concerned with

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the relationship between language and its functions in social settings. Martin (1992) describes that genres from this approach are viewed as "staged goal-oriented social processes", the cultural forms that cultures use in certain contexts to achieve various purposes. For the Systemic-Functional Linguistics scholars, genre is "one element in a complex social semiotic system, delineating and exploring the textual features of which is empowering" (Swales, 2004). In the Systemic-Functional linguistics approach to genre, the analysis is focused on the textual patterns and lexico-grammatical features within the Hallidayan schemes of linguistic analysis which are associated with field, tenor and mode.

These three approaches to genre can be summarized in the following table:

Table 2.1 : The Three Schools of Genre Theory

	ESP Analysis	**Australian Genre Theories**	**New Rhetoric Studies**
Researchers	ESP scholarship	Systemic-functional linguists	North American scholarship interested in L1 teaching
Objective	Pedagogical	Pedagogical	Pedagogical
Setting	NNSE, EAP, EPC	Primary; secondary, adult education for minorities, migrant workers and other mainstream groups	NSE in undergraduate schools
Genre Theory	Genre as "Communicative events' characterized by their communicative purposes" and by various patterns of "structure, style, content and intended audience" (Swales, 1990, p. 58)	Genre as "Staged-goal-oriented social processes" (Martin, Christie and Rothery, 1987)	"Genre as social action" with social purposes (Miller, 1984)
Text Analysis	Structural move analyses to describe global organizational patterns	Analysis of linguistic features within Hallidayan schemes of linguistic analysis	Text analysis based on ethnographic methods

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EAP = English for Academic Purposes, ESP = English for Specific Purposes, EPC = English for Professional Communication, NSE = Native Speakers of English, NNSE = Non Native Speakers of English

(Source: Kobayashi, 2003: 7)

Yunick (1997) also gives a concise description of the three approaches to genre which he summarises as follows:

> With respect to drawing relations between language and its social functions, New Rhetoric focuses on the social purposes end of the spectrum, while genre analysis in ESP brings more focus to moves in discourse structure. Australian linguistics explicitly and theoretically hooks up grammar and lexicon as well as discourse structure to social function.
>
> (Yunick, 1997)

The next three sub-sections discuss the three traditions of genre analysis in more detail.

2.7.1.1 The English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Tradition

Genre analysis developed as part of ESP in the 1980s. This most influential ESP genre-analysis framework was established by Swales (1981, 1990) and has set the standard for a formalistic approach to genre analysis of academic, professional and scientific discourse studies. Swales' theory of genre analysis is built upon three concepts: discourse community, genre and language learning task (Swales, 1990: 9).

In the ESP approach, textual patterns or organisation in a genre is analysed by breaking the text up into moves. Swales' moves analysis not only looks at the structure but also studies the lexico-grammatical features of moves.

In summary**,** many researchers have applied Swales' theoretical framework to their studies of the various sections found in research articles. Others, like Bhatia, have

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worked on the moves analysis of other genres, such as legal documents. The table below, although not comprehensive, lists some of the earlier researches using genre analysis to examine rhetorical structure that has been carried out using Swales' framework.

Table 2.2 : Genre Analysis Studies based on Swales' Framework

Year	Researcher	Title
1981	Swales	Aspects of Article Introductions
1984	Crookes	Towards a Validated Analysis of Scientific Text Structure
1986	Dudley-Evans	Genre Analysis: An Investigation of the Introduction and Discussion Sections of MSc Dissertation
1988	Hopkins Dudley-Evans	A Genre-Based Investigation of the Discussion Sections in Articles and Dissertations
1990	Swales	Genre Analysis: English in Academic and research Settings
1991	Bhatia	A Genre-Based Approach to ESP Materials
1991	Nwogu	Structure of Science Popularizations: A Genre-Analysis Approach to the Schema of Popularized Medical Texts
1993	Bhatia	Analysing Genre: Language Use in Professional Settings
1994	Brett	A Genre Analysis of the Results Section of Sociology Articles
1997	Holmes	Genre Analysis, and the Social Sciences: An Investigation of the Structure of Research Article Discussion Sections in Three Disciplines
1997	Nwogu	The Medical Research Paper: Structure and Functions
1999	Williams	Results Sections of Medical Research Articles: Analysis of Rhetorical Categories for Pedagogical Purposes
1999	Posteguillo	The Schematic Structure of Computer Science Research Article
2000	Feak, Reinhart Sinsheimer	A Preliminary Analysis of Law Review Notes
2002	Bunton	Generic Moves in Ph.D Thesis Introductions

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2.7.1.2 The New Rhetoric Studies Tradition

Another approach which differs somewhat from Swales and his followers who have focused on the structure and typical linguistic realisations of certain genres, is the New Rhetoric school which emphasises the flexible and dynamic nature of genres and the link between rhetorical forms and social needs. Scholars in this field whose main

interest is in the social, cultural and historical contexts in which genres operate believe that genres are generally too flexible and unstable to be able to fit into a model developed for a particular section or text. Studies in this approach tend to explore how genres evolve in different sociocultural settings to achieve particular purposes making them dynamic in nature.

Bazerman (1987), for example, traces the evolution of the scientific articles, highlighting that the rhetorical forms have arisen from social needs. His study shows how production of texts evolved in order to negotiate scientific knowledge at differing times and places. The changing nature of scientific articles is necessary to cater to changing social needs. In his analysis of the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London which was founded in 1665, he found that the journal which was initially a journal for a general audience gradually became more selective for professional interest and quality. From a position of peripheral interest to scientists during less competitive times, the journal publication became of great importance in the twentieth century. Researchers began to recognise and accept that their work contributed to new knowledge in the field and that their research was meant to be part of a communal process where it was to be accepted or criticised by others in forums that can be socially recognised.

Bazerman (1988) observed changes in the length, referencing and argument in research articles in physics which are a reflection of increasing knowledge, competition amongst other researchers and readers' expectations. Atkinson (1999), in his analysis of research writing from the seventeenth century, found that papers became less affective and more focused, and more informational rather than narrative-like over a period of time. Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) in their analysis of biology research articles since 1944 argued that the increasing promotion of results was brought about to accommodate the

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increasingly selective reading by researchers who are usually such busy people inundated with an expansion of information in the sciences.

This approach to the study of research articles helps us see the changes that have taken place in text production over a long period of time and linking these changes to the changing social needs, and that texts are dynamic and not static products. The studies in this approach indicate that genres are shaped by social factors and that texts occur in social contexts and are employed by specific communities to achieve recognised goals.

2.7.1.3 The Systemic Functional Linguistics Tradition

The above two approaches indicate two diverse interests of researchers of genres which are significant in the social, cultural and historical contexts in which genres operate and a concern interest in the nature of the genres themselves. In between these two are those who are interested in both the context in which genres are produced as well as in the linguistic features of the genres themselves. One of the prominent groups is the one which is involved in the approach to genre analysis that has its roots in Hallidayan linguistics and which provides a systemic functional perspective on language description. The genre theory of this school suggests that texts occur not in isolation but in social contexts, and they are goal oriented and culturally determined (Martin, 1984 in Eggins, 1994). In this approach, context is seen to comprise the context of culture and the context of situation. When describing a genre, there is a need to provide a thorough explanation of both the cultural and situational contexts which affect the patterns of language in texts.

The concept of genre is often used "to describe the impact of the context of culture on language by exploring the staged, step-by-step structure that cultures institutionalise as

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ways of achieving goals" (Eggins, 1994: 9). What this means is that certain cultures in a discourse community may have certain restrictions regarding language use by its members in the community, requiring a particular structure for its communicative purpose to be achieved. Discourse is analysed for its structural characteristics, its crucial semantic attributes of the structural elements and its lexico-grammatical patterns (Hasan, 1984; Halliday, 1985, 1994). In examining the generic structures, the values of the field, tenor and mode, which are the components of its contextual configuration, determine the range of textual structures available within a genre. Therefore, different social situations will produce different genres because each social situation has its own configuration of values. An example of this would be that given by Lewin et at. (2001: 8) of a first year university lecture in Biology which combines choices from that particular field with the ways in which lectures are conducted and the lecture which activates choices brought about by the relationship between the lecturer and the audience, in this case the first year students attending the lecture. The lecture can be identified by the mode of discourse which usually would be a semi-spontaneous speech. Systemic functional linguists have shown how lexico-grammatical choices are determined by topic and writer-reader relationships (Halliday and Martin, 1993).

Ventola (1987) and Martin (1992) consider genre as a semiotic level where the ways in which social acts are accomplished can be captured in a particular culture. Culture consists of many semiotic systems consisting of signs that have meaning for a particular culture. The semiotic organisation of the social system may be a system corresponding to the linguistic system. Therefore, when we know the values from the semiotic variables of the social context, we can also know the meaning choices that will be selected from the linguistic system (Halliday, 1985; Ventola, 1987). Couture (1986) suggests that register and genre represent two different organisations with register restricting choices at the linguistic level and genre restricting choices at the discourse

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structure level. Genres such as research reports can be considered the whole structured texts whereas registers such as the language of science represent stylistic choices.

Halliday and Hasan (1985) provide the first model for classifying texts according to genre. The Generic Structure Potential specifies the obligatory and typical optional elements of the genre and the ordering. The elements in their natural order can be used as the criteria to determine whether texts are complete or incomplete.

Ventola's (1987) system of genre realization is a more flexible system which allows for texts which have missing obligatory elements to be recognized as being within a genre. Martin (1985) too provides a generic systems network which captures the features of a genre based on the similarities and differences between text structures which thereby define text types. In order to accomplish their purpose, genres usually move through a number of stages (Martin, 1985). These stages are relatively predictable because each stage or move has a particular role in the development of the text. Equally important are the meanings being created in each stage and how they differ from stage to stage. These meanings are realised through the lexical and grammatical choices that are made. Halliday (1994) views language as a resource for making meaning and proposes that the language system has evolved to express three kinds of meanings: experiential meaning (i.e. how language is used to represent our understanding of the world around us), the interpersonal meaning (i.e. how language is used to create relationships with others), and the textual meaning (i.e. how textual resources are necessary to create cohesive and coherent texts).

Identifying the stages of a text can only fully contribute to its meaning if the grammar of the text is understood as well. Language in this approach is seen as a dynamic, open network of interrelated systems. Each system consists of a set of options from which the

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writer or speaker selects according to the meaning that he or she wants to make. Such choices are constrained by the cultural and situational context in which the genre is used. The social purpose influences the choice of genre and the stages it passes through. The grammatical choices are also influenced by the situational context - the field (i.e. what the text is about), the tenor (i.e. who is interacting with whom) and the mode (i.e. what role the language is playing). The three variables form the register of the text. Register indicates that certain choices are more probable than others.

Martinez (2001) examined research articles within the context of genre analysis using the framework of transitivity in Systemic Functional Linguistics. This approach suggests that each stage of a genre exhibits certain predictable lexico-grammatical choices. The distribution of material, mental, verbal, relational and existential processes in the different sections of the research article shows a relationship between the characteristic process types and the functions of the sections.

This approach can be usefully applied to the teaching of academic and professional discourse. The linguistic resources that are needed for a particular genre can be predicted by examining its field, tenor and mode. An awareness of what is typical and possible enables us to produce an example of a genre, to manipulate it in various ways and to act creatively on it. Like Swales' genre analysis, this view that students will benefit from explicit teaching of academic genres has been questioned by those who believe that genres are too complex and varied to be used in the language classroom. The disadvantages of this approach are the use of several terms which are not understood by non-followers of Systemic Functional Linguistics, and also bridging the findings obtained using this approach and then applying them in the classroom.

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Some other differences among the three traditions, as noted by Hyon (1996) are: a concentration on post-secondary academic and professional genres for the ESP and New Rhetoric traditions; a greater interest in ethnographic methods among the New Rhetoricians; and a broader, more rhetorical mode of genre definition for the Systemic-functional linguists, with a greater interest in applying genre studies to high schools and workplaces.

In its early form, genre theory was primarily concerned with the application of genre analysis to develop pedagogical solutions for the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classroom (Bhatia, 2012: 19). It is still considered the most popular and useful tool to analyse academic and professional genres for ESP applications. Further discussion on the three traditions of genre analysis is presented in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Hyland (2003) refers *genre* to the abstract, socially recognised ways of using language. It is based on the assumptions that the features of a similar group of texts depend on the social context of their creation and use, and that those features can be described in a way that relates a text to others like it and to the choices and constraints acting on text producers. Language is seen as embedded in and constitutive of social realities, since it is through recurrent use of conventionalised forms that individuals develop relationships, establish communities, and get things done.

Genre theorists, therefore, locate participant relationships at the heart of language use and assume that every successful text will display the writer's awareness of its context and the readers who form part of that context. Genres, then, are "the effects of the action of individual social agents acting both within the bounds of their history and the constraints of particular contexts, and with a knowledge of existing generic types" (Kress, 1989: 10).

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A succinct definition of genre is also given by Devitt (2004) from the North American New Rhetoric who focuses on rhetorical genres. Similar to Hyland (2003), she recognizes that genres are generated by writers, readers, publishes, and the complete scope of social influences that act upon a discourse at every stage of its production. Textual genres are social constructions that represent specific purposes for reading and writing within different social activities, created by social groups who need them to perform certain things.

Context also plays an important role in shaping genres (Holquist, 1986). Genre theory does not simply conceptualise context as the space outside of texts or the container surrounding texts, but as dynamic environments that simultaneously structure and are structured by the communicative practices of social agents. Researchers have also shown that the rhetorical moves people must make within accepted genres to communicate successfully in particular context operate to reinforce communities' identities and to legitimate particular communication practices. Thus, the genre that communities enact helps structure their members' ways of creating, interpreting and using knowledge (Bazerman, 1988; Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995; Myers, 1992; Winsor, 2000). Genres are actually very important in our everyday life, but we do not realise how much we use them, how much they affect us, how much they determine the way we act and understand others (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genre_studies).

Genres can change over time as they reveal essential shifts in social functions performed by that text. Swales (2004) noticed that what had become known as the three genre movements had somewhat united, whereby the three traditions have become less distinct and their divisions much less sharp. Additionally, the last decade has seen increasing attention given to genre and its application in language teaching and learning. As

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defined by Hyland (2011), *genre* is a term for grouping texts together, representing how writers typically use language to respond to recurring situations. Genre-based writing instruction is therefore a response to changing views of language and of learning to write which incorporate new understandings of how language is structured and how it is used in social contexts. As genres are resources for getting things done using language in particular contexts, they are likely to differ across disciplines and this has important consequences for linguists and teachers who need to become researchers of the texts they teach.

The purpose of analysing texts as a genre, especially in institutionalised contexts provides relevant and useful information about the way that particular genre is constructed, interpreted and used by the established members of the disciplinary community (Bhatia, 1999). Genre study helps to recognise the regularities in discourse types with a broader social and cultural understanding of language in use, thus unpacking the complex cultural, institutional and disciplinary factors at play in the production of specific kinds of writing (Freedman and Medway, 1994).

The power to use, interpret, exploit and innovate novel generic forms is the function of generic knowledge which is accessible only to the members of the disciplinary community. This is because genres are invariably situated in the context of specific disciplinary cultures **(**Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995) and are shaped by typical discursive processes embedded within the disciplinary activities of the profession. Thus, the ultimate generic product also displays a recognisable integrity of its own (Bhatia, 1993). An important question in genre analysis is how do these disciplinary communities maintain what is called generic integrity in their discursive practices. Two kinds of mechanisms to ensure generic integrity and identity in the professional discourse are peer review and editorial intervention. Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995)

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documented an in-depth and fascinating study of this kind of editorial control to maintain generic integrity. They point out that for the construction and dissemination of knowledge, 'textual activity' is as important as the 'scientific activity'.

The pressure for the 'democratisation' (Fairclough, 1992) of discourse is becoming increasingly intense, although it is unlikely to make a significant dent in the so-called integrity of professional genres, at least not in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, one can see an increasing 'fragmentation of discursive norms and conventions' (Fairclough, 1992: 221), often leading to 'genre-mixing and embedding in institutionalized orders of discourse' and the creation of new genres (Bhatia, 1994). To a large extent, these changes in discursive practices are making professional genres increasingly dynamic and complex.

The dynamic complexity of professional communication is further increased by the role of multimedia, the explosion of information technology, the multi-disciplinary contexts of the world of work, the increasingly competitive professional environment, and above all, the overwhelmingly compulsive nature of promotional and advertising activities.

Within linguistics, a variety of language is a system of linguistic expression whose use is governed by situational factors. In its broadest sense, the notion includes speech and writing, regional and class dialects, occupational genres [professional discourse] (such as legal and scientific language), creative linguistic expressions (as in literature), and a wide range of other styles of expression. Varieties are, in principle, systematic and predictable. It is possible to say, with some degree of certainty in a given language, how people from a particular region will speak, how lawyers will write, or how television commentators will present a type of sport (Crystal, 2001: 6-7)

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Sometimes the features of a variety are highly constrained by the situation: there are strict rules governing the kind of language we may use in court, for example, and if we break them we are likely to be criticized or even charged with contempt. In other situations there may be an element of choice in what we say or write, as when we choose to adopt a formal or an informal tone, or a combination of the two, in a speech. But all language-using situations present us with constrains [of the sociolinguistic factors or expectations and traditions, such as politeness, interest, and intelligibility] which we must be aware of and must obey if our contribution is to be judged acceptable (Crystal, 2001: 7).

In short, GA can be viewed as a study of situated linguistic behaviour in institutionalised academic or professional settings, and the most important feature of this approach is the emphasis of convention.

2.7.2 Models of Genre Analysis

In many linguistic explanations, genre refers to the most comprehensive level of organisation of a given "text-structure type" or "activity-structure type" (Hasan, 1978; Martin, 1985; Ventola, 1987) A genre is defined in terms of a typical beginning-middle and end structure, as a series or configuration of stages through which texts belonging to the given genre typically progress. Each stage is a functioning component in relation to the larger whole to which it belongs, and to the other parts of that whole (Baldry and Thibault, 2005: 113). These functional components of genre analysis are known as moves (Swales, 1990), hierarchical schematic structures (Nwogu, 1991) or rhetorical moves (Connor and Mauranen, 1999). GA studies the sequence of optional and obligatory elements or moves through which texts progress from their beginning to their end in order to fulfil some social or communicative purpose.

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There are many definitions of moves, such as "a text segment made up of a bundle of linguistics features (lexical meanings, propositional meanings, illocutionary forces, etc) which gave the segment a uniform orientation and signal the content of discourse in it" (Nwogu, 1991: 114). "Illocutionary force" refers to the meanings of an act "viewed in terms of the utterance's significance within a conventional system or social interaction" (Hurford and Heasley, 1983: 244). "Propositional meaning" is "that part of the meaning of the utterance of a declarative sentence which describes some state of affairs" (Hurford and Heasley, 1983: 19). A move may also be defined as "a functional unit used for some identifiable rhetorical purpose" (Connor and Mauranen, 1999) because each move consists of "a number of constituent elements or slots which combine in identifiable ways to constitute information in the move" (Nwogu, 1997: 122). In short, a moves structure refers to the conventionalised internal structure by which a particular text genre unfolds. In other words, a text consists of a number of functional units or 'moves' which, when combined, realise the communicative purpose of the genre.

The 'obligatory' moves constitute the limits of a genre and give a pattern of communication its identity, without which a genre would lose its integrity, while the 'optional' moves are available choices which authors or speakers may choose to use. Each move embodies "constituent elements" or "sub-moves" that are also known as steps, and is characterised by some distinct linguistic features (Swales, 1990).

The frameworks of moves structure that is relevant to the present study as advocated by the following proponents will be discussed below.

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2.7.2.1 Swales' (1990) Model

Swales' earliest work on research article introductions which was carried out in 1981 marked the beginning of the genre analytical model for a grounded description of academic research genres. This motivation was to apply the findings to the teaching and learning of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). After more research, Swales (1990) developed the three-move Create a Research Space (CARS) model which was an improvement to his earlier four-move model (1981) used in the analysis of the introduction section of research articles. Swales' (1990) GA focuses more attention on communicative purpose and genre conventions. In other words, a genre can be analyzed meaningfully if the communicative purpose in the various stages of a writing process is given due emphasis and conventions are recognizable in the texts produced by members of a discourse community.

The term 'discourse community' is provided by Herzberg (1986: 1) in Swales (1990) as follows:

> "Use of the terms 'discourse community' testifies to the increasingly common assumption that discourse operates within conventions defined by communities, be they academic disciplines or social groups. The pedagogies associated with writing across the curriculum and academic English now use the term 'discourse communities' to signify a cluster of ideas: that language use in a group is a form of social behaviour, that discourse is a means of maintaining and extending the group's knowledge and of initiating new members into the group, and that discourse is epistemic or constitutive of the group's knowledge."

In the context of the present study, the discourse community that uses the genre of online tourism advertorials comprises governments, tourism advertisers, advertising personnel, potential tourists, online website browsers and also the general public.

Swales (1990: 24 - 27) proposed six defining characteristics for identifying a group of individuals as a discourse community. He states that a discourse community:

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1. Has a broadly agreed set of common public goals.
2. Has mechanisms of intercommunication among its members.
3. Uses its participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback.
4. Utilizes and hence possesses one or more genres in the communicative preservation of it aims.
5. Has acquired some specific lexis.
6. Has a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discoursal expertise.

Swales (1990) CARS model consists of three moves with a number of steps or sub-moves as outlined below:

Move 1: Establishing a territory

Step 1: Claiming centrality, and/or

Step 2: Making topic generalisations, 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 principal findings

Step 3: Reviewing items of previous research

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This CARS model (Swales, 1990) paved the way for many other studies on genre analysis, including research on promotional genres. Following this, models that were developed to analyse the rhetorical moves of promotional genres, which are more relevant to the present study, are by Kathpalia (1992) and Bhatia (1993, 2004) as presented below.

2.7.2.2 Kathpalia's (1992) Model

Kathpalia (1992) studied three promotional texts or genres – book blurbs, print advertisements and sales promotion letters. From her analysis of the three promotional texts, Kathpalia developed a nine-move structural framework:

1. Headline: Attracting Reader Attention
2. Targeting the market
3. Justifying the product or service
    (a) by indicating the importance or need of the product or service
        (i) Product-based
        (ii) Situation/Occasion-based
    (b) by establishing a niche
4. Detailing the product or service
    (a) by identifying the product or service
    (b) by describing the product or service
    (c) by indicating value of the product or service
5. Establishing credentials
6. Celebrity or typical user endorsements
7. Offering incentives
8. Using pressure tactics
9. Soliciting response

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2.7.2.3 Bhatia's (1993) Model

Taking after Swales' (1981) definition of genre, Bhatia (1993: 13) also provides his description of genre in his book, *Analysing Genre: Language Use in Professional Settings* as:

> "... 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 functional 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) proposed the following seven-move structural framework in analysing the communicative purposes of promotional genres, specifically sales promotion letters and job application letters:

1. Establishing credentials
   (i) by referring to the needs of the potential customer
   (ii) by referring to the long-standing service of the company
2. Introducing the offer
   (i) Offering the product or service
   (ii) Essential detailing of the offer
   (iii) Indicating value of the offer
3. Offering incentives
4. Enclosing documents
5. Soliciting response
6. Using pressure tactics
7. Ending politely

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2.7.3 New Developments in Genre Analysis

Genre analysis was initially used for the description of the varied uses of language for specific purposes texts which were a basis for designing language learning and teaching programmes (Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1991; Kathpalia, 1992). Thus, the main emphasis then was on the "analysis of linguistic form with some attention given to context, although the basis of genre theory has always been the relationship between text and context both in a narrow sense of what surrounds the text as well as in a broader sense of what makes a particular genre possible and how it is used in specialised contexts" (Bhatia & Gotti, 2006) as described earlier.

In more recent years, however, genre theory has taken a more serious look at context in a much broader sense, paying particular attention to a more comprehensive understanding of text and context interactions, and focusing not simply on form and content of Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) genres, but more importantly on how these "specialized genres are constructed, interpreted, used and exploited in the achievement of specific goals in highly specialized academic, professional and institutional as well as other workplace contexts" (Bhatia & Gotti, 2006). These concerns have also developed genre theory in the direction of a more comprehensive and powerful multidimensional and multi-perspectived framework to analyse not only the text but also the context in a much more meaningful manner (Bhatia, 2004).

There has been a diverse range of methodological tools for the analysis of specialized genres, some of which include ethnographic, corpus-based, socio-cognitive, and socio-critical discourse analytical approaches, to supplement the analyses of lexicogrammar, rhetorical and generic structures, as well as a corresponding expansion of the range of specialized genres targeted for analysis. Hence, there is an increasing interest in looking

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beyond the conventional LSP genres to explore a much wider range of professional, corporate and institutional or workplace genres (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson, 1999; Gillaerts & Gotti, 2005) not only in the conventional spoken and written forms, but also through a variety of non-traditional semiotic modes including visuals and the Internet. Other recent studies also focused on 'mixed', 'embedded' or 'hybrid' genres across generic boundaries and disciplinary domains (Bhatia, 2004; Fairclough 2003).

Bhatia's (1993) view of genre has developed into a more comprehensive multidimensional and multi-perspectived view of genre analysis in 2004. His later work was an attempt to develop genre analysis further in order to understand the much more complex and dynamic real world of written discourse. His intention was to move away from pedagogic applications to ESP to focus on the world of professions and to be able to see a more complete view of the genre in question. He acknowledges that although all frameworks of discourse and genre analysis offer useful insights about specific aspects of language use in typical contexts, most of them on their own can offer only a partial view of complete genres, which are essentially multidimensional especially in the present-day genres. Therefore, it is only by combining various perspectives and frameworks that the analyst can have a more comprehensive view of a genre. Hence, he believes that there is a need to combine methodologies and devise a multidimensional and multi-perspective framework to analyse such genres. The present research adopts this framework in an attempt to provide a wide-ranging account on the online tourism advertorial genre. Bhatia's (2004) multidimensional and multi-perspective framework is discussed in detail in section 2.9 of this chapter.

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2.8 Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Social semiotics is a branch of the field of semiotics which investigates human signifying practices in specific social and cultural circumstances, and which tries to explain meaning-making as a social practice. Semiotics, as originally defined by Ferdinand de Saussure, is "the science of the life of signs in society". Social semiotics expands on Saussure's founding insights by exploring the implications of the fact that the "codes" of language and communication are formed by social processes. Social semiotics is therefore the study of the social dimensions of meaning. It focuses on social meaning-making practices of all types, whether visual, verbal or aural in nature (Thibault, 1991). These different systems for meaning-making, or possible "channels" (e.g. speech, writing, images) are known as semiotic modes. Semiotic modes can include visual, verbal, written, gestural and musical resources for communication. They also include various "multimodal" ensembles of any of these modes (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001).

In recent years, with the complexity of genres derived from the pervasive multi-modality of genres, the role of semiotic modes other than written and spoken texts has opened up possibilities of looking at non-linear extra-linguistic forms of communication, such as pictures, diagrams, gestures, colour, differing fonts and their sizes, etc. As Bhatia, Flowerdew and Jones (2008) state, there is a widespread belief now that textual data is not necessarily the most important mode used for the construction and interpretations of social meaning. Mitchell (2011) appropriately concurs that visual methods such as the use of photographs, videos, drawings, multimedia production and installation are now used as modes of representation as well as modes of inquiry in social communication.

The way we comprehend the meaning of a text is a result of the rich connection between “different layers of elements”, as in the “layout, language, content, typography, and the

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physical qualities and context" in which the text is encountered (Bateman, Delin and Henschel, 2003). This means that in order to thoroughly understand a text, the meaning-making resources cannot be fully described at the level of a single mode, such as language or visual design only. The genre of a document or text – the appearance, function and features of the text – must similarly be tackled in an inclusive way, as the genre also reflects distinctions in the author's purpose (Biber, 1988; Swales, 1990; Martin, 1992).

Some discourse analysts have attempted to bring a variety of different semiotic levels into their characterisations of genre. For example, Twyman (1985) provides a preliminary scheme for categorising documents according to the interrelationships between images and text, while Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) have studied particular 'genres', such as newspaper front pages. Genre in this multimodal sense appears to be taking up a stronger role in more recent work, such as Kress and van Leeuwen (2001).

This present study takes place in the context of this contemporaneous strand of work, where this approach constitutes a new tradition in genre research. The basic goal of this research aims to contribute to an identification of the relevant dimensions for describing the genre space of multimodal texts or discourse, specifically online tourism discourse.

Iedema (2003: 33) explains that there is a trend towards the new multimodal approach to discourse analysis because of the blurring of traditional boundaries between roles allocated to language, image, page layout, document design and so on. There is a realisation among discourse analysts that the human predisposition towards multimodal meaning-making requires attention to more than just language-in-use. Thus, there is now a growing interest in the field of multimodal studies. Multimodal discourse

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analytical approaches regard texts as one of the many modes of communication available for social interaction (Bhatia, Flowerdew and Jones, 2008).

A key emphasis in the field of multimodality is the equal importance which both linguistic and non-linguistic semiotic resources, such as visual images, sound, and others, contribute to communicative purposes. When music and pictures combine with language to alter or add to its meaning, then discourse analysis must consider these modes of communication too (Cook, 1992). Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) represents one of the many recent research efforts in further developing the 'meta-language' for multimodal studies (O'Halloran, 2006).

MDA looks at the discourses generated through the interaction of two or more semiotic modes of communication including language, dynamic and static visual images, architectural design, electronic media, film, and document design and layout. This includes the study of transition and phase, camera and body movement, typography, the use of colour, and how such choices orientate the viewer to particular readings of the text and context (O'Halloran, 2006). The result is a comprehensive survey of the ways in which enhanced meaning emerges through the interaction of more than one mode of communication. In short, modality analysis concerns the way in which the use of such means of visual representation as colour, representational detail and texture contributes to our judgement of the 'reality' value of visual representations, depending on the reality criteria that operate in the given context.

In analysing texts on a multimodal perspective, we should also consider how communication can be partially explained by a theory of signs or semiotics. Signs circulate in everyday life. Hence, humans have formed a sophisticated understanding of signs through immersion in culture, whether in language, music or visual images.

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Semiotics provide concepts and ideas which have become highly useful and meaningful in the context of interpretation of texts. Semiotics is an approach that initially grew out of linguistics, which has been used primarily to help us think more carefully about visual images and how they convey meaning (Hesmondhalgh, 2006). Semiotics has also made it apparent that our knowledge of values and beliefs are social rather than individual. Social semiotic analysis can help to show the means by which meaning is made and how it is a cultural process.

Based on the above mentioned researches in the last decade or so, semiotic modes other than language that go with the verbal in various kinds of discourses have been given much attention. The important role of images in newspapers, magazines, public relations materials, advertisements and various kinds of books is noticed. At present, discourse analysts are faced with a variety of new media of communication including computer-mediated communication, SMS messaging and other new communication technologies. These media involve a complex interplay of written text, images and other graphic elements that combine into visual designs by means of layout. This has resulted in a few comprehensive theories of visual communication, such as Baldry and Thibault's (2005), and Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006), in which a wide range of mass media materials are referred to. There is an apparent change in the conventional roles of language and image in printed texts, where there is a "move towards a decrease of control over language and ... an increase in codification and control over the visual" in various kinds of texts (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 26). They have noted recent changes in writing practices which they interpret as changes in the relative value assigned to different semiotic modes. Kress and van Leeuwen (1998: 186) point out that all texts are multimodal in the sense that spoken language is always accompanied by paralinguistic means of communication (such as speech sounds, rhythm, intonation,

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facial expressions, gestures. and posture), and that written language is always also a visual arrangement of "marks on a page".

2.8.1 Models of Multimodal Discourse Analysis

In one of the earliest theorist in multimodal analysis is Barthes (1977) who distinguishes between two types of function that verbal language can have in relation to images, which are anchorage and relay. The term 'relay' means that the text adds something that is not actually present in the image. The text adds some new element of meaning to the whole. An example of this is the captions found in the dialogue bubbles of comics. 'Anchorage' is where verbal language is used to point out which of the many possible meanings of an image are the most important, which is in a sense also what the relay function does. It draws attention to certain possible interpretations and specifies them by way of additional information.

The two kinds of image-text relations that Barthes (1977) distinguishes as explained above can be summarized as follows:

i) The verbal text extends the meaning of the image, or vice versa; adding more information.
ii) The verbal text elaborates the meaning of the image, or vice versa; giving an illustration or more precise restatement.

Thus, according to Barthes (1977), the meaning of images is always related to and in a sense dependent on a verbal or written text. What he means is that the caption or title can explain or clarify what is being 'said' by the image. However, Barthes overlooked the fact that the image can also anchor the verbal text, by influencing and shaping it to some degree, in some way (Gripsrud, 2006: 33). Take for example the case of film and

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television where the verbal or written text that makes up the title of the film or programme is often presented to the viewers before the images are shown. Hence, the images, in this case, may help the viewers understand what an ambiguous title is supposed to mean.

One of the ways in which the study of multimodal genres appears to be developing differently to the study of linguistic or literary genres is in its focus on the practical contexts of production and consumption of the texts analysed. This is perhaps a natural consequence of examining what are obviously 'social and cultural products' rather than intangible texts. The role, for example, of 'production' and 'distribution' is now being emphasised in Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001) proposal for multimodal discourse analysis.

The different approaches and frameworks to multimodal discourse analysis will be discussed in more detail below.

2.8.1.1 Halliday's (1978) Model

Linguistic theorist, Michael Halliday, introduced the term 'social semiotics' into linguistics, when he used the phrase in the title of his book, *Language as Social Semiotic*. This work argues against the traditional separation between language and society, and exemplifies the start of a 'semiotic' approach, which broadens the narrow focus on written language in linguistics. According to Halliday (1978: 39), languages evolve as systems of "meaning potential" or as sets of resources which influence what the speaker or writer can do with language, in a particular social context. Halliday (1978: 112) gives the example where the grammar of the English language is a system organised for the following three purposes, areas or "metafunctions":

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- Facilitating certain kinds of social and interpersonal interactions (interpersonal),
- Representing ideas about the world (ideational), and
- Connecting these ideas and interactions into meaningful texts and making them relevant to their context (textual).

In order to understand the notion of metafunctions, it is necessary to briefly examine the theory that established this concept. Systemic functional linguistics is a social semiotic approach to language. The term *systemic* refers to the view of language as "a network of systems, or interrelated sets of options for making meaning" (Halliday, 1994). According to Halliday, a central theoretical principle is that any act of communication involves choices. The choices available in any language variety are mapped using the representation tool of the "system network". The term *functional* refers to Halliday's view that language is as it is because of what it has evolved to do, and reflects the multidimensional nature of human experience and interpersonal relations in what he refers to as the "multidimensional architecture of language". In other words, systemic functional linguistics is "functional" because it considers language to have evolved under the pressure of the particular functions that the language system has to serve. Functions are therefore taken to have left their mark on the structure and organisation of language, which are organised via metafunctions.

The grammatical systems play a role in the understanding of different kinds of meanings. The basis of Halliday's (1977) claim is that language is *metafunctionally* organised. He argues that the reason for the existence of language is meaning in social life, thus all languages have three kinds of semantic components. All languages, including visual language, involve metafunctions or have resources for interpreting experience (the *ideational* component), resources for enacting humans' diverse and complex social relations (the *interpersonal* component), and resources for enabling these

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two kinds of meanings to come together in a coherent text (the *textual* function). Each of the grammatical systems proposed by Halliday is related to these metafunctions.

2.8.1.2 Kress & van Leeuwen's (1996, 2006) Model

One of the many varieties of theories available for analysing advertising discourse is Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996, 2006) grammar of visual design, which introduced a new dimension of understanding the nature of advertising discourse. They presented a framework for analysing and understanding visual images, and the interaction between verbal and visual components, in advertising discourse. Kress and van Leeuwen's theory suggests that with changing patterns in mass communication, the boundaries between language and image in printed matter are becoming less pronounced. In scientific texts, for example, graphs, tables and arrows are 'read' and understood with as much, if not more, capability as verbal explanation. Hence, such texts and discourses as instances of written language have considered the way in which words become images and images function in a manner comparable to words.

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) dispute Barthes' (1977) view that images alone are 'too polysemous' to arrive at a definite meaning and that consequently 'language must come to the rescue'. Kress & van Leeuwen (1996) find that this view fails to recognise that the visual component of a text is an independently organised and structured message, connected to the written component, but not necessary dependent on it. They are of the opinion that the verbal or written and visual modes represent two sets of meaning that are "neither fully conflated, not entirely opposed" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996: 18).

Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) approach to communication starts from a social perspective. They believe that meanings expressed by speakers, writers, publishers and

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photographers, painters or sculptors are social meanings, which arise out of the society in which the individuals live and work. Different media through which texts are constructed will show social differences because societies are not homogeneous. They note that a multimodal text using images and writing may carry differing and even conflicting meanings, whereby the writing may convey one set of meaning and the images another.

In developing a framework for the analysis of visual communication, Kress and van Leeuwen assume that:

- Language is one of a variety of semiotic modes available to people for creating meaning. Modes, other than language, such as visual images, have been insufficiently explored in various forms of communication.
- Forms of communication are constantly changing. The way in which language as well as visual images that are used currently, shows marked changes to the way these semiotic modes were used relatively recently. To illustrate this, consider how images, as a semiotic mode alternative to language, are used in a variety of texts, such as children's books, science textbooks and newspapers.

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) also developed theoretical tools with which to describe and explain the perceived order and regularity in visual communication. They focus on the trends in public communication where there is a significant incursion of the visual into many domains where formerly language was the sole or dominant mode. They consider the forms and functions of visual communication based on Halliday's metafunctions and giving detailed attention to:

- Patterns of representation available for people to encode experience visually

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- Patterns of interaction available for people to do things to and for each other through visual communication, referring to the relations between producers and viewers of visual texts
- The capacity of images to form texts, the way in which signs cohere both internally with each other and with the context in which they are produced
- The materiality of visual signs; tools and materials that sign producers use and their contribution to making meaning.

When music and pictures combine with language to alter or add to its meaning, then discourse analysis must consider these modes of communication too (Cook, 1992). A perceived change in the conventional roles of language and image in printed texts is illustrated and explained by Kress & van Leeuwen (1996, p. 26-27). They note a move "towards a decrease of control over language and an increase in codification and control over the visual" in various kinds of texts – books, films, and other forms of public language. This shift has also been recognised in other fields of research where emphasis on analysing "what the text says" is being replaced by emphasis on "how different audiences read the same text".

Kress & van Leeuwen argue that different semiotic modes, visual, verbal or gestural, each have their potentialities and limitations. Different modes may be more or less useful for different matters that are to be represented. For example, it is possible that visual representation may be more apt to subject matters of science than language is. It seems clear that the world, as it is represented visually in the mass media, is a different world from the world formerly represented in language only. Kress & van Leeuwen (1996: 31) consider the possibility that the volume and nature of information in some media has become so vast and complex that perhaps it has to be handled visually, because the verbal is no longer adequate.

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In a critical analysis of newspaper layout, with close attention to the layout of front pages, Kress & van Leeuwen (1998: 186) illustrated the signifying systems of conventional, contemporary layout patterns. In considering and illustrating how various modes are integrated in the layout, Kress & van Leeuwen (1996) showed how information value and salience are signalled. They also showed how framing devices are used to contrast or connect certain news items. They note how news writing involves close attention to typeface choices and layout, and how different semiotic modes in such texts interrelate in different ways:

1. The written text may remain dominant, with the visual highlighting important points.
2. The written text may become less important, with the message articulated primarily in the visual mode.
3. The visual and verbal components may duplicate in expressing the same meanings.
4. The visual and verbal components may complement and extend each other.
5. The visual and verbal components may clash and contradict each other.

The framework proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) for analysing and understanding visual images and the layout of multimodal discourses is presented below. They extended Halliday's (1978) distinction of 'metafunctions' in recognizing semiotic work, to images, using slightly different terminologies:

1. Representational Meaning
    a. Narrative structures
    b. Conceptual structures
2. Interactive Meaning
    a. Contact
    b. Distance
    c. Point of view

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3. Compositional Meaning
    a. Information value
    b. Framing
    c. Salience
    d. Modality

1. Representational Meaning

Representational meaning is conveyed by the represented participants, as in the people, places or objects, within an image. They are the visual equivalent of lexis/vocabulary and syntax. The syntax of images contributes to new ideas in the visual analysis of representational meaning. There are two kinds of representational patterns. The choice is important because the type of representation provides an answer to understanding the discourses which mediate their representation.

a. Narrative structures

Narrative representations relate participants in terms of the unfolding actions, events or processes of change. It is the relationship of how participants are connected through lines or vectors and visual rhymes of colour, shape and so on (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996).

b. Conceptual structures

Conceptual patterns do not have vectors, but represent "participants in terms of their more generalised and more or less stable and timeless essence", in terms of class, structure or meaning (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 79). They represent participants as being or meaning something, or having certain characteristics, or belonging to a category. They visually analyse, define or classify the participants. Analytical structures relate participants to each other in terms of a part-whole structure. It shows

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how the carrier or whole is made up of parts or attributes. Symbolic structures define the meaning or identity of a participant that is recognised through visual cues like size, position, colour or use of lighting; and gestures. The classification structure brings different participants together in the picture to show that they belong to the same class.

2. Interactive Meaning

The interactive meaning is about the relations between viewers, producer and participants in the picture. The pictures interact with viewers and suggest an attitude towards what is being represented. The following three factors contribute to the realisation of interactive meanings:

a. Contact

The represented participant(s) in a picture may be shown to make contact with the viewer by looking directly at the viewer. This relationship which is established with the viewer is one of demand. It acknowledges the viewer explicitly and causes the viewer to feel a strong engagement with the person in the picture. The facial expression and gestures denote the degree of demand on the viewer. When the represented participant in the picture is not looking directly at the viewer but at someone or something within the picture, the participant becomes an object of contemplation for the viewer. The represented participants here are observed in a detached manner and impersonally. Hence, such pictures offer information.

b. Distance

The social distance between an image and the viewer can be formed by how close the represented participants in the image appear to the viewer. It is similar to the social relations determined by the physical distance of interlocutors in everyday interaction. This social distance is determined by the size of the represented participant(s) in the

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picture. There are many ways and intermediate degrees between closeness and distance in which the viewer can see the represented participants. A close-up shot, where the head and shoulders or less are in view, suggests an intimate or personal relationship; a medium shot, where the human figure's knees or waist up is shown, suggests a social relationship; and a long shot, which shows the full figure or with space around it, suggests an impersonal relationship.

c. Point of view

This point of view factor is determined by the angle of how the picture was taken. There are two types of angles – horizontal and vertical. The horizontal angle refers to the degree of involvement of the viewer, and is further divided into the frontal and oblique angle. Frontal angles are used to increase viewer identification and involvement with the represented participant(s); while oblique angles or pictures taken sideways are used to create detachment of the viewer from the represented participant(s). Vertical angle refers to the degree of power in the relationships between the represented participant(s) and the viewer, and/or between the represented participants within an image. This is indicated by the level of how the image was shot. A high-angle shot or an aerial view where the represented participant is looking up has less power; a medium-angle shot where the represented participant is looking horizontally has equal power; and a low-angle shot or an ant's-eye perspective where the represented participant is looking down has more power.

3. Compositional Meaning

Compositional meaning looks at how the representational and interactive meanings relate to each other and integrate into a meaningful whole. This is akin to the syntax in a language. It is the set of rules that enable the signs of language (words or visual images) to be arranged grammatically so that it makes sense to the reader/viewer. In the context

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of the present study, the visual syntax is the composition of an image or the layout of a webpage, whereby the signs are put together in a coherent whole.

a. Information value

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) term 'information value' as the placement of represented participants or elements in particular areas in the visual space that endows them with particular meanings. This notion suggests that specific semiotic values are realised by particular configurational and locational properties of the elements that carry those values. The diagram in Figure 2.4 below illustrates the 'zones' of information layout which "accords specific values to the elements placed within it" (Kress and van Leeuwen, (1996) that are distributed across the visual or page.

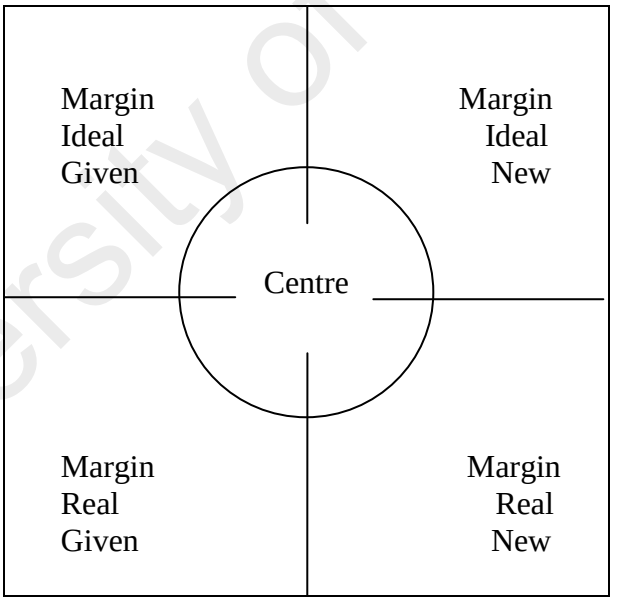

Figure 2.4

Dimensions of visual space

Kress and van Leeuwen (1990 & 1996) provide rules governing the use of horizontal and vertical axes to distribute visual information. They suggest that the role of any particular element will depend on whether it is placed on the left or right, in the upper or

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lower part, and in the centre or margin of the picture space or page. They suggest that the left or right difference corresponds to the given or new, and the top or bottom difference corresponds to the ideal or real. For something to be 'given' means the element is presented as material the reader/viewer already knows, as familiar and agreed by the reader/viewer. For something to be 'new' means that it is presented as something not yet known and not yet agreed upon by the reader/viewer, or the solution. 'Ideal' means that the element is presented as the idealized or generalized essence of the information, often as pictorial elements. The 'real' is the more specific information (e.g. details, textual elements), more practical information (e.g. consequences), or more factual and real information (e.g. photographs as evidence). Therefore, it is suggested that the least 'salient' information tends to be on the bottom left and the most 'salient' on the top right.

What is placed in the centre is what holds the marginal elements together. It is the central element that gives meaning and coherence to the other elements that surround it. The marginal elements are the elements that are held together by the centre – belonging and subservient to the centre. Triptich is when an element is placed centrally with information above and below or on either side of it. Here, the central element has either a mediating role or can be the central focus of the other information. It can also be a sequence of activity or frames, such as in a comic strip.

b. Framing

The term 'framing' indicates that elements in a visual composition can either be represented as belonging together, or given separate identities. How the elements are framed affects whether they are connected or separated. Frames can show **boundaries** or segregation, but also create **integration** between the elements within the boundary, while their absence can show natural connections. Connection can be created in many

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ways through similarities and **rhymes** of colour and form, through vectors that connect elements, or through the absence of framelines or empty spaces. Detachment can be achieved through framelines and **empty spaces** between the elements, through **contrast** or discontinuity of colour, form (i.e. size, shape and regularity), or any visual feature. Hence, the broad meaning potential and hierarchy of salience can be made more specific through the context and methods of framing selected.

c. Salience

This term indicates that some elements can be made to stand out or be more noticeable than others. It refers to the ability of elements in capturing the viewers' attention, and indicates the most important elements in the visual composition. Salience can be achieved through many different ways through symbols, size, colour, tone, focus, foregrounding, overlap, repetition, etc. A hierarchy of salience can be created by the different degrees of the factors that interact. The larger the element, the greater the salience; strong saturated colours have greater salience than faint colours; a high tonal contrast has greater salience; an element that is well-defined or sharp has more salience than a blurred element; an element in the foreground has greater salience than an element in the background; and the element that overlaps other elements in the composition is the most salient. In short, it identifies the most important elements in the composition.

d. Modality

Modality refers to the validity and reliability of the visual. Images with higher modality appear more real than those with lower modality. The modality markers or visual cues indicate the "realness" of a visual, and they comprise of colour saturation, differentiation and modulation; contextualisation; depth; and illumination. A full colour image denotes high modality, while a black and white image suggests low modality. Images that have

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a fully conceived background indicate high modality compared to images with the background completely absent. When an image has depth, it has high modality compared to an image without any perspective of depth. An image that has illumination or representation of light and shade indicates high modality, as opposed to a picture absent of light and shade which conveys low modality.

It is through the varied combinations of the different degrees of factors and elements that visuals can form rich layers of meaning. These combinations allow a visual or composition to have multiple meanings.

It is clear that different genres have different verbal and visual features. Where the verbal is unduly restricted, it is not surprising that the visual will become foregrounded as a medium of communication. This appears to provide further evidence to Kress & van Leeuwen's (1996) claim of current shifts in the ways in which the verbal and the visual interact in the media. These shifts encompass greater dependence on an under-utilized communicative mode. There are circumstances in which it seems that visual media can say more than the verbal. Some kinds of information may be more directly communicated visually than verbally, some have no choice but to rely on the visual (Anthonissen, 2003: 310).

The online media provides a suitable context for using more than the written word in communicating information. There has been a considerable shift in the discourse practices of professionals in terms of what they regard as useful knowledge, the view they take of the practitioner, the purposes assumed for the profession, as well as the stance they take towards their audiences (Bhatia, 2004: x). In professions like advertising and marketing and promotion of products and services, there is an emerging deliberate and engaged construction of hybrid genres, mixing different configurations of

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discourse features of promotion and information, such as advertorials. This complexity is also derived from the current pervasive multimodality of genres. As such, the present research has adopted a combined approach to analysing the online tourism advertorial genre – a multi-perspectival discourse analysis which combines the multidimensional genre analysis and the multimodal discourse analysis approaches which are discussed in more detail in the following section of this chapter.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

The current study is a multi-dimensional investigation of the web-mediated promotional genre of tourism homepages and advertorials. An effective investigation of the online genre requires a multi-dimensional inquiry into the various aspects of the genre. Therefore, this study builds on views of genre from linguistics, and extending genre to include texts that are not single-mode linguistic products. As a conceptual framework, the study is built on Bhatia, Flowerdew and Jones' (2008) combination of approaches to discourse analysis, in which texts should be realised in a multi-perspective and multidimensional approach.

This study integrates a number of approaches to discourse analysis into a single framework. The possibilities for the convergence and interdisciplinarity of approaches (Bhatia, Flowerdew and Jones, 2008), which may include a combination of ethnographic discourse analysis, conversation analysis, corpus-based discourse analysis and/or multimodal discourse analysis, is illustrated in Figure 2.5 on the next page. As can be seen from the diagram, a multi-perspective genre analysis approach to analysing web-mediated discourse appears to consider both the textual and other semiotic modes on the one hand, and social context on the other. This multi-perspective approach can also use varying combinations of theoretical frameworks and methodologies, giving a kind of

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multidimensional perspective on the discourse. Hence, the present study attempts to analyse the online tourism advertorials from the analytical genre perspective and multimodal perspective.

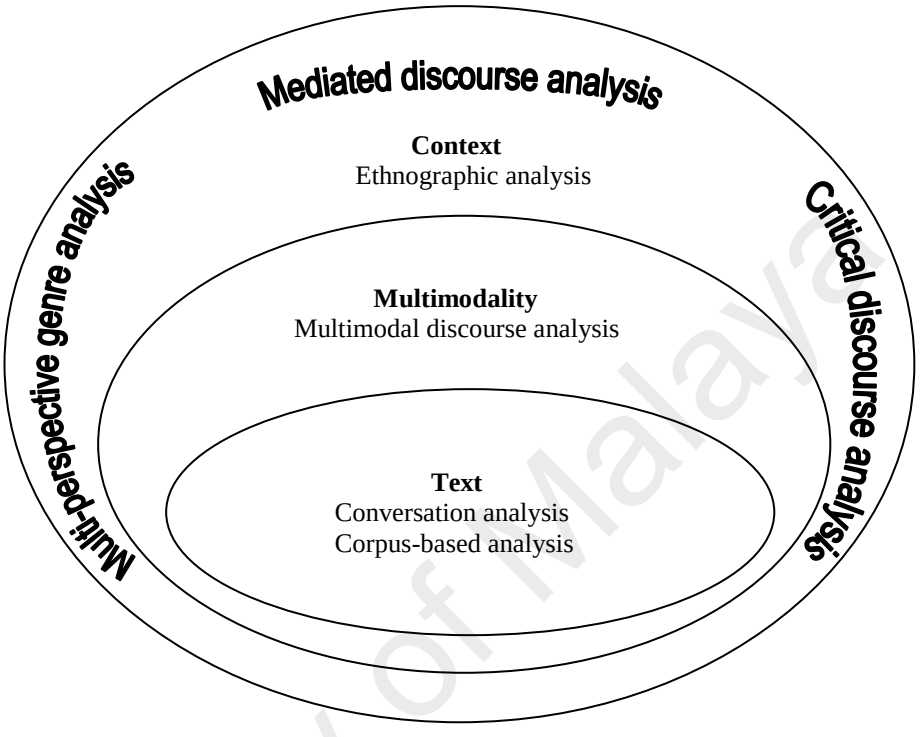

Figure 2.5

Approaches to discourse analysis: text, context and semiotic mode

(Source: Bhatia, Flowerdew & Jones, 2008)

2.9.1 Multidimensional Semiotic System of Web-mediated Genres

Due to the multi-semiotic character of most texts in contemporary society, it is important to analyse visual images and the relationship between language and visual images. It is undeniable that the field of advertising has also undergone a shift towards greater dependence on visual images. Young and Fitzgerald (2006) assert that advertising is generally a multimodal form of discourse. This is because it usually involves the use of text and graphics, such as colour, typography, illustrations and photographs. Images are

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composed of elements that are not as clearly distinguished as the word-signs of verbal language. The meanings of images may therefore be unclear, "fleeting or plural" (Gripsrud, 2006). This is one central reason why images tend to be combined in some way with verbal language. Images in advertising are accompanied by a text, at the very least the logo of the company or a trade mark.

Multimodality is especially important when analysing discourse from electronic media such as the Internet. Computer-mediated discourse is undeniably multimodal. Consequently, due to the multimodal nature of discourses that appear in electronic media such as the Internet, it is important to incorporate a multimodal discourse analysis approach to the multidimensional genre analysis approach when analysing web-mediated genres. This contention has led to a conceptual framework adopted for the present study which attempts to investigate the online tourism advertorial genre from a two-pronged analytical approach of genre analysis and multimodal discourse analysis.

2.9.2 Developments in the Genre Analysis Approach

As stated earlier in Section 2.7, genre analysis offers a grounded description and explanation of language use in academic and professional contexts by looking at discourse patterns and features according to the writers' intentions and institutional conventions in the context of communicative events characterised by communicative purposes. However, genre analysis has developed to account for new genres that have emerged. It is no longer adequate to just investigate a genre from the traditional approach of genre analysis which only focuses on the textual perspective. The conventional understanding of discourse analysis as an analysis of texts is not sufficient. To answer the important question in genre analysis of 'why do professionals use the language the way they do' (Bhatia, 1993), the evidence does not merely come from

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linguistic descriptions of texts or genres, but from the investigation of a variety of text-internal and text-external factors that contribute to and influence the production as well as the reception of these generic artefacts (Bhatia, 2004).

Recent studies (Bhatia, 2004; Devitt, 2004; Norris, 2004; Swales, 2004; Frow, 2006; Bhatia, Flowerdew and Jones, 2008; Candlin and Crichton, 2011) show trends toward assimilation of views and a shared appreciation of previous works of the three traditions of genre movements mentioned in this chapter. The following quotations from each, Bhatia and Swales who represent the ESP tradition, Devitt of the US new rhetoric tradition, and Frow a systemic linguist, adequately confirm this confluence of views:

> *Discourse as genre,* in contrast, extends the analysis beyond the textual product to incorporate context in a broader sense to account for not only the way the text is constructed, but also the way it is often interpreted, used and exploited in specific institutional or more narrowly professional contexts to achieve specific disciplinary roles.
>
> (Bhatia, 2004: 20)

> … that genre be seen not as a response to a recurring situation but as a nexus between an individual's actions and a socially defined context. Genre is a reciprocal dynamic within which individuals' actions construct and are constructed by recurring context of situation, context of culture, and context of genres.
>
> (Devitt, 2004: 31)

> … genres are not fixed and pre-given forms by thinking about texts as performances of genre rather than reproductions of a class to which texts belong, … stressing the importance of edges and margins - that is, stressing the open-endedness of generic frames.
>
> (Frow, 2006: 3)

> … to see genres no longer as single communicative resources, but as forming complex networks of various kinds in which switching modes from speech to writing (and vice versa) can play a natural and significant part.
>
> (Swales, 2004: 2)

The proponents of genre analysis, although from different traditions, have converged in indicating that discourse and/or genre analysis is a complex multi-perspective and

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multidimensional phenomenon which ideally requires an equally complicated methodological framework to understand and analyse a discourse comprehensively and satisfactorily. A multi-perspective discourse analytical approach in genre analysis recognises the important analytical focus of interdiscursivity regarding the way in which prior discourses are seen as shaping the values, discursive resources and structure of existing social practices (Fairclough, 1992), and the way in which the range of discursive practices analysed for each of the different perspectives may be interdiscursively related (Candlin and Crichton, 2011). This approach will eventually result in grounded explanations, rather than merely descriptions or interpretations of situated discursive practices (Fairclough, 1989; Candlin in Gunnarsson et al, 1997).

It is with this new development in genre analysis that shaped the present research which not only studies the data from a two-pronged analytical approach of genre analysis and multimodal discourse analysis, but also adopts a multi-perspective and multidimensional model for the analysis. This research has adopted a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of online tourism advertorials that required the researcher to go beyond the textual data to include the investigation of a number of socio-pragmatic aspects of construction, use and interpretation of the discourse or text, based on Bhatia's (2004) multidimensional analytical framework.

Corresponding to this new development in genre analysis, Bhatia (2004) proposed a multi-perspective and multidimensional model for the analysis of discourse as a genre. It is a three-space model integrating social professional space, social space and textual space as visually represented by the diagram in Figure 2.1 on page 27. This is because genre analysis has advanced from a more linguistics and textual view of discourse to a more contextual and social view of discourse, which Bhatia (2008) terms a Critical Genre Analysis (CGA). This multidimensional and multi-perspective aspect attempts to

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offer a more comprehensive exploration from various perspectives to genre analysis (Bhatia, 2004: 161), thus moving towards 'critical genre analysis'.

A critical genre analysis approach to professional discourse analysis provides a more complex description of language use and takes analyses beyond mere linguistic descriptions to offer explanation for specific uses of language in conventionalised and institutionalised settings (Bhatia, 2008). The critical genre analysis approach may be used to explore the data of the present study in determining the social function of advertising discourse, which Cook (1992, 2001) defines as the uses of creativity and word play in the poetic intricacies of the text, and the uses of sound and sight or pictures to assess the effect of these advertisements on the people who receive them, and whose personality is partly constructed by them.

Bhatia's (2004) model, which he calls "the multi-perspective genre analysis", offers a comprehensive approach in analysing written discourse, taking into consideration the professional and social practices. He suggests that in order to analyse a genre in a comprehensive manner, researchers should explore it from four perspectives, i.e. the 'textual', 'ethnographic', 'socio-cognitive' and 'socio-critical' perspectives, as illustrated in the diagram on the next page (Figure 2.6).

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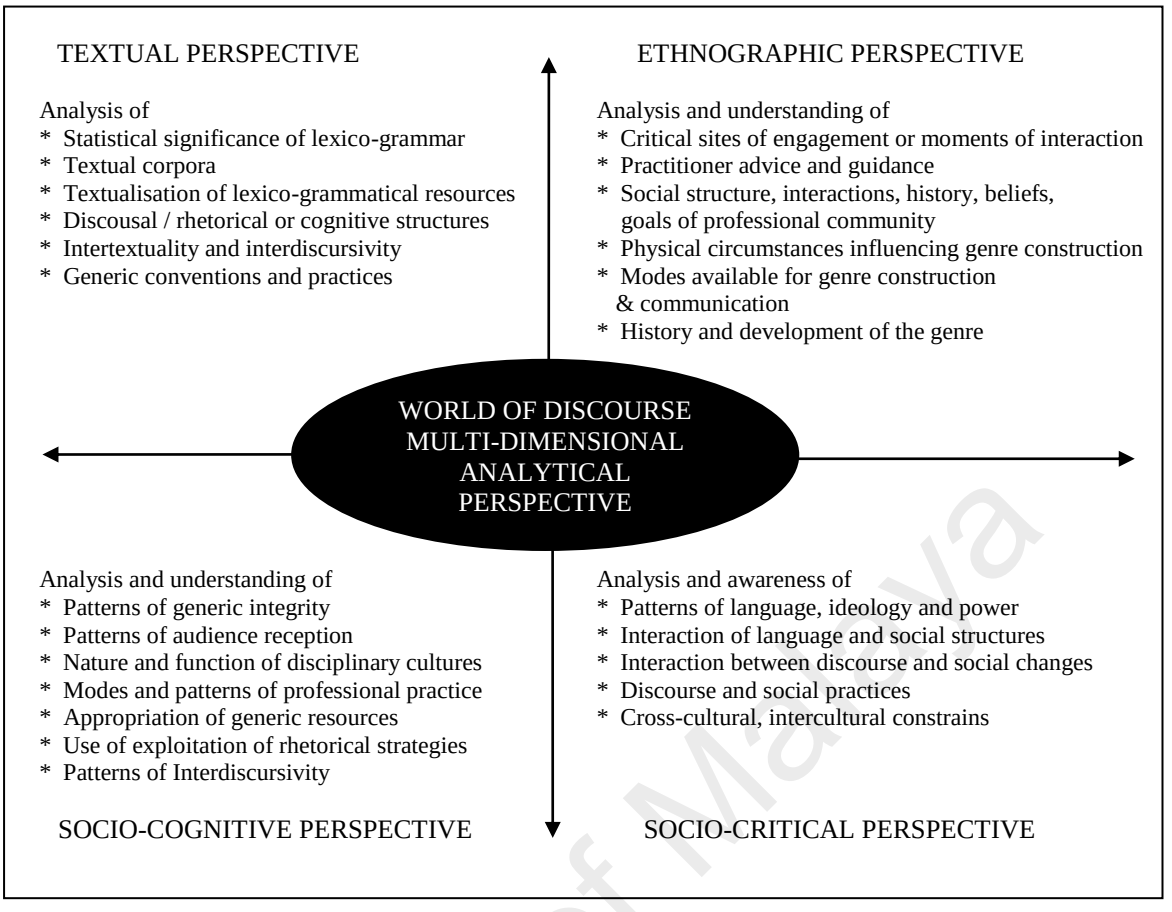

Figure 2.6

Multidimensional and Multi-perspective Genre Analysis Model

(Source: Bhatia, 2004: 163)

As can be seen from the diagram above, a multidimensional and multi-perspective analytical approach is mixed-methodological in that it analyses a genre, not only from the textual and linguistic perspective, but also analyses a genre from other perspectives, such as how the genre is created and adapted, as well as received by its audience. Each of the perspectives is associated with a specific set of methodological tools and analytical resources which function to meet the researcher's objectives and point of reference. These methodological tools will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four of this thesis.

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The present study looks at the three modes of the promotional discourse – the text, context and semiotic mode. It analyses the modes from a combination of different dimensions and perspectives, according to Bhatia's (2004) 'multi-dimensional analytical perspective'. The conceptual framework of this research, therefore, is analysing the discourse from the textual perspective of genre and multimodal discourse analysis, ethnographic analysis, socio-critical perspective and the socio-cognitive perspective of the discourse, focusing on analyses and understanding of:

Textual Perspective

* Discoursal / rhetorical or cognitive structures
* Generic conventions and practices

Ethnographic Perspective

* Practitioner advice and guidance
* Beliefs and goals of professional community
* Physical circumstances influencing genre construction
* Modes available for genre construction & communication

Socio-Critical Perspective

* Interaction between discourse and social changes
* Discourse and social practices

Socio-Cognitive Perspective

* Patterns of audience reception
* Modes and patterns of professional practice
* Appropriation of generic resources

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Textual analysis is carried out to identify the strategies and rhetorical structures writers use to realise the communicative purposes of the promotional genre. As genres are not static communicative events (Zhu, 2002) but dynamic social actions that occur in various contexts (Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1993) in order to fulfil various functions, it is important to analyse the texts. The texts will also reveal the cognitive strategies of the generic features and multimodality used to produce effective online tourism advertorials.

The ethnographic perspective of the genre is vital in understanding the beliefs and aims of the professional community in using the genre to achieve their communicative objectives. This perspective will also reveal the physical circumstances influencing the production of the genre, and the modes available for genre construction and communication.

The socio-critical perspective of the genre is examined to understand the social practices, and interaction between discourse and social changes. It will explain how the advertorial genre came into being, was developed and has evolved to realise the aims and objectives of the discourse community. The socio-critical perspective will also demonstrate the rhetorical strategies used by writers to realise the structural moves as it also concerns the social changes and processes involved in producing effective tourism advertorials. The strategies are considered as socio-critical as they involve socio-cultural factors.

Investigation of the socio-cognitive perspective of the genre will reveal the patterns of audience reception. This perspective will show the typical roles assigned to individual participants in the use of the generic text, as in the ways the reader approaches the text, negotiates to construct knowledge and use the resulting knowledge (Bhatia, 2004). In order to understand web-mediated genres is to refer to web users. Genre analysis of new

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genres that appear in the Internet as a mass communication medium for the general public should include the analysis of content and topic of information related to the communicative needs of the audience, and the writer's understanding of their needs (Karlgren, 2010). The recipients of the genre in context are potential tourists who gather tourism information from the Internet. Recipients of any genres are not passive. They will make decisions and act on the tourism information that are provided online by the NTOs. They can choose whether they want to receive the information, select the information that they want to receive, or decide if they want to respond to the information, and also when and how to do it. In short, the success of a genre or text in achieving its communicative purposes is dependent on the reception of the audience. After all, the genre or text was created primarily for these tourist audiences, and that genres only exist in use (Crowston, Kwasnik and Rubleske, 2010).

This mixed-methodological approach implemented in the present study with a combination of findings from the four different perspectives will result in a more complete and reliable conclusion regarding the genre being discussed.

2.9.3 Analytical Framework

Bhatia (1993 and 2004) proposed a seven-step analytical framework in order to analyse unfamiliar genres in terms of textualization, organisation and contextualisation of a discourse. Table 2.3, on the following page, compares the two frameworks.

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Table 2.3

Seven Steps in Analysing Unfamiliar Genres

Bhatia 1993 (pp. 22-36)	Bhatia 2004 (pp. 163-167)
1. Placing genre-text in a situational context 2. Surveying existing literature 3. Refining situational/contextual analysis 4. Selecting corpus 5. Studying the institutional context 6. Levels of linguistic analysis a. Lexico-grammatical features b. Analysis of text-patterning or textualization c. Structural interpretation of the text-genre 7. Specialist information in genre analysis	1. Placing genre-text in a situational context 2. Surveying existing literature 3. Refining situational/contextual analysis 4. Selecting corpus 5. Textual, intertextual and interdiscursive perspective (*an extension of No. 6 in Bhatia, 1993*) 6. Ethnographic analysis 7. Studying institutional context (*similar to No. 5 in Bhatia, 1993*)

Merging Bhatia's 1993 and 2004 frameworks, the analytical framework used for the present study is as follows:

1. Placing genre-text in a situational context
2. Surveying existing literature
3. Refining situational/contextual analysis
4. Selecting corpus
5. Levels of linguistics analysis
6. Ethnographic analysis including specialist information in genre analysis
7. Studying Institutional context

The application of the above seven steps in this study has resulted in a detailed analytical framework as shown in Table 2.4 on the next page, and is presented according to the sequence of chapters in this thesis.

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Table 2.4

Analytical Framework for Genres in Professional Settings:

Steps in Analyzing Web-mediated Genres in Context

Analytical Framework	Analysis	Chapters and Content
1. ***Placing genre-text in a situational context***	*Context*	1 Introduction
2. ***Surveying existing literature***	*Literature*	2 Review of Literature & Theoretical Frameworks
3. ***Refining situational/contextual analysis***	*Context*	3 Web-mediated genres 4 Conceptual Framework
4. ***Selecting corpus***	*Methodology*	5 Methodology
5. ***Levels of linguistic analysis*** Genre analysis: a. Generic conventions and practices b. Rhetorical structures	Text and Genre	8 Textual Perspective - Web-mediated Genre *Textualization and Organization*
6. ***Levels of linguistic analysis*** Multimodal discourse analysis: Compositional meaning a. Layout b. Pictures	Text and Genre, Discourse	9 Multimodality - Web-mediated Genre *Textualization, Organization and Multimodality*
7. ***Studying Institutional Context Ethnographic analysis*** (Controller): Main Discourse Community (Institutional guidelines, expert advice)	Genre and Discourse *Social Practice*	6(a) Ethnographic Perspective *Contextualization*
8. ***Studying Institutional Context*** Socio-critical analysis (Contributor): Contributory Discourse Community (Institutional guidelines, expert advice)	Genre and Discourse *Social Practice*	6(b) Socio-critical Perspective *Contextualization*
9. ***Studying Audience Response*** Socio-cognitive analysis (Consumer): Consumption Discourse Community (audience reception)	Genre and Discourse *Social Practice*	7 Socio-cognitive Perspective *Contextualization*

Note: 1. Reliability for textual analysis nos. 5 & 6 is carried out by Inter-raters (genre and discourse analysts).

2. Specialist Information and Studying Institutional Context Steps are analysed in nos. 7 & 8.

Bearing in mind the conceptual and analytical frameworks for the present study, the table that follows lists the multidimensional and multi-perspective analytical approaches that were specifically adopted in the study, as well as the genre and multimodal analytical models that had been modified and combined to analyse the data collected for

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the study. This table also indicates the different methods used for data collection for each of the four perspectives and how they serve to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the genre.

Table 2.5

Detailed Analysis Description

Data	Perspectives/Approaches	Analytical Models
Web genre / Cybergenre – Homepages of tourism websites	Textual perspective - Genre analysis (elements & functions) - Multimodality (layout & visuals)	Dillon & Gushrowski (2000); Marco (2002) Kress & van Leeuwen (1996, 2006)
Web genre / Cybergenre - Online tourism advertorials	Textual perspective - Genre analysis (rhetorical structures / moves structures) - Multimodality (layout & visuals)	Kathpalia (1992); Bhatia (1993, 2004) Kress & van Leeuwen (1996, 2006)
Interviews with specialist informants – NTO personnel	Ethnographic perspective	Bhatia (2004); researcher's own
Interviews with specialist informants – Website developer & Advertising personnel	Socio-critical perspective	Bhatia (2004); researcher's own
Questionnaire for genre recipients - Tourists	Socio-cognitive perspective	Bhatia (2004); researcher's own

2.10 Summary

New developments in genre analysis have underpinned the present research which examines the data from a two-pronged analytical approach of genre analysis and multimodal discourse analysis. The study has also adopted the multi-perspective and multidimensional approach or research procedures to genre-based analysis of online tourism advertorials, which draws on several types of analytical data. This study has

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undertaken a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of online tourism advertorials that went beyond the textual data to include the investigation of a number of socio-pragmatic aspects of construction, use and interpretation of the discourse or text, based on Bhatia's (2004) multidimensional genre analytical framework. This study draws on:

- textual data by treating genre as a reflection of discursive practices of the disciplinary communities;
- ethnographic data to observe the genre in action, grounded in narrated insightful experiences of expert members of the community of practice, i.e. tourism;
- socio-critical and institutional data as structurally grounded accounts of the patterns of language and conditions under which systems of the genre is constructed and used by expert members of the advertising disciplinary cultures to achieve their typical goals within the construct of their everyday professional activities; and
- socio-cognitive data to survey how the genre is interpreted by the recipients of the genre and if it meets their acceptability standards.

In addition, the present study has also analysed the online genre from the multimodal discourse analytical approach.

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CHAPTER THREE

WEB-MEDIATED TOURISM ADVERTORIAL GENRE

3.0 Introduction

Based on the scope of the study, this chapter presents an overview of the concept of genre. It then proceeds to discuss genres in corporate communication or business announcements, specifically the promotional genre of advertorials. The chapter subsequently continues to discuss computer-mediated communication and web-mediated genres, before ending with a description on the homepage and online advertorial genres.

3.1 Genre

The concept of genre has been defined in many ways, and the term '*genre*' has acquired a multiplicity of meanings. The term genre relevant to the present study is that given by an ethnographer, Saville-Troike (1982: 34). She identifies 'genre' from the ethnographic perspective to refer to the type of communicative event, such as jokes, stories, lectures, greetings and conversations. Studying the communications that are generically typed and the kinds of labels used in a community will reveal elements of verbal or written behaviour which the community considers sociolinguistically salient. In addition, ethnographers give considerable attention to appropriately interpret and utilise the elicited metalanguage.

In recent years, research in genre has been receiving much attention. Since its introduction in applied language studies in the 1980s, there has been a continuing and accelerating interest in the concept of genre in specialized language teaching and in the

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development of professional communication skills. In Australia, systemic functional linguists have used the concept to complement the Hallidayan notion of registers (Martin, 1992; Eggins, 1994); in America, the influential works of Miller (1984, 1994), Bazerman (1984), Swales (1990), and Yates and Orlikowski (1992) have contributed to a wider understanding of the concept of 'genre' by defining the concept, introducing models suitable for performing genre analyses, and capturing the complexities of genre systems and its development. Bhatia (1993), formerly from Singapore and Hong Kong, has paved the way for the practical application of genre theory by suggesting a comprehensive framework for analysing ESP texts.

A definition which shows the different aspects of genre theory is Miller (1984) who defines genre as "typified rhetorical actions" that respond to recurring situations and become instantiated in the communities' behaviour. Genres evolve as "a form of social knowledge – a mutual construing of objects, events, interests and purposes that not only links them but makes them what they are: an objectified social need". She views genres not as static forms, but rather as "forms of life, ways of being ... frames for social action ... environments for learning ... locations within which meaning is constructed" (Bazerman, 1994), indicating that different communities use different means of communication to achieve their objectives.

One view of genre which has gained influence in recent years has been that of John Swales (1990). As a well-known proponent of genre analysis, he gives a lengthy definition of the term as follows:

> "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 choices of content and style. Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one

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> that operates to keep the scope of a genre here and 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."
>
> Swales (1990: 58)

Swales' definition comprises linguistic and sociological factors whereby members of a particular discourse community share some set of communicative purposes, with historical and cultural factors taken into account.

The above definition by Swales (1990) emphasises the purposive nature of genres and concerns the way genres look. The communicative purposes constitute the rationale for the genre, which means that the purpose of a genre constructs a particular text structure, and a host of conventionalised verbal and visual rhetorical strategies. The diagram below conceptualises the inter-dependency of the three constituents of Swales' genre model, which captures the essence of what is called 'genres'.

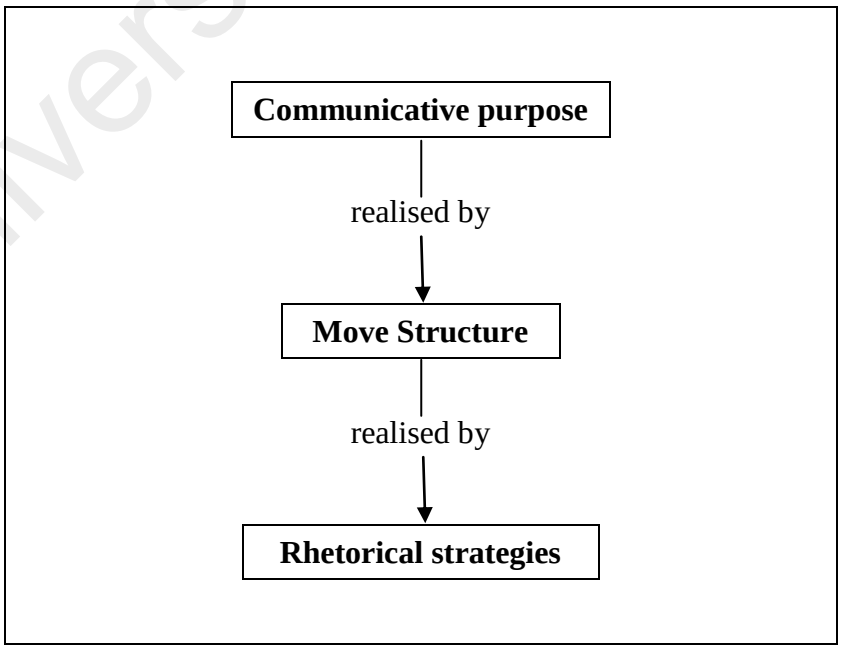

Figure 3.1

Swales' three-level genre model

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Bhatia (1993) concurs with Swales in that the most important aspect of genre is the recognisability and sufficient standardization, which is based on "a set of mutually accessible conventions" which most members of the professional or institutional organisation share, in that the members of the discourse or professional community may recognise the genre as a typical and valid example of the particular genre. He further observes that a genre may be complex as it "may reflect a specific form of mixing and/or embedding of two or more generic forms" or, with gradual development, be dynamic as a result of subtle changes in the rhetorical contexts that it responds to over a period of time (Bhatia, 2004).

However, Bhatia (1993) adds another aspect, the psychological factor, lacking in Swales' definition as "the psycholinguistic aspect of genre analysis reveals the cognitive structuring, typical of particular areas of enquiry" (Bhatia, 1993: 19). He calls for a "thick description" and offers his definition of genre as:

> "... 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 structures and conventionalized with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional 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: 13)

Most of the theorists mentioned above tend to focus on genres transmitted through speech or print. In recent years, however, there has been a steady increase in genre research which deals with genres transmitted through one of the most significant electronic media of today – the Internet. Some of these researches were conducted by Yates and Orlikowski (1992) who studied the production, reproduction and

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modification of genres over time (e.g. the memo's transfer to the electronic medium); Furuta and Marshall (1996) who examined genres used on the Internet to facilitate information; Crowston & Williams (1997) who analysed the reproduction and adaptation of genres on the web; Yates, Orlikowski & Okamura (1999) who researched on the transfer of genres into the computer conferencing medium; Roussinov et al. (2001) who looked at people's recognition of genres on the web; Ryan et al. (2003) who researched the evolution of the US state government homepages; and finally Askehave and Nielsen (2005) propose the necessity of incorporating the notion of 'medium' in accounting the characteristics of genres mediated on the Internet.

A communicative genre should be distinguished from a medium – for instance a 'fax' or an 'email' are not representatives of communicative genres, but a 'business letter' or a 'hotel reservation' sent by fax or electronic mail are. However, media may play an important role in the form of a genre and the introduction of new media may occasionally change genres (Yates & Orlikowski, 1992). Changes in a genre may also emerge along with institutionalisation of organisational practices and with individual actions taken to change the norms and rules for using the genre in communication, either explicit or implicit (Yates & Orlikowski, 1992, Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995, Yates et al., 1999).

3.1.1 Genre Chains

In his book, *Analysing Discourse: Textual analysis for social research*, Fairclough (2003) defines 'genre chains' as different genres which are regularly linked together, involving systematic transformations from genre to genre, such as official documents, associated press releases or press conferences, reports in the press or on television. He

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further adds that genre chains are an important factor in the enhanced capacity for "action at a distance" which has been taken as a feature of globalisation. A change in a genre chain is a significant part of social change.

3.1.2 Genre Sets

According to Devitt (1991), 'genre set' incorporates a class of typical professional genres that a particular professional engages in as part of his or her routine professional activity. An example of the generic texts of a genre set in a corporate company would include various kinds of letters, such as opinion letters to the clients, response letters to the clients, or a letter to the local authorities, all of which are distinct but at the same time intertextually linked to each other. The texts from a particular genre set display conventional patterns found in similarly texts produced by other professionals in the same field. Although a professional activity may involve a number of other participants from within or outside the profession, texts or other semiotic constructs, the concept of genre set only includes one side of the professional practice, as pointed out by Bazerman (1994: 98-99) who gives the following example:

> The genre set represents ... only the work of one side of a multiple person interaction. That is, the tax accountants' letters usually refer to the tax code, the rulings of the tax department in this case, the client's information and interests, and these references are usually presented in highly anticipatable ways appropriate to the genre of the letter, but the genre set is only the tax accountant's participations, as intertextually linked to the participations of the parties.

Hence, every disciplinary community has its own distinctive set of genres, which are used by most of its members in the accomplishment of their professional objectives. This notion of genre set can be extended to a genre network or system in order to account for the full set of genres, by analysing the "interrelated genres that interact with each other in specific settings" (Bazerman, 1994: 97).

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3.1.3 Genre Networks

This is sometimes termed as ‘genre systems’. It represents a complete set of discursive forms that are invoked by all the participants involved in a professional activity. Disciplinary genres extend such a system to include all those discursive forms that are used in all professional practices associated with a particular disciplinary or professional domain.

As mentioned above, a genre system consists of “interrelated genres that interact with each other in specific settings” (Bazerman, 1994: 97) The sequence of genres such as the 'job advertisement', 'job letter', 'curriculum vitae' and 'job interview' is an example of a genre system. When there exists more than one separate genres used simultaneously for a communicative purpose, genres can also overlap (Orlikowski & Yates, 1994: 544). Both a sequence of genres and a set of overlapping genres are included in the concept of genre system constituting a wider communicative process shared within the community in question (Bazerman, 1994).

According to Swales (1990: 110), genres are living and continually evolving. Therefore, genres will undergo some changes dictated by the outer and wider context surrounding the discipline.

A *genre repertoire* of an organisation “indicates its established communicative practices” (Orlikowski & Yates, 1994: 546). Following changes in individual genres, a genre repertoire changes over time either implicitly or explicitly (Yates et al., 1999). Implicit development occurs along with everyday communicative actions taken by the members of the community in question, either supporting existing genres or somehow

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contradicting their enacted use. Explicit development of a genre repertoire may include active adoption of new genres and genre systems or alteration of the existing ones. A development may take place through trial-and-error, by learning from other communities or actively creating alternative routines. Furthermore, explicit analysis and development of an organisation's genre repertoire have been considered useful in comprehending the introductions, uses and influences of new media in organisations (Orlikowski & Yates, 1994, an example in Yates et al., 1999).

The explicit development of a genre may also occur and change when texts belonging to a genre system enter into a new communication medium (Orlikowski & Yates, 1992). In short, when a genre enters into a new medium, such as the World Wide Web, the new environment affects the texts and the genre system as a whole. The present research thus, analyses the effects of the World Wide Web as a medium on the advertorial genre, and the ways in which tourism authorities communicate with the public via the World Wide Web.

3.1.4 Genre Mixing

The relationship between texts and genres is a potentially complex one. A text may not be "in a single genre", as it may "mix" or "hybridize" different genres (Bhatia, 2004; Fairclough, 2003). Genre mixing is an aspect of the interdiscursivity of texts. A number of social researches and theorists have drawn attention to ways in which social boundaries are blurred in contemporary social life, and to the forms of 'hybridity' or mixing of social practices (Fairclough, 2003). One area of social life where hybridity has received particularly intense attention is media. The texts of mass media can be

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seen as instantiating the blurring of boundaries of various sorts: fact and fiction, news and entertainment, drama and documentary, and so forth (Silverstone, 1999).

Thus, the analysis of this interdiscursive hybridity in texts allows linguists to locate texts within processes of social change and to identify the potentially creative and innovative work of social agents in texturing. It provides a potentially valuable resource for enhancing research based upon these perspectives, and offers a level of detailed analysis which is not achievable within other methods (Fairclough, 2003). The issue of hybrid genres will be discussed further in the next section in this chapter.

A promotional feature or an advertorial from the *Tourism Malaysia*, an online tourism website, is an example of genre mixing. As Fairclough (2003: 34) has mentioned, one aspect of the transformations associated with new capitalism is that individual towns and cities, as well as national governments now actively promote and "sell" themselves. The change in the relationship between countries and business corporations involves the changing of genres – a chain linking the genres of local governments to business genres. The change manifests itself partly in the emergence of a new genre within the genre chain, through the mixing of existing genres. In the case of online tourism advertorials, it is a mixture of a journalistic feature article, corporate advertising, and tourist brochure. This hybridity is evident in the layout and organisation of the webpage. Other features of the three genres combined in tourism advertorials include, alternation between report and quotation or direct representation of the words of significant sources; the predominance of self-promotion in positive self evaluations; and a description of the country and its places of interest in a report which is thematically organised according to the conventions of tourist literature (such as buildings of architectural or historical interest, geographical location, cultural life, local cuisine, etc.)

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3.2 Hybrid Genres

These genres are evidently seen in discourses that have been published in the form of news articles or reports that tend to influence audiences for commercial benefit. There are elements of promotional practice within journalism, where discursive elements of promotion are overtly drawn upon within news discourse. Such discourses display a typical mix of information and promotion which makes them prime examples of what has been called "hybrid genres" by Bhatia (2004: 90) and Fairclough (1992: 207), who define them as:

> genres which are the result of the blurring of boundaries between discourses, and which appear to be especially prominent in the domain of contemporary media.
>
> (Fairclough, 2003: 35)

Such hybridisation is related to the general trend towards the "commodification" of discourses – a tendency of market discourses to colonise other types of discourse, a phenomenon extensively studied by Bhatia in his investigation of genre mixing, bending and embedding for the purposes of promotionalisation (Bhatia, 1999, 2000, 2004). This process of commodification or promotionalisation is the result of a colonisation of professional genres on the part of advertising.

Bhatia (2004, 2005) argues that among the genres that clearly stands out to be the most prominent instrument of colonisation is advertising. One of the 'colonized' advertising genres or a hybrid genre that combines the characteristics of editorial or new report, and advertisement or promotional material is the advertorial, which from its label suggests that the promotional elements of advertisements are integrated into editorials to increase the desire of the reader or audience to consume (Bhatia, 1997, 2002 & 2004).

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In his explanation, Bhatia (2004) says that the lexico-grammar and rhetorical moves of this genre clearly indicates the hybrid nature to the text, which is partly informational and partly promotional. It clearly differentiates itself from a review, as it is unlikely to incorporate any negative evaluation of the product or service. He further explains that such advertorials from "corporations, ... institutions, travel industries and government departments are primarily informative, but it is rare not to find any promotional or persuasive overtones in them" (Bhatia, 2004: 94-95).

In the case of online tourism genres of advertorials, feature articles and press or media releases, the mixing of informative and promotional communicative purposes is constitutive of the genre. These genres are not solely informative, but have the elements of persuasion and advertisement. The salient feature of these hybrid genres is interdiscursivity, as in the combination of different discourse types, - e.g. advertorials consists of news discourse with its primarily informative focus, and promotional discourse characterised by a persuasive intent - within the same genre (Bhatia: 1997, 2002, 2004 & 2005). This suggests that there is a tension between overtly acknowledged and tacitly understood (implied) communicative purposes. Such a tension is the consequence of the hybrid nature of the genres, with the close combination of promotion and information – two linguistic functions which may not necessarily be in conflict from a rhetorical point of view, but may be so in a professional perspective.

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3.3 Corporate Communication Genres

There are various types of corporate communication genres used by corporations for different business purposes. However, only promotional genres that are relevant to the tourism industry are discussed in the following sub-sections.

3.3.1 Press / Media Releases

A press release, news release, media release, or press statement (as they are inter-changeably known) is a short text resembling news stories, which contain what is said to be newsworthy information (Catenaccio, 2008). They are generally sent to members of the news media for the purpose of announcing something claimed as having news value with the purpose of turning it into news stories, thus generating publicity. The intended primary readership is the general public.

It is important to note that Walters et al (1994), who studied the styles of sixty press releases, identify press releases in a wider sense to include editorials, announcements and reviews, and thus extend the meaning of press release category outside the range normally included in the categorisation. Hence, press releases include documents, such as company fact sheets, annual reports, corporate profile and mission statements that the press release very often draws on intertextually to form a hybrid genre (Lassen, 2006).

The use of a press release is common in the field of public relations, the aim of which is to attract favourable media attention in order to provide publicity for products or services marketed by those corporations. Press releases can announce a range of news items, such as upcoming events, personal promotions, awards, news products and services, sales and other financial data, accomplishments, etc. They are often used in generating a feature story.

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Press releases have several traits of their structure. Some of these common structural elements include:

- **Headline** — A headline is used to grab the attention of journalists and briefly summarize the news. The success or failure of press releases is based on their headline and opening paragraph.
- **Dateline** — A press release contains the release date and usually the originating city of the press release.
- **Introduction** — The first paragraph in a press release generally gives basic answers to the questions of who, what, when, where and why.
- **Body** — This is where further explanation, statistics, background, or other details relevant to the news are revealed.
- **Boilerplate** — Generally, this is a short "about" section, providing independent background on the issuing company, organization, or individual.
- **Close** — Traditionally in the United States, the symbol "-30-" appears after the boilerplate or body and before the media contact information, indicating to media that the release is ending. A more modern equivalent has been the use of "###" symbol. In other countries, other means of indicating the end of the release may be used, such as the text "ends".
- **Media contact information** — The name, phone number, email address, mailing address, or other contact information for the PR or other media relations contact person in the press release.

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3.3.2 Editorial

An editorial is a news article giving an objective and unbiased opinion on some topical issue. It is an opinion piece written by the senior editorial staff of a corporation or publisher of a newspaper or magazine. Editorials are supposed to reflect the opinion of the organisation or periodical. Additionally, most print publications feature an editorial, or open letter followed by a 'Letters to the Editor' section. In major periodicals, editorials may be classified under the heading "opinion".

3.3.3 Feature Articles

A feature article, also termed as feature story or simply feature, is a piece of journalistic writing that covers a selected issue in-depth. It is usually longer, and presents an opinionated view. A feature need not address an immediately topical subject as would be expected of an editorial or a news story. These articles are commonly seen in newspaper supplements and magazines.

While the distinction between published features and news is often clear, when approached conceptually there are few hard boundaries between the two. Thus, it is quite possible to write a feature in the style of a news story. Nevertheless features do tend to take a more narrative approach, perhaps using opening paragraphs as scene-setting, instead of the delivery of the most important facts. As the print media faces ever stiffer competition from other sources of news, feature stories are becoming more common as they can be more engaging to read. At many newspapers, news stories are sometimes written in 'feature style', adopting some of the conventions of feature writing while still covering public events.

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3.4 Promotional Genres

Bhatia (1997) asserts that "the power to use, interpret, exploit and innovate novel generic forms is the function of generic knowledge which is accessible only to the members of the disciplinary communities". This is because genres are invariably situated in the context of specific disciplinary cultures **(**Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995) and are shaped by typical discursive processes embedded within the disciplinary activities of the profession. Thus, the ultimate generic product also displays a recognisable integrity of its own (Bhatia, 1997).

The pressure for the 'democratisation' of discourse is becoming increasingly strong, whereby an increasing "fragmentation of discursive norms and conventions" can be observed (Fairclough, 1992: 221). This often leads to "genre-mixing and embedding in institutionalised orders of discourse" and the creation of new genres (Bhatia, 1994). To a large extent, these changes in discursive practices are making professional genres increasingly dynamic and complex.

The dynamic complexity of professional communication is further increased by the role of multimedia, the explosion of information technology, the multi-disciplinary contexts of the world of work, the increasingly competitive professional environment, and above all, the tremendously compulsive nature of promotional and advertising activities. The result of this is that many of the institutionalised genres are seen as incorporating elements of promotion (Bhatia, 1997). Elements of promotion that are found in institutionalised genres include advertisements, sales promotion, company brochures, public campaigns, travel brochures and advertorials. These genres are some of the

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primary members, secondary members and peripheral members of the colony of promotional genres (Bhatia, 2004:62).

The diagram below explains the generic description of the present study which examines the promotional genre of tourism advertorials in more detail.

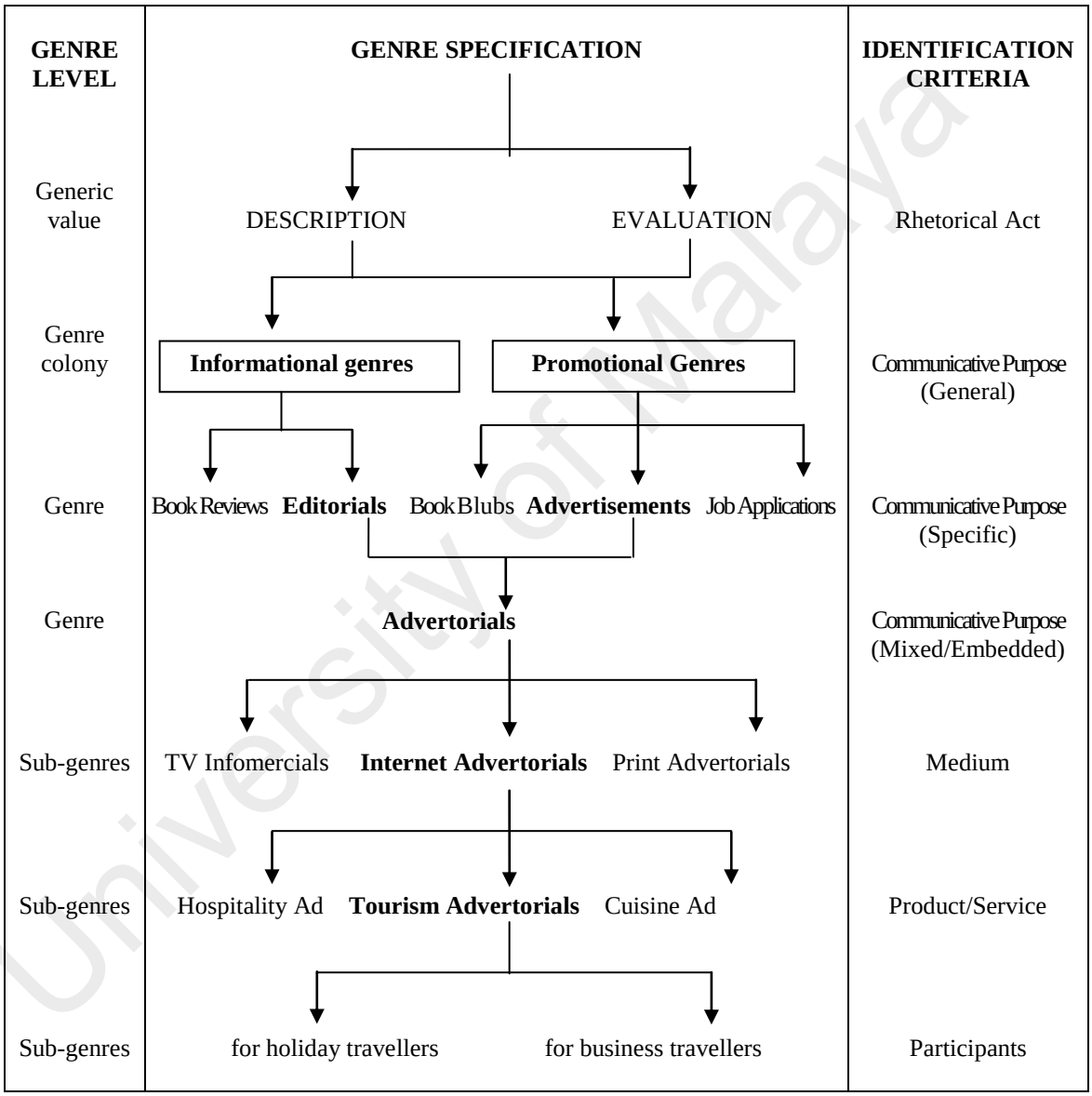

Figure 3.2

Generic Description of Online Tourism Advertorials

(Adapted from: Bhatia, 2004)

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3.4.1 Advertisements

Advertisements, as a form of promotion, have been regarded as the colonizers of other genres that are increasingly promotional. Bhatia (2004, 2005) claims that among the various genres, one that clearly stands out to be the most prominent instrument of colonization is advertising. Advertisements as a genre colony represents groupings of closely related genres that serve similar communicative purposes. One of the 'colonized' advertising genres is the advertorial, which from its label suggests that the promotional elements of advertisements are integrated into editorials to increase the desire of the audience or reader to consume. It is this focus that underlines the present research.

There are basically two distinguishable types of content in the press: advertisements and editorial content. However, in the last few years, media critics have expressed great concern about the blurring of the lines between these two types of content, and have noticed a new phenomenon – a hybrid between advertisement and editorial, a new genre commonly referred to as 'advertorial'.

3.4.2 Advertorial

As mentioned above, a form of promotional genre is advertisements which include the sub-genre of advertorials. Advertorials are an emerging hybridised text type which represents the paralinguistic and linguistic features of three related genres – advertisements, news stories and editorials. The communicative purposes, rhetorical structure and micro-linguistic features at the three genres are interrelated and mixed in advertorials (Zhou, 2012: 337). It has been argued that a genre that imitates another

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genre, such as advertorials, can be resisted as unacceptable. This is because readers will judge the credibility of the source by looking at whether it is an editorial or just an imitated one. However, advertorials reinforce the credibility of editorial, keeping the boundaries intact. Kong (2006) believes that it is more meaningful to examine mixed genres that are more "integrated with the voices of more than one genre" because they subtly integrate the two genres in question.

In the field of tourism, the main goal of tourism advertorials is to promote the country via tourist destinations, the local cuisine, events and activities; which Moyo Guijarro (2006) terms as "tourist possibilities of the areas being advertised". Tourism advertorials aim to attract potential customers' attention and influence them to visit the country being advertised. These purposeful promotional and persuasive intentions show the way how the field of tourism makes things happen by means of language and pictures. Using persuasive writing techniques and pictures, the writers try to convince the readers and potential tourists of the value of a particular place or country. Knowing how the persuasive function is achieved through investigating tourism advertorials would provide us with insights into the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

3.4.2.1 Description of Advertorial

The term '*advertorial'* is an invented word that combines parts of two words and their meanings, which Bhatia (2004) categorises as a "hybrid of editorial and advertisement". As mentioned earlier, an advertorial is a hybrid genre that combines the characteristics of editorial or new report, and advertisement or promotional material.

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As early as 1961, the entry 'advertorial' made an inexplicable appearance in the *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, providing its etymology as "a blend of *advertisement* and *editorial*", and states that it is "an advertisement that imitates editorial format". More recently, *Dictionary.com* defines an advertorial as "an extended newspaper or magazine text advertisement that promotes the advertiser's products or services or special point of view but resembles an editorial in style and layout". Cameron and Ju-Pak (2000: 66 - 67) synthesized conceptual definitions of other researchers in defining advertorials as:

> "... blocks of paid-for, commercial message, featuring any object or objects that stimulates the editorial content of a publication in terms of design or structure, visual or verbal content, and/or context in which it appears".

From the linguistics perspective, Bhatia (2004) who defines an advertorial as "a hybrid of editorial and advertisement", categorises it as a mixed genre. He further describes that advertorials, which incorporate the bending and mixing of genres such as reviews, opinions and editorials, are becoming more popular nowadays because the masses are not easily influenced by traditional advertisements which do not provide much elaboration on the products and services that are being advertised.

A check with a journalist revealed that some publications term advertorials as feature stories, feature articles, or simply feature. These publications use the term 'feature' instead of 'advertorial' probably because the term 'advertorial' may not be well-received by readers and consumers, since they are of the opinion that the term 'advertorial' is overtly made up of the word 'advertisement', and that many people regard advertisements as biased and only telling the positive side of the product or service, irrespective of it being true or not.

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Advertorials can be printed and presented as an entire newspaper section, or inserted the same way within a newspaper as store fliers, comics sections, and other non-editorial content. These sections are usually printed on a smaller or different type of font. Advertorials frequently feature information about a new product or technological advancements in existing services. An advertorial often contains "statistics on scientific research, consumer trends, or other authoritative pieces of information" (http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-an-advertorial.htm). Cook (1992) defines advertorials as:

> "... lengthy entries in magazines and newspapers which attempt to combine article and advertisement, using the publication's house style, and providing the reader with information or discussion which is more substantial and less single-minded than that in the majority of (traditional) advertisements."
>
> Cook (1992: 32)

Wikipedia, an online encyclopaedia defines an advertorial as an advertisement written in the form of an objective opinion editorial — usually designed to look like a legitimate and independent news story (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advertorials). However, it is not strictly objective as it has a promotional intention behind it. The tone is usually similar to that of a press release than of an objective news story, because advertisers will not spend money to describe the flaws of their products.

Advertorials differ from publicity advertisements because the advertiser must pay a fee to the media company for the ad placement, whereas publicity is placed without payment to the media company and with no control over the copy. The differences may be subtle, and thus, the term — such as the word '*advertorial'* — may or may not appear. Sometimes synonyms describing the advertorial as a "special promotional feature" or the like is used (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advertorials).

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Many newspapers and magazines will assign staff writers or freelancers to write advertorials, usually without the writer's name. A major difference between regular editorial and advertorial is that the clients or advertisers usually have content approval of advertorials, a luxury usually not provided with regular editorial. A related practice is the creation of material that looks like traditional media (for instance, a newspaper or magazine) which is in fact created by a company to market its products. One familiar example is airline in-flight magazines which usually feature reports about travel destinations to which the airline flies. Some editors expect readers themselves to spot the commercial interests that lie behind a supposedly disinterested contributor, whilst a few are seeking signed declarations from deceitful journalists offering apparently skewed reportage (Adair, 2006).

Interviews with copywriters at advertising companies reveal that advertorials are becoming more popular nowadays because the public are not easily influenced by traditional advertisements. As people are getting more and more resistant to traditional advertisements (Appendix A), it is hoped that the reader will mistake advertorials (Appendix B) for an article and read on. Advertorials are also created when the product advertised needs more detailed explanation, like in the case of technology. An advertorial can also be written similarly to a press release and often contains statistics on scientific research, consumer trends, or other authoritative pieces of information.

Advertorials have become popular because advertisers are convinced that an editorial format can be more effective than a traditional advertising format in influencing audiences for commercial benefit. They are actually a form of advertisement designed to simulate editorial content, while at the same time offering more information to prospective clients. It is widely known that people give more credibility to editorial

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content than to paid advertisements. Anyone can claim that their own product is the best, but editorial content suggests the implicit approval of the medium in which the information is presented and that the message is legitimised by third-party credibility as someone else has endorsed the product or service.

Advertorials are a form of advertising, leveraging personal reputation to give creditability to product promotion (Spalding, 2008). It has always been more effective to have a "real person" promote a product than to do so through traditional advertisements. The way this advertising strategy works is to use cults of personality to add creditability to claims made about a product or brand. This can be done through a clear endorsement, and "discussing" a topic of the sponsors'/advertisers' choosing, linking ideas of trust and creditability back to the advertiser who devised it. Of course, this is most effective when this topic is a registered trademark of the company doing the sponsorship. That is why sponsorship contracts are so lucrative.

3.4.2.2 Advertorial: An Emerging Advertising Strategy in the Malaysian Mass Media

In the context of advertising in Malaysia, there is an increase in the usage of advertorials in recent years. These advertorials are especially encountered in the Malaysian print media, such as newspapers and magazines where such a genre was not common prior to five years ago. This advertising strategy is emerging in Malaysia because consumers today are now more literate and educated. These consumers are more cognisant of their needs and what they hope to obtain in return for their purchases. Furthermore, they are interested to know what other or past consumers think of a product or service in order to make a more informed decision to purchase the product or service, or vice versa.

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Advertorials are generally found in the print media, especially in the English language dailies and magazines. Although research has been carried out on advertisements and editorials, not much research was done on advertorials from a linguistic point of view. Few or perhaps no studies have examined advertorials found in Malaysian newspapers or the Internet. Therefore, the researcher feels that it is pertinent to survey the trend of using advertorials as a promotional and advertising strategy, and the initial source that is found to provide such data is from the print media.

The researcher began by conducting a study which employed a qualitative approach of analysing advertorials collected within a period of nine months from a local Malaysian newspaper. The survey (Cheong, 2008), which will be reported below, identified the types of businesses, companies and organisations that employ this popular present-day culture of advertising. It also identified the text-internal indicators of advertising genres found in advertorials in an attempt to establish what constitutes an advertorial and how they have evolved.

An analysis of the advertorials based on a multimodal perspective was also carried out in the survey by the present researcher. Modality analysis concerns the way in which the use of such means as visual representation as colour, representational detail and texture contributes to our judgements of the reality value of visual representations. O'Halloran (2006) defines multimodality as the study of transitions and phase, camera and gestures, typography, layout and the use of colour, and how such choices orientate the viewer to particular readings of the text and context.

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3.4.2.3 A Survey

A survey was first of all conducted by the researcher (Cheong, 2008) to establish the definition of advertorial as a genre and its features. The survey also aimed to get an overview of the communicative purposes and its discourse community. This survey was carried out as there is a lack of literature on this particular genre. It analyzed a total of 86 print advertorials collected in a period of nine months, between 23 February 2007 and 19 November 2007, which appeared in a local English language newspaper, *The Star*. The corpus for this survey was collected from this newspaper publication because it is the most widely-read local English language newspaper in Malaysia with a readership for *The Star* (daily) and *Sunday Star* at 1,082,000 and 1,022,000 respectively, for the duration of July 2008 to December 2008. These figures were obtained from the *Nielsen Media Research Q4 2008*, conducted by the Nielsen Company[3], which is a leading information provider on audience measurement, print readership, customised media research and competitive advertising intelligence information. Based on their latest data from the *Nielsen Media Index* in 2011, *The Star* has also maintained its position as Malaysia's most read English daily for the years 2009 and 2010. An analysis of the advertorials based on a multimodal perspective was also carried out.

3.4.2.3.1 Findings and Analysis of the Data from the Survey

This sub-section presents the findings from the survey which attempted to obtain an overview of the communicative purposes of advertorials and its discourse community.

[3] The Nielsen Company (NYSE: NLSN) is a global information and measurement company with leading market positions in marketing and consumer information, television and other media measurement, online intelligence, mobile measurement, trade shows and related assets. The company has a presence in approximately 100 countries, with headquarters in New York, USA.

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It also reports on the contents and strategies used in advertorials, as well as the utilisation of multimodality in those advertorials.

a. Products and Companies

Products and services frequently featured in advertorial form include nutritional supplements, cosmetic procedures, ICT goods, educational training programs, and travel agencies. The advertorials analysed in the pilot study could be categorised into 36 types.

The findings of the survey (Appendix C) reveal that most companies or organisations that publish advertorials of their products or services in the daily are mainly from the first six companies and services (in bold) that are listed in Table 3.1 on the following pages. Perhaps, these companies, which are large companies, are able to allocate more funds on advertising or that they see this form of advertising as able to churn more sales for them. Moreover, the products and services from these companies are considered very expensive and not basic necessities. Therefore, they will have to persuade potential customers or clients to buy their products and services. One way of doing so is to provide more information.

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Table 3.1

Companies/Organisations and Products/Services that Publish Advertorials

Products/Services	Companies/Organisations	Content/Contexts
Property Development, Land Investments & Vacation Condominium	Property Developers	Sale of properties – residential properties, shop offices, etc
Cars / Automobiles	Car companies	*Honda Dreams Fund* (A community project)
Skin care / Cosmetics & Beauty	Departmental store, Cosmetic companies, Societies/Associations	Intertextuality - different advertorials on the same product
Health Care / Supplements / Therapy	Health care and Pharmaceutical companies, Companies offering therapy services	Health supplements, Medical conditions Traditional Thai Massage
Information Communication Technology	Computer-related companies	Computing solution, Servers, Mobile computing
Education	Colleges and universities	Programmes, courses, awards, etc
Tourism	Tourism Boards, Tour companies, Alcohol company Petroleum company	Tourist sites Tour packages Sports tour/holiday Contest & Tour holiday
Beverages	Beverage companies	Rewards promotion, contests,
Public Service Announcements: Road Safety; Smart Consumerism; Recycling; Electronic Waste	Government; Ministries of: Transport; Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs; Natural Resources & Environment	Messages by Minister of Transport Special Message by the Prime Minister
Telecommuncation / Power and telecom cable	Telecommunication and cable companies	Ericsson International Assignment Programme – reviews/testimonies
Anniversaries, Promotions & Contests	Car company (*MOFAZ*), Private Companies, Associations, Hotels, Beverage company, Alcohol & Petroleum companies	Anniversary celebrations, Reward promotions, Winner of contest
Carnivals	Ministry of Tourism, Credit card company	Malaysian Consumer Day Carnival 2007, Malaysian Mega Sale Carnival
Campaigns	Software Alliance, Government and Ministries	Smart Consumerism, Software Privacy (Opstulen) / '*Sikap Tulen Campaign'*

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Table 3.1 (continued)

Sports	Car company, Petroleum company	*Honda Malaysia* racing team, Formula One Grand Prix holiday
Nutrition for Children/Milk	Milk product companies	Promoting company product
Management System	Metronic Global Bhd.	Promoting company product
Plastic	Private company dealing in plastic	Promoting company product
Vehicle navigation & tracking products	Heavy vehicle company	Promoting company product
Cranes manufacturer	Heavy vehicle / machinery companies	Promoting company product
Talks	Corporations & Associations	Business Technology Programme Business and Technology Talk on "Securing Capital Funding"
Research and development of knowledge-based industries	Technology Park Malaysia Corporation	Promoting centre's services
Training	Banks and Financial Institutions, Telecommunication company	Apprentice Programmes, International Assignment Programme – employee reviews/ testimonies
Event Management	Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre	Promoting centre's services
Steel pipes	Private corporation and Industry	Messages from Chairman & Chief Minister of Penang
Benefits	Social Security Organisation (SOCSO/*PERKESO*)	Education Benefits
Printing	Printing Press	Promoting company services
Business partnership	Taiwan/Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Malaysia	
Reviews / Testimonies	Petrol Companies	Employee reviews/ testimonies
Economic status/promotion	State governments	East Coast Economic Region
Products storage and materials handling business	Private company	Promoting company services
Expositions & Forums	Broadcasting Industry, Home decoration companies	Announcements of exhibitions & shows
Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs)	Telecommunication company	Promoting company services
Property Protection System	Intellectual Property Organisation	Promoting organisation's products and services

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b. Contents and Strategies

Many advertorials contain statistics on scientific research, consumer trends, or other authoritative pieces of information. The contents and/or strategies employed by the advertorials in the pilot study are as follows:

1. Reviews/Testimonies/Relating of experiences by satisfied customers or clients
2. Write-up about the state/ company/ activities/ facilities/ amenities/ achievements/ contest & winners/ future aims & relevant information
3. Offers/ Promotions
4. Quote by the Manager/ celebrity/ award winners
5. Speech/Message/Open letter by Managing Director/Chairman/Minister/CEO
6. Research on the product
7. Benefits/free gifts/privileges
8. History
9. Story
10. Public service announcements
11. Awards obtained
12. Interview with a celebrity/client

The above strategies were employed in the advertorials surveyed because these strategies attract readers' attention to the advertorials and try to invest them with some of the authorities of the accompanying discourses (Cook, 1992).

c. Length

Out of the eighty-six advertorials that were analysed in the survey, it was found that the length of the advertorials ranges from one fifth of a page to four pages long. As

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tabulated in Table 3.2 below, 72.1% of the advertorials were published in at least one or more pages. It is interesting to note that the four of the companies that used a three- or four-page long advertorial are property and car; and property and event management companies respectively. This again substantiates the researcher's point about how large and successful companies are able to pay extra for the creation of advertorials. Out of these sixty-two advertorials, ten of them (16.1%) also have one to three pages of congratulatory advertisements published after the advertorial. These congratulatory advertisements are part of the companies' anniversary celebrations.

Table 3.2

Length of Advertorials

No. of Pages	No.	%
< 1	24	27.9
1	57	66.3
2	1	1.2
3	2	2.3
4	2	2.3
Total	**86**	**100**

d. Multimodality

Multimodality plays a significant role in advertorials, as illustrated in Table 3.3 on the next page. It appears in 96.5% of those advertorials analysed in the survey. It is found from the survey that 94.2% (81) of the eighty-six advertorials contain some form of pictures or photographs to illustrate their products or services. The advertorials used photographs of the managers, customers, public figures or celebrities, or award winners to give a sense of validity and reliability of the information contained in the advertorials, and also to give some kind of endorsement or approval by the people shown in the photographs. The pictures and photographs of the products or events would also attract the readers' attention and also allows them to view the product.

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Table 3.3

Multimodal Content of Advertorials

Text type	No.	%
Pictures only	79	**91.9**
Pictures and table	2	**2.3**
Table/chart	2	2.3
Words only	3	3.5
Total	**86**	**100.0**

The types of pictures or illustrations that are used in the advertorials are very important. They must be selected based on how best the illustrations compliment the concept and message that the advertiser wants to put across. Take for example the illustration used in the advertorial by a credit card company, *MasterCard*, as shown in Appendix B. The illustration shows a family, consisting of the husband, wife and a young son, shopping for some dresses for the wife at an expensive boutique. All of the characters in the photo are seen smiling and feeling happy. This denotes that by using the credit card, the wife is able to buy expensive clothes from the boutique; the husband is probably happy that he does not have to withdraw money to pay for the clothes yet because the payment can be done on credit; and the young boy is also happy because he may be able to buy some expensive toys later, also with the use of the credit card. All these purchases may be possible with the use of that particular credit card that gives a higher credit amount, thus in line with the tagline, "*MasterCard, it's priceless*!" With all the benefits of the credit card given by the company, the family is portrayed as a very happy family, which is everyone's aspiration.

Another important element that is considered when creating an advertorial is the use of colour. The use of colours will further attract the readers' attention and interest to the

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product or service. In advertising, the selection of colours to be used should represent the advertiser, such as their logo colour; and their overall brand image. The selection of appropriate colours is very important because a serious business like say, banking, cannot look too playful.

Based on the findings of the study, many companies have adopted the colour factor as part of their corporate image or identity. Out of the eighty-one advertorials that contain pictures/photos, 40.7% (33) are in colour. This will further attract the readers' attention and interest to the product or service. Many companies have adopted the colour factor as part of their corporate image or identity. The choice of colour is also an important factor for potential customers to remember their products, and also be associated to some form of allusion which may be dependent on the customers' culture and outlook. For example, the homepage of *Digi Telecommunications Sdn. Bhd.*, a Malaysian mobile telecommunications company**,** has adopted yellow as their company colour (Appendix D). The company probably believes that as Malaysia is made up of a multicultural society who associates the colour yellow to a positive presumption, this choice of colour has a profound impact for their corporate image. In Malaysia, yellow is associated with royalty. According to Kate Smith (2009), a colour expert, founder and editor of *Sensational Color*, yellow carries the meaning of wisdom, optimism, happiness, intellectual energy and creativity. In addition, the Chinese pronunciation of this colour is equivalent to the word 'prosperity'. Thus, at any promotional event or any advertising strategy that they employ, the colour yellow would be portrayed and projected.

Some companies would also just use colour to portray a concept, as in the use of the colour green to suggest that a product takes into consideration the environmental aspect.

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And when this product is being used, it does not adversely affect the environment. An example that can be quoted from the data is a company that deals with computer servers, which suggests that their servers are created to consume less electricity and thus conserve the environment. That is why some companies only use a single colour in their advertorials for the font as well as the pictures and photos, or as the background colour (Appendix E). Based on the thirty-three advertorials that contained pictures or photos, 21.2% (7) of them use this strategy.

There were four advertorials (4.6%) that contain charts and tables. Charts and tables are also features of multimodality. The use of charts and/or tables is to provide some form of statistical data to its product. This would show more reliability to the product.

3.5 Computer-Mediated Communication

Mass media now have a pervasive influence on what we know and how we perceive the world today. They shape our view of the world through words and visual representations. We understand, learn and are tantalised by the information we get from these mass media. We even buy because of the symbols we view in the words and pictures we find in the media. The mass media include magazines, newspapers television and the Internet. As this research focuses on the type of communication conveyed via the computer media, a brief discussion on computer-mediated communication is deemed necessary.

John December (2009), an experienced Web developer, teacher, software creator, and freelance writer, defines computer-mediated communication (CMC) as the process by which people create, exchange, and perceive information using networked

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telecommunications systems that facilitate encoding, transmitting, and decoding messages. Other definitions of CMC include, "any communicative transaction which occurs through the use of two or more networked computers" (McQuail, 2005). Popular forms of CMC include communications that occur via computer-mediated formats, such as instant messages, e-mails, chat rooms, bulletin boards, list-servs and weblogs (blogs); and text-based interaction, such as text messaging (Thurlow, Lengel, and Tomic, 2004; Herring, 2004).

There is no doubt that the World Wide Web (WWW) has opened doors to information in a way that we have never experienced before. It is a potential resource of up-to-date, specialist and generalist content on a range of topics. Not only is this resource growing daily, at a rate which bypasses the timelines of traditional publishing procedures, it is also a resource that is deliverable, by virtue of the spread of the personal computer, to the home as well as to the place of work and study (Slaouti, 2002).

Electronic scenes entice audiences. Reading and responding to the distinctive aesthetics on the computer screen places the texts in context. In consuming web content, we negotiate the 'internal architecture' of cyberspace. Internet users' consumption of mediated meaningful content is informed by their comprehension and knowledge of a wiser world. Drawing upon the cultural frameworks of understanding within which they interpret experience, viewer communities playfully produce readings of visual texts (Schroder, 1988). The Internet is seen as a form of 'infotainment', with users being motivated both by its intrinsic and extrinsic functionality, its provision of pleasure and satisfaction of instrumental purpose (Wilson, Hamzah and Khattab, 2007). The Internet viewer-user is thus, "a choice-making quester", "playful and goal-directed", with a

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varying intensity and range of purpose, creating self identity beyond screens with online content (Gillard, 2000: 117, 122-123).

Huizinga (1970) argues that reading websites is to a regulated release from the mundane, the disciplined distraction of sometimes materially productive 'serious fun'. Always teleological or goal-directed, going online is shown to be ludic. Interpreting the Internet involves the communal construction of meaning, and the public formation of identity (Marschall, 2002).

New developments in the Internet have made it an effective source and media in advertising that can reach the global market quickly. This is because there is a growing number of Internet users. By mid-1992, the Internet linked millions of people through more than 750,000 'host' connects. By the end of 1992, Cukier (1993) reported that the number of computers connected to the Internet had increased from 30,000 in 1987 to 1.3 million in 170 countries. As of February 1996, the most frequently-cited estimates of number of Internet users were in the 20 to 30 million range according to the *Globe and Mail,* with some estimating as many as 100 million users (Collot and Belmore, 1996). Thus, it is undeniable that the number of Internet users increases every day.

The Internet was introduced into Malaysia in the mid 1990's. The number of Internet subscribers in the country increased from less than 100,000 in 1996 to 200,000 in 1997, and to 470,000 by 1998. Internet access continued to develop substantially by 64% in 1999 and 148% in 2000 (The Star, 30 July 2002). According to *Aneki.com***,** an independent, privately operated website based in Montreal, Canada which provides a comprehensive source of continental and world rankings in an increasing number of categories, Malaysia ranks as the sixteenth country with the most Internet users

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(http://www.aneki.com/internet.html) with 15.868 million users in 2007 (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html). The data for their compilations is derived from numerous sources including United Nations agencies and the United States' Central Intelligence Agency's *World Factbook* (http://www.aneki.com/about.html).

Information and communication technology (ICT) and the Internet, undeniably have opened many new avenues. They are especially important in areas and activities that rely on the provision and dissemination of data and information, particularly in the service sector. Thus, they are recognised as vital support services and platforms in driving all sectors in social and economic growth of nations. Many aspects of producing, delivering, consuming, coordinating and organising now takes place over the Internet or broadband communications networks. This is because broadband makes it more feasible for producers and consumers of goods and services to be in different geographical locations. The ability of businesses to interact with the international business community is a fundamental requirement of modern businesses, and this contributes to productivity growth by expanding markets and increasing business efficiency.

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3.6 Web-mediated Genres

As mentioned earlier, a genre is a conventionalised way of using language in a particular recurrent social situation. New genres appear to meet new rhetorical needs of a discourse community, whereby the form and function are determined by those needs. The introduction of the Internet as a new communications medium has given rise to the appearance of an abundance of digital genres or ‘cybergenres’, a term introduced by

Yates and Orlikowski (1992 in Ryan, Field & Olfman, 2002) to refer to genres of electronic communication such as those via the Internet. Genres change over time as a result of ongoing usage. It can also change as media capabilities change and communicators adopt innovative techniques for media use. In the context of the Internet, genres can change due to the migration of existing genres from other media (Yates et al., 1999). Genres may even disappear through a process of selection, as other new genres become preferred.

Askehave and Nielsen (2005) who examined electronic genres, specifically genres mediated on the Internet, extended the Swalesian genre model to add Finnemann's (1999) concept of the navigating mode, and propose the necessity of incorporating the notion of 'medium' into the notion of 'genre' in order to account for the characteristics of digital genres or web-mediated texts. Their contention is that the characteristics of the genre mediated, for example a corporate profile, on the Internet cannot be accounted if we simply analyse 'print-outs' of the web text and treat it as a static product and neglect the fact that the Internet as a medium has characteristics that significantly influence and contribute to the way web-mediated genres are presented and viewed. By explicitly adding the aspect of movement and navigation, they thereby produced a two-dimensional genre model that does not isolate any given genre from its medium. Hence, in addition to Swales' (1992) genre model, the notion of 'medium' should be incorporated into the notion of 'genre' when accounting for genres mediated on the Internet.

The extension of the functional genre analysis model to account for the genre characteristics of non-linear, multimodal, web-mediated documents involves a two-dimensional view on genres and acknowledges the fact that digital genres not only act

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as text but also as medium. With this extension, the genre concepts such as 'communicative purposes', 'moves' and 'rhetorical structures' (Figure 3.1) are being adapted to accommodate the multimodal, non-linear characteristics of web texts, as illustrated in Figure 3.3 below.

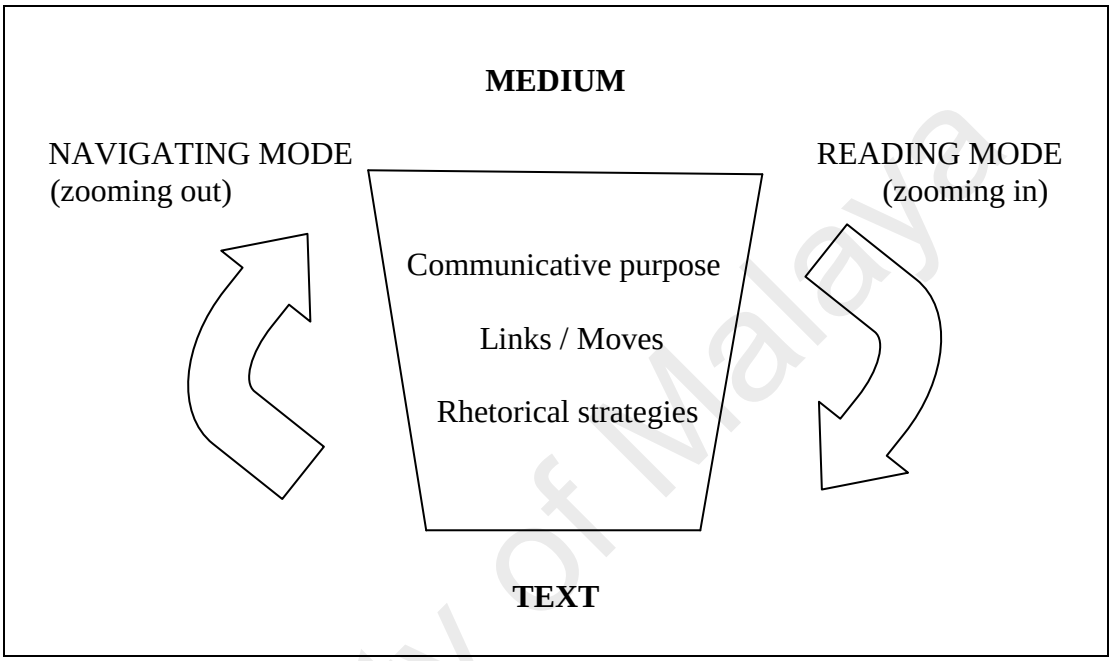

Figure 3.3

The two-dimensional genre model

(Source: Askehave and Nielsen, 2005: 3)

In relation to this study which looks at online or web-mediated promotional texts, it is thus important to first understand the significance of web-genre as an organisational principle. Just as genres regulate and mediate the ways we interact with each other in society, websites and web pages are no exceptions. The website as a whole has generic features as well as comprises many more specific genres. In order to study the macro structure of web-mediated genres, the homepages or main pages of websites can be analysed. This is because the homepage is a functional component within the larger-scale structure of the website. Moreover, it is the "top-level document of a website"

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(Askehave & Nielsen, 2005) and the most important page of any website, which gets more views than any other web page (Nielson & Tahir, 2002). Homepages also have "the characteristics of a superordinate genre in its own right at the same time that many of its component parts are themselves distinctive mini-genres", such as linguistic, visual, musical and so on (Baldry and Thibault, 2005: 113).

The use of the term 'homepage' in this study should not be confused with personal homepages. The term 'homepage' as used in this study refers to the first, introductory or reception page or main page of a corporate or governmental organisation website (Crowston & Williams, 1997; Askehave & Nielsen, 2005). A homepage or main page of a website performs two functions:

1. It introduces the general content of the website by presenting informative tables of content and providing enticing text bits.
2. It functions as the official gateway to the website, as it enables the reader to access and navigate the site by providing navigational tools or links that branch off into the website as a whole.

3.6.1 Intertextuality of Web-mediated Genre

The notion of intertextuality is the relations between genres. This term was first used by Julia Kristeva (1980) although the notion was developed by Bakhtin (1981, 1984, 1986) in that the meanings created through texts and their linguistic formulations depend on the meanings of other texts. Kristeva (1980: 69) referred to texts in terms of two axes: a *horizontal axis* connecting the writer and reader of a text, and a *vertical axis,* which connects the text to other texts.

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Devitt (1991) who examined the role and interaction of texts within a discourse community and revealed how essential texts are to the constitution and accomplishment of the discourse community, proposes a three-dimensional concept of intertextuality – referential, functional and generic (the first two which is similar to Kristeva's vertical axis) – which collectively account for the interaction between texts which the community needs in order to carry out its work. In essence, referential intertextuality refers to the use of references within one text to another; functional intertextuality refers to a particular text as being part of a larger macro-text; and generic intertextuality refers to drawing on previous texts written in response to similar situations. In short, intertextuality manifests "a plurality of text sources"; and involves the absorption and transformation of elements in the new textual contexts (Candlin and Maley, 1997).

According to Fairclough (1992), intertextuality in an analytical construct applied to the investigation of the relationship between genres. It is "the constitution of a text from diverse discourses" (Fairclough, 1992). A genre is a manifestation of intertextuality in so far as it follows the conventions of previous examples of this particular type of text. Thus, any stretch of text will bear the imprint of previous texts. Fairclough (1992) defines this "horizontal or sequential intertextuality" as a case in which specific other texts are overtly drawn upon within a text, such as the use of reported speech and direct speech in news reports.

Intertextuality can also occur on the part of the reader/audience in the shaping of a text's meanings by other texts. Therefore, it can refer not only to an author's borrowing and transformation of a prior text, but also to a reader's referencing of one text in reading another.

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3.6.2 Interdiscursivity of Web-mediated Genre

Interdiscursivity is a form of intertextuality that describes how a discourse type is constituted through a combination of elements of orders of discourse. Fairclough (1992) refers to interdiscursivity as embedded or constitutive intertextuality, in which one genre is embedded in another. The concept of interdiscursivity focuses on discourse conventions, such as in "mixed genres" which combine elements of two or more genres, such as advertorials.

In addition to this, is the concept of *interpractice* (Erjavec, 2004) where specific other practices in the process of text production and interpretation are overtly drawn upon within a practice. For example, if an advertiser, who orders and pays for the news, makes a decision in the news producer's (which is supposed to be the journalist or editor) place, interpractice has occurred - a hybrid practice consisting of journalistic or editorial and advertising practice. In the process of interpretation, inter-practice occurs when the reader believes that he/she is reading the news, whereas in reality he/she is reading advertisements.

3.6.3 Homepage Genre

The forms and functions of the web genre appear to answer the rhetorical needs of the tourism discourse community. The Internet as a new communications medium has added unique properties to the digital genre in terms of production, function and reception that cannot be ignored in characterising the genre. The new media consist of multimedia content, interactivity, instantaneous and other media characteristics which constitute a specific digital genre such as online advertorials. As such, it is vital to

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research on the information conveyed on websites, and in the context of this research are tourism websites, which have features deriving from the capabilities afforded by this new medium.

Specific genre characteristics are recognised in the process of communication. In the context of the present study, the structural information of the webpage can help identify its genre. The common layout of webpages can be determined by their contents which include the textual and visual features. Several ways of structuring these characteristics have been suggested in the literature of genre analysis. Due to the advent of the Internet and the popularity of online materials, the concept of genre was also introduced into the information science field as a way of identifying types of organisational communication via the Internet.

There are different views of characterising a genre. A genre can, for example, be characterised by having similarities in substance and form (Yates and Orlikowski, 1992), where *substance* (or purpose) refers to the social motives, themes and topics; and *form* refers to observable aspects such as a) structural features, b) communication medium (e.g., pen and paper, telephone, or CMC), and c) language or symbol system. Others have characterised genre by its *purpose* and *form* (e.g. Swales, 1990; Orlikowski and Yates, 1994; Crowston and Williams, 1997). Although often implicit in the use of genre (e.g. Yates and Orlikowski, 1992), all genres reflect a communicative purpose, a rationale or reason for enacting the communication. Shepherd and Watters (1998) who are from the field of computer science, argue that while non-digital genres can be characterised by the "tuple" or the sequence of two elements - content and form, digital genres are characterised by the triple - content, form, functionality - as the medium has functional capabilities. *Functionality* refers to the capabilities available through the new

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media, the Internet (Shepherd and Watters, 1998). Ihlstrom and Akesson (2004) included another genre characteristic, *positioning* for communicating design, resulting in a quadruple characterisation - content, form, functionality, positioning.

Some of the researches on the different combinations of genre characteristics used in literature can be summarized in the following table.

Table 3.4

Researches in Genre Characteristics

Genre Characteristics	Authors
Form and purpose	Swales (1990); Orlikowski and Yates (1994); Crowston and Williams (1997); Yates et al (1997)
Form, purpose and functionality	Toms and Campbell (1999); Schmid-Isler (2000); Roussinov et al (2001)
Content and form	Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995)
Content, form and functionality	Shepherd and Watters (1998); Ryan et al (2002); Crowston and Kwasnik (2004)
Content, form, functionality and positioning	Ihlstrom and Akesson (2004)

The genre characteristics of *content*, *form*, *functionality*, *positioning* and *purpose* are explained as:

- *Content* refers to the substance, such as themes and topics (cf. Yates and Orlikowski, 1992), e.g. articles, news streams, video items, etc.
- *Form* refers to "observable physical and linguistic features" (Yates and Orlikowski, 1992), as in the presentation format of the content, e.g. as textbox, links, tables, or graphics (i.e. icon).
- *Functionality* refers to capabilities available through the new media (Shepherd and Watters, 1998), e.g. searching, broadcasting, downloading, interactivity, etc.
- *Positioning* refers to the place where the contents are located on the page.
- *Purpose* refers to a shared communicative purpose(s) that the genre is intended to fulfil (Swales, 1990; Askehave & Nielsen, 2005).

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It can be concluded that genre is an important aspect for understanding how contents, forms and functions structure communication and interaction, in the current case is digital media. However, genres are not stable as they may emerge, change and shift. There is new tendency in linguistics to re-define genre by including content, situation and context to the concept. Changes occur when genres are communicated and shared among people especially from diverse disciplines, giving rise to new sub-genres or completely new genres. It is also important to be aware that technical, other than social, factors (Erickson, 1997; 1999) contribute to such changes. This has become apparent as new Internet-based digital genres have evolved and gained importance, both for understanding how communication is socially organised and as new genres are actively developed by designing technology use. Among the new genres emerging in the Internet, publicity is one of the most important discursive emergences of this process of continuous generic change taking place in the international computing era. One new genre that has emerged through the introduction of this new media is the online tourism homepage and its advertorial genre.

The evolution of cybergenres can be explained with reference to the following cybergenre model (as shown in Figure 3.4 on the following page) proposed by Shepherd and Watters (1998).

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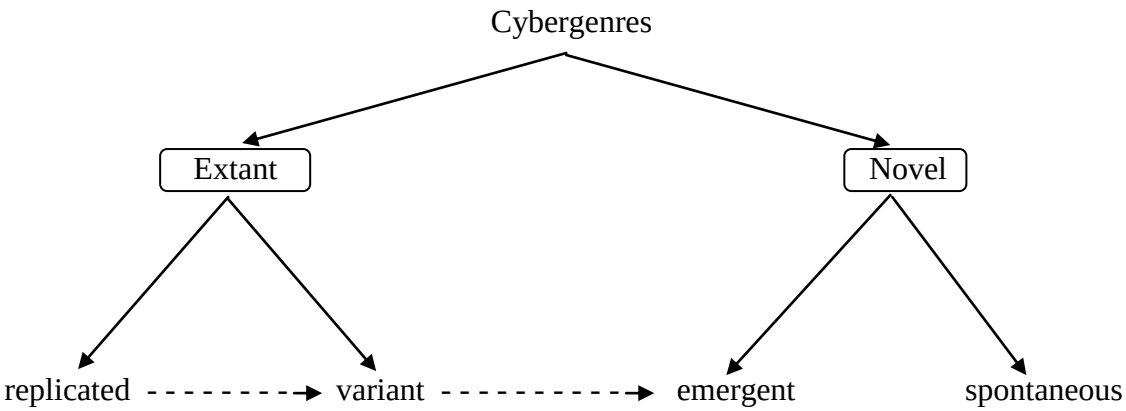

Figure 3.4

The Evolution of Cybergenres

Extant genres are existing genres that have been transferred into the digital media, while **novel** genres exist only in the digital media without similarities in other media. The stages of cybergenre evolution due to the functionality of the new medium have created the sub-(cyber)genres. **Replicated** sub-genres follow the content and form of the corresponding genre in other media with little functionality by the new online media. **Variant** sub-genres have new functionality added to their content and form. **Emergent** sub-genres have evolved further from the variant sub-genre with significant difference in content and form, and added functionality that is fully dependent on the new online media. **Spontaneous** sub-genres do not have any corresponding genre in other media. Dillon and Gushorowski (2000) suggest that homepages have evolved into a standard form that may be considered as an authentic digital or cyber genre.

The increasingly competitive professional environment and the overwhelmingly compulsive nature of promotional and advertising activities have led to the present-day world of work as being increasingly identified as a "consumer culture" (Featherstone, 1991). The inevitable result of this is that many institutionalised genres, whether they are social, governmental, professional or academic, are incorporating elements of

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promotion (Bhatia, 1997). These changes in discourse practices are what he calls "commodification" of institutional orders of discourse.

Thus, corporate and governmental organisations have now adopted a promotional intent in the description and in designing their websites. In the context of the present study, National Tourism Organisations (NTO) or government tourism organisations have also practised this promotional stance in their description of their countries to the world.

3.6.4 Internet Advertorial Genre

With the myriad benefits of computer-mediated communication and the World Wide Web as mentioned in Chapter One and in this chapter, advertorials have now appeared on the Internet as a form of advertisement and promotion. The development of new technologies and the large number of computer science graduates have enabled companies and computer users to "become their own publisher" (Herring, 2004). There are also local as well as international Internet publishing organisations that offer services for writing advertorials which are to be published on the Internet for a fee. The cost for this service is relatively cheap for the assistance rendered. The vast number of companies that have placed information regarding their companies and products or services in the Internet is testimony that advertising in this medium has many benefits, and is here to stay. Malaysian organisations and the government have also not been left out in their attempt to promote their products, services and country to the world.

Although a variety of genres of persuasive genres have been investigated in the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in traditional media, few studies have examined Internet advertising, especially the sub-genre of online tourism advertorials. The

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present study attempts to analyse how this genre is constructed to attract potential tourists to visit the places or country through the texts in which the persuasive and communicative features are used, together with promotional pictures. There is a lack of research in this professional discourse probably because online advertorials are relatively new.

In relation to this study, online advertorials are created in recent years because consumers are now more computer-savvy and technologically inclined as these hardwares are now more affordable and easily available, especially with the presence of cyber cafes everywhere. Moreover, consumers in this day and age have become more sophisticated in how they source a product/service; and in this case, tourism. They want immediate information and feedback, and the Internet can fulfil this need.

3.7 Summary

Advertorials have proven to be an effective means of marketing a company or product. Much like product placement, an advertorial is a non-obvious form of advertising that can subtly grab the attention of consumer audiences since they believe that they are learning useful information that can guide them to a consumer decision rather than being blatantly sold a product or service.

Advertorials are a form of persuasive promotional genre and can be used whenever we want to promote a product, service or idea, and to persuade people to do something. The overall communicative goal of advertorials is to persuade people to use the product, service or idea. Different strategies for doing so are developed in the course of the history of persuasive communication, and in the case of the present study utilises the

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services of the online tourism websites in presenting the persuasive information. In other words, although it is represented here as the format of a particular text, the persuasive or promotional genre is a general format that can be applied to many different promotional genres. It is also a relatively flexible format and one that allows for variation.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter states the methodology used to achieve the aims and to address the research questions of the study. It gives a detailed account of the processes involved in carrying out this research. First, the selection of corpus – the respondents and texts – for the study, and instruments used to obtain the data for the study are identified in Section 4.1. Then, the collection of data is explained in detail in Section 4.2. Next, the various stages involved in the analysis of data are laid out in Section 4.3. The analytical frameworks which form the basis for this research are also presented and explained in this section.

4.1 Description of the Data

It is hoped that the data collected for this study are able to provide findings on the different perspectives of the online tourism genre as proposed in the previous chapter of this thesis. The data can be divided into three main categories – information from specialist informants, opinions of potential tourists, and texts and discourses of the online tourism genre. The information obtained from specialist informants will provide findings on the ethnographic and socio-critical perspectives; the opinions of potential tourists will yield data for the socio-cognitive perspective; and the texts and discourses collected for analysis will be data for the textual perspective of the genre.

In order to obtain the relevant data mentioned above, certain research tools are employed in the study. These data are obtained via interviews with members of the

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discourse community as in specialist informants related to tourism promotion and advertising, dissemination of a set of questionnaire that seeks responses from tourist respondents and the selection of tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials. A more detailed account of the instruments used in the study, the subjects or respondents, and the sources of the textual data is provided in the following sub-sections.

4.1.1 Instruments

This study employed interviews and a questionnaire as its research instruments. These tools were employed to address the issue central to this thesis, as in how the online advertorial genre is constructed to convey the communicative purpose of persuading potential tourists to visit Malaysia, and to meet the needs of the target recipients of the genre. These research tools are described in more detail in the next two sub-sections that follow.

4.1.1.1 Interviews with Specialist Informants

In order to obtain relevant information from the ethnographic and socio-critical perspectives of the genre, the study employed semi-structured interviews (Appendix F) as a research tool. Interviews were conducted with specialist informants from the tourism industry and people related to the field of advertising to identify the principal moves and steps in the online advertorials. These specialist informants are practising members of the disciplinary culture in which "the genre is routinely used" (Bhatia, 1993). The specialist informants brought in relevant explanation and valid insights to the research analysis due to their familiarity of and expertise in the relevant areas. The questions for the interviews and issues for the discussion were based on Fairclough's

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(1995) dimensions of discourse and discourse analysis. The interview questions focused on the processes of production and interpretation of texts, and taking into consideration the discourse and socio-cultural practices. This semi-structured interview questions can be referred to in Appendix F. The information obtained from the interviews with the relevant specialist informants formed the first set of data in the study.

4.1.1.2 Questionnaire for Tourist Respondents

Knowledge of audience characteristics also helps a writer to use appropriate and effective communicative strategies to influence the reader, especially in the case of persuasive genres where various kinds of appeals are chosen depending upon the analysis of audience characteristics (Bhatia, 1999: 28). Thus, in order to obtain relevant information from the socio-cognitive perspective, this study has employed a set of questionnaire (Appendix G) as a research tool to find out the features and communicative strategies that can effectively influence the audiences' preferences and acceptance of Malaysian online tourism advertorials. The questionnaire was created specifically to find out the respondents' needs for, and preferences of, the types of information, elements and multimodal features of the official Malaysian tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials. The tourists' responses to the questionnaire produced the second set of data in the study.

There are thirty questions altogether, with space for further relevant comments at the end of the questionnaire. The question forms of the questionnaire consist of *Yes/No* questions and items with a list of options available for the respondents to select. This is to ensure that the respondents will respond to the questionnaire willingly and not be put

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off by too many open-ended questions which require laborious responses. However, at the end of each item or question with a list of options, there is an *Others* option followed by a space for respondents to provide any extended opinions regarding the point being deliberated if they so choose to. The thirty questions are classified into four domains:

Part A: Demographic Information

This part attempts to find out the types of tourists that read online tourism advertorials. It is important to know the demographics of the tourism website visitors who are also prospective tourists, in order to cater to their needs by ensuring that the information presented in the websites are relevant for the audience.

It consists of six questions which mainly required respondents to tick the appropriate boxes of information that are relevant to them, except for questions 3, 4, 5 and 6 which required the respondents to provide extra or more specific information when they had ticked the 'Others' option. The first question in the questionnaire required the respondents to state their gender. The second question asks respondents to tick their age range. The third question in this part of the questionnaire was to identify if the tourist-respondent is a local tourist or foreign tourist, and their nationality if they are foreign tourists. The next question of the questionnaire attempted to find out the race of the tourist-respondents. Question 5 of the questionnaire tried to find out the respondents' highest level of academic qualification. The last question in Part A of the questionnaire required the respondents to specify their state of origin (if they are local tourists) or country of origin (if they are foreign tourists).

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Part B: Travel-Planning Experiences

This part of the questionnaire attempts to find out how the tourists plan their vacation. It consists of four questions (Questions 8 to 10) which required respondents to tick the relevant item(s). Respondents can tick as many items that are relevant to them and provide specific information when they choose the 'Others' option. The responses to these questions will reveal the potential tourists' travel planning experiences and the various means of obtaining tourism information.

Part C: Online Experiences

The third part of this questionnaire, which consists of thirteen questions (Questions 11 to 23), attempts to find out the potential tourists' online experiences and preferences in order to get more information on the places that they intend to visit. This part is divided into two sub-parts which seek to investigate tourists' preferences and frequency of online usage in finding out more about a place or country; and the preferred website contents or information that they like to obtain online.

The five questions in the first sub-part required respondents to choose only one option, and a justification for their choice for Question 13. Five out of the eight questions (Questions 16, 17, 19, 21 and 22) in the second sub-part allowed respondents to opt for more than one item that are applicable to them, with an 'Others' option to provide other points not listed. This section of the questionnaire also attempts to find out the multimodal elements that attract tourists to visit the country and its places of interest.

Part D: Online Experiences of Malaysian Tourism Websites

Part D of this questionnaire attempts to obtain the tourists' opinion of the official tourism websites of Malaysia and its states.

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4.1.2 Subjects and Respondents

The first and second sets of data are derived from the information gathered via interviews with the discourse community and the responses from a questionnaire disseminated to tourists. Hence, there are two groups of subjects in this study, the specialist informants and tourist respondents comprising of foreign and domestic tourists to/in Malaysia. The sub-sections that follow will describe these subjects in more detail.

4.1.2.1 Specialist Informants

Views and comments from the discourse community, such as the advertisers, communication and publicity officials or editors from the tourism boards and website development companies, advertising agents, and copywriters were obtained via interviews. These specialist informants were interviewed in order to seek pertinent information on advertorials as an emerging advertising genre and the processes involved in the creation of, and probable collaboration in producing, such texts in the tourism industry and advertising profession to promote a destination. The specialist informants comprise of seven individuals working in the tourism and advertising industries. More details concerning these specialist informants can be found in the next seven sub-sections.

4.1.2.1.1 Chief Executive Officer of a Website Development Company

The Chief Executive Officer of a leading local website development company was interviewed. The company, an Information Communication Technology-based company which was incorporated in January 2005 in Malaysia and is accredited with

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the MSC Status, provides solutions in the field of management and marketing consultancy through the application of web marketing platforms. The company is a firm believer in the power of the Internet. Its various projects and portfolios have been ranked highly in the major search engines among millions of other listings. The company has provided expertise and services to over four hundred clients in the Northern region of Malaysia, making it the fastest growing web development company in the region. It is the 329440th largest site within .NET. The interview provided information regarding the definition of advertorial and the trend of using this genre in Internet advertising. Findings were also obtained regarding the cost for such online advertising services.

4.1.2.1.2 Senior Copywriter of an Advertising Company

The outcome of the interview with a senior copywriter of an international advertising company in Singapore provided information regarding the definition of advertorial in advertising terms; the purpose of using advertorials as a form of advertisement; the selection process and selection criteria of visuals/pictures for an advertising text; the processes involved in creating an advertorial; and the trend of online advertising as compared to traditional advertising. As this specialist informant has been working in the advertising industry in Singapore for more than ten years, she would also provide advertising information from a non-local perspective. A non-local perspective of such information is considered indispensable to this study as the promotion of tourist destinations and the publication of travel information is now global with the advent of the Internet. Such touristic information is after all for worldwide readership and to persuade potential tourists to visit the country and its destinations.

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4.1.2.1.3 Copywriter of an Advertising Company

The purpose of the interview with a copywriter from another international advertising firm (at the time of the interview, but is now working at yet another international advertising company, both located in Malaysia) was to gain more insights into the production of online advertorials. She has worked as a copywriter for a number of years, and was involved in producing some website content for *Tourism Malaysia*'s *Malaysia Truly Asia* campaign.

4.1.2.1.4 Head of the Editorial Unit, Communications and Publicity Division, Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (*Tourism Malaysia*)

The head of the Editorial Unit, Communications and Publicity Division of *Tourism Malaysia*, the official online tourism website of Malaysia was interviewed to get some relevant information about the promotional texts published on the official tourism website.

4.1.2.1.5 Editor of the Editorial Unit, Communications and Publicity Division, Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (*Tourism Malaysia*)

An editor form the same Editorial Unit of the Communications and Publicity Division of *Tourism Malaysia* was also interviewed to seek further information and the processes of writing tourism advertorials published by *Tourism Malaysia*, the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, on their official corporate tourism website.

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4.1.2.1.6 Travel Writer/Chief Executive Office of a Travel Information Website

A travel writer cum Chief Executive Office of a travel information website was also interviewed. This travel information website is managed by an avid traveller, who is a Malaysian, for the last twenty-three years from Malaysia, and a former copywriter. It is an independent online travel information site that reviews and shares information on places of interest for tourism around Malaysia and Southeast Asia. All places reviewed have been personally visited, photographed and articles written by him. Its focus is on eco-tourism, islands and beaches, nature, adventure, culture and heritage (UNESCO sites) and much more from around the region. Its website hit 204,000 page views in February 2011 since its inception in January 2008, and to date with more than 1700 tweeter followers. It was recently nominated for the "*Award for Best Tourism Article and Documentary on Sabah*" in the Online Media section of the *Sabah Tourism Awards 2011* and went on to win the *Best Online Media* award. (http://blog.malaysia-asia.my).

4.1.2.1.7 Audio Visual Producer of an Advertising Agency

An interview with an advertising personnel from the creative department of another international advertising firm was carried out to gain more insights into the importance of multimodality in online marketing and branding aspect of a product, service or an industry.

The company's Malaysian branch is part of an international advertising agency whose headquarters is in New York City, United States. The agency is a unit of Omnicom Group, the world's largest advertising agency holding company. It was founded in 1970 in Paris, France, by an American who specialises in Management, a French who specialises in Marketing, a Swiss who specializes in Creation, and an Italian who

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specializes in Client Services. The name of the organisation is an acronym formed by the first letter of each founder's surname. The agency was later purchased by the Omnicom Group in 1993 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TBWA_Worldwide). This advertising company is ranked as a top-ten worldwide advertising agency, and was recognized by *Advertising Age* in 2010 as the "Best International Network of the Decade".

4.1.2.2 Tourist Respondents

A total number of sixty tourist respondents, comprising of thirty local tourists and thirty foreign tourists, was targeted to respond to the questionnaire. In order ensure validity of the responses to the questionnaire, the respondents must have visited Malaysia or travelled out of their home states before.

The tourist respondents were approached at a few tourist destinations around Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, such as the National Museum, shopping malls, Malaysian Tourist Information Centre (MATIC), and hotels, etc. Past tourists who had visited Malaysia or travelled out of their home states were also contacted via email and social media platforms to be respondents for the questionnaire. A softcopy version of the questionnaire was sent to these tourists via email attachment.

The extensive sources of data collected for the study as described above are necessary to provide a comprehensive description of the findings of the study and to ensure their validity. Methodological triangulation which involved the use of more than one method to gather data, specifically documents, interviews, and a set of questionnaire, was

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practised. The purpose of triangulation in such a qualitative research is to increase the credibility and validity of the findings and results.

4.1.3 Textual Data

This sub-section describes the textual data of the study. Two sets of textual data were collected for analysis. In order to understand the textual data collected in the study as well as the distribution of tourists' visits, a brief explanation on the geographical composition of Malaysia is deemed appropriate at this juncture.

Malaysia is a country that consists of two distinct parts. Peninsula Malaysia or what is also known as West Malaysia constitutes the long fringe of land, extending down from Asia that borders Thailand and Singapore. The South China Sea separates West Malaysia from East Malaysia. Malaysia consists of thirteen states – eleven in West Malaysia and two in East Malaysia. Figure 4.1 on the next page is an illustration of the map of Malaysia.

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Figure 4.1

Map of Malaysia

In Peninsula Malaysia, the West Coast is the more developed side of Peninsular Malaysia, made up with the states of Perlis, Kedah, Penang, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Melaka. Kuala Lumpur is the capital city and main gateway into Malaysia with Putrajaya as the new administrative centre, are all located within this region. There are a few islands surrounding Peninsular Malaysia. In the upper north-west is the fabled island of Langkawi, and Pangkor on the west.

The East Coast, made up of the states of Kelantan, Pahang and Terengganu, is more rural, traditional and conservatively Muslim. The cluster islands off the coast here are the Perhentian, Redang and Kapas islands. In the South is the state of Johor and the idyllic island of Tioman.

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Some 800 kilometres to the east is East Malaysia, and the states of Sabah and Sarawak, which occupies the northern third of the island of Borneo, shared with Indonesia and the small kingdom of Brunei. Covered with tropical rain forests, it offers a variety of wildlife. It is populated by various native tribes that still practice a cultural lifestyle that remains unchanged especially in the interior regions. Off the upper western coast is the island of Labuan. On the north of Sabah is Layang-layang Island, and off the south eastern coast of Sabah is the world famous dive island of Sipadan.

The main focus of this research was initially to find out the generic structure of online Malaysian tourism advertorials. However, due to the nature of the existence of such texts, it is difficult to ignore the medium of how this online genre is available. It is also deemed necessary to look at the websites where these online tourism advertorials are located. In order to do so, this research also analysed the websites at a macro-textual level, specifically the homepages or main pages where the tourism advertorials are published. Hence, there are two sets of corpus collected for analysis on the textual perspective in this study. The first set of the textual data comprised of the homepages of the official Malaysian tourism organisations, and the online tourism advertorials form the second set of the textual data.

4.1.3.1 Homepages of Official Malaysian Tourism Organisations' Websites

As mentioned earlier in the Chapter Three, in order to account for the characteristics of digital genres or web-mediated texts, it is essential to incorporate the notion of 'medium' into the notion of 'genre'. The characteristics of the genre mediated on the Internet cannot be accurately accounted for if we simply analyse 'print-outs' of the web text and treat it as a static product and neglect the fact that the Internet as a medium has

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characteristics that influence and contribute to the way web-mediated genres look and are used. Therefore, in addition to a traditional genre model that analyses the structural organisation of texts, the notion of 'medium' should be incorporated into the notion of 'genre' when accounting for genres mediated on the Internet. This is because the Internet, as a medium, has a number of characteristics which significantly influence and contribute to the way web-mediated genres are presented and viewed.

In relation to this study which looks at online or web-mediated promotional texts, it is thus important to first understand the significance of the web-genre as an organisational principle. A website as a whole has generic features as well as comprises many more specific genres. The analysis of homepages should be carried out because the homepage is a functional component within the larger-scale structure of the website. The homepage is the starting point or front page of a website. Moreover, the homepage is the most important page of any website, getting more views than any other web page (Nielson & Tahir, 2002). It also has "the characteristics of a superordinate genre in its own right at the same time that many of its component parts are themselves distinctive mini-genres", such as linguistic, visual, musical and so on (Baldry and Thibault, 2005: 113).

Thus, in order to describe the online tourism advertorials, the researcher also analysed the homepages or main pages of *Tourism Malaysia*, Malaysia's official tourism organisation's website; its corporate website; and the websites of the official tourism boards' capital city and thirteen states of the country. This analysis seeks to identify the elements or contents (as in the components of the main pages, including the graphics, internal or external links, etc.) that are characteristic of tourism homepages, their functions and communicative purposes.

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The homepage corpus collected for this research is gathered from tourism websites. Due to the large volume of tourism websites available on the Internet, this study only focuses on the homepages of Malaysia's official tourism organisations' websites. The homepages include those from the websites of:

i. the Malaysian government tourism portal, *Tourism Malaysia*;
ii. *Tourism Malaysia*'s corporate website (linked mirror website);
iii. Malaysia's capital city, Kuala Lumpur; and
iv. all the thirteen states in Malaysia.

The sixteen homepages can be viewed in Appendix H.

4.1.3.2 Malaysian Online Tourism Advertorials

The main corpus for this research is advertorials gathered from the official Malaysian tourism websites identified above. Due to the large volume of web pages of tourism websites, this study only focuses on advertorials related to the tourist attractions and main selling points of the top four most visited states in the country (in 2009 and 2010) as reported by *Tourism Malaysia* for travel arrivals. The four states or city, with their respective number of tourist arrivals for 2009, are:

1. Kuala Lumpur - 15.7 million
2. Pahang - 9.7 million
3. Penang - 6.0 million
4. Sabah - 5.4 million

The tourism advertorials collected for this study are forty-nine relevant advertorials found in the web pages of six of the sixteen official Malaysian tourism organisations'

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websites mentioned in the sub-section above, namely the websites of *Tourism Malaysia*, *Tourism Malaysia Corporate* website, and the official state tourism websites of the identified top four most visited city/states in Malaysia. The advertorials, which are arranged according to the tourist attractions or five tourism themes (A, C, F, N, S – the alphabets denote the themes), have been included in Appendix I. The advertorials were selected based on the capital and states' main attractions or selling points as given by *Tourism Malaysia*. The selling points are:

1. Kuala Lumpur - shopping;
2. Pahang – nature and adventure;
3. Penang – food and beaches;
4. Sabah – nature, adventure and culture.

The tourist attractions and selling points, as in adventure, culture, food and beaches, nature, and shopping of the four destinations, are also the main attractions of Malaysia. In other words, those tourist attractions are also synonymous to what Malaysia is globally known for. A brief description of the four destinations is given below and in the next few pages that follows.

Kuala Lumpur

Internationally, Kuala Lumpur has been ranked fourth in *Euromonitor International*'s report on Top City Destination Ranking 2009, recording a total of 9,400,000 tourist arrivals in 2009, ahead of such popular destinations such as Paris, Hong, Kong, New York City and Dubai; while the *New York Times* has placed Kuala Lumpur as one of thirty-one places to visit in 2010.

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Situated at the juncture of two rivers, Kuala Lumpur which means 'muddy confluence' in Malay, was founded in 1857. With its looming skyscrapers, stellar cuisine and thumping night life, the Malaysian capital has emerged as one of Southeast Asia's most alluring metropolitan cities, offering all the amenities of a major. Kuala Lumpur is full of odd juxtapositions. Old cafes are tucked under gleaming expressways, towers of steel and glass, glitzy malls and leafy parks, all of which gives this city a cosmopolitan flair unrivalled in the region.

Pahang

Pahang is the largest state in Peninsular Malaysia. Nearly two-thirds of the state is enveloped in lush rainforest, making it a magnificent enclave of verdant greenery, exotic wildlife and natural treasures. Its magnificent natural attractions include the National Park or famously known as *Taman Negara*, a 130 million year-old rainforest as well as animal sanctuaries, parks, lakes and waterfalls. Other natural gems include *Endau-Rompin State Park* and *Tioman*, an idyllic island (Tourism Malaysia, 2009).

Penang

Penang was founded as a free port by the British in 1786. Occupying a position between India and East Asia, the island drew merchants and middlemen keen to make their fortunes. Chinese, Indians, Armenians, Arabs and more all traded alongside each other. With its racial and religious mix, and dedication to the pursuit of free trade, Penang was in many ways the first custom-made city of globalisation. The federal government has also spent liberally on bridges and the airport, making Penang better connected to the rest of Asia. The old George Town has been restored and refurbished, and this helped to bring in foreigners to live and work there (http://www.economist.com/node/21525968?frsc=dg%7Ca).

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The state consists of Penang Island, and a strip of the mainland known as *Seberang Prai*. Georgetown, its capital, is a fascinating metropolitan city with historical building and cultural landmarks. It is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage City. Besides her interesting heritage, Penang is also well known for her multi-ethnic and multi-cultural richness. The state is also famous for its beautiful beaches. Penang's northern shoreline characterised by expansive stretches of golden sand and glittering waters, is a vacation spot for foreign and local visitors alike. Visitors will enjoy the tropical sunshine, beautiful scenic views and the great varieties of delicious food.

Web portal Yahoo! ran an interesting story of one-of-a-kind islands entitled *10 Islands to Explore Before You Die* written by Gary McKechnie, a *Yahoo! Travel* writer. He ranks Penang, eighth on the list of the "must visit" places. The article featured Malaysia's unique fusion of cultures and flavours, especially Penang's popularity as a gastronomic haven with affordable Asian and European food choices. Penang is famous for delicious food, especially for its hawker and street food[4]. The writer even tagged Penang as "Malaysia's food capital" (http://travel.yahoo.com/p-interests-37926474).

Sabah

Sabah presents a wonderland of natural scenery, lush primary rainforest, vibrant coral reefs, and mysterious indigenous cultures. It is a playground for adventure seekers,

[4] For a view of Penang's attractions and world famous hawker food, watch the videos *I Love Penang Hawker Food 檳城美食 by YUFOO* at (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fadelHXJcM4), and *I Love Penang Hawker Food Take 2 檳城美食續集 by YUFOOD* at (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kb1-C62dvoE). The videos were produced by Dr Stanley Yu - a tourist originally from Hong Kong and now living in London, United Kingdom; who "fell in love with Penang, Malaysia". He uploaded the two videos on *YouTube* "just to show the world how great Penang is". The researcher came across the videos when reviewing the readers' comments section in response to an article, *36 Hours: Penang, Malaysia*, by Robyn Eckhardt, which was published online on 9 February 2012 in *The New York Times*' Travel section (http://travel.nytimes.com/2012/02/12/travel/36-hours-penang-malaysia.html). The videos and commentary were also cited here for an impartial opinion on the destination and its attractions as Dr. Yu is not a Malaysian.

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extreme sports enthusiasts, and those in search of the ultimate natural landscape. Sabah rewards those who venture here with a holiday in an unspoiled paradise.

Covering 73,711 sq. km (28,747 sq. miles) of the northern part of Borneo, the world's third-largest island, Sabah stretches from the South China Sea in the west to the Sulu Sea in the east, both seas containing an abundance of uninhabited islands, beaches, and pristine coral reefs bubbling with marine life. In between, more than half of the state is covered in ancient primary rainforest that's protected in national parks and forest reserves. In these forests, some rare species of mammals like the Sumatran rhino and herds of Asian pygmy elephant, the orangutan, proboscis monkey, gibbon, lemur, civet, Malaysian sun bear, and a host of other animals which can be seen on jungle treks. There are hundreds of bird species here, including the hornbills and herons that are only found in this part of the world.

Sabah's tallest peak is one of the highest mountains between the Himalayas and Irian Jaya. At 4,095m (13,432 ft.), it's the tallest in Malaysia, and a challenge to trek or climb. The state's interior has endless opportunities for jungle trekking, river rafting, mountain biking and four wheel drive exploration for every level of excitement, from soft adventure to extreme sports. This state holds not only mysterious wildlife and geography, but people as well. Sabahans count among their many ethnic groups some thirty-two different peoples whose cultures and traditions are vastly different from the rest of the world.

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4.2 Data Collection Procedures

This section will describe how the various data for this study specifically from the interviews, questionnaire, tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials were collected.

The procedure which the researcher went through in order to collect the relevant data was firstly by carrying out a survey to establish the uses of advertorials in promoting a product, service or brand. The outcome of the survey has been reported in Chapter Three of this thesis.

4.2.1 Interviews with Specialist Informants

Interviews with specialist informants were firstly carried out to find out the discourse community's practices. The views and comments from specialist informants, such as the advertisers or public relations officials from the tourism boards and website development companies, advertising agents, and copywriters were obtained via interviews. Before the interviews commenced, a letter which states the researchers' identity and research purpose as well as to seek cooperation from the relevant division of the tourism organisation from the Postgraduate Office to the relevant officials were obtained (Appendix J).

These specialist informants were then interviewed in order to seek pertinent information on online advertorials as a promotional genre and the processes involved in the production of such texts in the advertising profession and tourism industry. The interviews were carried out between 16 October 2009 and 30 April 2012. The interviews with the specialist informants were recorded, and the comments and

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explanations were noted down. The interviews with the seven specialist informants were then transcribed for analysis (Appendix L).

4.2.2 Dissemination of Questionnaire to Tourist Respondents

A questionnaire was also formulated (Appendix G) and administered to foreign and domestic tourist respondents to collect data on the socio-cognitive perspective of the genre which concerns information on the preferences of potential tourists that influences and shapes the construction of the tourism websites and online advertorials as a genre. A total of 117 copies of the questionnaire were disseminated, in both hardcopy as well as softcopy forms.

The hardcopy version of the questionnaire was given to tourists who were approached at a few tourist destinations around Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, such as the National Museum, shopping malls, Malaysian Tourist Information Centre (MATIC), and hotels, etc. The tourists were given a couple of days to respond to the questionnaire, and their responses were later collected from their hotels or received via self-addressed stamped envelopes. The softcopy version of the questionnaire was sent to tourists who have visited the country or different states of Malaysia, via email attachment. The softcopy version was sent to those tourists so as to give them the opportunity to view the official *Tourism Malaysia* website or any of the official state tourism websites of Malaysia, as mentioned in the questionnaire.

Although sixty-five responses were received, only the first sixty responses (from thirty foreign tourists and thirty domestic tourists) were used because the target number of responses was initially set at sixty. Moreover, two questionnaire responses were not

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considered as valid because the two respondents had not visited Malaysia or any of its states before.

4.2.3 Selection of Textual Data

In collecting the textual data, the researcher identified all the relevant official Malaysian tourism organisations' websites and downloaded screenshots of the main pages or homepages of these websites. Next, online tourism advertorials that are related to the top four most visited states in Malaysia were identified and collected for generic structure analysis. These advertorials pertain to the main tourist attractions of the respective states that were revealed by *Tourism Malaysia*, the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board. A detailed description of the textual data collection of the tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials is given in the following sub-sections.

4.2.3.1 Homepages of Official Malaysian Tourism Organisations' Websites

First, the researcher collected the macro genre of the tourism websites by downloading and printing the homepages of the sixteen official Malaysian tourism organisations' websites, comprising of the country's official tourism portal *Tourism Malaysia*, the corporate website of that tourism portal, as well as the official government tourism websites of the capital city and thirteen states of the country (Appendix H).

A Uniform Resource Locator (URL) is a Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) that specifies where an identified resource is available and the mechanism for retrieving it (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uniform_Resource_Locator). It is the "address" of a web page on the World Wide Web. The homepages or main pages of Malaysia's official

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tourism website, *Tourism Malaysia*, its corporate website, *Kuala Lumpur* which is the capital of Malaysia, and the thirteen Malaysian states' official tourism websites were downloaded for analysis. The URL of the sixteen official Malaysian tourism organisation websites that were downloaded in order to analyse their main pages are:

1. Tourism Malaysia: http://www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my/
2. Tourism Malaysia Corporate: http://corporate.tourism.gov.my/
3. Kuala Lumpur: http://www.visitkl.gov.my/
4. Perlis: http://www.perlis.gov.my/
5. Kedah: http://www.visitkedah.com.my/
6. Penang: http://www.tourismpenang.gov.my/
7. Perak: http://www.peraktourism.com/
8. Selangor: http://www.tourismselangor.gov.my/
9. Negeri Sembilan: http://www.ns.gov.my/tourism
10. Malacca: http://www.melakatourism.gov.my/
11. Johor: http://www.tourismjohor.com.my/
12. Pahang: http://www.tourismpahang.com/
13. Kelantan: http://www.tic.kelantan.gov.my
14. Terengganu: http://www.tourism.terengganu.gov.my/
15. Sabah: http://www.sabahtourism.com/
16. Sarawak: http://www.sarawaktourism.com/

The empirical study of homepages from a genre perspective is made difficult by the ephemeral nature of the pages on the Web. Web pages seem to change and disappear unpredictably. They change very often in order to be current and to incorporate the ever-changing information and latest news, although the general layout and facts may be more permanent. Thus, the researcher had to collect screenshots of the homepages of

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the official Malaysian tourism organisations' website before they are changed and removed forever from the World Wide Web. The official Malaysian tourism organisations' main pages or homepages were downloaded from the Internet between July 2010 and November 2010.

4.2.3.2 Malaysian Online Tourism Advertorials

The researcher then randomly selected forty-nine relevant advertorials found in the web pages of *Tourism Malaysia*'s official website, its corporate website and the identified top four most visited city or states in Malaysia, based on the country's main tourist attractions (e.g. activities, etc,) as well as the capital's and respective states' selling points as revealed by *Tourism Malaysia*, the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board. The online tourism advertorials collected for generic structure analysis, which were retrieved from the above mentioned official Malaysian tourism organisations' websites, are those which appeared on the Internet from 29 April 2009 to 28 January 2011 (Appendix I). Only online tourism advertorials that relate to Malaysia's tourist attractions, such as the tourism themes of adventure, culture, food, nature and shopping; which also concern the top four most visited destinations in Malaysia, as in Kuala Lumpur, Pahang, Penang and Sabah, were collected for analysis. An example of a screenshot of one of the advertorials as how it appeared on the computer screen is given in Appendix K. In addition to downloading these forty-nine online advertorials, they were printed out for ease of analysis.

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4.3 Methods of Data Analysis

This research employed qualitative and quantitative research methods in analysing the interviews, questionnaire and textual data. This study includes a field survey which employs semi-structured interviews, a self-administered questionnaire and the analysis of homepages and online promotional texts. Although the approach to the study is mainly qualitative, the findings from the questionnaire and textual data are also presented in a quantitative manner using frequency counts and percentages to report on the options which have been selected by the respondents of the questionnaire, and the elements and structural organisation of the textual data.

4.3.1 Interviews – Ethnographic and Socio-critical Perspectives Analysis

The interview questions and responses from the specialist informants were transcribed for analysis. The analysis of responses to the interview questions is based on a qualitative approach. The findings from the interviews with the specialist informants were then interpreted and analysed in a qualitative manner.

4.3.2 Questionnaire – Socio-cognitive Perspective Analysis

Although the approach to the study is mainly qualitative, the findings from the questionnaire are presented in a quantitative manner using frequency counts and percentages to report on the options in the questionnaire which have been selected by the respondents. The findings from the questionnaire were then manually tabulated on a spreadsheet using Microsoft Excel for analysis. In analysing the data obtained from the questionnaire, the responses to the options of the questions are regarded as practically significant if the options have been selected by more than 50% of the respondents. This

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figure will indicate that the factor or feature that has obtained an outcome of 50% and above will be significant in having an effect on the issue being investigated, and vice versa. Finally, the results of the findings from the questionnaire were then analysed and discussed in a qualitative manner.

4.3.3 Textual and Visual Data Analysis

The study primarily attempted to find out the move structure and steps of the relevant tourism advertorials related to the main attractions of the four states with the highest tourist arrivals which are gathered from the webpages of the official Malaysian tourism websites. Due to the placement of these online advertorials, this study also analysed the elements found in the homepages of these official Malaysian tourism websites, and their functions in realising the communicative purposes of the genre at the macro-textual level.

In this section, the analytical models used for analysing the generic features of the textual and visual data from the tourism homepages and online advertorials are discussed in detail. The textual data was first analysed to identify the elements and features of the homepages of the official Malaysian tourism websites and their functions. This was followed by analysing the rhetorical structures or moves of the online tourism advertorials and identifying their communicative purposes. Both the textual data were then analysed for their compositional structure and on the visual elements of the promotional genre, although references will only be made to audio and graphic elements where applicable.

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4.3.3.1 Functions of the Official Malaysian Tourism Homepages

The sixteen homepages or main pages of Malaysia's official tourism website, *Tourism Malaysia*, its corporate website, the capital's and thirteen states' tourism websites as identified in section 4.2.3.1, and which can be viewed in Appendix H, were firstly analysed to identify the elements (as in the components of the main pages, such as graphics, internal or external links, etc.) that are characteristic of tourism homepages and their functions.

In order to analyse the homepages methodically and systematically, the analysis was done according to grid sections starting from the top (left to right) to the bottom (left to right) of the webpage. The diagram in Figure 4.2 on the next page illustrates an example of the sequence of grid sections (from 1 to 10) that were analysed for the homepage of *Tourism Malaysia*'s official website.

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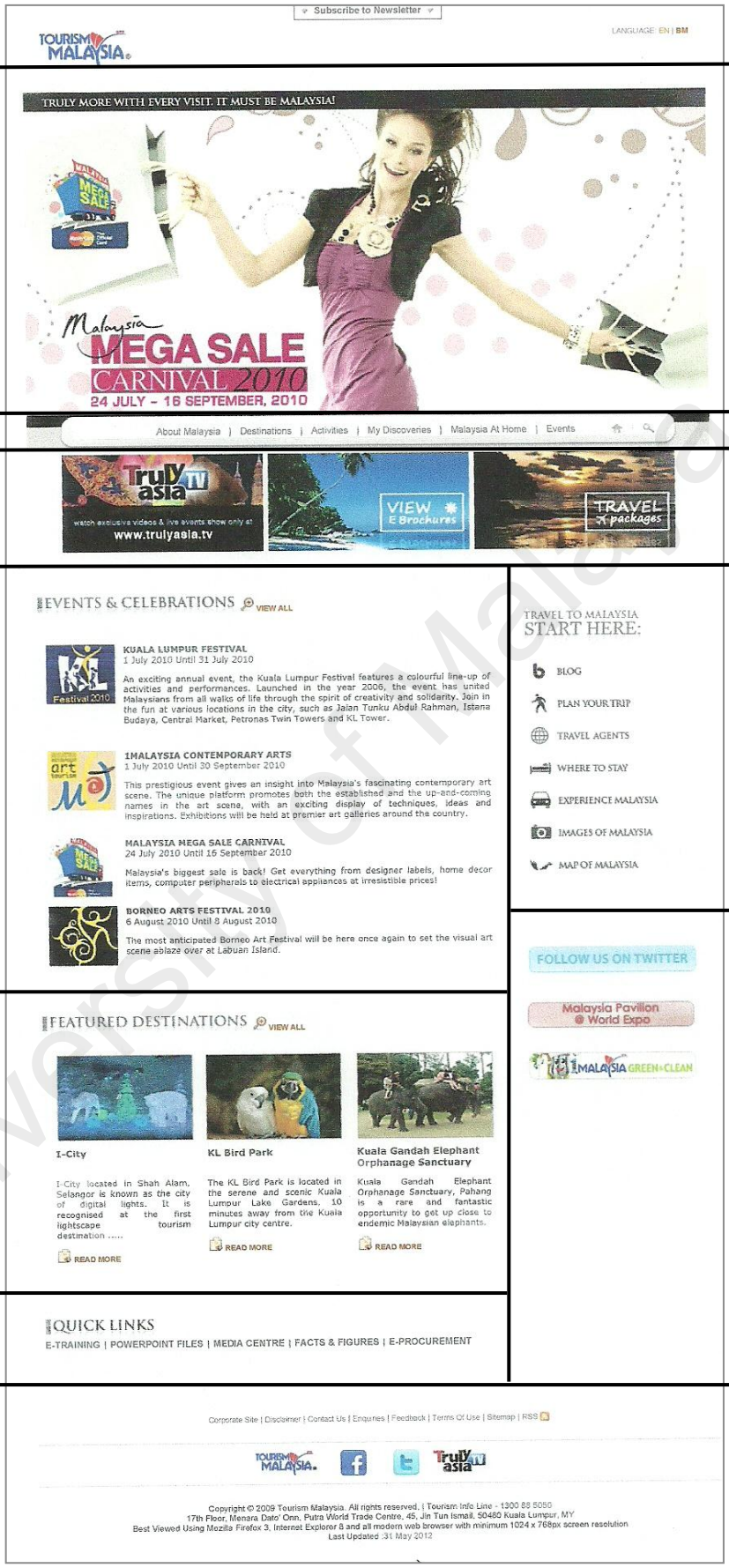

Figure 4.2

Sequence of Grid Sections for Analysis

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To decompose the elements of the homepages, all content was identified and analysed according to the grid sections based on form, functionality and purpose. Figure 4.3, on the next page, shows an example of the identification of the elements and forms in the tourism homepages, i.e. *Tourism Malaysia*'s homepage. The communicative purposes based on those elements and forms identified in the tourism homepage genre (i.e. *Tourism Malaysia*'s homepage) are explained and exemplified in Figure 4.4 on the page that follows.

The elements or contents found in the Malaysian tourism homepages that were analysed were classified according to their functions and communicative purposes. The analytical model used for the classification of the elements and contents of the Malaysian tourism homepages is the one proposed by Marco (2002), which was based on her study of corporate homepages and taking into consideration Dillon & Gushrowski's (2000) analysis of personal homepages. Marco's (2002) model was selected for this study because she also examined corporate homepages in her study, which was similar to the homepage data of the present study. This model classifies elements that occurred in corporate homepages into four groups according to the following functions:

- Creating a positive image
- Introducing and offering products and services
- Strengthening the relationship with the potential customers
- Giving information about the webpage/website

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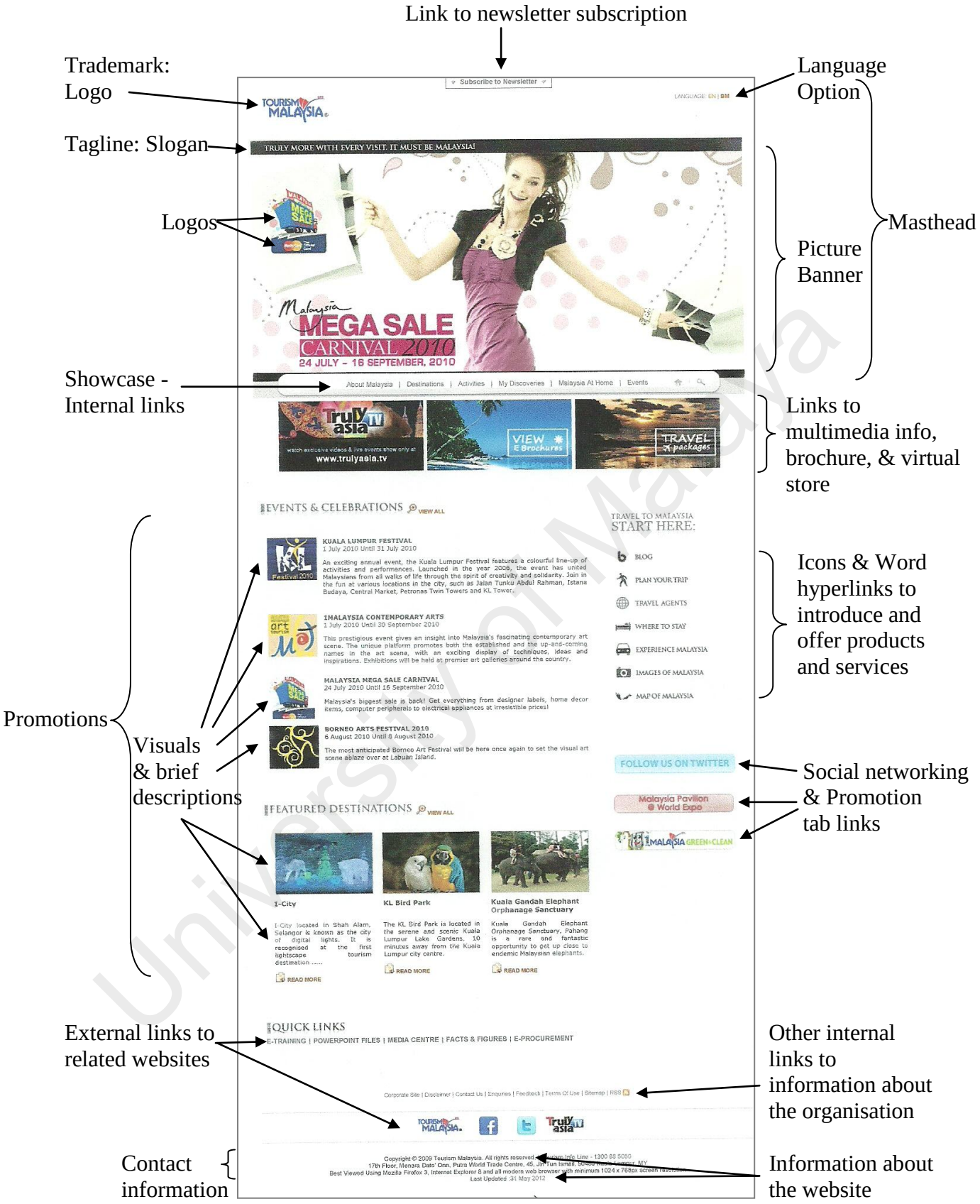

Figure 4.3

Elements and Forms in Tourism Organisation Homepages

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Figure 4.4

Communicative Purposes of the Tourism Homepage Genre

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4.3.3.2 Move Structure of the Malaysian Online Tourism Advertorials

At the micro-textual level, this study also analysed the moves and steps of the advertorials found in the national tourism website of Malaysia, *Tourism Malaysia*, *Tourism Malaysia Corporate* website and the four official tourism websites of the capital and states identified earlier, which describes the main selling points or tourist attractions of the country. It also analysed the visual elements of the promotional genre although references are only made to audio and graphic elements where applicable. The socio-cultural context in the production of these advertorials was considered so as to identify and contrast them in producing effective online tourism advertorials.

Only the advertorials, excluding the mastheads and menus on the top, sides and bottom of the advertorials, were extracted for analysis. An example of an advertorial that was extracted for analysis, which was taken from a webpage of *Tourism Malaysia*'s website, is shown in the Figure 4.5 on the next page. This advertorial is the same one given in Appendix K, which is the screenshot of the webpage as how it appeared on the computer screen.

Similarly to the tourism homepages, the analysis of the online tourism advertorials was done according to grid sections starting from the top (left to right) to the bottom (left to right) of the advertorials. The diagram in Figure 4.5 also illustrates an example of the sequence of grid sections (from 1 to 5) that were analysed for the online advertorial.

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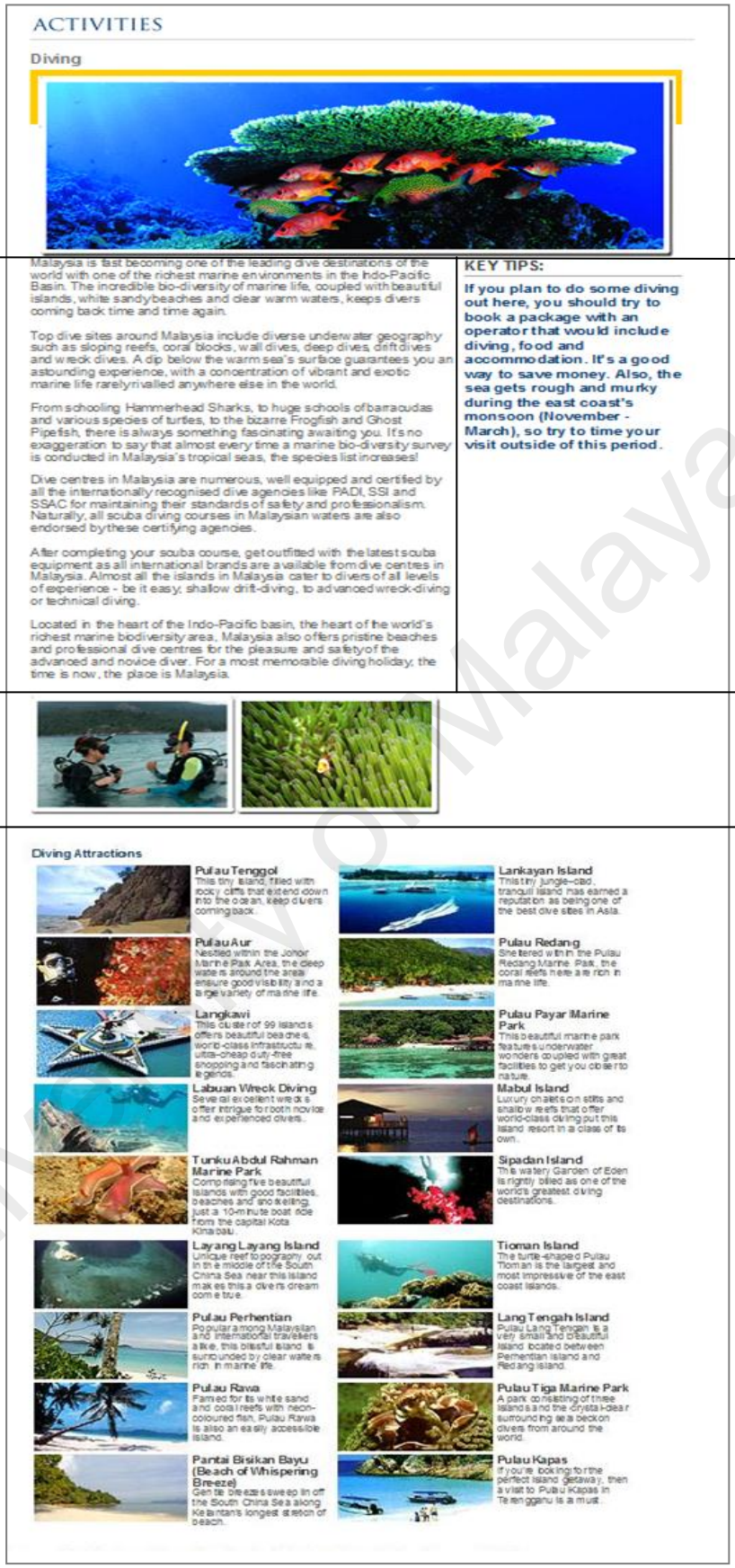

Figure 4.5

An Advertorial Extracted from a Webpage in *Tourism Malaysia*'s Website

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After ascertaining the corpus based on the top four most visited states in Malaysia and their tourist attractions, the researcher proceeded to identify the move structure of the advertorials in accordance to the move structure frameworks employed in the study. The analysis is based on a combination of Kathpalia's (1992) nine-move and Bhatia's (1993 & 2004) seven-move analytical models of the cognitive structures for advertising discourse of advertisements and promotional letters as presented in Chapter Two. A comparison of the two models is provided in the table below.

Table 4.1

Comparison of Rhetorical Moves Structure Models

No.	Description of Moves	Kathpalia (1992)	Bhatia (1993, 2004)
1	Headlines (for reader attraction)	Move 1	
2	Targeting the market	Move 2	
3	Justifying the product/service (a) Indicating importance or need of the product/service, and/or (b) Establishing a niche	Move 3 Sub-move 3(a) Sub-move 3(a)	
4	Detailing/Introducing the product/service (a) Identifying/Offering the product/service (b) Describing/Detailing the product/service/offer (c) Indicating value of the product/service/offer	Move 4 Sub-move 4(a) Sub-move 4(b) Sub-move 4(c)	Move 2 Sub-move 2(i) Sub-move 2(ii) Sub-move 2(iii)
5	Establishing credentials	Move 5	Move 1
6	Celebrity or typical user endorsements	Move 6	
7	Offering incentives	Move 7	Move 3
8	Using pressure tactics	Move 8	Move 6
9	Soliciting response	Move 9	Move 5
10	Enclosing documents		Move 4
11	Ending politely		Move 7

The two models have used a slightly different labelling or description of some of the moves and sub-moves. The sequencing or numbering of the moves also differs. An explanation of the moves and sub-moves listed in the table above is provided below.

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1. Headlines (for reader attraction)

The use of headlines functions to grab the attention of the reader in order to prod them to read further. This move can be realised in terms of lexico-grammatical resources and in recent years, the use of multimodality has become increasingly obvious.

2. Targeting the market

In business communication, a message is written with a particular target market in mind (Kothler et al, 1999). Kathpalia (1992) states that this move can be fulfilled by directly addressing the target market identified by sex, age, education, degree of specialisation, profession, social roles, interest and others. In short, it addresses the sort of customers who need the product or service, and to whom the product or service is important.

3. Justifying the product or service

This move functions to influence the potential customers into believing that the product or service being promoted is specifically for them. According to Kathpalia (1992), there are two strategies for accomplishing this purpose:

(a) <u>By indicating the importance or need of the product or service</u>

This sub-move refers to the individual needs of the potential customer. It is accomplished by means of reasoning out the need for possessing the product. It states why the product or service is important for the potential customer, and what they will gain if they were to purchase the product or service.

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(b) Establishing a niche

This sub-move presents real-life problems and the answer to them is the product or service advertised. The solution to these problems is the niche or strength of the product or service, which advertisers term as the Unique Selling Point (USP).

4. Detailing/Introducing the product or service/offer

Kathpalia (1992) and Bhatia (1993) have identified this move and the first two sub-moves slightly differently although they have a similar description of the move and its sub-moves. They indicated that this move can be realised by:

(a) identifying/offering the product or service

(b) describing/detailing the product or service/offer

(c) indicating value of the product or service/offer

(a) Identifying/Offering the product or service

The function of this sub-move is to introduce the product, and this can be done by simply naming the product.

(b) Describing/Essential detailing of the product or service/offer

According to Bhatia (2004), offering a product description that is good, positive and favourable is one of the most important moves in an advertising discourse or a promotional discourse. This is often achieved through the generic values of description and evaluation. Product description is realised by giving a description of the features of the product or service. This sub-move will further persuade the potential customer to purchase the product, service or offer.

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(c) Indicating value of the product or service/offer

This sub-move may be achieved in two ways, "by a straightforward evaluation or by translating the chief features of the product or service into concrete consumer benefits" (Kathpalia, 1992: 187 – 188). This move can be accomplished by creating a positive image of the product, service or offer, and giving "an adequately relevant, positive and a good indication of its value to its intended audience (Bhatia, 1993: 66), such as emphasizing the thoroughness, flexibility and that the product/service can be tailored to suit the customer's requirements.

5. Establishing credentials

This move promotes the company in order to gain potential customers' trust in the products and services. This can be achieved by referring to the expertise of the company in meeting the needs of the potential customer (Bhatia, 1993). Kathpalia (1992) has identified three strategies or sub-moves, all of which are relevant for the present study to establish credentials.

(a) Identification of the company, product or service

This is a further positive information about the company, product or service. This sub-move can also be realised by the use of a positive and well-established track record of the company in the market (Bhatia, 2004).

(b) Product/service guarantee/warranty

The guarantee or warranty includes the after-sales service and the guarantee of quality on related services rendered.

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(c) Provision of company profile

This refers to the long-established reputation of the company in providing the product or service (Bhatia, 2004).

6. Celebrity or typical user endorsements

Kathpalia (1992) states that the function of this move is to make the advertising message more convincing. This is achieved by making use of a third person to support the idea presented in the text, which includes:

- acknowledgement by celebrities or public figures,
- testimonies of satisfied consumers and positive reviews,
- acceptance, support or approval of authorities,
- official or public citation of achievements and seals of approval.

This move may be realised by using images of the celebrity, public figure or satisfied consumers to gain the potential tourists' positive view of the product and service.

7. Offering incentives

This move attempts to tempt or further attract the potential customer into purchasing the product or service by making the offer more attractive by offering an incentive, such as:

- promotions
- free gifts
- discounts
- special offers
- rebates
- trial offer

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- other benefits

These incentives are included in order to persuade the prospective customer to seriously consider purchasing the product or service being offered.

8. Using pressure tactics

This move aims to speed up the potential customer's decision by imposing certain constraints on the product or service being described. This move gives the cause and negative effects to pressure the potential customer if he/she does not purchase the product or service. Its function is to prompt the already inclined or half-inclined customer to expedite his/her decision about the product or service being promoted. This is generally realised in the form of an offer of some additional savings or gains if the customer decides to buy the product or use the service before a specific deadline (e.g. only limited units left, on a first-come-first-served basis).

This move can be realised by imposing certain constraints on the product or service being promoted, which may be presented in the following forms:

(a) Time constraints on the offer or availability of the product or service,

(b) Quantity constraints on the limited availability of the stocks or service,

(c) Emotional blackmail on a particular market segment,

(d) Terms and conditions of the offer or package.

9. Soliciting response

Promotional texts are never considered complete without soliciting response (Bhatia, 2004). The communicative purpose of this move is to persuade the potential customer

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to take action or engage the service by encouraging them to continue further communication. The inclusion of this move can be as follows:

(a) Contact information of advertiser, such as

- address
- specific telephone and/or fax number
- email
- website (and more recently, the creative new technological use of a QR Code which potential consumers can scan with a smartphone or tablet and they will be linked to the company's website and view it online)
- name of the person who will be willing to answer any queries that the reader may have about the product or service

The above methods function to invite the potential customer to get in touch with the advertiser or to participate in the communication.

This move of 'establishing contact' provides contact information (i.e. address, telephone, fax and email) of the company, with the purpose of selling the company's name, attracting more customers, generating more business leads, promoting the company's products and services, and ultimately, helping to gain more returns on investment (Lepcha, 2006: 1). Readers may look for someone who claims accountability and responsibility for the content. In addition, the provision of the organisation's e-mail address, telephone, fax and physical address can enhance the readers' confidence in the company's product and service as a source of relevant and valid information.

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10. Enclosing document

Bhatia (2004) notices that promotional genres especially typical promotional letters enclose supporting documents, such as in the form of supporting brochures and leaflets. Even the job application letter, which is a form of self-promotion, encloses the applicant's curriculum vitae or résumé with the letter.

11. Ending politely

It is a formality of ending communication on a pleasant note, especially in letters. The writer ends the advertisement or promotional letter politely, pleasantly and courteously as business can flourish by maintaining friendly, courteous and pleasant relations.

4.3.3.3 Multimodality of the Textual Data

The main focus of this study is to examine the organisational patterns of the advertorials found in the official Malaysian tourism web pages, at the micro-textual level. However, due to the context in which the discourse is presented, the multimodal and semiotic characteristics of the discourse cannot be ignored. Building on Bhatia, Flowerdew and Jones's (2008) approaches to discourse analysis, other than Bhatia's (2004) multidimensional and multi-perspective approach in critical genre analysis that examines the generic structures of the promotional web genre, Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996, 2006) multimodal framework for analysing compositional structure and visual images is also adopted to investigate the macro structure and multimodal features of tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials. This is because the layout and visual images also create meaning in communication.

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Thus, in addition to examining the contents of the tourism homepages and the rhetorical structures of the online tourism advertorials, this study also attempts to investigate the non-linguistic features of the texts at the macro and micro-textual levels by looking at how the layout and pictures used in the homepages and online advertorials serve to realise the persuasive communicative purposes, based on a multimodal analysis. Both the genre and multimodal analyses allow the study to reveal a more comprehensive finding that can give a more accurate and reliable account for the web-mediated genre.

A multimodal discourse can be examined for its 'representational', 'interpersonal' and 'compositional' meanings (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). The representational meanings concern the representation of the world. They are revealed through narrative and conceptual images. Interpersonal meanings refer to the social relationship between the represented participants, as well as between the participants and the viewer. Contact, distance, point of view and modality contribute to the realization of interpersonal meanings. Compositional meanings are the relations of the representational and interactive meanings of an image to each other. They are realized through the interrelated systems of information value, framing and salience.

Although a text can be analysed from the three metafunctions, the present study only concentrates on analysing the textual data from the textual metafunction or compositional meaning of the genre. This metafunction is selected as the focus of analysis because it brings together the individual parts of the representational and interactional meanings into a recognisable whole of the communicative event. The interrelated systems of the compositional metafunction can be used to characterise the representational and interactive meanings of spatial composition. These systems can apply to individual visual images or to combinations of elements such as in the case of

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the present study where a homepage consists of textual information, logos, photographs, headings and content indicators; and the advertorials which contain product descriptions, photographs, colours, etc. The ways that the elements are made to attract attention, the way they are arranged, and the way they are connected or separated from each other give the overall meaning of those elements and of the composition as a whole.

The following compositional meaning framework by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) which describes the aspects of the spatial organisation of information and pictures is adopted for analysing the multimodal nature of the tourism homepages and advertorials in this study.

(a) Informational Value

The approach to genre analysis has been designed mostly for linear texts. However, online texts are not necessarily linear. There is also a spatial element to their organisation, through the use of layout. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) term 'information value' as the placement of elements in the particular areas in the visual space that endows them with particular meanings. This notion suggests that specific semiotic values are realised by particular configurational and locational properties of the elements that carry those values. Figure 4.6 on the next page illustrates the 'zones' of information layout which "accords specific values to the elements placed within it" (Kress and van Leeuwen, (1996) that are distributed across the page.

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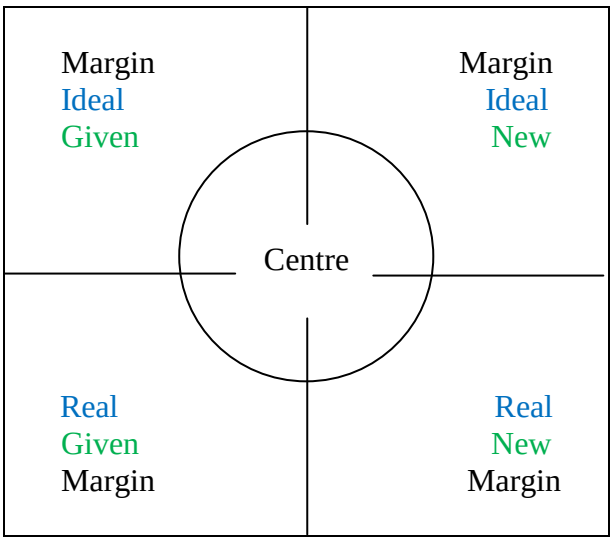

Figure 4.6

Dimensions of visual space

Kress and van Leeuwen (1990 & 1996) provide rules governing the use of horizontal and vertical axes to distribute visual information. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) recognise three key principles, which can combine in various ways. The information may be organised:

1. along a horizontal axis, with one element (e.g. a picture) on the left, and another (e.g. text) on the right. The left element is then presented as 'Given', that is positioned as something already known to the reader or viewer, while the information on the right is presented as 'New', as something not yet known to the reader or viewer, and hence as something to which attention must be paid, and which is at least in principle negotiable or contestable in the larger communicative context.
2. vertically, with two different elements positioned one above the other. The information on top is presented as 'Ideal', that is the more abstract, idealized or generalised essence of the message, and the information below as 'Real', that is the more realistic (e.g. photographs as evidence) and practical (e.g. consequences), and/or more detailed and specific information (e.g. details).

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3. concentrically. In this case, the 'Centre' contains the information that is presented as the core, and the 'Margins' contain information that is presented as, in some sense, subservient or complimentary to the 'Centre', and deriving its identity and meaning from it.

Combinations of the three principles are also possible. **Triptych** is when an element is placed centrally with information on a vertical axis, or horizontally; whereby the central element has a mediating role or can be a central focus of the information before and after it; or the sequence of activity or frames. They also suggested that the most 'salient' information tends to be in the top right and the least 'salient' in the bottom left.

(b) Framing

The term 'framing' indicates that different elements in a visual composition can either be represented as belonging together, or given separate identities. How the elements are framed affects the degree they are meant to be read as whether they are connected or separated. Frames can show boundaries or segregation, but also create integration between the elements within the boundary, while their absence can show natural connections.

Connection can be created in many ways through similarities and rhymes of colour and form, through vectors that connect elements, or through the absence of frame lines or empty spaces. Detachment can be achieved through frame lines and empty spaces between the elements (i.e. edges of photographs), through contrast or discontinuity of colour, form (i.e. size, shape and regularity), or any visual feature. Framing can also be realised by the use of colour which can either make distinct elements cohere (e.g.

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through recurring colours) or contrast (e.g. through contrastive colours). Hence, the broad meaning potential and hierarchy of salience can be made more specific through the context and methods of framing selected.

Van Leeuwen (2005) suggests that it is possible to create an inventory of terms to describe different types of framing and connectivity, and suggested some categories of describing the semiotic potential for different kinds of framing or linking. However, the semiotic meaning potentials are not fixed as they are dependent on the use of other semiotic tools too. The categories of association for describing the various types of framing are segregation, separation, integration, overlap, rhyme and contrast (van Leewen, 2005).

(c) Salience

This term indicates that some elements can be made to stand out or be more noticeable than others. It refers to the ability of elements in capturing the viewers' attention, and indicates the most important elements in the visual composition. Salience can be achieved through many different ways through symbols, size, colour, tone, focus, foregrounding, overlap, repetition, etc. A hierarchy of salience can be created by the different degrees of the factors that interact. The larger the element, the greater the salience; strong, saturated and conspicuous colours have greater salience than faint colours; a high tonal contrast has greater salience; an element that is well-defined or sharp has more salience than a blurred element; an element in the foreground has greater salience than an element in the background; and the element that overlaps other elements in the composition is the most salient. In short, it identifies the most important elements in the composition.

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(d) Modality

Modality is the social semiotic approach to the question of truth. The term 'modality' refers to the semiotic resources for indicating how true or how real communication content is to be taken. It refers to the reliability of the visual. Images with higher modality appear more real than those with lower modality. The modality markers or visual cues indicate the "realness" of a visual, and they comprise of colour saturation, differentiation and modulation; contextualisation; depth; and illumination. A full colour image denotes high modality, while a black and white image suggests low modality. Images that have a fully conceived background indicate high modality compared to images with the background completely absent. When an image has depth, it has high modality compared to an image without any perspective of depth. An image that has illumination or representation of light and shade, it indicates high modality, as opposed to a picture absent of light and shade which conveys low modality.

In order to ensure reliability, analytical triangulation on the textual and visual data was also conducted by two lecturers cum researchers who are involved in the area of genre analysis to double check or cross examine the findings of the textual data. This inter-rater reliability was carried out on the textual and multimodal data analysis in order to verify that the elements and moves identified from the textual data, and the features and functions recognised from the visuals are consistent with expectations. This is also to ensure that the findings of this study are accurate and more reliable.

After the analysis on the sixteen tourism homepages and the selected forty-nine online tourism advertorials were carried out, the findings from both the textual data were

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manually tabulated on a spreadsheet using the Microsoft Excel software for quantitative analysis of frequency counts and percentages for the homepage elements and advertorial move structure occurrences. The frequencies of the homepage elements and individual moves in the advertorials were recorded to determine whether a particular move occurred frequently enough to be considered 'obligatory'. In this regard, a cut-off frequency of 50% was established as a measure of move stability. This means that an element or a move must occur in 50% of the homepages or advertorials under study before it was labelled as a significant element or an 'obligatory' move. Alternatively, an element or a move is considered 'optional' if the frequency of a move fell below 50% of the total homepages or advertorials.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has provided detailed information on how the present research has determined the data for collection, collected the relevant data and analysed the data to obtain significant findings related to the various perspectives of the online tourism genre as outlined in the conceptual framework presented in Chapter Two of this thesis. This chapter has also provided an explicit picture of how the findings as reported and presented in the following chapters were obtained.

The findings of the four perspectives based on the online tourism genre are reported according to the sequence of the data obtained and analysed in the study, beginning with the ethnographic and socio-critical perspectives which reflect the relevant discourse communities' efforts in producing effective promotional genres for tourism promotion and advertising. This is followed by the report on the findings from the socio-cognitive perspective of the genre, and ends with the reportage of the findings from the textual

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perspective of the generic structure and multimodality of the tourism homepages and web-mediated tourism advertorial genre.

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES OF WEB-MEDIATED TOURISM ADVERTORIALS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter reports on the findings from the ethnographic and socio-critical perspectives of web-mediated tourism advertorials based on the data gathered from the interviews with seven specialist informants.

Data on the ethnographic perspective of the genre were obtained from the specialist informants of the tourism industry discourse community or tourism advertisers and editors. They are considered to be able to provide information from the tourism disciplinary culture or ethnographic perspective of the web-mediated tourism advertorials. The ethnographic perspective describes and interprets the narrative accounts of active professionals, as in the practices, values, and/or beliefs of the tourism or main discourse community (Bhatia, 2004). This ethnographic perspective investigation focuses on the typical sites of interaction, which is highlighted by the understanding of the practitioner advice and guidance, social structure, interactions, beliefs, goals of the tourism professional community, physical circumstances influencing genre construction and the modes available for genre construction and communication (Bhatia, 2004; Scollon, 1998).

Other specialist informants are from the advertising industry discourse community, and they comprise of a website developer, copywriters and an audio-visual producer of online promotional genres. These advertising industry specialist informants who are engaged by the tourism professional community to produce tourism websites and write

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advertorials, are considered to be able to provide information from the advertising disciplinary culture or socio-critical perspective of the web-mediated tourism advertorial genre. The advertising discourse community is able to creatively exploit the information supplied by the tourism professional community in producing effective tourism websites and advertorials. Hence, the advertising discourse community represents the socio-critical perspective of the genre in that it has gone beyond the typical professional or disciplinary practices to include more general social practices and motives (Bhatia, 2004:162) with the inclusion of the advertising institutional and discoursal practices in the texts' construction.

The findings from the data gathered from the ethnographic and socio-critical perspectives are analysed to answer the first research question: What are the communicative purposes of tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials and whether these purposes are the factors that influence the shaping of the generic structure of the web genre?

The data obtained from the interviews with the seven specialist informants were transcribed (Appendix L) for ease of analysis. The findings from the interviews were then interpreted by the researcher and analysed in a qualitative manner. A summary of the results and interpretation of the findings based on the data are also included in this chapter.

5.1 Findings and Discussion

Views and comments from specialist informants, such as advertisers or communication and publicity officials from the tourism boards and website development companies,

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advertising agents, and copywriters were obtained via interviews. These specialist informants were interviewed in order to seek pertinent information on the aims of producing online advertorials as an emerging advertising genre and the processes involved in the production of such texts in the tourism industry and advertising profession. The transcriptions from the outcome of the interviews with the seven specialist informants have been included in Appendix L.

The findings from the data collected from the interviews are presented, analysed and discussed in the next two sub-sections – the ethnographic perspective and the socio-critical perspective.

5.1.1 The Ethnographic Perspective

This section of the thesis reports on the findings from the interviews with three tourism specialist informants – the head or chief editor, and an editor or writer from the communications and publicity division of the national tourism organisation (NTO) of Malaysia, *Tourism Malaysia*; and an online tourism travel writer. The editors from *Tourism Malaysia* also write the media releases which make up part of the textual data in the study. These three specialist informants represent the ethnographic perspective of the genre, as in the tourism industry discourse community or tourism advertisers. Hence, they are considered to be able to provide information from the tourism disciplinary culture or ethnographic perspective of the web-mediated tourism advertorials. This ethnographic perspective describes and interprets the practices, values, and/or beliefs of the tourism discourse community. The findings from the interviews with these tourism specialist informants are interpreted and analysed below.

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5.1.1.1 Head of the Editorial Unit, Communications and Publicity Division, Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (*Tourism Malaysia*)

The Head of the Editorial Unit, Communications and Publicity Division of *Tourism Malaysia*, the official online tourism website of Malaysia was interviewed on 10 June 2010 to get some relevant information about the promotional texts published on the website. She also functions as one of the editors of the unit.

As Head of the Editorial Unit, she disclosed that the unit's main function is to generate editorial materials to promote Malaysia as a preferred holiday, and 'Meetings, I*ncentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions'* (MICE) destination internationally and domestically - i.e. media features, media releases, media information - for Malaysian media as well as *Tourism Malaysia* overseas offices to generate publicity on Malaysia in their respective market places.

The objectives of producing such materials are in accordance with the national tourism organisations' mission statement which is to:

- promote Malaysia as an outstanding tourist destination by showcasing Malaysia's unique wonders, attractions and cultures;
- develop domestic tourism; and
- enhance Malaysia's share of the market for meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE).

The organisation's ultimate goal is to increase the number of foreign tourists to Malaysia via their promotional materials, and extend the average length of their stay, with the aim to increase Malaysia's tourism revenue by making the tourism industry a

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major contributor to the socio-economic development of the country. It is also hoped that tourism and its related industries would help promote new investments in the country, and provide increased employment opportunities.

The online advertorials which *Tourism Malaysia* terms as media features, media information and releases, produced by their Editorial Unit can be viewed at their online media centre at http://corporate.tourism.gov.my/mediacentre.asp. The textual data of this study comprise some of these online advertorials which were analysed for their generic moves or structural organisation. Other than those, the Editorial Unit also prepares speeches and interview answers for senior officers of *Tourism Malaysia* and the Malaysian Ministry of Tourism.

This informant also revealed that the editors in her unit at *Tourism Malaysia* are also involved in the writing of advertorials and advertisements to promote a tourism destination, and the selection of visuals/pictures for the promotional text which they are working on. The advertorial space is negotiated together with the advertisement commitment. In some cases, the advertorials are drafted by the publication based on the editors' inputs. The purpose of publishing such promotional materials as press releases, editorials and advertorials in a tourism website is to inform the media and generate publicity on Malaysia as a preferred tourist destination. They are also produced to inform the public on new tourism products and events, and *Tourism Malaysia*'s promotional activities through *Tourism Malaysia*'s online media centre. According to this informant, the information that should be included as the content of online tourism advertorials are tourism products and events that would create people's interest on Malaysia.

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Specifically on the subject of who is responsible for writing the hardcopy brochure or booklet (e.g. the *Malaysia Travel Guide* – Sept. 2009 edition) produced by *Tourism Mal*aysia for distribution at tourist information centres, hotels, etc; and the information articles (e.g. description of *Acitivities / Diving,* etc) and all the contents on the *Tourism Mal*aysia website, she states that the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB) or popularly known as *Tourism Malaysia* has a special division, the Marketing Support Division which handles the production of the brochures. There are a pool of writers and a production team from that division that produces those brochures. They also select the pictures, which come together with the descriptions. Most of the materials on the website are taken from those brochures. The Information Technology Division then manages the overall *Tourism Mal*aysia website.

Although much information and pictures can be obtained from the respective state tourism boards, the editors and writers actually go to those places that they are writing about to gather information and experience the places or activities. According to the editors of the Editorial Unit, they can write better "with feelings and passion upon visiting the respective places personally". These editors are occasionally sent for courses to brush up on how to write the information articles, media releases, advertorials, etc. Nevertheless, almost all the writers in the unit have had experience working as writers/journalists in publishing companies and newspapers.

5.1.1.2 Editor of the Editorial Unit, Communications and Publicity Division, Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (*Tourism Malaysia*)

An editor or writer from the same Editorial Unit of the Communications and Publicity Division, Tourism Malaysia as the previous informant was also interviewed to seek

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further information on the tourism advertorials published online in the corporate site of the official tourism website of *Tourism Malaysia*. This informant was also interviewed to validate the information and job specifications of the editors who write the advertorials gathered from the Tourism Malaysia corporate website which were analysed in the study.

This editor-informant verified that the job description of the editors at the Editorial Unit of the Communications and Publicity Division, Tourism Malaysia is to prepare and liaise the publishing of materials for Tourism Malaysia, such as media releases, media information, internal advisory speeches, talking points and interview notes, and question and answer (Q&A) notes. He revealed that his work as an editor at *Tourism Malaysia* partially involves the writing of advertorials to promote a tourism destination, and the selection of visuals/pictures for the promotional text that he is working on. Although sometimes the feature is written by the Advertising Agencies, the *Tourism Malaysia* editors check that it is parallel and in tandem with the objectives and policies of Tourism Malaysia.

According to this informant, people in the tourism or communications and publicity industry such as himself, understand an advertorial as an advertisement-based feature, article or report (hard copy or soft copy) either in print or electronic (video/radio). He further states that the purpose of publishing press releases, editorials and advertorials in a tourism website are mainly for the following reasons:

a) Policy (for official websites)

b) Wider publicity and network (Internet users can access)

c) Convenience (for media to download past archives of Press Releases, etc).

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An important source of information that this interviewee thinks should be included as the content of online tourism advertorials is an active web link, also known as hyperlink. The hyperlinks will enable Internet users to navigate or browse the hypertext, which consists of hyperlinks, in order to make references that the readers can directly follow. The hyperlinks could directly provide the prospective tourists the convenience of gathering further relevant information regarding the destination with just a click of the mouse.

The online characteristics that need to be considered in order to produce an effective online tourism advertorial are the interactive online helpdesk to answer any queries that online readers or potential tourists may have, and the pageview "must be in full colour and where possible, use video footages" so that the advertorial is not only textually informative but also dynamic.

This informant also provided a brief guideline when writing a promotional text such as advertorials in that there should be a catchy headline or title; as well as clear fonts and font size, citing the Vernada font as quite acceptable, which is used by many of the official tourism websites analysed in this study. The first paragraph of the advertorial should capture the reader's attention. The advertorials and features that they write are also not very long which is about two A4 size pages in length. They may also update the description and information on events from time to time. As for selecting the accompanying visuals and layouts, etc., the most current images which do not exaggerate the message must be ensured.

The following are the processes involved in writing and creating an online tourism advertorial before it is published by Tourism Malaysia:

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1. Draft by Agency
2. Vetting through by unit concerned and send for approval
3. Approval by Head of Unit
4. Back to unit for Agency work
5. Agency receives and completes the advertorial and sends it back to the client.
6. Client re-checks / re-confirms with Unit Head
7. Job is published
8. Monitoring by Unit responsible.

5.1.1.3 Travel Writer and Chief Executive Officer of a Travel Information Website

Another tourism specialist informant who is a travel writer-photographer cum Chief Executive Office of a travel information website was also interviewed on 29 April 2010. This travel information website is managed by a Malaysian who is an avid traveller for the last 23 years, and a former copywriter. The website is an independent online travel information site that reviews and shares information on places of interest for tourism around Malaysia and Southeast Asia; and the writer's personal favourite is the main Island of Borneo, namely Sabah and Sarawak. This informant basically travels around and documents his experiences on the Internet for everyone to read. All places reviewed have been personally visited, photographed and the articles written by him. Its focus is on eco-tourism, islands and beaches, nature, adventure, culture and heritage (UNESCO sites) and much more from around the region. The website hit 204,000 page views in February 2011 since its inception in January 2008, and to date with more than 1700 tweeter followers. It was recently nominated for the "*Award for Best Tourism Article and Documentary on Sabah*" in the Online Media section of the *Sabah Tourism*

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Awards 2011 and went on to win the *Best Online Media* award (http://blog.malaysia-asia.my).

This informant's work as a writer involves the writing of advertorials to promote a tourism destination, and the selection of visuals/pictures for the promotional text he is working on. At the time of the interview, he was working with one of the tourism boards of Malaysia and was writing a number of reviews for selected hotels, resorts and travel companies.

He personally thinks that many people, including the tourism advertiser and consumer, are still unaware on how advertorials can benefit them in the long run. The purpose of publishing editorials and/or advertorials in a tourism website is to educate and promote the particular place to the world, not just the region.

The information that should be included as the content of online tourism advertorials, especially by the main tourism body of the country, *Tourism Malaysia* , are content that are overlooked which in his opinion are nature and eco-tourism. He explains that there should be more promotion on the niche tourism areas, and in the case of Malaysia, more descriptions about nature tourism and eco-tourism in Malaysia should be included.

This informant stipulates that the main characteristic to be considered in order to produce an effective online tourism advertorial is that generally, the writer has to be knowledgeable in what he/she is writing about. One way of being knowledgeable is to experience the destination. He has seen many articles poorly written for local magazines that put him to shame when he reads them. So, some form of education on travel writing should be given to these new writers. Information can simply be cut and

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paste, but experiencing and then writing it is a different story all together. This view concurs with the information given by the Head of the Editorial Unit, Communications and Publicity Division of *Tourism Malaysia*, in that her editors write better after visiting the respective places personally. These editors are also occasionally sent for refresher writing courses to improve their tourism writing skills.

This online travel writer also provided some processes involved in writing and creating an online tourism advertorial before it is published. He lists them as in the sequence of experiencing the place personally, finding out about unique interests and such, having a clear mind when writing the advertorial, and assuring the client that his/her article will be well received in various media platforms besides a website.

5.1.2 The Socio-critical Perspective

This section of the thesis reports on the findings from the interviews with four specialist informants – an advertising website developer, two copywriters, and an audio-visual producer of an advertising agency. These specialist informants represent the advertising industry discourse community who are the developers, writers or producers of the online promotional text. They are considered to be able to provide information from the advertising disciplinary culture or socio-critical perspective of the web-mediated tourism advertorials. The findings from the interviews with these socio-critical specialist informants are interpreted and analysed below.

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5.1.2.1 Chief Executive Officer of a Website Development Company

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a leading local website development company was interviewed on the 8 January 2010. According to this specialist informant, the company's website development products and services include the following:

- Website Structure Design, Development & Consultation
- Web Hosting & Server Transfer
- Domain Name Registration
- Web Maintenance
- Global Trade Business Matching
- Online Advertisement & Marketing
- Email Management & Marketing
- Keyword Optimization
- Directory Listing Submission
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Link Exchange
- Web Statistics Monthly Report & Analysis
- Email Account Creation & Set Up
- Payment Gateway Set Up
- Database/Membership Module Development
- Online Reservation
- Portal Development & Management

An important aspect of their services is providing monthly activity reports to give the advertiser an accurate account of the website traffic and make regular updates after the website gets underway.

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The company was involved in the development of a web portal for Penang food lovers and fun seekers (www.oomph.com.my) which was endorsed by the Penang Tourism Action Council. It was the first attempt by a web company to provide a portal to help boost tourism in Penang, Malaysia via the Internet. It is also linked to the official Penang Tourism website and recorded 3.65 million hits in the first seven months of its launch. This web portal, according to this informant, was the answer to food lovers and party seekers wishing to check out the latest promotions in town. The company was commended by the state Tourism Development and Environment Committee for enlisting a host of food and entertainment outlets in Penang to join the portal and provide information at the fingertips to potential visitors worldwide. The portal also featured virtual games and opportunities to win great prizes and free meals.

The interview with the CEO of this website development company provided information regarding the definition of advertorial and the trend of using this genre in Internet advertising. Findings were also obtained regarding the cost for such online advertising services. The information gathered from the interview with this specialist informant also contributed to a guideline for producing promotional materials, specifically advertorials that are effective in achieving the objectives of promoting, advertising, and marketing or selling a product, brand or service which is presented in Chapter Nine of this thesis.

When the interviewee was asked how people in the advertising or online industry would define advertorial as opposed to advertisement, he explained that *advertisements* are anything that uses any tool or medium to promote a certain product, brand or service (PBS). He considers *advertorial* as a subset of advertising because its main objective is to also eventually promote a PBS, but through a different approach - an editorial. The

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common medium of advertorials would be in printed mediums, or these days online platforms can also be considered as a medium too. In the case of advertorials, the approach would be like writing an article that is related to a certain topic and industry of which the PBS is also mentioned as a "solution provider" to the problems or issues discussed in the topic or industry.

The CEO said that many companies were still doing business the conventional way because they fear change due to a lack of ICT knowledge. There are also those who think that website marketing is only useful for global trading. However, he says, this is a wrong mindset. The website can also reach out to local customers as many locals have now resorted to the Internet as a form of entertainment and when seeking information.

The interviewee also noticed that some entrepreneurs were unwilling to invest in ICT marketing, or already had a website which failed to bring in revenue due to wrong focus. He explained that a beautiful web design is useless when there are few visitors, or if download time is slow. He revealed that a successful website must include good design, applications and marketing. On the cost of hiring a web designer, he said it varied depending on content and web features.

Regarding the contents and visuals, he says that they should be provided by the client with the website development company doing the editing, cropping and designing. However, most of the time the website developers would help to do the entire scope of work, meaning that they have to try and understand what business the client/advertiser is actually doing and then come up with the entire content for the client. The

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promotional text would also be suggested and proposed by the website developers if the clients do not have their own original promotional text or taglines in the very first place.

According to the interviewee, some of the things that website developers should consider or look out for in writing the text/advertorial and selecting or creating visuals or images would be first, to find out the answers to the following questions from the client:

- What is their target market segment?
- What kinds of advertisements have they used before?
- Which audience are they targeting?
- What worked for them previously and what did not, and why?
- What is their PBS price range?
- What is the PBS's Unique Selling Point (USP) or Proposition)?, and
- What is their budget to have the work done?

The next process would be to research on or be familiar with the client's industry in order to identify the client's competitor(s), and what the competitors did to promote their PBS et cetera because it is crucial to know what the PBS is all about.

In preparing the text, it is important to use words which are easily understandable and understood by the target market segment. Even though a certain jargon may be commonly used by the consumers, the website developers cannot take this for granted but have to ensure that the target market understands them. It has to be done this way and not presume that the audience of the promotional text will understand those terminologies.

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On the subject of visuals, this specialist informant says that it is best to use colour coordination that can attract the market segments which are aimed at, and yet still ensure that it is consistent with the brand's image or PBS's image which the client may have already carried previously, for instance the font or colour of cannot be simply changed just to make it more attractive. It has to be spoken in the "lingo which the market segment speaks" and "hit a vein" to ensure that the advertisement, advertorial or the PBS is instilled in the minds of the viewers or potential consumers. He further gives this as an example, "*If you do not consume enough of ABC nutrition you may be susceptible to contracting this disease* ... (then show a horrible picture of a diseased organ)".

It is also important to have a catchy tagline which people can remember and feel fashionable repeating it, like *Nike*'s 'Just Do It' - provided of course the client does not have one yet. If the client already has a tagline and if the advertising agency feels that it is truly unsuitable, then they may need to come up with some creative phrases which could "stick in the minds" but these phrases can be changed through time to fit the occasion. This change must be agreed upon by the client who is prepared to re-do his tagline and change the brand image in totality. The CEO went on to provide examples of some catchy accompanying creative phrases, such as "Great Minds Think Alike ... Why Should You Differ?" and "If You're Not In, You're Out!".

According to this specialist informant, one very important thing to do for any form of advertisement is to highlight the unique selling point (USP) of the product, brand or service because that will position it away from its competitors and give the PBS an advantage over the rest. The USP has to be one of the first things which the promotional text viewers or potential consumers notice.

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Same with visual or image selections, website developers have to look for those that are easily identified and associated with the lifestyles, needs or wants of the target market audience. The interviewee elaborated this by explaining that they would not choose a picture for an advertorial selling wheelchairs, for instance, with the background scene of people dancing or skating, but they need to choose a background scene where everything is depicted as serene, comfortable, et cetera.

5.1.2.2 Senior Copywriter of an Advertising Firm

An interview with a senior copywriter of an advertising firm was carried out on the 16 October 2009. This specialist informant has vast experience in copywriting having written for all kinds of media, including television commercials, print advertisements including advertorials, direct mail, e-Direct Mail, radio commercials, et cetera for more than ten years. Prior to working at the present firm, this senior copywriter worked at two other advertising companies, which are all international advertising firms.

The outcome of the interview with this senior copywriter of an advertising company in Singapore provided information regarding the definition of advertorial in the field of advertising; the purpose of using advertorials as a form of advertisement; the selection process and selection criteria of visuals/pictures for an advertising text; the processes involved in creating an advertorial; and the trend of online advertising as compared to traditional advertising.

According to this interviewee, those in the advertising industry define *advertorial* as an advertisement made to look like an editorial piece. The hope is that the reader will

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mistake it for an article and read on, as "people are getting more and more resistant to advertisements". They also do advertorials when the product a company is advertising needs more detailed explanation, such as in the case of technology. Advertorials tend to be factual and "hardworking", and does not allow the copywriter to be very creative as it mostly consists of facts.

The advertising agency follows guidelines when provided by the client or advertiser. Otherwise, they use their own judgement when creating a promotional text. The following is the general processes involved in creating an advertorial for a client or advertiser:

1. An Account Executive servicing an advertiser (known as the Account servicing in the advertising profession) takes briefing or instructions from the client.
2. The Account servicing (and sometimes strategic planners) writes the creative brief, which states the strategy and main message that the client or advertiser wants the public to know about the brand.
3. The Creative team or writer and Art Director are briefed by the account servicing the client. Media space is booked by the Media department.
4. The Copywriter and Art Director come up with concepts (such as headline and layout only).
5. The Creative team shows the concepts to the Creative Director to approve and shortlist.
6 Shortlisted concepts are shown to Account servicing to ensure that they answer the brief, or in accordance with the brief.
7. The Account servicing presents concepts to the client.

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8. If one of the concepts is picked, the Creative team proceeds. The Copywriter will write the actual bodycopy, whilst the Art Director will either work with an illustrator or a photographer to shoot photos, or ask the Production Department to check prices of photographs from a photo stock library.
9. The new layout with copy is once again approved by the Creative Director, and then presented to the client.
10. The client might want minor changes made to the copy or want another photo, etc.
11. The Account servicing will brief the creative team on the changes.
12. When the advertorial is almost finalised, the layout goes to the Interactive Department. This is where web designers resize the layout to the actual dimensions of the publication booked, and place high resolution photos into the layout (Art directors only use low resolution versions of photos as high resolution photos slow down their computer).
13. The Creative team, Creative Director and Account Servicing Executive check and proofread the advertorial carefully, and validate before presenting it to the client for the last time.
14. The final advertorial is sent out to the client's database as an electronic direct mail or loaded onto the client's website by the Interactive staff.

In the selection or creation of visuals or images, the advertising agency tries to find photos or create illustrations that best compliment their concept and the message the client wants to put across. Other elements that are considered are using a colour that represents the client, like their logo colour, and overall brand image. She adds that a serious business like say, banking, cannot look too playful. A copywriter is also involved in the creation and selection of visuals or pictures for the promotional text that they are working on. Copywriters work closely with the art director to come up with an

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advertorial concept, just like any other piece of advertising that they do. They always work as a team, and sometimes copywriters also help to source for photos; but ultimately, the art director will decide on the best pictures to use and layout.

This specialist informant's very rough guess of the percentage of online advertising at the moment of the interview is about thirty percent as compared to traditional advertising. However, she believes that in recent years, the amount of online work is much greater. Budgets are getting cut drastically for traditional media and more advertisements are being placed in online work, such as websites, microsites and electronic direct mail, and especially in social media like *Facebook* and iphone applications. She affirms that almost all advertising campaigns now include an online element.

5.1.2.3 Copywriter of an Advertising Firm

An interview with another copywriter of an advertising firm was carried out on the 25 March 2010. The purpose of the interview with this copywriter from another international advertising and marketing agency (at the time of the interview, but has since worked at another advertising company, both of which are the international companies' branch located in Malaysia) was to gain more insights into the production of advertorials. It was to the benefit of this present study when it was found out that this informant had produced some website content for the '*Malaysia Truly Asia*' campaign of *Tourism Malaysia*. That advertising work basically involved explaining the different facets of the country's main attractions or unique selling points. This contributed to some invaluable input to this research.

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As with the previous two specialist informants interviewed in the study, this informant states that an advertorial functions similarly to an advertisement as it ultimately promotes a product/brand/service (PBS). However, advertorials are information-heavy and include more details of the product. To explain this point, she takes an example of an advertisement for toothpaste which will paint a brand image and the main benefits of that toothpaste "in an impactful and memorable way". An advertorial for a toothpaste on the other hand, will go into details of teeth problems, the functions of certain ingredients, and perhaps even customer testimonials.

According to her experience, not all brands will utilise advertorials. It all depends on the communication requirements of the advertiser. However, some newspapers and magazines offer advertorial placements at cheap monthly or yearly rates, so companies sometimes take advantage of that offer especially if they feel that there is a lot of information that needs to be communicated to their consumers.

Most copywriters will have written a few advertorial in their career span. Sometimes, they may not write an advertorial entirely on their own, but they may be given the write-up from the client and asked to restructure certain parts or improve it to enhance its market appeal. In many cases, the advertorial writer is advised against making too many changes as some information must be approved by the authorities. In that case, the copywriter will mostly do proofreading and making sure that the content flows well, etc.

The information contents of an advertorial really depend on the product itself. Traditionally, advertorials were used for PBS that are heavy on function or technical information, such as for a technologically enhanced sports shoes. It was not conventionally used to promote a perfume, although advertorials have been used

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nowadays for advertising and promoting cosmetics. Most of the time the content is provided by the client and the copywriters will "craft the copy, restructure or summarise the info while adding an element of consumer appeal". Advertorials should preferably be written with a certain type of target audience in mind, especially for magazines which have a certain theme. Since advertorials are composed of about eighty to ninety percent text, the copy should be tailored to have reader appeal. Sometimes if celebrity ambassadors are being utilised, the "hook" could be in the celebrity him/herself and how his/her life or usage of the product relates to the average user.

This informant verifies the information given by the senior copywriter interviewed about multimodality, whereby a copywriter can make suggestions on the visuals and layout, but remarks that this part of the advertorial is really the Art Director's responsibility. She further defends that a writer is not responsible for an ugly layout or a picture not being in sync with the content.

This informant also informed on the processes involved in writing and creating an advertorial before it is published. Unlike a standard advertisement where the creative team works based on a concept or direction, brand identity and the desired outcome; for advertorials, the client needs to provide the advertising agency with a lot more 'meat' or information – even if not the information itself, then at least a "detailed outline of the communications", like what are all the areas the advertorial should cover, etc - without that, the copy will be full of "fluff or filler". Once the creative team has the information to work with, the writer will structure it into a copy that will appeal to the target readers, while the art director or designer will decide on the layout. Some newspapers have their own guidelines on advertorials placed in their publications -- *The Star*, for example,

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allows the use of only certain fonts. So these are the external factors that one has to consider too.

She also asserted that many big companies have their own in-house writers and marketing communication people. These individuals may be in charge of corporate brochures, annual reports, organising market research data into an attractive booklet and so forth. The in-house writers may also compose the occasional leaflet or business-to-business invitation to their partners and investors, etc. This information added to the researcher's purpose of interviewing the editors attached to their Communication and Publicity Division, *Tourism Malaysia* of the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board which is an entity under the Malaysian Ministry of Tourism.

When this informant was queried about why some business organisations still need to seek services from an advertising agency when they have a pool of writers and editors attached to their companies, she opined that the big companies may have their in-house writers, however when it comes to a brand identity and direction, a focused and creatively executed advertising campaign is essential to bring an impactful message to consumers. This is where the expertise of advertising firms is needed because "we are talking about the big picture -- what people see and think when they consider the brand". Merely having a decent writer or designer cobble together a few advertisements or leaflets is not enough.

The brand strategists of advertising and marketing firms will decide on the positioning of the company's brand and marketing message. The creative team will figure out how to make that message into a great campaign idea and then turn that idea into engaging and attractive advertising. She believes that the "*Malaysia, Truly Asia*" campaign of *Tourism Malaysia* would not be a success were it not for the minds of the advertising

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agency that combined creative expression with a clear marketing strategy. She does not deny that the client or company also plays an important role, as they must furnish the agency with the right information and market research because that information will be translated into the big brand positioning, which is translated into a big idea, and in turn translated into an engaging publicity.

5.1.2.4 Audio Visual Producer of an Advertising Agency

An interview with an Audio Visual Producer of an international advertising agency was carried out on the 30 April 2012. The interview with this advertising personnel from the creative department of another global advertising firm, with a branch in Malaysia was carried out to gain further insights into the importance of multimodality in online marketing and branding of a product, service or an industry.

This informant defines advertorial as a much more detailed explanation of the service or product that the client would like to advertise, as opposed to just an advertisement which will only feature certain benefits to attract the consumer to find out more about the product or services.

In order to show credibility of this specialist informant, she was first asked to explain what an Audio Visual (AV) Producer at her advertising company actually does. She states that anything related to audio-visual, including filmed content and digital media, will come to her to be produced and distributed. She takes charge from the level of execution stage - from costing, scheduling up to the finished production of the video/radio/television. In short she is the bridge between the clients and the Creatives

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(who include the graphic designer and copywriter) at her advertising agency, to the suppliers.

In terms of the visuals or pictures for the promotional text that the agency is working on, she revealed that the main idea or creation comes from the creative department. However, AV Producers also provide input in terms of selecting the right supplier to execute the idea best, within the given time frame and budget provided. Sometimes they do get involved on the development stage but it depends if they have the time to participate or not. The factors that would be considered in the selection and creation of visual and images would be based on the schedule, availability, costing and suitability of the supplier for the job. She personally thinks that there is no general guideline that can be followed when creating a promotional text or when selecting/creating the accompanying visuals. It depends on the individual client's requirements and also the format that they want to advertise on. Thus, different advertisers will require different formats of the promotional text and accompanying visuals. It will also depend on the advertiser's purpose and choice of media platforms.

The informant also gave the processes involved in creating an advertorial or a promotional material for the client. The process usually starts from the instructions, or what is termed as 'a brief' in the field of advertising, from the client. This includes what they would like to do, and intend for it to do (i.e. what is the product or service for, which target market they would like to reach out to, etc). From there, they look at the budget available, and deadline given by the advertiser. Then, the agency will come up with the overall idea or campaign if it is a big project. Once all that is approved, it will go to the respective departments to execute the idea. The approximate range that a client has to pay for such services is from as little as RM10,000 to over a million.

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5.2 Summary

The discourse and social practices of this research is chiefly related to the state or Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB) as it is the main producer of the genre. It should be noted that although advertising firms and professional copywriters are engaged to produce the texts or genre, its production should conform to the standards and requirements of the tourism board(s) which is the main discourse community and gatekeeper of the discourse and the sponsor of the texts/genre. In other words, the text/genre is produced and consumed within the same domain, i.e. tourism. Hence the findings from the interviews are presented and analysed together in this chapter as both the ethnographic and socio-critical perspectives complement each other in the production of the online tourism genre.

This chapter has provided answers to the first research question which is to identifying the communicative purposes of the genre of tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials from the ethnographic and socio-critical perspectives of the tourism and advertising discourse communities. The overall findings of the ethnographic and socio-critical perspectives of the online tourism advertorial genre reveal that the tourism and advertising discourse communities do not follow a specific rhetorical moves structure when using and producing tourism advertorials. They are more concerned with how best to promote the various tourism destinations by describing the places and tourism activities positively and persuasively in attracting potential tourists. This concurs with Zhou (2012: 337) in that advertorials persuade in the interest of the sponsors and never present any negative comments as editorials do. In producing the advertorials, the ethnographic and socio-critical discourse communities avoid the inclusion of negative opinions and express only positive evaluations of the products or services.

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The findings gathered from the specialist informants have revealed that the main communicative purpose of the web genre, specifically the online tourism advertorials, is to promote the destinations. In their promotion of the destinations, the NTOs also hope to provide relevant, valid and up-to-date information to potential tourists. These communicative purposes are therefore the motivating factors in shaping the generic structure of the web-mediated tourism genre.

The findings presented in this chapter have also shown that there are certain actions and procedures that need to be followed by the tourism advertisers and online tourism material producers and writers in publishing promotional information or advertorials on tourism websites. This corresponds with Bhatia (2004: 162) in that there are typical roles and patterns of composing processes involved which include an initiating event, information gathering and analysis, writing and rewriting of text, collaborative tasks, and culminating in the technological production of the text. However, their main objective is to ensure that the information and advertorials published in the tourism organisations' websites meet the needs of the tourism industry consumers by including and enhancing the kinds of information required by potential tourists, in their attempt to promote and attract tourists to the country. The findings concerning tourists' informative needs are presented and discussed in detail in Chapter Eight of this thesis.

Having reported and discussed the findings from the ethnographic and socio-critical perspectives, the next chapter presents and discusses the findings from the textual analysis of the web-mediated tourism genre.

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CHAPTER SIX

THE GENERIC STRUCTURE OF TOURISM HOMEPAGES AND WEB-MEDIATED TOURISM ADVERTORIALS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on the textual perspective of web-mediated tourism genre. It attempts to fulfil the following specific objectives as stated in Chapter One:

1. To identify the communicative purposes of the genre of tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials, and determine if these purposes are factors that influence how the generic structure of the web genre is shaped.

2. To identify the elements that constitute the generic structure of tourism homepages and provide a detailed description of the rhetorical structures of online tourism advertorials.

The analysis and discussion of this web-mediated tourism genre is divided into two levels. The first level of generic structure analysis is at the macro structure level of the sixteen homepages or main pages of the Malaysian official tourism websites where tourism advertorials are placed. The micro level rhetorical structure analysis was carried out on the forty-nine advertorials extracted from these relevant Malaysian official tourism websites which are managed by the government tourism organizations as in the national tourism organisations (NTOs) of Malaysia, *Tourism Malaysia*, and the capital's and respective states' tourism boards.

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6.1 Tourism Homepage Genre

In view of the fact that going on a vacation especially overseas may involve a huge sum of money, prospective tourists will first source for as much information as they can before selecting the ultimate destination to visit. As was mentioned in the earlier chapters, it is undeniable that the Internet has lately become the place for information-seeking public because they can now easily select and consume massive databases of information. The general public have now become so technologically savvy in the way they obtain a broad spectrum of information, including information on where they will spend their next vacation. Other than information gathering, consumers are also using the online media extensively for travel planning. The Internet has now clearly established itself as the world's favourite place to book travel (IPK International, 2011).

In the context of the present study, the primary role of a NTO is to promote the country as an international tourist destination and to increase visitor arrival numbers for the country. NTOs see the potential of the Internet in promoting their country and its tourism products and services globally, and have now resorted to spending much of their national budget in developing websites to promote the country's tourism industry. Other than promoting the country and its states, the NTO's website and the official state tourism boards' websites serve as main sources of valid and reliable information on tourism attractions of destinations, such as the places of interest, activities, local events and festivals, local cuisine, related tourism information, useful contacts, climate conditions, transportation, currency exchange, and links to related web pages or websites on tour packages, lodging facilities, and so on. Such governmental organisations' and corporate websites function to not only promote or advertise the organisation's or company's products and services (Roberts, 1998), in this case is the country's and states' destinations and tourism products and services; but also to act as

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image creating tools and control information about the organisation or destination (Mannion and Sullivan, 1999). The NTO's website is developed to construct the country's identity and image, by providing information related to the country's tourism industry, and to persuade potential tourists to consume or experience its products and services. Hence, the webpages could be considered as belonging to what Fairclough (1992) and Bhatia (1993, 2004) refer to as a hybrid information-and-publicity discourse, which is constituted through a mixture of existing discourse types.

Webpages from one website share the same Uniform Resource Locator (URL) prefix and are linked together. These webpages are organised into a hierarchy via their URL prefix and allows users to navigate the website. The base or starting point of this hierarchy is a webpage known as the homepage. The homepage is the starting page or front page to other webpages on the website. It usually has a menu bar at the top of the webpage that allows the user to enter other locations or webpages within the website, and often has generic links on the left, and sometimes also on the right, of the homepage to enable the user to obtain more information on a certain chosen topic or theme which is located on other webpages within the same website. The homepage is very important as an overview of the website and likens to a contents page where users often return to this webpage to start over their navigation of the website. Hence, all webpages include the utility *Home* link for this purpose. A summary, extract or the heading of online advertorials are presented on the homepage with a hyperlink or via a generic link where users can get access to them in full. Therefore, it is first essential to investigate the contents, forms and functions of the homepage, as well as the abilities afforded by this new medium.

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The findings from the analysis of the sixteen official Malaysian tourism organisations' homepages or main pages where the tourism advertorials are published are presented and discussed in the following section.

6.1.1 Generic Features of Tourism Homepages

The homepage is a dominant genre of increasing importance for corporations, organisations and governments. The knowledge of the generic features of tourism homepages will not only guide the writers and producers in the development of the web genre, but also help users and readers to better comprehend, process and interact with the web contents. Reviewing the types of information displayed on a website can help identify areas for improvement and create a better experience for online customers. Therefore, one of the aims of this research was to analyse the elements or contents and their functions that are characteristic of tourism homepages.

The corpus collected for the analysis of the generic features of the official Malaysian tourism homepages in this study are from the following websites:

i. the Malaysian government tourism portal, *Tourism Malaysia*;
ii. *Tourism Malaysia*'s corporate website;
iii. the official tourism website of Malaysia's capital city, Kuala Lumpur; and
iv. the official tourism websites of all the thirteen states in Malaysia.

The above-mentioned official Malaysian tourism organisations' websites and their URL are listed on the next page. The print-out version of the homepages can be viewed in Appendix H.

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Official Tourism Websites of Malaysia and their URL:

Tourism Malaysia Official Website	(http://www.tourism.gov.my)
Tourism Malaysia Official Corporate Website	(http://corporate.tourism.gov.my)
Kuala Lumpur	(http://www.visitkl.gov.my)
Perlis	(http://www.perlis.gov.my)
Kedah	(http://www.visitkedah.com.my)
Penang	(http://www.tourismpenang.gov.my)
Perak	(http://www.peraktourism.com)
Selangor	(http://www.tourismselangor.gov.my)
Negeri Sembilan	(http://www.ns.gov.my/tourism)
Malacca	(http://www.melakatourism.gov.my)
Johor	(http://www.tourismjohor.com)
Pahang	(http://www.tourismpahang.com)
Kelantan	(http://www.tic.kelantan.gov.my)
Terengganu	(http://tourism.terengganu.gov.my)
Sabah	(http://www.sabahtourism.com)
Sarawak	(http://www.sarawaktourism.com)

The sixteen official Malaysian tourism websites which are managed by the government and state tourism boards were examined to identify the elements (i.e. the contents of the home pages such as graphics, internal or external links, etc.), forms (i.e. methods of presentation), as well as their communicative purposes and functions that are characteristic of tourism homepages.

The analytical framework for analysing the sixteen homepages was adapted from Marco's (2002) analysis of corporate homepages and taking into consideration Dillon &

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Gushrowski's (2000) analysis of personal homepages. The detailed findings from the analysis according to the respective sixteen homepages can be found in Appendix M. The analysis of the sixteen homepages has identified seven main moves or functions, an addition of three main functions to Marco's (2002) analytical framework presented in Chapter Four. The additional functions are introducing the tourism organisation, introducing the destination and advertising business and job opportunities. The elements or contents found in the Malaysian tourism homepages that were analysed can be classified according to the seven functions as follows:

- Creating a positive image
- Introducing the organisation
- Introducing the destination
- Introducing and offering products and services
- Strengthening the relationship with the potential customers
- Giving information about the webpage/website
- Advertising business and job opportunities

Table 6.1, on the next page and continues on the next few pages, shows the frequency and percentages of the analysed homepages which contain the elements or contents that function to realise the generic structures of the Malaysian official tourism websites' homepages.

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Table 6.1

Generic Structures and the Frequency of Elements of the Tourism Homepages

Functions/ Moves	Elements / Contents / Features	Purposes	Total	Percentage (%)
Creating a positive image	**Tagline / Slogan / Catchphrase**	Attract attention. Create an identity.	14	87.50
	Rational for trademark (logo)	(i.e. *Malaysia*, *Truly Asia* - to imply that the destination offers a true Asian experience)	1	6.25
	Information about the local tourism industry/organisation	Present the industry/organisation as economically sound, dynamic, continually		
	- Publications about the tourism industry	developing and improving.	1	6.25
	- Events (industry functions)		1	6.25
	- Media release / Announcements of awards & achievements / Corporate news (corporate website)	Provide certification or official recognition. Establish credentials. Give impact on investment.	3	18.75
	- Economic information / Statistics on tourist arrivals & receipts	Provide assurance to customers for selecting the destination as a tourist destination.	3	18.75
	- Campaigns (i.e. 1Malaysia *Green and Clean*)	Add value to the destination.	1	6.25
	Endorsement	Influence audience's decision to visit the		
	- Testimonial	destination.	2	12.50
	- Review		1	6.25
	- public address/welcome message by authorities	Show approval and support of authorities.	3	18.75
	- Affiliation to local/international tourism organisations/associations	Indicate reliability and credibility of website / organisation.	10	62.50
	Trademark (emblem)	Show approval and support of authorities.	9	56.25
	Visuals (on the homepage itself)	Make the page visually attractive and		
	- Photographs, images, graphics, etc	interesting. Stimulate potential tourists' interest.	16	100.00
	- Logos	Attract attention.	13	81.25
	- Animation (changing graphics/transition of images, scrolling of text/images)		10	62.50

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Table 6.1 (continued)

Functions/ Moves	Elements / Contents / Features	Purposes	Total	Percentage (%)
Introducing the tourism organisation/website	**Trademark** - logo - emblem **Masthead** **Name** of website	Identify the tourism organisation/webpage.	 13 2 5 8	 81.25 12.50 31.25 50.00
	Description about the organisation (‘*About Us*’ link)	Give information about the tourism organisation.	9	56.25
Introducing the destination	**Masthead** **Name of destination**	Attract attention. Identify the destination.	9 10	56.25 62.50
	Positive introduction (on the homepage itself) **Links** to **description** about: - destination (e.g. ‘*About* / *Facts on* [name of destination]’) - history - geography (i.e. weather) - demographics - transportation - getting to the destination	Give information about the destination and its related information.	4 13 3 7 3 6 5	25.00 81.25 18.75 43.75 18.75 37.50 31.25
	Visuals (on the homepage itself) - logo - photographs - maps	Make the page visually attractive and interesting. Identifying the destination. Attract attention. Show the location of the destination.	 13 16 3	 81.25 100.00 18.75

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Table 6.1 (continued)

Functions/ Moves	Elements / Contents / Features	Purposes	Total	Percentage (%)
Introducing and offering products/services	**Masthead**	Attract attention.	2	12.50
	News heading/title (with links to full story)		14	87.50
	Headline		1	6.25
	Showcase / Announcements	Give information about the tourist attractions - destinations, current events/festivals, activities etc. – by providing comprehensive information, and highlighting the attractions of the destination. (a bar of generic links with drop-down/pop-up menus & lists of labels of tourism themes with links to webpages within the website).		
	- Description / advertorials on:			
	* Places to see (places of interest)		16	100.00
	* Things to do / activities		15	93.75
	* Services (i.e. MICE, MM2H)		7	43.75
	* Products (i.e. Events, themes: nature, beach, cuisine, local produce, etc.)		16	100.00
	- Travel guides		2	12.50
	- Virtual brochures		4	25.00
	- Blogs		3	18.75
	- Calendar		10	62.50
	- Notices		2	12.50
	Offers and incentives (i.e. promotions, discounts, special offers)	Make the services/products more attractive.	2	12.50
	Information on **service packages**:	Give information on accommodation & tour packages; Link to other organisations - accommodation venues and travel agents; Convey reliable and competent business practices.		
	- Accommodation		15	93.75
	- Travel packages		7	43.75
	- Tour agents		6	37.50
	Multimedia	Illustrate the tourist attractions.		
	- Video	Stimulate potential tourists' interest.	10	62.50
	- Audio	Attract attention.	2	12.50
	- Slides		2	12.50
	Visuals			
	- Photo gallery		9	56.25
	- Map link	Show the location of tourist attractions/services.	13	81.25
	E-training / E-marketing	Assist tourism business organisations/industry players.	2	12.50
	Note to supplier		1	6.25
	Trade promotions		3	18.75

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Table 6.1 (continued)

Functions/ Moves	Elements / Contents / Features	Purposes	Total	Percentage (%)
Strengthening the relationship with potential consumer – establish a closer relationship with the audience/potential visitor	Links to **virtual store** - tour packages - accommodation, etc	Facilitate the acquisition of product/services – possibility to buy online / capability of online reservation. Reduce marketing costs.	 1 2	 6.25 12.50
	Personalising & offering information/services - customer online registration - member's login	Provide customised offerings to targeted customers, to track preferences - contents of the page, special services & features, updates, early notifications of products.	 1 2	 6.25 12.50
	Language options (to see webpage in selected language) **Language phrases translator**	Provide a multilingual interface to users/cater to potential international tourists with different languages; Widen the potential market for the business	6 1	37.50 6.25
	Contact info – email, phone no., link to such info.	Solicit response & establish contact. Enable readers to contact website owners for further info. Provide offline personal contact as an option for customers who lack confidence and ability to contact online.	16	100.00
	Other free products & services: - font size option - technical support for special web users - travel planner - currency converter - Time zone converter - downloads - newsletters / bulletin / magazines / mobile device update - online entertainment - virtual greeting cards/e-cards - other relevant tourism information websites	 Offer ease of viewing the webpage. Cater to special users. Assist tourists in travel planning. Give updates on news and information. Attract attention and interest to the product. Provide online entertainment and services.	 2 2 2 1 1 2 6 1 2 13	 12.50 12.50 12.50 6.25 6.25 12.50 37.50 6.25 12.50 81.25

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Table 6.1 (continued)

Functions/ Moves	Elements / Contents / Features	Purposes	Total	Percentage (%)
	Other relevant information:	Provide other related tourism information		
	- travel tips		2	12.50
	- phone dialling codes		1	6.25
	- banking		1	6.25
	- prayer times		1	6.25
	- relevant tourism directory/contact info.		6	37.50
	Enquiries channel	Establish an ongoing relationship with the	4	25.00
	Feedback channel	customer.	8	50.00
	- comments and suggestions	Obtain readers' opinion about the product/service.	1	6.25
	- complaints		1	6.25
	- frequently-asked-questions (FAQs)		4	25.00
	- polls		1	6.25
	- fill in a survey / questionnaire		1	6.25
	Links to users / **newsgroup access** / social networking sites:	Enable frequent loyal users to establish communities within the website.		
	- Forum		1	6.25
	- updates on RSS	Disseminate current information / updates on latest	8	50.00
	- Facebook / Twitter	promotions / events; establish contact	8	50.00
	Visuals / Graphics			
	- Icons	Create a user-friendly interface.	11	68.75
	- Map link	Cater to tourists' need for direction to plan their travelling routes and arrange their itinerary.	13	81.25
	Utility links/functions (in text/icon)	Ease website accessibility; Provide flexibility of		
	- back to mainpage/Homepage ('*Home'* link)	accessing content or items of information.	16	100.00
	- Sitemap / index		9	56.25
	- Search facility		14	87.50
	- PDF version	Provide option to view information in other	3	18.75
	- Print option	versions.	4	25.00
	Navigation route	Chart the navigation of information. Identify where users have moved in the site.	3	18.75

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Table 6.1 (continued)

Functions/ Moves	Elements / Contents / Features	Purposes	Total	Percentage (%)
Giving information about the webpage	**Time/Day/Date**	Provide information on current time/date of access.	5	31.25
	Date of last update	Reinforce integrity, validity and reliability of the information on the website.	5	31.25
	Number of visitors who have visited the page (counter / hits) - Statistics of past / current visitors - User's online info. (IP Address) - Software used for collating statistics	Provide a form of endorsement for the website, and reinforce the credibility and reliability of the website information. Show reliability of statistics on visitors.	 8 1 3	 50.00 6.25 18.75
	Proposing things to do with the webpage - add to favourites / set as homepage - email the page/information item	 Provide ease of accessing the website. Provide assistance to disseminate information to third party.	 1 3	 6.25 18.75
	Links to legal information - Copyright - Disclaimer - rules & regulations / terms & conditions - terms of use - privacy statement - security policy	Provide legal information concerning the website. Disclaim responsibility for information published. State rules and regulations of information use. State security measures applied to personal information.	 14 10 4 1 4 3	 87.50 62.50 25.00 6.25 25.00 18.75
	Best viewing quality	Give information on the best viewing quality.	5	31.25
	Advertisements - Advertising opportunity - Website developer	Offer a channel for advertising other products/services. Advertise services for website development.	 1 2	 6.25 12.50
Advertising business and job opportunities	E-procurement	Acquire supplies and services for the tourism industry/organisation	3	18.75
	Jobs / Careers	Advertise jobs available.	1	6.25

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A discussion of the findings as tabulated in Table 6.1 is given below. The discussion is organised according to the seven functions or moves found in the homepages of the sixteen official NTOs' websites.

6.1.1.1 Creating a positive image

This function which has the communicative purposes of attracting attention, creating an identity and giving a positive image of the local tourism industry is realised by elements such as slogans or taglines; information about the local tourism industry, for instance announcements of awards and achievements, corporate news, and statistics on tourist arrivals and receipts; endorsements comprising of testimonials, reviews, affiliations, public address or welcome message by authorities; and visuals.

87.50% of the sixteen tourism homepages examined contained a tagline, slogan or catchphrase. The fourteen slogans and taglines (with the name of the NTO in parenthesis) that appeared in the homepages are as follows:

i. *Truly more with every visit. It must be Malaysia!* (Tourism Malaysia)
ii. *Malaysia, Truly Asia* (Tourism Malaysia Corporate)
iii. *Kuala Lumpur, A Beautiful Experience Awaits You!* (Visit KL)
iv. *"Perlis permai, indah lagi mempesona"* (*Beautiful, Splendid and Captivating Perlis* - Perlis)
v. *Kedah, More to Explore* (Visit Kedah)
vi. *Penang Has It All!* and *George Town: UNESCO World Heritage Site* (Tourism Penang)
vii. *Discover Perak. Land of Grace, Gateway to Nature* (Perak Tourism)
viii. *Unique Culture, Popular Destination* (Negeri Sembilan Tourism)
ix. *Visit Historic Melaka means Visit Malaysia* (Melaka Tourism)

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x. *Abode of Tranquility* (Tourism Pahang)

xi. "*Kelantan destinasi unik anda*" (*Kelantan, your unique destination* – Kelantan Tourism)

xii. *"Merakyatkan Pentadbiran dan Pembangunan"* (*To Popularise Administration and Development*) and *Where Nature Embraces Heritage ...* (Tourism Terengganu)

xiii. *Best of Borneo* (Sabah Tourism)

xiv. *Paradise Within* (Sarawak Tourism)

These slogans and taglines imply that the destinations offer the best tourism experience, products and services which enable potential tourists to experience a fulfilling vacation or trip. One of the tourism organisations, *Visit Kedah*, also provided the rationale for the 6-colors combination used in the *Visit Kedah 2008* logo to represent excitement of the Visit Kedah 2008 year.

The slogans '*Malaysia Truly, Asia*' and '*Truly more with every visit. It must be Malaysia!*' were developed to brand Malaysia and create a set of core brand values or a brand personality (Temporal, 2000). This branding of Malaysia was aimed at overseas tourist marketing and gives the country an identity as a tourist destination. Branding is essentially concerned with discursive processes which are developed from the linguistically defined core values. These discursive processes are directed towards the creation of an image or set of images, along with the *Tourism Malaysia* logo that defines the brand. Its communicative purpose is a social action which is to persuade potential tourists to visit the country and buy the product or service (Flowerdew, 2004).

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Positive information and announcements related to the tourism industry, with links to the full story can be found in some of the tourism homepages studied. Since these news which are included via a link in the homepages are self-selected by the tourism organisation, they mainly reveal positive achievements and information that enhances the image of the organisation and the local tourism industry. This will in turn influence the readers' opinion. At least two (12.50%) homepages examined have a link to the organisation's pressroom, newsroom or news desk in the form of media releases and 'News From our Trade Friends'.

Information about the status of the local tourism industry via publications (6.35%); media releases, announcements and corporate news about achievements and awards received (18.75%); economic information derived from the statistics of tourist arrivals and receipts (18.75%); and information on tourism campaigns (6.25%) function to present the local tourism industry and organisation as economically sound, dynamic, and continually developing and improving. Although very few of the homepages that were examined included such information about its local tourism industry, the certification, official recognition by international tourism organisations, and reports on international tourism surveys are important in establishing credentials for the local tourism industry and have impact on investments.

The move of establishing credentials is to establish the company's reputation in the market (Bhatia, 1993 & 2004). On tourism homepages, this move serves to establish a positive image of the destination and to inform readers of the competitive advantage of the local tourism industry. For example, one organisation conveys the tourism awards received and the international recognition of the destination as one of the top ten holiday destinations to visit, and highlights the country as a place that offers a true Asian

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experience (in *Tourism Malaysia Corporate* website). The purpose of establishing credentials also serves as a form of assurance to prospective tourists for selecting the destinations as excellent vacation venues. Thus, such information should be included as elements or content in tourism homepages. Of course this would mean that some research or surveys must first be conducted by the respective tourism organisations to get the statistical data and gather the relevant information in order to publish those facts in their websites.

The element of endorsement as realised by testimonials (12.50%); positive reviews by past tourists and Cable News Network (CNN), the international news television company (6.25%); addresses or messages by authorities (18.75%); logos signifying affiliation to official and/or international tourism organisations/associations (62.50%); and the inclusion of official emblems as evidences of approval by relevant authorities (56.25%) found on the homepages demonstrate the genuine value of the tourism products and services offered, as well as the reliability and credibility of the information published on the websites. The potential tourists will have more confidence in the information provided in the websites. These modes of endorsement may consequently influence the website audiences' decision to visit the destination.

Reviews and online opinions are essential to consumers in the travel-planning process. A recent *Travelsat* global benchmarking survey conducted in Brussels by TCI Research (Tourism Competitive Intelligence), an international survey group that monitors tourists' experience, showed that about 40% of people would choose a travel destination based on recommendations via testimonials and reviews (Modiano, 2011). Since reviews are becoming a great influence and factor in the selection of tourist destination, it is important for destinations and NTOs to focus on how to increase positive reviews and

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feedback from their current and future visitors. Therefore, these elements of endorsement are very crucial in increasing the number of tourists to a destination, and should be included in tourism websites.

Another element that functions to create a positive image by attracting attention to the homepages is the element of visuals which can be found in all of the homepages. The visuals include photographs, images with a symbolic value, and graphics (100%) that make the homepage visually attractive and interesting; logos of the tourism organisations (81.25%); and animations such as the changing or transition of pictures, graphics or images, and scrolling of texts and images (62.50%). These types of animation functionality or capability which stimulate the users' and potential tourists' interest is unique to the online genre as such visual changeovers are only available through this new online media and not through the traditional print media. The use of visuals in any form that attracts web audiences' attention cannot be discounted in the development of an effective homepage that intends to persuade its audience.

6.1.1.2 Introducing the tourism organisation and website

The purposes of identifying a tourism organisation's webpage and giving information about the organisation function to introduce the tourism organisation. This function is realised by the use of trademarks such as logos (81.25%) and state emblems (12.50%) in the corpus. As mentioned above in the discussion of creating a positive image with the use of slogans and taglines, logos are also used to define or identify a brand. The logo of the tourism organisations further identifies the website.

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Tourism Malaysia, and
Tourism Malaysia Corporate

Visit KL

Visit Kedah

Tourism Penang

Perak Tourism

Negeri Sembilan Tourism

Melaka Tourism

Tourism Johor

Tourism Pahang

Kelantan Tourism

Tourism Terengganu

Sarawak Tourism

Figure 6.1

Logos of Official Malaysian Tourism Organisations

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This move which is textualised by the logo and/or emblem appears as the first move on all the thirteen homepages which have included this element. The NTOs' logos and/or emblems tend to be located at the top of the webpage and mostly on the left, which leads to an easy recognition of the tourism organisation. Figure 6.1 on the previous page illustrates the logos that appeared on the thirteen official tourism organisations' homepages. Although almost all, except one (Perlis state), of the official national tourism organisations have their organisations' logo, two of the organisations (i.e. *Selangor Tourism* and *Sabah Tourism*) did not put the logo on their homepages at the time of homepage data collection for this study.

The introduction of the tourism organisations is also accomplished by stating the name of the portal or website (50.00%) somewhere on the masthead, or as a masthead of the homepage (31.25%). Descriptions and other information about the tourism organisations are obtainable via the *About Us* link (56.25%). These descriptions may include the organisations' profile, objectives, visions and mission statements. The link may also include the organisations' contact information. The information contained in the *About Us* section is to establish the tourism organisation's background and credentials in order to build trust and credibility with prospective tourists.

This identification of the organisations which is communicated in all of the homepages analysed is imperative to the validity and integrity of the websites as official websites of tourism organisations of the country. This is because there are many websites, including personal and corporate ones, on the Internet that provide tourism materials. However, the tourism websites managed by official national tourism organisations are more current and reliable in terms of the information offered online. Hence, prospective tourists may more likely obtain touristic information confidently from these official

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tourism websites. Furthermore, information about the tourism organisations can build trust and credibility among prospective tourists.

6.1.1.3 Introducing the destination

The function of introducing the respective destinations is achieved by stating the name of the destination (62.50%) overtly on the masthead of the homepage. 56.25% of the homepages' mastheads introduce their respective destinations by displaying visuals of the local places of interest or attractions synonymous with the destination. Other than identifying the destination, these nine mastheads also attract attention to the webpage with the use of animated and static visuals. Eight of these mastheads (50.00%) employed the functionality of animated visuals that can change through rotation or appear intermittently.

Positive introductions to the destination on the homepage itself (25.00%), and links to descriptions about the destination via the *About* / *Facts on* [name of destination] link give information about the respective destinations. More specific details on the destinations' history (18.75%), geography (43.75%), demographics (18.75%), transportation (37.50%) and ways of getting to the destination (31.25%) are also obtainable through links on the homepages.

Introduction of the destinations is also realised with the display of visuals such as logos (81.25%), photographs of tourist attractions (100%), and maps of the local destination (18.75%). The logo of the tourism organisations not only introduces the NTOs but also introduces and identifies the respective destinations. This is reflected in all the logos of

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the NTOs (Figure 6.1). Brief explanations on the significance of the twelve logos used in thirteen of the homepages are given on the pages that follow.

The mutual logo of *Tourism Malaysia* and its corporate site, *Tourism Malaysia Corporate*, as illustrated above incorporates the icon of a red hibiscus flower that is part of the 'Y' alphabet, and signified by the three dots that represent the hibiscus stigma. The red hibiscus, known as the *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*, is the national flower of Malaysia.

Visit KL's logo features the icons of famous buildings in Kuala Lumpur: the Petronas Twin Towers which were the world's tallest buildings from 1998 to 2004; the heritage building of the Sultan Abdul Samad Building which served as the backdrop for many important and historical events such as the declaration of independence of Malaysia; and the Kuala Lumpur Tower which is currently the eighteenth tallest freestanding tower in the world.

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The logo of Kedah's NTO, *Visit Kedah,* includes an image of two paddy stalks because the state is the 'rice bowl' of Malaysia. The state is known for its paddy fields which accounts for one third of Malaysia's total production of rice.

Tourism Penang's logo consists of an image of a heritage building to represent the rich cultural heritage and well-preserved heritage buildings in the state which the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared as a World Heritage Site in 2008. The use of brown colour for the building symbolizes the old and archaic heritage buildings which were built mostly out of timber.

The state of Perak is known as the 'Land of Grace' with its architectural splendour, and these are symbolised by the curved line and golden yellow image of a heritage building top in its NTO's, *Perak Tourism*'s, logo which represents the *Masjid Ubudiah*. *Masjid Ubudiah,* Perak's royal mosque, is often regarded as Malaysia's most beautiful mosque.

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The mosque's magnificent golden dome and minarets create a fascinating sight and are testimony to the beauty of Islamic architecture.

The logo of Negeri Sembilan's NTO, *Negeri Sembilan Tourism*, also rests on the state's unique cultural heritage and values of the Minangkabau society which is reflected in the architecture and construction of the Minangkabau houses found only in the state. The silhouette of the yellow building represents the ruler's Seri Menanti Palace, and yellow being the royal colour.

The state of Melaka is dubbed '*The Historic State'* among Malaysians. Hence, *Melaka Tourism*'s logo features a kris, a dagger or sword indigenous to Malaysia with its sheath made from various precious or rare materials and carved in meticulous design, to represent the state's history. The well-known *Keris Taming Sari* or Flower Shield Kris, which is a skillfully-crafted legendary kris in Malay literature that possesses supernatural powers and extraordinary ability, was mentioned in Melaka's traditional folktale and used during the rise of the Melaka Sultanate.

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The image of a horse in the *Tourism Johor* logo depicts the state's local folk dance, *Kuda Kepang* a legless horse-shaped puppet that is straddled by the performers. This folk dance is performed by Johoreans at wedding ceremonies and cultural celebrations.

Pahang's main attraction as reflected in its slogan, *Abode of Tranquility*, is its natural resources of rainforests, fine stretches of beach and islands with extensive coral reef systems. The state is home to the country's largest world-famous national park, *Taman Negara*, which is habitat to many rare or endangered animals. These attractions are portrayed by the colours and images superimposed on the letters of the state's name which constitute the NTO's, *Tourism Pahang*'s, logo

The logo of *Kelantan Tourism* consists of many of its state attractions. They are represented by the figure of a man flying the *wau bulan*, an intricately designed Malaysian moon-kite that is traditionally flown by men in Kelantan. The man doubles

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up as a puppet master of the *wayang kulit* or shadow puppet plays which are also synonymous to the state. On the backdrop is the brown image of the Sultan Ismail Petra Arch, which is made of timber (hence, the colour), built to commemorate the occasion when Kelantan was proclaimed a cultural state.

Tourism Terengganu's logo is based on one of the state's attractions that is leatherback sea turtles found on the beach of Rantau Abang in Terengganu. The state once had the largest leatherback nesting population in the world, hosting 10,000 nests per year. The combination of various playful colours also represents its picture-perfect beaches and offshore islands which attract beachgoers and snorkelers from all over the world.

As with *Tourism Terengganu*'s logo, *Sarawak Tourism*'s logo is also based on one of its fauna, the Oriental Pied Hornbill that is predominantly found in Sarawak. The use of the colours in the logo also inventively reflects the colours of this attraction.

This finding, based on the analysis, clearly shows the significance and value of creating and using a logo to give an identity to the tourism organisation as well as the

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destination. All the thirteen official Malaysian tourism organisations' logos each depict their main tourist attraction, tourist destination(s), produce, the flora or fauna that is unique to their respective destination. These aspects are also reflected in the colours used for the logos.

As mentioned earlier, the presence of photographs is aimed at stimulating the audiences' interest and attracts attention to the homepages. Photographs which are found in all the homepages also function to further introduce the destination. The maps, with the capability of enlargement, shown on 18.75% of the homepages can give the audience and potential tourists an idea of the location of the destination and its attractions. In short, visuals constitute a fundamental element in the construction of the tourism homepage genre which also functions to introduce the destination.

6.1.1.4 Introducing and offering products and services

The homepages that were analysed in this study have employed various forms and elements to introduce and offer their tourism products and services. Two (12.50%) homepages introduce their tourism products via their mastheads. One of the homepages, *Tourism Malaysia*, used its masthead as an attention getter to introduce the current event (e.g. the Mega Sale Carnival as illustrated in its masthead). Another homepage, *Sabah Tourism*, displayed an animation of images that introduce the destination's flora and fauna that are synonymous to the place on its masthead. News heading or titles (87.50%) with links to the full story, and headlines (6.25%) are also used to realise this function. The homepage audience and potential tourists can skim and scan the titles or news headings and then choose to read further on a news that interests them. The news headings which mostly include an excerpt of the highlighted

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descriptions of the products or services also operate as hyperlinks to the full story or descriptions.

Much of the information presented on a promotional website is to showcase its products and services. Likewise, a tourism website also offers and announces its tourism attractions such as descriptions or advertorials on its destinations, products and services offered. The promotional descriptions of tourism attractions include the various local places of interest (100%); activities (93.75%); services (43.75%) such as to organise Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) functions, and Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H) programme; and products (100%) such as events, festivals, tourism themes, local produce and cuisines.

The move of introducing and offering products and services is realised by a navigation menu – a bar of generic links with (side) drop-down or pop-up menus and list of labels of tourism themes which link to other webpages within the website. The navigation menu lists all the main topics, in the form of links, on the NTOs' websites, which is similar to the table of contents of print materials. A main navigation menu enables the homepage visitors to quickly and easily identify the content channels and switch between them. The use of both horizontal and vertical menus is commonly found on tourism homepages. Out of the sixteen homepages analysed, twelve (75.00%) of the homepages have both horizontal and vertical menus, three (18.75%) have only a horizontal menu, and one (i.e. *Kelantan Tourism*) has only a vertical menu (6.25%).

The introduction and offering of tourism products as reflected in the findings and analysis of the homepages can also come in the form of links to travel guides (12.50%), virtual brochures (25.00%), blogs (18.75%), calendar of events (62.50%), and notices

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(12.50%). In relation to this, offers and incentives (12.50%) such as promotions, discounts or special offers are also listed whereby the headings listed serve as hyperlinks to a webpage for more details. These offers and incentives make the services more attractive.

Other than products, tourism service packages are also presented in the homepages for potential tourists' knowledge and convenience in their travel planning. The related services comprise information on accommodation (93.75%), travel packages (43.75%) and tour agents (37.50%). The information can also include contact particulars and links to lodging service providers and travel agents. This introduction and offer of services is to maintain reliable and competent business practices.

As with the prior moves of the tourism homepages discussed above, multimodal elements are also used to realise the function of introducing and offering products and services. The multimodal elements include multimedia and visuals. The types of multimedia found to have been included in the homepages are videos (62.50%), audio (12.50%) and slides (12.50%). The videos and slides function to demonstrate the tourist attractions and stimulate the audiences' interest with the hope that they will be attracted to visit the places and participate in the tourism activities. The audio feature discovered in two of the NTOs in their homepages is the local traditional cultural songs. Visuals that illustrate the destination's attractions and used to introduce and offer tourism products found on the homepages are uploaded onto the websites' photo gallery (56.25%). A collection of photographs in relation to the country's or individual state's tourism attractions can be found in their photo gallery. These photographs also function similarly to the videos and slides in attracting audiences' attention and arousing their interest. The role of map links found on 81.25% of the NTOs' homepages is to locate

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the tourist attractions. They also serve another purpose of strengthening the relationship with the potential tourist which will be discussed further in the discussion of the next move.

Other elements found to realise the move of introducing and offering products and services are in indirect forms of e-training or e-marketing (12.50%), note to tourism suppliers (6.25%) and information on trade promotions (18.75%). These elements have a primary purpose of assisting tourism business organisations and industry players. However, the NTOs' website viewers can also access such information and obtain information on the tourism products and services.

6.1.1.5 Strengthening the relationship with potential customers

Many NTO websites incorporate elements that make their readers feel comfortable accessing information on their websites. The purpose is to convince them that the NTO will try their best to fulfil the needs of the readers who comprise of potential tourists. There are various elements found in the data that serve to accomplish this purpose and are discussed below.

A few of the homepages facilitate potential tourists with the acquisition of tourism services such as tour packages (6.25%) and accommodation (12.50%). Tourists have the possibility of buying tour packages online and make online reservations for their accommodation before they arrive at the destination. This capability that is afforded by this new online media will not only reduce marketing costs for the business supplier but also benefit the tourists in terms of the convenience of purchasing the services and perhaps get a discount on the service as with many products and services that are bought

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online. However, this facility is not provided in many of the NTO homepages analysed in the study.

The number of homepages that afford the possibility for readers to register online (6.25%) and login (12.50%) to the website with the purpose of customising the content of the webpage is also rather small. These elements enable the readers to receive information that is tailored to their interests and needs, thus saving them the time spent on looking at information that they may not be interested in. This facility may also offer special deals on the services or early notifications of tourism product and service updates. Consequently, the NTOs can also establish a closer relationship with the reader or potential tourist; and in addition, a database of potential tourists can be created.

A number of the homepages examined also provide language options for their readers to view the webpage in other languages that they are comfortable with. This multilingual choice can be accessed via a "choose a country" flag icon or simply the name of the language options. This facility translates all the information on the webpage into the selected language so as to cater to potential international tourists who read a different language other than the English or Malay languages. This will also contribute in widening the potential market for the tourism business. One homepage even provides a language-phrases translator for potential tourists so that they are able to communicate with the local citizens upon their arrival.

Corporate websites such as those of the NTOs are created with the purposes of promoting the destinations and their tourism products and services, attracting more visitors, generating more business leads, and ultimately help to gain more returns on

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investment. Readers may look for someone who claims accountability and responsibility for the content. The possibility of contacting the website owner or NTO is thus regarded as a very important move in strengthening the relationship with potential tourists. That is why all the sixteen homepages (100%) offer prospective tourists this possibility by providing their contact information, such as the address, telephone, fax and email, at the end of the webpage or in the *Contact Us* link. This element acts as a form of establishing contact or communication with potential tourists. The provision of an e-mail address, telephone and fax numbers, and the physical address can also enhance the readers' confidence in the tourism products and services. The *Contact Us* link may include email capabilities which enable readers to contact the NTOs immediately for further information. Communication with a tourism organisation has therefore become much easier with this online medium. The offline contact information is another option for potential tourists who lack confidence and ability to contact the state tourism organisation or NTO online and prefer a more personal mode of offline communication (Marco, 2002).

Some of the homepages of the NTOs also offer utilities and other related free tourism products and services. They include font size options (12.50%); technical support for special web users (12.50%); travel planner (12.50%); currency converter (6.25%); time zone converter (6.25%); downloads (12.50%); news updates (37.50%) in the form of newsletters, bulletin, magazines and/or mobile device; online entertainment (6.25%); virtual greeting cards or e-cards (12.50%); and links to other relevant tourism information websites (81.25%). Other relevant information that are available on several of the homepages examined in this study are travel tips (12.50%); Phone dialling codes (6.25%); banking facility (6.25%); prayer times for Muslims (6.25%); and relevant tourism directory or contacts (37.50%). These elements are provided with the purposes

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of assisting the reader in the viewing of the webpage, catering to special users, assisting in travel planning, updating on news and information, and providing relevant contact information that may help make the potential tourist's stay more comfortable.

Channels for enquiries (25.00%) and feedback (50.00%) are also available in a number of the homepages analysed. The *Enquiries* link basically involves customer services which enable users to make enquiries related to tourism products and services. The *Feedback* link seeks to obtain the website users' opinions about the tourism products and services. It allows readers to comment, suggest, or make complaints. Tourists' evaluation of the accommodation services (*Melaka Tourism*) and a survey on the tourism products and services (*Perak Tourism*) are also included in 6.25% of the official NTO homepages respectively. The polls and questionnaire aimed to rate and improve on the services in addition to provide optimum satisfaction for the tourists visiting the states. Feedback to readers and prospective tourists in the form of frequently-asked-questions (FAQs) is also present on 25.00% of the homepages.

As discussed earlier about the importance of establishing contact with readers and potential tourists in strengthening the relationship with potential tourists, this new online media now affords the capability of linking users, accessing current and updated information and interacting with others on social networking platforms via participation in online forums (6.25%), RSS updates - a content delivery method that brings automatically updated information straight to the viewer's desktop (50.00%), and social media networking sites such as *Facebook* and *Twitter* (50.00%). The opportunities presented by the rapid expansion of these social media are powerful and ingenious ways that corporations and governments are using to expedite the spread of their products and services. These forms of communication between the NTOs and users, and among

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potential tourists enable frequent online users to establish contacts and communities within the website. Such functionalities are what Shepherd and Watters (1998) term as novel spontaneous subgenres only found in cybergenres.

The advantages of using social media to promote a destination and its tourism attractions and activities are reflected in the expenditure of many countries in using the new media for tourism promotion. Australia is spending A$150mil (RM465mil) for three years, the Philippines is spending US$7.2mil (RM22mil), and Thailand is using 40% of its tourism promotion budget on social media for this purpose (Ho, 2012). Following this trend and realising the power and importance of social media in advertising and promotion the country as a tourist destination, Malaysia is also spending RM1.8mil on social media to promote the country's tourism attractions via six *Facebook* campaigns.

Visuals and graphics, such as icons and map links, also function to strengthen the relationship with potential tourists. Icons which appear in 68.75% of the NTOs' homepages create a user-friendly interface for the users. Maps which are available via links are also highly presented on most (81.25%) of the homepages. These maps, which give the location of the tourist attractions, can cater to the tourists' need for planning their travelling routes and itinerary.

Other than the above, utility links and the navigation route are two elements that can also strengthen the relationship with potential tourists. The utility links or functions, which can appear in textual form or icons, include elements such as a '*Home*' link which brings the user back to the mainpage or homepage (100%); sitemap that is akin to an index of the webpage (56.25%); search facility (87.50%); the option of viewing an

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information in PDF version (18.75%); and the option of printing the information (25.00%). The provision of a '*Home*' or icon link, the search facility and sitemap is very important as can be seen from the findings of the data. These utilities facilitate website accessibility and make navigation of the website easier for users to access the contents and obtain relevant information. Providing the navigation route is also a form of strengthening the relationship with the users as the webpage can chart the users' direction of their information access and identify where the users have moved in the website. This information is given in 18.75% of the homepages.

6.1.1.6 Giving information about the website

The function of giving information about the webpage itself or website is realised by information such as the time, day and/or date of webpage access (31.25%), date of last update (31.25%), number of hits on the website (50.00%), things to do with the webpage (18.75%), links to legal information, information on the best viewing quality (31.25%), and advertisements of other products as can be seen in the homepages. The purpose of providing the date of the last website update is to reinforce the integrity, validity and reliability of the information provided in the website. Statistics on visitors who have visited the website are given in half of the sixteen homepages examined in the study. This element acts as a form of endorsement for the website, and reinforces the credibility and reliability of the website information. Some of these homepages (i.e. *Negeri Sembilan Tourism, Kelantan Tourism* and *Tourism Terengganu*) even provided the statistics of the total website visitors according to a daily, weekly and monthly breakdown. In order to show the reliability of the collation of the statistics, those homepages (18.75%) included the name of software used in collating these statistics. One of the homepages even showed the current user's Internet Protocol (IP) Address.

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Proposing things to do with the webpage is another element that gives information about the webpage. This came in the form of the option of setting the webpage as the user's Internet access homepage (6.25%). This means that the first webpage that is shown upon the user's access to the Internet is that NTO's homepage. Another form of proposing things to do with the webpage is the possibility and ease of emailing the webpage or information item endowed to the user. This option allows the user to disseminate the particular information to a third party. When an information item is conveyed to another person and so on, it acts as a form of publicity for the news item in addition to the NTO and homepage where the information is situated.

One of the elements that occurred frequently in the homepages that were analysed in the study is the copyright and legal information, usually through links found at the bottom of the homepage. These links include information about the copyright (87.50%), disclaimer (62.50%), rules and regulations, terms and conditions or terms of use (31.25%), privacy statement (25.00%), and security policy (18.75%). The purpose of these legal information is to protect the NTOs from any liabilities that may be taken against them for publishing the information on their websites. The privacy statement and security measures that may apply to both the consumption of the website information and users' personal information will also assure the users of the safety of disclosing their personal information via the Internet, such as sending a message to an NTO's email address. The users will also have more confidence in using the website and Internet as a mode of communication with the NTOs.

Five (31.25%) of the homepages stated information on the best viewing quality of the website to their users. This information is required to ensure that the users view the

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NTOs' webpages, especially the visuals, in a viewing quality that best promotes their tourism products and services.

A website, including a tourism website, can also be a channel for other businesses to advertise their products and services. This is only observed in one (6.25%) of the NTO websites (i.e. *Selangor Tourism*) examined in the study. Two (12.50%) of the homepages (*Visit Kedah* and *Tourism Terengganu*) included the identification of their website developer, i.e. "www.visitkedah.com.my portal is a copyright of Kedah ICT Holdings Sdn Bhd" and "Developed by … for Tourism Terengganu …" respectively, on their homepages. The inclusion of such information is an indirect form of advertisement on services for developing websites, for the company that developed the NTO's website.

6.1.1.7 Advertising business and job opportunities

A final function found in the tourism homepages that were analysed in this study is advertising business opportunities and job opportunities to tourism industry suppliers and prospective individual job-seekers. Advertising for the procurement of tourism supplies and services for the NTO is only found in three (18.75%) of the homepages, while advertisement on job offers can only be found in one (6.25%) of the homepages. This form of e-procurement of products, services and human resources is a form of acquiring resources for the organisation, in addition to reducing advertising costs for the NTOs concerned.

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6.1.2 Characterising the Genre of Tourism Homepages

As mentioned earlier in Chapter Three, the genre characteristics of tourism homepages include purpose, functionality, form, and content. These characteristics are evident in the official NTOs' homepages analysed in this study.

6.1.2.1 Purpose

The NTOs homepages are used to communicate with potential tourists and tourism industry companies. The above analysis of the elements in the tourism homepages and their functions show that the tourism homepage is a multipurpose genre, with both an informative and a persuasive intent. It shares many features with promotional genres such as advertisements and news. Many of the elements found on the homepages offer information that have been carefully presented with the objective of creating a positive image of the country or destinations. Therefore, the primary purpose of these homepages seems to be image building which is achieved through promotion and evaluation by offering the tourism products, services and tourist support. The country or states, its destinations, and tourism products and services offered are valued positively in order to persuade and convince the prospective tourists to visit the place(s). This strategy is similarly used in product detailing by writers of sales promotional letters (Bhatia, 1993).

6.1.2.2 Functionality

The functionality of an online tourism homepage genre should also be discussed since the functional features of the webpage are designed with the purpose of the genre and online user in mind. Tourism homepages consist of highly dynamic texts which are

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changed and updated frequently to provide current information rapidly, or at least they give an impression that the information is being updated frequently by incorporating an automatic update date as can be seen in a number of the tourism homepages examined in this study. This capability afforded by the online medium is important in demonstrating validity of the information presented on the tourism website to potential tourists.

Another operational feature of tourism homepages is their connectivity via hyperlinks. As has been stated earlier, tourism homepages are non-linear texts which are internally linked to other webpages within the website or can even be externally linked to other relevant websites by means of hypertexts. Although news headings of tourism products and services may be presented on the homepages, their detailed descriptions and advertorials of the products and services are grouped according to certain classifications, such as tourism themes or activities, which can be found on webpages other than the homepage as evidenced in the data.

The tourism homepages are also highly interactive in that they may include features such as the facility of emailing to the NTO, enquiries and feedback channels, online reservations of its services, filling in a survey or questionnaire, downloadable documents and applications, etc. Some of these tourism webpages even offer the possibility to interact with other potential tourists via newsgroups, social networking sites and online forums.

The functionality of animated visuals with various types of transitions is also offered by the new media. This displaying of dynamic visuals that are intermittently rotated or

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changed are more attention-grabbing than static visuals, which is why most (62.50%) of the NTOs have made use of this capability.

6.1.2.3 Form

The method or form of presenting tourism information is important in constructing an online image or experience for the users. It is how information is presented to facilitate users' navigation as well as attract their attention to specific aspects of information. This is achieved by means of icon links, menu bars or tabs of generic links with (side) drop-down or pop-up lists of labels of tourism themes which connect to information on other webpages within the website. The use of both horizontal and vertical menus can be found on the tourism homepages analysed in the study. Out of the sixteen homepages analysed, twelve (75.00%) of the homepages have both horizontal and vertical menus, three (18.75%) have only a horizontal menu, and one has only a vertical menu (6.25%). Other forms of presentation include insert tabs; textual and visual information such as textual descriptions, pictures, logos, emblems or icons which may also function as links; and flash animations.

The tourism homepage design or layout is developed according to the focus of the NTOs. The focal point of the homepage is typically occupied by general introductions; highlights or brief information on current promotions, features or events; or headings of positive news related to the NTO with pictures and links to more information. Other categories of information are placed within links that are situated in a menu at the top, sides and bottom of the homepage. The overall visual design of tourism homepages should provide a general overview by presenting links to its main sections of

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information. The visual layout or positioning will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter of this thesis.

6.1.2.4 Content

The contents of the NTOs' homepages consist of mostly information and descriptions about the country's or state's tourism products and services. The homepages also include many other elements as seen and discussed earlier in this chapter. The more frequent elements that appear in 50% or more of the sixteen tourism homepages examined in the study are identified and presented in descending order in Table 6.2 on the next page. An identification of the typical contents and layout of a tourism organisation's homepage which displays some of these links and features analysed in this study was shown in Figure 4.3 in Chapter Four (page 181).

Some of the sixteen tourism homepages analysed in this study have also included other items that the NTOs believe can be of interest to their website users. For instance, the homepage of *Visit Kedah* has a link to e-vouchers and online games; the homepage of *Tourism Pahang* contains links to local telephone dialling codes, prayer times for Muslims, and currency and timezone converters; while the homepage of *Sarawak Tourism* includes links to e-cards and an airline's domestic flight schedule.

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Table 6.2

Frequency of Elements of the Tourism Homepages

Elements / Contents / Features	Total	%
Masthead	16	100.00
Contact info – email, phone no., link to such info.	16	100.00
Description / advertorials on: * **Places** to visit (places of interest)	16	100.00
Description / advertorials on: * **Products** (i.e. Events, themes: nature, beach, cuisine, local produce, etc.)	16	100.00
Utility link/function (in text/icon) - **back to mainpage/Homepage** (‘*Home’* link)	16	100.00
Visuals - Photographs, images, graphics, etc	16	100.00
Accommodation service packages	15	93.75
Description / advertorials on: * Things to do / **activities**	15	93.75
Tagline / Slogan / Catchphrase	14	87.50
News heading/title (with links to full story)	14	87.50
Utility link/function - **Search facility** (in text/icon/insert tab)	14	87.50
Links to legal information - **Copyright**	14	87.50
Map links	13	81.25
Links to other **relevant tourism information/services websites**	13	81.25
Trademark - **logo**	13	81.25
Links to description about the **destination** (e.g. ‘*About* / *Facts on* [name of destination]’)	13	81.25
Visuals / Graphics - Icons	11	68.75
Multimedia - Video	10	62.50
Affiliation to local/international tourism organisations/associations (logo)	10	62.50
Animation (changing graphics/transition of images, scrolling of text/images)	10	62.50
Name of destination	10	62.50
Events **Calendar**	10	62.50
Links to legal information - **Disclaimer**	10	62.50
Trademark - **emblem**	9	56.25
Visuals - Photo gallery	9	56.25
Description about the tourism organisation (‘*About Us*’ link)	9	56.25
Utility link/function - **Sitemap / index**	9	56.25
Name of website	8	50.00
Feedback channel	8	50.00
Updates on RSS	8	50.00
Links to **social networking sites** - Facebook / Twitter	8	50.00
Statistics of past / current visitors to the website (counter / hits)	8	50.00

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The analysis and discussion of the homepage genre above, based on the functions and elements found on the homepages, have shed light on the NTOs' use of the new online media in the promotion of the destination and tourism products and services. Both the verbal and visual elements are combined and used in the tourism websites to achieve this purpose. The visual elements constitute an essential feature of the digital genre, and function both as an attractive complement to the linguistic message and as a visual aid for the online user to navigate the website more easily. The verbal or textual element functions to describe essential and detailed information. Thus, both factors contribute to the final persuasive effect.

The findings have also shown that the tourism homepage is a rather complex macro structure genre which incorporates a variety of different elements. Some of these elements, such as static visuals, textual descriptions, slogans, logos and news headings, which are typically found in tourism brochures, have been taken from existing genres in traditional print media and modified onto the online media. Other elements, such as videos; transition of visuals; links to a virtual store, online forums and social networking sites; update information or date; statistics counter; currency and time-zone converters; and hyperlink feature, are specific and unique to this new medium and are not available on other media especially print promotional genres.

The tourism homepage is a web genre that has appeared to take advantage of the capabilities afforded by the new media, the Internet. Websites and their homepages are used by NTOs to present information promptly and to interact with prospective tourists, tourism suppliers as well as investors. Many elements are borrowed and adapted or modified from other genres to take advantage of the features of the Internet, such as the

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provision of contact information to establish contact and solicit response. The new media affords the ability and channel to send an email via the 'contact us' link, send an enquiry and get feedback from tourism organisations easily and quickly. Therefore, it is undeniable that the new online medium has not only transformed old genres, but also given rise to new genres which are known as cybergenres.

The macro structure findings of the tourism homepages discussed above relate to the next section of this chapter which reports on the micro structure of tourism advertorials which are found within the tourism websites via their homepages.

6.2 Tourism Advertorial Genre

The micro level analysis was carried out on the forty-nine advertorials extracted from the official Malaysian tourism websites which are managed by the government tourism organizations as in the national tourism organisations (NTOs) of Malaysia, *Tourism Malaysia*, and the capital's and respective states' tourism boards.

The forty-nine advertorials collected for this micro-level analysis of the moves structures of tourism advertorials are descriptions on the main attractions of the top four most visited states in Malaysia, according to the statistics on tourist arrivals to the states in 2009:

i. KL (15.7 million) - shopping;

ii.. Pahang (9.7 million) – nature and adventure;

iii. Penang (6.0 million) – food and beaches;

iv. Sabah (5.4 million) – nature, adventure and culture.

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The analytical framework adopted for the analysis of the rhetorical structure of the online tourism advertorials was adapted from the frameworks of Kathpalia's (1992) and Bhatia's (1993) who researched on promotional texts, specifically book blurbs, print advertisements, sales promotional letters and job application letters. The two analytical models were compared and then adapted for the present study.

Following Kathpalia's (1992) and Bhatia's (1993 & 2004) models as introduced in Chapter Two and explained in detail in Chapter Four, an analytical framework was adapted from their models and used for analysing the rhetorical structure of the current online tourism advertorials. This adapted combination of the two frameworks is used for analysing the online genre as advertorials are similar in terms of their general communicative purpose to the promotional texts that were examined by the two researchers. The combination of the abovementioned frameworks, as discussed in Chapter Four, which form a basis for the current analytical framework in analysing the rhetorical moves of the online tourism advertorial genre is shown in the Table 6.3 on the following page.

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Table 6.3

Analytical Frameworks for Promotional Genres

No.	Description of Moves	Kathpalia (1992)	Bhatia (1993, 2004)	Present Study
1	Headlines (for reader attraction)	Move 1		Move 1
2	Targeting the market	Move 2		Move 2
3	Justifying the product/service (a) Indicating importance or need of the product/service, and/or (b) Establishing a niche	Move 3 Sub-move 3(a) Sub-move 3(a)		Move 6
4	Detailing/Introducing the product/service (a) Identifying/Offering the product/service (b) Describing/Detailing the product/service/offer (c) Indicating value of the product/service/offer	Move 4 Sub-move 4(a) Sub-move 4(b) Sub-move 4(c)	Move 2 Sub-move 2(i) Sub-move 2(ii) Sub-move 2(iii)	 Move 3 Move 4 Move 5
5	Establishing credentials	Move 5	Move 1	Move 7
6	Celebrity or typical user endorsements	Move 6		Move 9
7	Offering incentives	Move 7	Move 3	Move 10
8	Using pressure tactics	Move 8	Move 6	Move 11
9	Soliciting response	Move 9	Move 5	Move 12
10	Enclosing documents		Move 4	(Move 13)
11	Ending politely		Move 7	(Move 14)
12	Locating/Scheduling the destination/activity/event			Move 8

After analysing a few of the textual data of the online tourism genre, it was realised that the move of 'Targeting the market' was present in a few of the tourism advertorials analysed at the outset. Hence, this new move is added in the analytical framework for the present study. Bhatia's (1993 & 2004) rhetorical moves of 'Enclosing documents' and 'Ending politely' were also adapted in the current analytical framework to analyse the textual data in the present study. Due to the textual configuration of the present data which does not warrant the enclosure of documents but provides other related information and links to such information, the classification of the 'Enclosing documents' move is adapted to indicate it as a 'Giving related information' move. As for Bhatia's (1993 & 2004) 'Ending politely' rhetorical move which is more appropriate

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for letters, this classification has been adapted to reflect the 'Reinforcement ending or closing' of the promotional texts that were analysed. A new move (Move 8) was also added to the analytical framework for the present study because the location of destinations/activities and/or schedule of the events are significant in tourism genres.

Hence, the analytical framework used for the present research in analysing the genre of online tourism advertorials consists of a fourteen-move rhetorical structure as identified below. Consequently, the analysis of the forty-nine online tourism advertorials has also confirmed the identification of the fourteen rhetorical moves as follows:

Move 1: Attracting reader's attention

Move 2: Targeting the market

Move 3: Identifying/Introducing the destination/activity/event

Move 4: Describing/Detailing the destination/activity/event

Move 5: Appraising/Indicating the value

Move 6: Justifying the need for the destination/activity/event

Move 7: Establishing credentials

Move 8: Locating/Scheduling the destination/activity/event

Move 9: Endorsements/Testimonies/Reviews

Move 10: Offering incentives

Move 11: Using pressure tactics

Move 12: Call for action/Soliciting response/Establishing contact

Move 13: Giving related information

Move 14: Reinforcement ending/closing

A detailed explanation and discussion of the various moves in the context of the present study is provided on the next few pages.

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Move 1: Attracting reader's attention

This move of attracting readers' attention is realised by the different or larger typography; and is brief, creative and catchy to grab the attention of the reader in order to read further. Some of the strategies include:

(a) tourism slogan and/or motto

(b) rhetorical question / statement

(c) famous quotation / quotation by reviewer

(d) synopsis / extract / preface

(e) Headline

(f) Title of the tourism advertorial

(g) Sub-title

(h) Picture/visual – when pictures are placed at the beginning of an advertorial, its function is to attract the readers' attention

Move 2: Targeting the market

This move can be fulfilled by directly addressing the target market identified by sex, age, education, degree of specialisation, profession, social roles, interest and others. It addresses the sort of customers who need the product or service, and to whom the product or service is important. In the context of the present research, the product and service have been extended to include tourism experience. The target audience is obviously the general public who are potential tourists. The target market can also be realised in the vision and mission statements, and/or objectives of the tourism website/board.

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Move 3: Identifying/Introducing/Offering the destination, product, activity or event

The function of this move is to introduce the product, and this can be done by simply naming the product. In the case of the present study, the product identification is realised by providing the name of the destination, activity or event. This move introduces the destination, activity or event. It can also be recognised by the name of the tourism organisation, together with the crest and/or logo where applicable.

Move 4: Describing/Essential detailing of the destination, product, activity or event

According to Bhatia (2004), offering a product description that is good, positive and favourable is one of the most important moves in an advertising discourse or a promotional discourse. This is often achieved through the generic values of description and evaluation. Product description is realised by giving a description of the features of the product, service or experience.

In detailing a tourism product or attraction, a positive description of the product, activity or event is used to persuade the potential tourists to buy the product or service, or to experience the activity or event. This includes providing details of the destinations, activities, events, celebrations, history, packages, rates, immigration requirements, rules and regulations, tourism tips, etc.

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Move 5: Appraising/Indicating the value of the destination, product, activity or event

This move is achieved in two ways, "by a straightforward evaluation or by translating the chief features of the product or service into concrete consumer benefits" (Kathpalia, 1992: 187 – 188). In tourism product evaluation, a positive evaluation of the destination, product, activity or event can further persuade the prospective tourists to visit the destination and experience the activity or event. This move also states what can be seen at the destination and the experience that can be felt there. It can be accomplished by creating a positive image of the destination (i.e. clean, safe environment, friendly, facilities available, etc.).

Move 6: Justifying the destination, product, activity or event

This move is usually realised in the body section of the advertorial. It functions to influence the potential tourists into believing that the product or service being promoted is specifically for them. There are two strategies for accomplishing this purpose:

(a) <u>Indicating the importance or need to visit the destination, or experience the activity or event</u>

This sub-move refers to the individual needs of the potential customer. It is accomplished by means of reasoning out the need for possessing the product, or in the context of the present study, visiting the destination and experiencing the tourism activity or event described. It states why the tourist destination and/or attraction are/is important for potential tourists, and what they will gain if they were to visit or experience it, depending on whether it is:

- Product-based, or

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- Situation/Occasion – based

(b) Establishing a niche / strong point / speciality

This sub-move presents real-life problems and the answer to them is the product or service advertised. This sub-move can be realised through the following two generic values:

- Unique Selling Point (USP):

  It is a strategy used by advertisers to convince the audience that their destination is better than others of the same category, as in the tourism theme such as for adventure tourism, nature tourism, culture tourism, shopping, etc.

- Specific features that make the destination, tourist attraction or activity/event special compared to other similar destinations (e.g. nature/adventure (diving) – different from other nature/diving experiences, whereby one can see the rafflesia flower or leatherback turtles, not found elsewhere).

Move 7: Establishing credentials

This move promotes the tourism organisation or destination in order to gain potential tourists' trust in the tourist destinations or attractions. This can be achieved by announcing the achievements of the country or organisation in the tourism industry to show its positive reputation as a tourist destination. It can also be realised via self-appraisals; giving an adequately relevant, positive and credible description of the destination, attractions and its potential value. Kathpalia (1992) has identified three strategies or sub-moves, all of which are relevant for the present study to establish credentials:

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(a) Recognition for the organisation/destination/activity/event

- further positive information about the tourism organisation, destination, activity, or event,
- information about what the state or country is known for, the historical background or present status in terms of international recognition (i.e. Penang is listed as a UNESCO heritage site).

(b) Product/service/activity/event guarantee/warranty

- after-sale service,
- guarantee of quality on related services rendered (e.g. certified tour guides),

(c) Provision of organisation/destination profile

- referring to the long and well-established nature or service of the tourism organisation, destination, activity or event; or the established track record,
- current status of the tourism industry achievement (i.e. ranking of the tourism destination, tourism achievements (statistics on tourist arrivals) and awards, etc. - to show its reputation as a tourist destination,
- referring to mission statements, gratitude for past support.

This move functions to fulfil the needs of the potential tourist, and establish the tourism organisation's reputation in the market. On tourism homepages, the move 'establishing credentials' serves to establish a positive image of the country, state or destination, and to inform readers of the competitive advantage of the destination by introducing the long history and the international fame of the destination, and highlights the destination as a place that offers the best of a genuine Asian tourism experience.

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Move 8: Locating the destination/activity/event

This move describes the place or location of the destination, activity or event, and includes providing the scheduled dates (period/duration) and time of the event, festival, etc. This move helps the potential tourists to plan their travel itinerary.

Move 9: Endorsements/Testimonies/Reviews

The function of this move is to make the advertising message or advertorial more convincing. This is achieved by making use of a third person to support the idea presented in the advertorial, which includes:

- acknowledgement by celebrities/public figures,
- testimonies of satisfied consumers / positive reviews,
- acceptance/support/approval of authorities,
- official/public citation of achievements, and seals of approval.

This move may be achieved by using images of the celebrity, public figure or satisfied consumers to gain the potential tourists' positive view of the destination/country.

Move 10: Offering incentives

This move attempts to tempt or further attract the potential tourists into visiting the destination(s) and experiencing the tourism activities or events by making the offer more attractive by offering an incentive, such as:

- promotions
- free gifts
- discounts

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- special offers
- rebates
- trial offer
- other benefits

These incentives are included in order to persuade the prospective customer to seriously consider consuming or experiencing the tourism product or service being offered. This move can also be realised with the creative use of multimodality, in the form of pictures or images.

Move 11: Using pressure tactics

This move aims to speed up the potential tourist's decision by imposing certain constraints on the tourism product or service being described. This move gives the cause and negative effects to pressure the potential customer if he/she does not consume the product or service, such as what the potential tourist will miss if he/she did not visit the destination or experience the tourism attraction or activity. Its function is to prompt the already inclined or half-inclined customer to expedite his/her decision about the product or service being promoted. This is generally realised in the form of an offer of some additional savings or gains if the customer decides to buy the product or use the service before a specific deadline (e.g. only ... units left, on first-come-first-served basis).

This move can be realised by imposing certain constraints on the product or service being promoted, which may be presented in the following forms:

(a) Time constraints on the offer or availability of the product or service,

(b) Quantity constraints on the limited availability of the stocks or service,

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(c) Emotional blackmail on a particular market segment (e.g. if you don't visit/consume it, you will not be considered as the elite few),

(d) Terms and conditions of the offer or package.

Move 12: Urging action / Call for action / Soliciting response / Establishing contact

Promotional texts are never considered complete without soliciting response (Bhatia, 2004). The communicative purpose of this move is to persuade the potential tourist to take action or engage the service by encouraging them to continue further communication. The inclusion of this move can be as follows:

(a) Contact information (of advertiser/sponsor)

- address
- specific telephone and/or fax number
- email
- website
- name of the person who will be willing to answer any queries that the reader may have about the product or service

(b) Writer's information (by line, contact info, etc) / Publisher's information

(c) Registration of online visitors

(d) Subscription to online newsletter

(e) Links to other forms of communication (i.e. via social networking sites)

(f) Other forms that persuade the potential tourist to visit the destination or experience the activity, but with **no** pressure tactics (e.g. "... the time is now, the place is Malaysia.").

The above methods function to invite the potential tourist to get in touch with the advertiser or to participate in the communication.

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This move of 'establishing contact' in the tourism context provides contact information (i.e. address, telephone, fax and email) of the tourism board to the online readers. Corporate websites are created with the purposes to represent a company, sell the organisation's name, attract more visitors, generate more business leads, promote the organisation's tourism products and services, and ultimately, help to gain more returns on investment (Lepcha, 2006: 1). Readers or potential tourists may look for someone who claims accountability and responsibility for the content. In addition, the provision of the organisation's e-mail address, telephone, fax and physical address can enhance the readers' confidence in the tourism website as a source of relevant and valid information.

Move 13: Related information / documents / links

This move includes other relevant information that are related to the destination or tourism activity, but it does not directly describe the destination or activity (i.e. suggestions, advice, tips, information on accommodation and transportation available, information on how to get there, etc). These related information can come in various forms which include:

(a) Links to relevant webpages/websites

(b) Supporting visuals or pictures - when pictures are placed not at the beginning, its function is to indicate the value of the destination, product or service and usually occurs together with Move 4 or 5

(c) Link to a PDF file version

(d) E-brochures, leaflets or newsletters with details of offer

(e) Request or order forms

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(f) Information on its hardcopy publications

(g) Other forms of description, such as the background information, facts, acknowledgements which usually occurs together with Move 4

Move 14: Reinforcement ending / Closing sentence

This move reinforces the service, tourism activity, event or festival, as in it strengthens the reason(s) as to why the potential tourists should come to witness and experience the destination, tourist attraction or activity being described in the advertorial. It can also include expressions of gratitude as the closing statement.

(xxx)

Some narrative description can also be found in some advertorials, and they do not really serve any particular purpose but just to describe a person, object or sequence of events in the narration of the advertorial. Hence, these statements will be marked as (xxx).

6.2.1 Rhetorical Structure of Web-mediated Tourism Advertorials

This section presents the findings of the rhetorical structures of the online tourism advertorials. Forty-nine online tourism advertorials have been analysed to identify their move structures. The textual and visual contents of all the forty-nine advertorials have been analysed and categorised into the fourteen moves that were identified above from the tourism advertorial genre based on the analytical framework proposed in Chapter Four. All the relevant moves that were manually identified in the forty-nine tourism

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advertorials can be viewed in Appendix I. The overall quantitative findings of the rhetorical moves structure of the online tourism advertorials have been tabulated in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and can be referred to in Appendix N. Although a few of these fourteen rhetorical moves are similar and overlaps the generic structures identified in the tourism homepages, they are more specific for the micro structure analysis of the online tourism advertorials and will describe this promotional genre more adequately.

The table on the next page shows the sum and percentages of existence of the move structures of the forty-nine online tourism advertorials. The findings on the sub-moves (where applicable) of each of the main move have also been tabulated in Table 6.4 on the next page. The frequency of each move and sub-move is calculated based on their existence in the advertorials. Although a move or sub-move may sometimes appear more than once in an advertorial, it will only be considered as having existed in the advertorial, rather than the sum total of its occurrences in that advertorial. This is because investigating the sequence of moves is not part of the objectives of the present study. Moreover, the sequence does not significantly affect the communicative purposes of the genre, which is the main objective of this study.

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Table 6.4

Existence of Moves Structures and Sub-moves in the Online Tourism Advertorials

Move	Sub-Move	Total	Percentage (%)
1: Attracting reader's attention		**49**	**100.0**
1	a: Tourism slogan and/or motto	0	0.0
	b: Rhetorical question/statement	6	12.2
	c: Quotation by authority/reviewer	7	14.3
	d: Synopsis/extract/preface	5	10.2
	e: Headline	2	4.1
	f: Title	49	100.0
	g: Sub-title	41	83.7
	h: Picture/visual (placed at the beginning of the advertorial)	36	73.5
2: Targeting the market		**18**	**36.7**
3: Identifying and Introducing the destination/activity/event		**49**	**100.0**
4: Describing and Detailing the destination/activity/event		**49**	**100.0**
5: Appraising and Indicating the value		**49**	**100.0**
6: Justifying the need for the destination/activity/event		**30**	**61.2**
6	a: Indicating the importance	29	59.2
	b: Establishing a niche	10	20.4
7: Establishing credentials		**13**	**26.5**
7	a: Recognition of the destination/activity/event	7	14.3
	b: Guarantee/warranty on the destination/ activity/ event	6	12.2
	c: Achievements/awards received	3	6.1
8: Locating the destination/activity/event		**41**	**83.7**
9: Endorsements/Testimonies/Reviews		**23**	**46.9**
10: Offering incentives		**11**	**22.4**
11: Using pressure tactics		**1**	**2.0**
11	a: Time constraints	0	0.0
	b: Quality constraints	0	0.0
	c: Emotional blackmail	0	0.0
	d: Terms and conditions	1	2.0
12: Calling for action/Soliciting response/Establishing contact		**43**	**87.8**
12	a. Advertiser's contact information	34	69.4
	b. Writer's/publisher's information	17	34.7
	c. Online registration	0	0.0
	d. Newsletter subscription	0	0.0
	e. Links to other forms of communication	0	0.0
	f. Others	8	16.3
13: Giving related information		**49**	**100.0**
13	a: Links to relevant webpages/websites	38	77.6
	b: Supporting visuals/pictures	40	81.6
	c: Link to PDF file version	12	24.5
	d: E-brochure/leaflet/newsletter	0	0.0
	e: Request/Order forms	0	0.0
	f: Publication information	13	26.5
	g: Others	27	55.1
14: Reinforcement ending/closing		**9**	**18.4**
(XXX): Narrative description		1	2.0

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Table 6.5 shows the overall findings of the main move structures of the forty-nine online tourism advertorials that were analysed in the study.

Table 6.5

Existence of the Main Move Structures in the Online Tourism Advertorials

Moves Structures		Total	Percentage (%)
1	Attracting reader's attention	49	100.0
2	Targeting the market	18	36.7
3	Identifying/Introducing the destination/activity/event	49	100.0
4	Describing/Detailing the destination/activity/event	49	100.0
5	Appraising/Indicating the value	49	100.0
6	Justifying the need for the destination/activity/event	30	61.2
7	Establishing credentials	13	26.5
8	Locating/Scheduling the destination/activity/event	41	83.7
9	Endorsements/Testimonies/Reviews	23	46.9
10	Offering incentives	11	22.4
11	Using pressure tactics	1	2.0
12	Calling for action/Soliciting response/Establishing contact	43	87.8
13	Giving related information	49	100.0
14	Reinforcement ending/closing	9	18.4
XXX	Narrative description	1	2.0

The graph (Figure 6.2) on the next page illustrates the findings by comparing the distribution and showing the significance of the identified moves and their communicative purposes in the online tourism advertorials.

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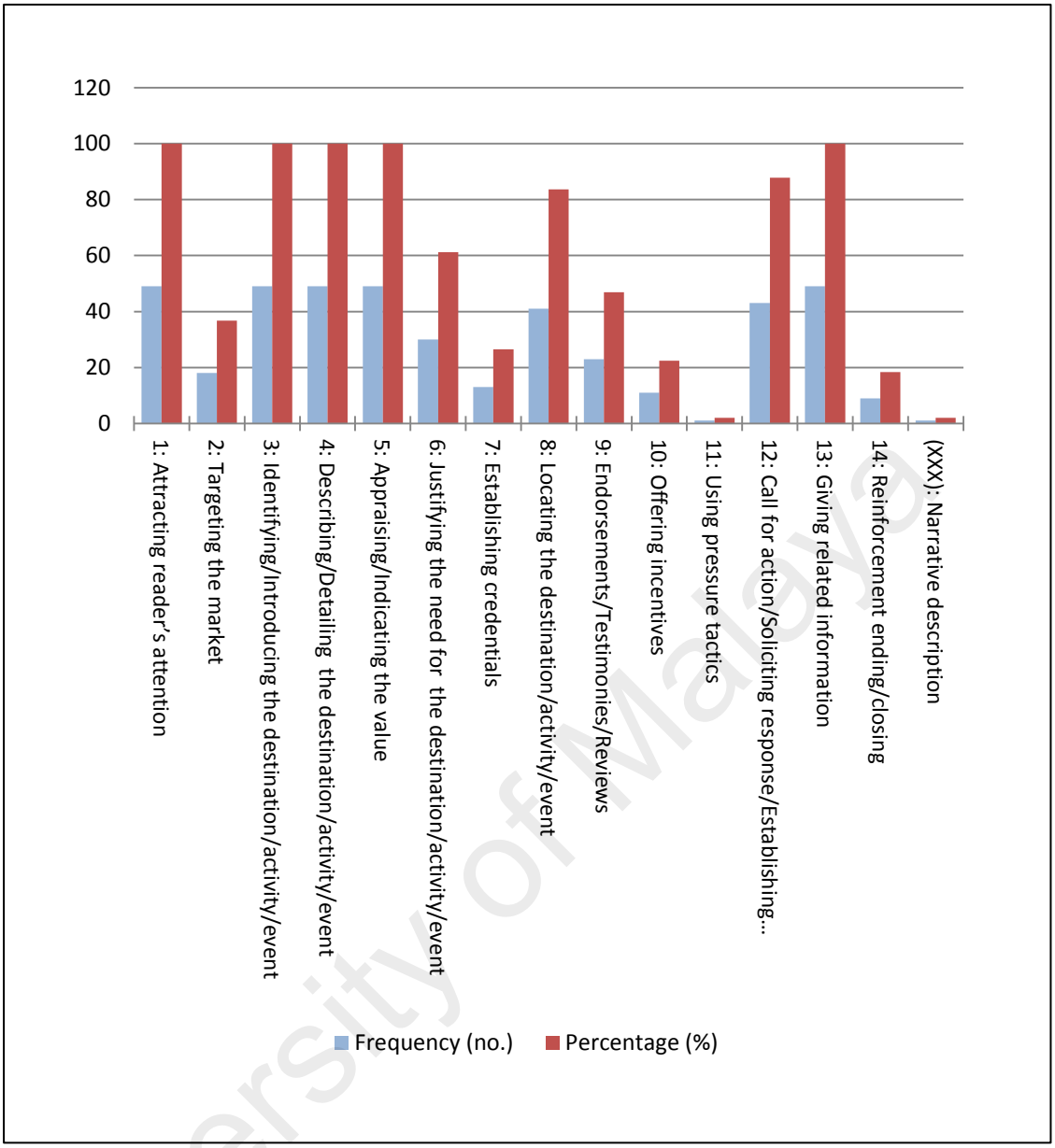

Figure 6.2

Frequency of Main Moves Structures

The discussion on the findings of the moves structures of the online tourism advertorial genre will be organised according to the descending order of the sum of existence and significance of the fourteen main moves, as presented in the table below. In discussing the main moves, the sub-moves of each main move, where applicable, will also be discussed in detail.

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Table 6.6

Existence of the Main Moves Structures in the Online Tourism Advertorials in Descending Order of the Total

Move		Total	Percentage (%)
1	1: Attracting reader's attention	49	100.0
3	3: Identifying/Introducing the destination/activity/event	49	100.0
4	4: Describing/Detailing the destination/activity/event	49	100.0
5	5: Appraising/Indicating the value	49	100.0
13	13: Giving related information	49	100.0
12	12: Calling for action/Soliciting response/Establishing contact	43	87.8
8	8: Locating the destination/activity/event	41	83.7
6	6: Justifying the need for the destination/activity/event	30	61.2
9	9: Endorsements/Testimonies/Reviews	23	46.9
2	2: Targeting the market	18	36.7
7	7: Establishing credentials	13	26.5
10	10: Offering incentives	11	22.4
14	14: Reinforcement ending/closing	9	18.4
11	11: Using pressure tactics	1	2.0
XXX	Narrative description	1	2.0

The findings as shown in the table above reveal that five obligatory moves which occurred in all (100%) the forty-nine Malaysian online tourism advertorials analysed are:

Move 1: Attracting reader's attention,

Move 3: Identifying and introducing the destination/activity/event,

Move 4: Describing and detailing the destination/activity/event,

Move 5: Appraising/Indicating the value, and

Move 13: Giving related information.

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Move 1: Attracting Reader's Attention

The move of attracting the readers' attention to an advertorial is very important; hence it occurred in 100% of the data collected. Although eight sub-moves were categorised in the main move of **Attracting Reader's Attention** in the analytical framework for analysis, the findings reveal that only seven of the sub-moves appeared in the data. Tourism slogans and/or tourism mottos were not used in any of the forty-nine advertorials to attract online readers' attention. This is because the slogans and or mottos may already be found in the masthead of the webpage. If the whole webpage is taken into consideration, where the masthead appears at the top of the webpage, then the tourism slogan and/or motto actually appears at the top of every page of the online advertorials analysed.

Table 6.7

Existence and Frequency of Occurrences of Sub-moves of Move 1

Move	Sub-Moves	Existence	Percentage (%)	Frequency of Occurrences
1: **Attracting reader's attention**	a: Tourism slogan and/or motto	0	0.0	0
	b: Rhetorical question/statement	7	14.3	7
	c: Quotation by authority/reviewer	6	12.2	6
	d: Synopsis/extract/preface	5	10.2	5
	e: Headline	1	2.0	1
	f: Title	49	100.0	49
	g: Sub-title	41	83.7	**232**
	h: Picture/visual (placed at the beginning of the advertorial)	36	73.5	36

The other seven strategies used to attract the readers' attention in descending order are Sub-move 1(f): Title of the advertorial (100%); Sub-move 1(g): Sub-title (83.7%); Sub-move 1(h): Picture/Visual, which is placed at the beginning of the advertorial (73.5%);

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Sub-move 1(b): Rhetorical question or statement (14.3%); Sub-move 1(c): Quotation by an authority or a reviewer (12.2%); Sub-move 1(d): Synopsis/extract/preface (10.2%); and Sub-move 1(e): Headline (2.0%).

Based on the findings as shown in the table above, the title of the advertorial is incessantly (100%) used to attract readers' attention. All the forty-nine advertorials analysed in the study contain a title. The title is regarded as a very important heading for attracting readers' attention to the contents of the advertorial. It also indicates the theme or topic of the advertorial so as to enable readers to instantly know what the advertorial is about.

83.7% of the data (forty-one advertorials) used sub-titles in their advertorials. Thirty-six or 87.8% of these forty-one advertorials that used this sub-move of employing sub-titles, used them more than once in the advertorial, with the highest at twenty-four occurrences within one advertorial. In other words, that particular advertorial (Appendix I-A10) employed twenty-four sub-titles. There are a total of two hundred and thirty-two (232) sub-titles used in all the forty-nine advertorials analysed. Titles and sub-titles function as a way to state the topic and focus of the advertorial, and direct the readers to the specific information that they hope to obtain. After all, skimming or scanning is a typical activity of searching for information from the Internet.

Pictures and visuals are also frequently used in the advertorials to attract readers' attention. A piece of written discourse uploaded in the Internet without any accompanying visual is rather obsolete nowadays. The picture(s) that are used for the purpose of attracting readers' attention are found at the beginning of 73.5% (thirty-six) of the forty-nine advertorials analysed.

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Rhetorical questions or statements have the ability of drawing readers' attention as they function as a query whereby the answer is obtainable from the advertorial itself because readers will be curious to discover the response to the rhetorical question which is answered in the form of a description of the destination/service/event. This also acts as a style of descriptive writing and approaching the topic of discussion. This sub-move is present in seven or 14.3% of the advertorials analysed in the study. A few examples of this sub-move extracted from the advertorial data are given below:

> So, if Snake Island sounds dangerous, why are visitors still flocking to this place, you might ask?
>
> (Appendix I-A3)

> **Looking for a cultural thrill?** Swing by to the Linangkit Cultural Village in Tuaran and get personally acquainted to the Lotud people—one of the 32 diverse ethnic groups in Sabah.
>
> (Appendix I-C8)

> Oh, and for the brave and adventurous, the King of Fruits awaits!
>
> (Appendix I-F2)

> Will the lanterns maker who fabricates the traditional Chinese surname lanterns with bamboo and rice paper teach his craft to another generation? Will the signboard maker find a talented apprentice who can simultaneously master the skills of woodcarving, gilding and calligraphy?
>
> (Appendix I-F4)

Although the use of quotation as a strategy for attracting readers' attention in the tourism advertorials was not high, it occurred in six or 12.2% of the forty-nine advertorials. Employing such quotations from authoritative spokespersons of the field or reviewers of the destination/service/event will add credibility to the advertorials, and hence act as a form of reader attraction because potential tourists who read these

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advertorials will more likely trust such reliable sources of information. Instances of this sub-move, which appear at the beginning of the tourism advertorials, are given below:

> *"I have seen other places like **Sipadan** 45 years ago. Now we have found again an untouched piece of art".* - **Jacques-Yves Cousteau**

(Appendix I-A7)

> *"Considered one of the most beautiful islands in the world, Tioman is a marine park that has spectacular reefs. The island is blessed with lovely beaches, waterfalls and rugged rainforests that are ideal for trekking and rock climbing."*

(Appendix I-A10)

> *"Straddling the borders of Pahang, Terengggganu and Kelantan, Taman Negara is a totally protected area of 4,343 sq. km. and is home to one of richest and most complex ecosystems in the world."*

(Appendix I-N12)

> *"Cherating, a lovely village located along the coast of Pahang is truly an exclusive vacationer's paradise offering a variety of activities."*

(Appendix I-N13)

Utilising a synopsis, extract or preface as a form of attaining reader's attention was not very high in the advertorials analysed. It only appeared in 10.2% or five of the forty-nine advertorials. This is probably because an online page space does not allow much verbatim repetitions of the descriptions, unless it is of something very significant. Moreover, potential tourists may not like to read what will already be appearing in the advertorial itself.

Headlines or captions are not frequently used in the advertorials analysed in the research but only appeared in one (2.0%) advertorial from the corpus. The headline was

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superimposed on a visual that was placed at the beginning of the advertorial, after the title, *Shopper's Paradise* (refer to Appendix I-S5).

Move 3: Identify and Introducing the destination/activity/event

Move 3 which functions to identify or introduce the destination/activity/event, also occurs in all (100%) the forty-nine advertorials. This move is considered very important in such a discourse because the communicative purpose of tourism advertorials is after all to promote a destination, activity or event to potential tourists. This move states, makes known or names the tourist attractions by introducing or presenting the destination/activity/event. Instances of this move can be found in all the advertorials in Appendix I.

Move 4: Describing and detailing the destination/activity/event

Move 4: Describing and detailing the destination/activity/event, is also a very important move in the tourism advertorials. It appeared in all the forty-nine (100%) advertorials. The primary function of tourism advertorials is to promote the country's tourist attractions through descriptions on its destinations, activities or events, etc. This move provides details about the destinations, activities, events, celebrations, cuisine, history, tour packages, rates, immigration requirements, etc. The positive description of the destination/activity/event is to persuade the potential customers, as in tourists, to come and visit the destination or take part in the activity or event that is being described in the advertorials. This concurs with Zhou (2012) who states that advertorials provide positive information to persuade on behalf of the sponsors. Evidences of this move can be seen in all the advertorials analysed as shown in Appendix I.

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Move 5: Appraising/Indicating the value

Similarly, the findings show that Move 5: Appraising/Indicating the value is also constantly used in the tourism advertorial genre, appearing in all forty-nine (100%) of the advertorials. Other than a written description, the move could also be in the form of visuals, whereby attractive photographs illustrating the actual destination, activity or event are included in the advertorials. As expected, the evaluation of the destination, activity or event is positive. The advertorials create a positive image of the destination, activity and event (such as the beautiful, clean and safe environment; friendly locals; facilities available, etc) by explicating their positive values via the textual and visual descriptions, with the intention of further attracting the potential tourists to visit the destination or take part in the activity or event.

Move 13: Giving Related Information

Move 13 also occurs in all (100%) the forty-nine Malaysian online tourism advertorials analysed in this study. Its communicative purpose is to provide relevant or related information, visuals, documents or links on a destination/activity or event. The strategies used for this move could be in the form of a written text and/or a visual(s). This textual information provided in the advertorial is different from the description of the destination or activity as it is not directly related to the destination or activity, but they act as some supplementary information that may be useful and relevant to tourists who visit the place or participate in the activity/event. These related information could include supporting visuals, suggestions, advice, tips, available accommodation and transportation, information on how to get to the destination, etc. Seven sub-moves have been categorised in Move 13 as listed in the table on the following page.

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Table 6.8

Existence and Frequency of Occurrences of Sub-moves of Move 13

Move	Sub-Moves	Existence	Percentage (%)	Frequency of Occurrences
13: **Giving related information**	a: Links to relevant webpages/websites	38	77.6	70
	b: Supporting visuals/pictures	40	81.6	71
	c: Link to PDF file version	12	24.5	21
	d: E-brochure/ leaflet/ newsletter	0	0.0	0
	e: Request/Order forms	0	0.0	0
	f: Publication information	13	26.5	19
	g: Others	27	55.1	82

Supporting visuals/pictures, which ranks as the highest sub-move of Move 13, are used to show the actual scene(s) of a destination or activity. The visuals are regarded as related information especially when they function together with Move 4 or 5, which are to provide visual details or to illustrate the value of the destination/activity/event. As 81.6% of the 49 online tourism advertorials from the data have visuals, the existence of this sub-move is considered very important in such online discourse.

One of the advantages of the Internet is the ability to make references to some other data that an online reader easily can navigate to or browse via a hyperlink. Thirty-eight or 77.6% of the online tourism advertorials have made use of this computing benefit or reference mechanism, so as to give the potential tourists the option of obtaining further relevant information concerning certain information related to the topic of the advertorial.

55.1% (twenty-seven) of the tourism advertorials analysed have provided other related information that are relevant to the subject matter of the advertorial. This sub-move usually occurs with Move 4 which is the description and essential detailing of the

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destination or activity. These other related information include the background facts of the destination or activity, transportation information on how to get to the destination, information on nearby tourists' attractions, accommodation facilities, advice to the potential tourists, and acknowledgements. In order to further explain this sub-move, examples of this sub-move which appear in the advertorial, Mountaineering Potential in Malaysia (Appendix I-A6) have been extracted and presented in bold font below.

> … Mt Kinabalu was the pristine location for the establishment of a mountaineering training center, saying, "Mt Kinabalu is perfectly set up for a mountaineering training center. **In Europe, we have a lot of very good climbing schools, (catering to a large range of ages)**. There is a real potential for Mt Kinabalu to have a training center/climbing school. …
>
> **Who is Sir Chris Bonington?**
> **Sir Chris Bonington is by far one of the most famous of the legendary mountaineers the world has ever seen. Now at the age of 76, his list of notable accomplishments fills a library with 20 over books written over the course of 40 years. These books hold the account of his most notable mountaineering escapades. But these books are unable to contain all of his exploits in mountaineering and his passion for life.**
>
> … Mountain Torq is the World's highest via ferrata located at Mt Kinabalu's Panar Laban rock face. It starts at 3,411m and ends at 3,776m – **the next highest via ferrata is found in the Italian Dolomites called the Marmolada West ridge, at the highest point of 3,343 meters**.

The advertorial is actually to promote Mount Kinabalu as a perfect tourist destination for the mountaineering activity. However, those sentences that are in bold above are not directly related to the mountaineering activity in Mount Kinabalu, although they may have some relevance to the subject matter of the advertorial as a form of comparison and background description of an authority in the activity of mountaineering. Hence, they are categorised as a sub-move of giving other related information.

Publication information is also available in thirteen or 26.5% of the advertorials analysed. This sub-move of providing the release date and year, as well as the type of

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publication, such as “Media Release”, and “For Immediate Release” is found in such advertorials because it is the norm for the advertisers to do so in media, news or press release information to the press. As mentioned in Chapter Three of this thesis, a media or press release is also a form of advertorial because its purpose is to announce something which is claimed as having newsworthy information (Catenaccio, 2008). They are generally sent to members of the news media with the aim of attracting favourable media attention in order to generate publicity for products or services marketed by those corporations. Furthermore, the intended primary readership is the general public, and in this case potential tourists. The statistics of this finding is rather small as only those advertorials that resemble or are in the form of a media release have such information within the advertorial itself. It should also be stated here that this does not mean that the date of the advertorial information published online, are not available in the tourism webpages. In fact, many of the tourism websites provide the date of the information published on their websites as “last updated”, which is available within the structure of the webpage of the online genre. This was discussed in the homepage genre section of this thesis.

Out of the forty-nine advertorials in the data, only twelve or 24.5% have a hyperlink to a Portable Document Format (PDF) file version of the advertorial. The PDF file format of the advertorial looks like a stand-alone document. Seven of the PDF file version advertorials contain coloured pictures, although four of these mirror seven webpage version advertorials in the website do not include any pictures at all. On the contrary, the other five PDF file version advertorials do not have any pictures, but one of these five has two thumbnail visuals in its webpage version advertorial. The existence of this sub-move in only 24.5% of the data shows that a PDF version of the same advertorial is not necessary to be included in the website since the contents of the webpage version

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advertorials and the PDF version advertorials are similar, except for the inclusion of a few photographs in some of the PDF file version advertorials which are sent to news media associates.

Although seven sub-moves were categorised in the main move of giving related information, documents or links in the analytical framework for the genre analysis of the advertorials, the findings revealed that only five of the sub-moves were employed in the advertorials. The sub-move of having an E-brochure/leaflet/newsletter link and Request/Order forms within the advertorial was not found in any of the advertorials. However, an E-brochure/leaflet/newsletter and Request/Order form links may be available within the macro webpage where the advertorial is situated.

Move 12: Calling for action/Soliciting response/Establishing contact

The next most frequently used move is Move 12: Calling for action/Soliciting response/Establishing contact which appears in 87.8% or forty-three of the advertorials in the data. The move of 'establishing contact/calling for action/soliciting response' generally provides contact information such as the address, telephone, fax and email of the tourism board to the reader. Tourism websites like any corporate websites are created with the purposes of representing a company/country, sell the company's/country's name, attract more visitors, generate more business leads, promote the company's/country's products and services, and ultimately, help to gain more return on investment (Lepcha, 2006: 1).

As Bhatia (2004) asserts, promotional texts such as the advertorial genre are never considered complete without soliciting response or some form of calling for the

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consumer's action. This purpose of establishing some form of contact by providing the advertiser's contact information is rather vital in any promotional discourse. The communicative purpose of this move is to enable the potential tourist to gather any other information easily from the advertiser. This continuation of further communication with the advertiser will also allow the advertiser to further convince the potential tourist to buy the product/service, in this case visit the destination or country.

Six sub-moves were categorised for the purpose of calling for action/soliciting response/establishing contact. The sub-moves and their findings from the data are presented in Table 6.9 below.

Table 6.9

Existence and Frequency of Occurrences of Sub-moves of Move 12

Move	Sub-Moves	Existence	Percentage (%)	Frequency of Occurrences
12: **Calling for action/ Soliciting response/ Establishing contact**	a. Advertiser's contact information	34	69.4	49
	b. Writer's/publisher's information	17	34.7	31
	c. Online registration	0	0.0	0
	d. Newsletter subscription	0	0.0	0
	e. Links to other forms of communication	0	0.0	0
	f. Others	8	16.3	8

The sub-move of providing the advertiser's contact information ranks the highest sub-move of Move 12. This information appears in thirty-four or 69.4% of the forty-nine advertorials. This sub-move functions to invite the potential tourist to get in touch with the advertiser. The details of contact information of this sub-move are as follows:

- address

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- specific telephone and/or fax number
- email address
- website
- name of the person who will be available to answer any queries that the reader may have about the destination, activity or event

Some of those thirty-four advertorials which contain information for further communication, have more than one of contact information, hence there are a total of forty-nine contact details in the thirty-four advertorials identified. There is a range of one to four sources of information within one advertorial. In other words, some of the advertorials contain as many as four sources of communication for prospective tourists to seek information on various specific matters. The provision of e-mail address, telephone, fax and physical address can enhance the readers' confidence and trust in the information published in those tourism websites.

It is similar for the sub-move of supplying the writer's and/or publisher's information in the tourism advertorial, especially when the advertorial is a media release. Although the range is slightly smaller – one to three, some of the seventeen or 34.7% of the advertorials that were identified contained more than one instance of the writer's and/or publisher's information within the same advertorial. The kind of details specified in the writer's and publisher's information are the by line or writer's name; writer's/publisher's contact information such as the telephone number, email address, mailing address, website, etc. Readers may want to search for someone who claims accountability and responsibility for the content.

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Although the data did not reveal any incidences of the sub-moves of online visitor's registration, online newsletter subscription, and links to other forms of communication such as social networking sites within the advertorials, these types of request for action and communication may be offered within the macro webpage where the advertorial is located.

In fact, findings from the webpage or homepage genre reveal that many of the tourism websites cater to such requests for action and communication via social networking sites like *Facebook* and *Twitter*, which is available within the macro structure of the homepage of the online tourism genre. This was discussed in the web or homepage genre section of this thesis.

Other forms of urging for action from the potential tourists account for eight or 16.3% of the advertorials analysed in the study. This other sub-move persuades the potential tourists to visit the destination or experience the activity, "… the time is now, the place is Malaysia." The eight advertorials is actually from the same website of *Tourism Malaysia*, Malaysia's official tourism portal which is managed by the Malaysian Ministry of Tourism. Thus, the advertorials use the same or standard call for action – to come and visit Malaysia now. This sub-move also serves as a reinforcement ending or closing for the advertorials, hence it occurs with Move 14 in the respective advertorials.

Move 8: Locating the destination/activity/event

The communicative purpose of Move 8: Locating the destination/activity/event appears to be the following highest occurrence of moves that appears in 83.7% or forty-one of the advertorials. This move includes the description of the place/location of the

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destination/activity/event, the scheduled dates (period/duration), and time of the operating hours/event/festival that is being described in the advertorial. Information on the location or site of the destinations/activities/events and schedule of the events is rather important for the potential tourists so as to enable them to locate the destination easily, as well as schedule their trip to the place especially if there is an opening hours or operating time to visit the place of interest. These information are also important for potential tourists to plan their holiday so as to coincide with the events or festivals. Many tourists do not only want to visit the destinations of a country but would also like to experience the local culture via the local events and festivals.

Move 6: Justifying the need for the destination/activity/event

Another move that ranked rather high and appearing in more than 50% of the data is Move 6: Justifying the need for the destination/activity/event. This move occurred in 61.2% (30) of the advertorials. The function of this move is to influence the potential tourists into believing that the destination/activity advertised is specifically suited for them. There are two strategies for accomplishing this communicative purpose as shown in the following table.

Table 6.10

Existence and Frequency of Occurrences of Sub-moves of Move 6

Move	Sub-Moves	Existence	Percentage (%)	Frequency of Occurrences
6: **Justifying the need for the destination/ activity/event**	a: Indicating the importance	29	59.2	46
	b: Establishing a niche	10	20.4	13

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Indicating the importance or need to visit the destination, or of the activity/event is a sub-move of justifying the destination/activity/event. This sub-move is employed in twenty-nine or 59.2% of the advertorials, specifies the importance or the need to visit the destination or take part in the activity/event. This is achieved by rationalizing the need or importance of what is being discussed in the advertorial for the consumer or tourist by referring to the individual needs of the potential customer. It states what the tourist will gain if he/she visits the place or experiences the activity/occasion. The statements below are just two of the forty-six statements in the data that illustrate this sub-move of indicating the importance for the tourism activity:

> Experiencing a homestay in a traditional village is perhaps one of the fastest and easiest ways to get to know the real Malaysia.
>
> (Appendix I-C1)

> A visit to the Mari Mari Cultural Village will be a cultural excursion of a lifetime! See, taste and feel the essence of Sabah presented to you *as it was and as it is*.
>
> (Appendix I-C4)

The sub-move of establishing a niche or stating the strong point and speciality of the destination/activity/event can be found in ten or 20.4% of the advertorials. It provides the specific features that make the destination/activity/event special compared to other similar destinations. If we were to take, for instance, the activity of diving, the nature/adventure experience in Malaysia that the tourist will gain is different from other nature/diving experiences elsewhere, whereby one can see the *rafflesia* flower or leatherback turtles which are not found anywhere in the world other than in Malaysia. These features are the unique selling points (USP) of the country, which will hopefully attract the potential tourists to visit the country. This sub-move serves to convince the

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potential tourists that the destination/activity/event is better than others of the same category. One of the instances of this sub-move of establishing a niche is given below:

> Malaysia is one of the twelve mega-biologically diverse countries in the world, which boasts at least 15,000 species of flowering plants, 286 species of mammals, 150,000 species of invertebrates and 4,000 species of fishes in addition to the countless micro-organisms.
>
> (Appendix I-N5)

An example of Move 6: Justifying the need for the destination/activity can be seen in Appendix I-A1, where the Sub-move 6(a): Indicating the importance (in **bold**) moves to the other Sub-move 6(b): Establishing a niche (in *italics*) within the same sentence, as shown below:

> **A dip below the warm sea's surface guarantees you an astounding experience,** *with a concentration of vibrant and exotic marine life rarely rivalled anywhere else in the world*.

The other six Moves which occurred in less than 50% of the advertorials in the data, in descending sequence, are Move 9: Endorsements/Testimonies/Reviews (46.9%); Move 2: Targeting the market (36.7%); Move 7: Establishing credentials (26.5%); Move 10: Offering incentives (22.4%); Move 14: Reinforcement ending/closing (18.4%); and Move 11: Using pressure tactics (2.0%).

Move 9: Endorsements/Testimonies/Reviews

Move 9: Endorsements/Testimonies/Reviews accounted for 46.9% of the advertorials analysed. The function of this move of including endorsements, testimonies or reviews is to make the advertising message or advertorial more convincing. This can be

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achieved by quoting a third person or citing any awards received to support the positive image of the destination, activity of event presented in the advertorial. They could include:

- acknowledgement of a celebrity or public figure;
- testimonies of satisfied consumers / positive reviews;
- acceptance/support/approval of authorities; or
- official/public citation of achievements, and seals of approval.

Acknowledgements, support and approvals by a person in authority or a public figure, and any mention of achievements and awards received will make the topic discussed in the advertorial more credible and reliable. The advertorial will also be more convincing when testimonies and reviews by past tourists are included in the advertorial. As revealed in the findings from the questionnaire, the potential tourists would expect to read reviews from past tourists. This accounted for 76.7% of the respondents. 58.3% of the tourist respondents were also influenced to visit the destination or country after reading the reviews on the tourism websites, with more than half of these respondents comprising of foreign tourists. This shows the ability of endorsements, testimonies or reviews to persuade potential tourists to visit a destination or country. Such reviews and testimonies by past tourists will also further confirm the potential tourists' selection and make them feel more assured that they have made a correct choice or decision to visit the place and to participate in the activities and events.

Move 2: Targeting the market

Move 2: Targeting the market, which is realised by explicitly addressing the target audience or market, occurred in eighteen or 36.7% of the advertorials. This move

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suggests the type of tourists who should visit the destination or join in the activity/event described in the advertorial, and why it is important for them to do so.

The findings show that this move is not as significant as the other moves identified and discussed above probably because the audience is obviously the general public who are also potential tourists. It is also evident that the target market of tourism websites and readers of touristic articles are the potential tourists. By not explicitly addressing the target audience in tourism advertorials also mean that the advertisers do not want to only restrict those destinations/activities/events to just a group of potential tourists but that these places//activities/events cater to all tourists alike. After all, the more tourist visitors a country has, the better it is for its tourism industry.

Move 7: Establishing credentials

The following move which is evident in thirteen advertorials or 26.5% of the data is Move 7: Establishing credentials. This move further promotes the destination/activity/event, and is realised by providing the positive recognition of the destination/activity/event; the guarantee/warranty of the quality; and the long & well-established track record, via three sub-moves. This move continues to fulfil the needs of the potential tourist, and establishes the country's reputation in the tourism industry. It also serves to establish a positive image of the country/destination, and to inform readers of the competitive advantage of the destination, such as introducing the long history and the international fame of the destination/activity, and highlights the destination as a place that offers a blend of the best experience of Eastern and modern hospitality.

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Table 6.11

Existence and Frequency of Occurrences of Sub-moves of Move 7

Move	Sub-Moves	Existence	Percentage (%)	Frequency of Occurrences
7: **Establishing credentials**	a: Recognition	7	14.3	7
	b: Guarantee/warranty	6	12.2	7
	c: Achievements/awards	3	6.1	4

The first sub-move of establishing credentials is the recognition given for the destination/activity/event. This sub-move can be found in seven or 14.3% of the corpus. It is a form of honour, distinction or glory, and gives an adequately relevant, positive and credible appraisal or description of the destination/activity/event, as well as its value. This sub-move describes what the state/country is known for, the historical background, and present status or any international recognition (for example, the state of Penang is listed as a UNESCO heritage site). It could also include the positive description of the contributions of the service provider(s) at the destination being described. Such information and credentials will furnish potential tourists with an added motivation to read the advertorial and lead them to select the destination to visit. Example of this sub-move of establishing credentials by way of recognition can be seen in the following statements:

> Needless to say, Mountain Torq's via ferrata has played a major role in raising awareness on Mount Kinabalu among mountain climbers around the world.

(Appendix I-A5)

> Among nature-lovers, Sabah is renowned for its varied vegetation, picturesque mountain range, lovely islands and many other natural wonders.

(Appendix I-C2)

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> As one of the twelve mega-biologically diverse countries in the world, Malaysia is able to boast at least 15,000 species of flowering plants, 286 species of mammals, 150,000 species of invertebrates, and 4,000 species of fishes in addition to the countless micro-organisms.

(Appendix I-N2)

> Today, Tabin … has grown to become a green pocket of primary and secondary lowland dipterocarp rainforest, its huge canopy sheltering some of the world's endangered animals.

(Appendix I-N7)

> Recognized as one of the world's most complex ecosystem, this forest serves as a natural home for endangered wildlife species

(Appendix I-N11)

Giving some kind of guarantee or warranty is also a form of establishing credentials. This sub-move of establishing credentials is noticed in six or 12.2% of the advertorials analysed. In the context of the current study, this guarantee or warranty refers to the assurance of quality of the destination/activity or the related services rendered (e.g. certified tour guides) at the destination being discussed in order to gain the potential tourists' positive view of the destination/activity/event. Below are statements extracted from the advertorial data that illustrate this sub-move by giving a guarantee or warranty:

> Mountain Torq's via ferrata … was constructed by a team of preeminent via ferrata builders from Europe, using CE Mark-approved materials.

(Appendix I-A5)

> The kampungs, or villages, that are involved in the homestay programme are committed to ensuring that you experience village-style living first-hand. and are used to welcoming a variety of foreign guests from around the world.

(Appendix I-C1)

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> While promoting the natural attractions in the country to tourists, the Malaysian Government also realises the importance of sustainable tourism and of balancing conservation and development. As such, the Ministry of Tourism, Malaysia, has adopted the National Ecotourism Plan (NEP) to provide policies and guidelines for the conscientious development of ecotourism.
>
> (Appendix I-N5)

> With over 17,000 redemptions made at last year's campaign alone – an increase of 18.6% from 2008 – MasterCard continues to provide unparalleled services and experiences.
>
> (Appendix I-S1)

> Local regulations ensure items are price-tagged and prominently displayed, particularly at department stores in shopping complexes where prices are fixed.
>
> (Appendix I-S4)

Another strategy for realising the move of establishing credentials is by referring to the long and well-established nature of the destination/activity/event, and stating the reputable track record of the destination/activity/event. This could also include the current status of the country's tourism industry achievements and awards – such as the ranking of the tourism destinations, statistics on tourist arrivals, etc - to show its reputation as a tourist destination. Sometimes, the mission statements of the tourism boards may be referred to, as well as statements of gratitude for past support. This sub-move is detected in three or 6.1% of the advertorials analysed as shown below:

> To date, a total of 2,808 homestay operators from 142 villages throughout the country have been trained and licensed by the Ministry of Tourism. The five states with the highest number of homestay villages are Pahang, Sabah, Selangor, Johor and Sarawak.

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Last year, more than 68,000 tourists both local and foreign had a taste of the *kampung* lifestyle at the various homestay programmes offered in Malaysia.

A total of 18,891 foreign tourists participated in the homestay programme in 2007 compared to 10,038 tourists in year 2006; the majority of them were from Japan, Korea and Singapore.

(Appendix I-C3)

We will encounter several on this route, the Han Jiang Ancestral Temple or Teochew Temple, **which won a UNESCO Asia-Pacific Cultural Heritage Award** for its community-driven restoration; …

(Appendix I-F3)

Entering into its 10th year, the annual shopping event will be held from 20th November 2010 to 2nd January 2011.

(Appendix I-S1)

Move 10: Offering incentives

The next move in the sequence of frequency is Move 10: Offering incentives. It is found in only eleven (22.4%) of the forty-nine advertorials. This move persuades the potential tourists to visit the destination and participate in the activity/event by means of making the offer more attractive, such as offering the following incentives:

- promotions
- free gifts
- discounts
- special offers
- rebates
- trial offers
- other benefits

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This move offers such incentives so as to persuade the prospective tourist to seriously consider the holiday package being offered. This move may occur together with pictures or images of the destination/activity/event.

The move may not be frequently utilised in the advertorials analysed in this study because the advertorials, which were obtained from the official tourism websites, do not actually sell any holiday packages. The main function of these websites it to promote and advertise the places of interest, activities, events, etc; in addition to disseminate relevant information on the respective destinations. The information published in these websites aspires to persuade the prospective tourists to visit the country, thereby to boost the tourism industry as an economic activity of the country. No explicit rates, price lists or tour packages are published on the advertorials, although there may be the occasional entrance fee listing for a tourist destination or the transfer fare for services to the destination, such as can be found in Appendix I-A8. These entrance fee and transfer fare information are regarded as giving details of the destination or tourist attraction described in the advertorial. As such, incentives such as discounts, special offers, rebates and trial offers as a result of purchasing a tour package have not been identified in the data. The kinds of incentive that can be identified in the corpus are part of the promotion of the events by encouraging the prospective tourists to join in the events, such as can be found in the following advertorial extracts, in **bold** font style:

Malaysia Year End Sale 2010 (Appendix I-S1):

> Car enthusiasts can enjoy the Kuala Lumpur International Motor Show 2010 – a showcase of the world's latest and hottest automotive wonders and car accessories – at Putra World Trade Centre from 3-12 December, and **earn a chance to drive away with a dream car!**
>
> As official card of the M-YES 2010, *MasterCard* has designed **an exciting redemption programme** worthy of celebration.

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Cardholders can expect to be dazzled by **the line-up of premium gifts, holiday trips and other attractive prizes**.

Don't miss the opportunity to shop at Malaysia's international airports, either, where **shoppers stand a chance to win great holiday prizes and shopping vouchers** during the "Indulge & Win" contest.

The *AMP Radio Network* will also be running the 'Smart Shopper' contest with the aim of showcasing the variety of bargains available during the M-YES 2010 and to re-create a shopping environment on air. Questions will be asked, requiring listeners to calculate the percentage of discount offered on a product. With 5 seconds to work out the answer, listeners will be given a total of 30 seconds to answer as many questions as possible. **For every right answer, they win RM200 in either cash or shopping vouchers with the maximum winnings totaling at RM1,000**.

Malaysia Mega Sale Carnival 2010 (Appendix I-S3):

Making your shopping experience **even more worthwhile is the fact that many of the retail goods are tax exempted or duty free**.

To add to the excitement, *MasterCard*, the official card of the MMSC 2010, will be **rewarding its cardholders with attractive weekly prizes worth up to RM100,000** through its 'MasterCard Spend and Win Programme'. Every week for eight weeks, *MasterCard* cardholders will **stand a chance to win a MasterCard Priceless Eco travel package to East Malaysia**. Aside from this priceless experience, ***MasterCard* will also be giving away two Apple iPad 3G, weekly for eight weeks**.

Capture your favourite shopping moment in Malaysia in a 3-minute video clip and **stand a chance to win prizes worth up to RM10,000**!

Start saving your shopping receipts and take part in *Sinar* and *Mix FM*'s R'hingo contest; if your receipt amount matches the figure the deejay picks, **you could win cash up to RM1,000**.

Shopping (Appendix I-S4):

The **exemption of duty on a range of items has resulted in more competitive pricing and** makes shopping in Malaysia an **even more attractive option**.

Incentives are not necessarily offered in the form of discounts or rebates but in the services provided, such as revealed in the *Ecotourism* advertorial (Appendix I-

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N1), "Experienced outdoor professionals, who are well equipped with the latest gear, can guide you through all of these activities"; and the *Cave Exploration* advertorial (Appendix I-N3), "There are guides available at all major Malaysian caves. Seasoned cavers are normally appointed as guides. They may be contacted through the Malaysian Nature Society or other adventure clubs."

Move 14: Reinforcement ending/closing

Move 14: Reinforcement ending/closing can be identified in nine or 18.4% of the advertorials analysed in the study. This move which functions to reinforce the call for participation in the activity/event/festival states the reason why tourists should come to the destination, experience the activity and witness the event/festival as described in the advertorial. This move, as stated in its label, is located at the end of the advertorial, and usually occurs together as Move 12: Urging Action/Call for Action, such as "… the time is now, the place is Malaysia" which is noticed in a few of the advertorials. Another example of this move can be found as the concluding sentence of the *Malaysia GP Sale* advertorial (Appendix I-S2), "So, gear up for the race of the season and a colourful shopping festival that brings you some of the best bargains!".

Move 11: Using pressure tactics

The move of using pressure tactics states the cause and negative effects in order to pressure the potential customer if he/she does not consume the service/product. Its function is to prompt the already inclined or half-inclined customer to expedite his/her decision about the product or service being promoted. This move is generally realised in the form of an offer of some additional savings or gains if the customer decides to

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buy the product or use the service before a specific deadline (for example, only limited units left, on first-come-first-served basis, etc).

In short, this move imposes certain constraints on the product/service being promoted, which may be presented in the following forms or sub-moves:

(a) Time constraints on the offer or availability of the product/service

(b) Quantity constraints on the limited availability of the stocks/service

(c) Emotional blackmail on a particular market segment (e.g. if you don't visit/consume it, you will not be considered as the elite few)

(d) Terms and conditions of the offer/package

None of the first three sub-moves (a, b and c) of Move 11: Using Pressure Tactics can be found in the corpus, except for Sub-move 11(d): Terms and conditions. This sub-move of using pressure tactics, can be detected in only one (2.0%) of the advertorials in *Malaysia Year End Sale 2010* (Appendix I-S1), in bold font style below:

> "As official card of the M-YES 2010, *MasterCard* has designed an exciting redemption programme worthy of celebration. … Cardholders can expect to be dazzled by the line-up of premium gifts, holiday trips and other attractive prizes. **To qualify for the programme, shoppers only need to use their *MasterCard* to pay for purchases** at participating malls in Klang Valley, Penang and Johor Bahru."

This is just a mild form of pressure tactic which requires shoppers to use the *MasterCard* credit card to make their purchases if they want to benefit from the redemption programme which promises an array of "premium gifts, holiday trips and other attractive prizes". It is presented as a term and condition of participation in the programme.

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An explanation for this near non-existent finding is that the information and descriptions in the advertorials do not have any time or quantity constraints. As mentioned earlier, the purpose of the advertorials only promotes and advertises the destinations, activities, events, products, etc of the country in order to persuade the potential tourists to visit the country. All tourists are welcome to visit the country at any time of the year. Moreover, this finding further implies and confirms that Malaysia which is known for its indirect and courteous approach in business dealing, do not practice emotional blackmail even indirectly.

Other structures

All the sentence structures in the advertorial corpus had been analysed in terms of their communicative purposes and in their formation of the rhetorical structures of tourism advertorials. The narrative, "Cool," I exclaimed!", and the following sentence which appear in the advertorial, *Mount Kinabalu – Where the World's Highest via Ferrata Resides* (Appendix I-A5), denotes a narrative description (which has been marked as XXX in the analysis):

> "… Sporting a tank top and knee-length pants, with a toned figure and not an inch of extra fat in sight, I-Gek certainly has the word mountain climber written all over her face. She definitely looked the part though she wasn't doing an actual climb. …"

This narrative description does not have any particular communicative purpose other than to give an account of the Sales & Marketing Director who manages *Mountain Torq Sdn. Bhd.*, the company responsible for bringing a 'via ferrata' - a climbing route which is equipped with fixed cables, stemples, ladders, and bridges for the ease of mountain climbing activity, to Mount Kinabalu. This narrative description is not categorised as

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Move 4: Describing or Detailing the destination/activity because this narrative is not about the destination of Mount Kinabalu or the mountain climbing activity which are the subject matter of the advertorial. It is also not classified as Move 13: Giving Related Information, as the writer had inserted this observation to provide some form of validity and reliability to the contents of his advertorial.

6.2.2 Significance of Rhetorical Structures in Online Tourism Advertorials

Analysis of the forty-nine advertorials has resulted in the following findings on the preferences or importance of the overall moves structures in the web-mediated tourism advertorial genre. The fourteen moves identified in the advertorials from the corpus and their significance are summarised in the following table.

Table 6.12

Significance of the Rhetorical Structures in the Online Tourism Advertorials

Moves Structures		Existence	Percentage (%)	Significance
1	**Attracting reader's attention**	**49**	**100.0**	**Obligatory**
2	Targeting the market	18	36.7	Optional
3	**Identifying/Introducing the destination/activity/event**	**49**	**100.0**	**Obligatory**
4	**Describing/Detailing**	**49**	**100.0**	**Obligatory**
5	**Appraising/Indicating the value**	**49**	**100.0**	**Obligatory**
6	Justifying the need for the destination/activity/event	30	61.2	Optional
7	Establishing credentials	13	26.5	Optional
8	Locating/Scheduling the destination/activity/event	41	83.7	Optional
9	Endorsements/Testimonies/ Reviews	23	46.9	Optional
10	Offering incentives	11	22.4	Optional
11	Using pressure tactics	1	2.0	Highly Optional
12	Call for action/Soliciting response/Establishing contact	43	87.8	Optional
13	**Giving related information**	**49**	**100.0**	**Obligatory**
14	Reinforcement ending/closing	9	18.4	Optional

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Among the fourteen main moves, five moves are obligatory, eight moves are optional, and one move is highly optional as it occurs in only one of the advertorials in the corpus. The five obligatory moves are attracting the reader's attention; identifying the destination/activity/event; describing the destination/activity/event; indicating the value of the destination/activity/event; and providing related information on the destination/activity/event. The optional moves consists of targeting the market; justifying the need for the destination/activity/event; establishing credentials; locating or scheduling the destination/activity/event; endorsements/testimonies/reviews; offering incentives; call for action/soliciting response/establishing contact; and reinforcement ending/closing. The only highly optional move is using pressure tactics.

6.3 Summary

The findings from the analysis of the macro structure of the sixteen tourism homepages and analysis of the micro structure of the forty-nine tourism advertorials have answer the first two research questions:

1. What are the communicative purposes of tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials and whether these purposes are the factors that influence the shaping of the generic structure of the web genre?
2. What are the elements that constitute the generic structure of tourism homepages and the principal rhetorical structures of online tourism advertorials?

In the event of analysing and discussing the contents, rhetorical structures and communicative purposes of the tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials, the elements of non-linguistic semiotic resources have also been identified and discussed.

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Hence, this chapter has also partially answered the third research question which was to identify the non-linguistic and multimodal features that support the moves structures found on the Malaysian tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials.

The findings and information on the genre characteristics of tourism homepages which include the content, form, functionality, and purpose that have been analysed and discussed have identified the elements that constitute the generic structure of the homepages in realising the communicative purposes of the tourism homepages. Similarly, the micro-level analysis of the online tourism advertorials has also identified the detailed communicative purposes of this web-mediated tourism genre. These purposes have shown to be the motivating factors in shaping the structure of the web-mediated genre. In addition to disseminating relevant and reliable information to potential tourists, the main communicative purpose of the web-mediated tourism genres is to promote the destinations and their tourist attractions with the hope of increasing tourist arrivals.

The findings of the rhetorical structures or moves from the micro-level analysis of the online tourism advertorials can assist tourism organisations and writers of such informative texts with a promotional intent, to effectively produce advertorials that can persuade potential tourists to visit the destination.

The findings from the analyses of this web-mediated tourism genre of homepages and advertorials have also shown the importance of both verbal and visual elements in achieving the genres' promotional objective. The verbal factor plays a fundamental role in providing essential information and unfolding the rhetorical structure of the genre. However, the visual elements and multimodal features also contribute as vital factors in

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the online tourism genre, and help to achieve the purpose of promoting a destination and its tourism products and services. The analyses have shown that all of the advertorials have used a form of visual, at the least a logo icon, in their texts. Furthermore, many of the moves are also realised by visuals. This concurs with Bhatia, Flowerdew and Jones (2008) and Mitchell (2011) who have stated that visuals have now become an essential part of texts and they may even be more important than the written form in the production and comprehension of texts. Therefore, it is also important to analyse the visuals (Biber, 1988; Swales, 1990; Martin, 1992; Cook, 1992 & 2001) and multimodal features used in the tourism homepages and advertorials. These have been analysed and are discussed in more detail in the next chapter of this thesis.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

A MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS OF THE TOURISM HOMEPAGES AND WEB-MEDIATED TOURISM ADVERTORIALS

7.0 Introduction

This chapter attempts to identify the rhetorical strategies, specifically the non-linguistic or multimodal features, of tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials. It presents the multimodal findings of the web-mediated tourism genre which attempts to answer the third research question as stated in Chapter One: How do the non-linguistic and multimodal features support the generic structures found on Malaysian tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials?

There is now a widespread belief that textual data is not necessarily the most important mode used for the construction and interpretations of social meaning (Bhatia, Flowerdew and Jones, 2008). Other than the verbal form, visual methods such as the use of photographs, videos, drawings, and multimedia production and installation are now frequent modes of representation as well as modes of inquiry in social communication (Mitchell, 2011). The way we comprehend the meaning of a text is a result of the rich connection between "different layers of elements", as in the "layout, language, content, typography, and the physical qualities and context" in which the text is encountered (Bateman, Delin and Henschel, 2003). This means that in order to thoroughly understand a text, the meaning-making resources cannot be fully described at the level of a single mode, such as language or visual design only. Both the verbal and visual factors play significant roles in contributing to the overall meaning of the text.

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It is undeniable that the field of advertising has also undergone a shift towards greater dependence on visual images. Young and Fitzgerald (2006) assert that advertising is generally a multimodal form of discourse. This is because most forms of advertisements usually involve the use of text and graphics, such as colour, typography, illustrations and photographs. This is even more evident in the context of the Internet and the present study, where both the verbal and visual elements are combined and equally used in the tourism websites to achieve their communicative purposes as evidenced in the findings presented in Chapter Six. The visual elements constitute an essential feature of the digital genre, and function both as a complement to the linguistic message, as well as a description of the message itself. This multimodal mix is called the visual language of the discourse, and readers or users can no longer rely solely on the written text for comprehension as they process all that they see within a text to create meaning for themselves. As such, it is important to study the types of visuals and multimodal elements used in this web-mediated genre.

Multimodality is especially important when analysing discourse from electronic media such as the Internet. Web-mediated discourse is undeniably multimodal. Web pages often include visuals, in the form of photographs, maps, diagrams, animation and the like, to support texts. The Internet discourse is also graphically rich. The richness of its graphics is demonstrated in its range of typographic and colour variation. This new media allows further options such as animated texts, hyperlinks and multimedia support specifically sound and video.

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7.1 Multimodal Features of the Tourism Homepages and Online Advertorials

Some of the multimodal elements found in the online tourism genres include static and dynamic photographs, illustrations, videos, audio recordings, graphics, layout design, and assortment of textual fonts, colour, logos and iconography. The various types of visuals found on the sixteen homepages are summarised in Table 7.1 on the next two pages, while the types of visuals found in the forty-nine online advertorials are tabulated in Table 7.3 on pages 326 to 329. The functions and communicative purposes of these multimodal elements have already been discussed in detail with regard to the generic structures of the online tourism genres of homepages and the moves structures of the online advertorials in the previous chapter. Therefore, in this chapter, the multimodal elements will be discussed based on the perspective of their compositional meaning potentials.

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Table 7.1

Types of Visuals on the Official Malaysian Tourism Homepages

VISUALS / HOMEPAGE (URL)	Masthead - photo/drawing	Photograph	Thumbnail Photo	Thumbnail poster/banner	Map	Table	Logo	Emblem	Icon
Tourism Malaysia (http://www.tourism.gov.my)	1		5	8			4		10
Tourism Malaysia Corporate (http://corporate.tourism.gov.my)	1			2		1	5		8
Kuala Lumpur (http://www.visitkl.gov.my)	1	1 (with animation)	1	10			19	4	3
Perlis (http://www.perlis.gov.my)			7				2	2	6
Kedah (http://www.visitkedah.com.my)	1 (Black & white thumbnail)	2	4	3	1		1	1	5
Penang (http://www.tourismpenang.gov.my)	1 (with animation & 2 thumbnail pic.)	1	2	8			1		
Perak (http://www.peraktourism.com)	1 (with animation)		14	7			4	1	5
Selangor (http://www.tourismselangor.gov.my)		1	7	4			5	2	
Negeri Sembilan (http://www.ns.gov.my/tourism)	1 (with animation & 2 thumbnail pic.)	2 (with animation)					2		12

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Table 7.1 (continued)

VISUALS / HOMEPAGE (URL)	Masthead - photo/drawing	Photograph	Thumbnail Photo	Thumbnail poster/banner	Map	Table	Logo	Emblem	Icon
Malacca (http://www.melakatourism.gov.my)	1 (with animation & 2 thumbnail pic.)	1	26 (some animated)				1	1	1
Johor (http://www.tourismjohor.com)	1 (with animation & 9 thumbnail pic.)	1	5	1	1		5	3	12
Pahang (http://www.tourismpahang.com)	1 (collage of pics. with animation)	1 (with animation)	5				3	2	13
Kelantan (http://www.tic.kelantan.gov.my)				2			5	1	10
Terengganu (http://tourism.terengganu.gov.my)	1 (with animation)		8	12 (1 with animation)			10	2	13
Sabah (http://www.sabahtourism.com)	1 (with animation)		6				2	2	3
Sarawak (http://www.sarawaktourism.com)	1		7	7	1		17		
Total	**13**	**10**	**97**	**64**	**3**	**1**	**86**	**21**	**101**
No. of homepages with visuals	**13**	**8**	**13**	**11**	**3**	**1**	**16**	**11**	**13**
Percentage of homepages with visuals (%)	**81.25**	**50.00**	**81.25**	**68.75**	**18.75**	**6.25**	**100**	**68.75**	**81.25**

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As can be seen from the findings of the contents of the sixteen official Malaysian tourism organisations' homepages presented in the previous chapter and summarised in Table 7.1, all the homepages contain some form of visual image, with many of them also include a link(s) to a multimedia or visual feature. Table 7.2 below shows the occurrence of links to multimedia features and visuals found on the sixteen official Malaysian tourism homepages.

Table 7.2

Links to Multimedia and Visuals on the Official Malaysian Tourism Homepages

Multimodal Features	Total	%
Multimedia		
- video link	10	62.50
- audio link	2	12.50
- slides link	2	12.50
Visuals (link to other webpages within the website)		
- photo gallery link	9	56.25
- map link	13	81.25

The types of visuals found in the forty-nine online tourism advertorials are tabulated in Table 7.3 on the subsequent pages. All the forty-nine tourism advertorials analysed in the study contain at least one type of visual. Some of the online advertorials that are published on the *Tourism Malaysia Official Corporate* website may not contain pictures or photographs depicting the destination or attraction being described in the advertorial, but those thirteen advertorials extracted from the website have an Adobe PDF logo icon and hyperlink to download a Portable Document Format (PDF) file version of the advertorial which has the same descriptive information and includes some visuals in that version. As was mentioned in the previous chapter of this thesis, most of the pictures found in the advertorials function as related supporting visuals to the textual information, and they have the communicative purposes of attracting the users' or readers' attention and indicating the value of the tourism attraction or of visiting the destination via the concrete evidence of photographs.

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Table 7.3

Types of Visuals in the Online Tourism Advertorials

Themes	Appendix I	Advertorials (Title)	Website	Pictures	Thumbnail Pictures	Other Related Thumbnail Pictures	Maps	Tables	Logo Icon
Adventure	A1	Diving	Tourism Malaysia	1*	2	18			
	A2	Sail And Cruise	Tourism Malaysia	1*	2				
	A3	A Taste of Survivor Island (Sabah)	TM Corporate		7				1
	A4	The Klias Wetlands River Cruise Adventure (Sabah)	TM Corporate		6				1
	A5	Mount Kinabalu – Where the World's Highest via Ferrata Resides (Sabah)	TM Corporate		10				1
	A6	Mountaineering Potential in Malaysia (Sabah)	TM Corporate		2				1
	A7	Sipadan Island (Sabah)	Sabah Tourism	1	10		1		
	A8	Tunku Abdul Rahman Park (Sabah)	Sabah Tourism	1	10			2	
	A9	Tioman Island (Pahang)	Tourism Malaysia		4				
	A10	Tioman Island (Pahang)	Tourism Pahang	1*	39				
	A11	Layang Layang Island, Sabah	Tourism Malaysia		7				
	A12	Mabul Island, Sabah	Tourism Malaysia		13				

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Table 7.3 (continued)

Themes	Appendix I	Advertorials (Title)	Website	Pictures	Thumbnail Pictures	Other Related Thumbnail Pictures	Maps	Tables	Logo Icon
Adventure	A13	Pulau Tiga Marine Park, Sabah	Tourism Malaysia		15				
Culture	C1	Homestay	Tourism Malaysia	1*	2	2			
	C2	Sabah – Lest We Forget	TM Corporate						1
	C3	The Malaysia Homestay Programme: Experincing Life in the Country	TM Corporate						1
	C4	Mari Mari Cultural Village (Sabah)	Sabah Tourism	1	9			4	
	C5	Monsopiad Cultural Village (Sabah)	Sabah Tourism	1	10				
	C6	Maranjak Longhouse Homestay (Sabah)	Sabah Tourism	2				1	
	C7	Murut Cultural Centre (Sabah)	Sabah Tourism	1	5				
	C8	Linangkit Cultural Village (Sabah)	Sabah Tourism	1	10			2	
Food & Beach	F1	Food	Tourism Malaysia	1*	2				
	F2	Eat, Drink and be Merry (Penang)	Tourism Penang	2*					
	F3	Street Food (local hawker fare) [Penang]	Tourism Penang	11*					
	F4	Georgetown - Cultural Heartland, Food Paradise (Penang)	Tourism Penang	19*					
	F5	Batu Ferringhi, Penang	Tourism Malaysia		3				

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Table 7.3 (continued)

Themes	Appendix I	Advertorials (Title)	Website	Pictures	Thumbnail Pictures	Other Related Thumbnail Pictures	Maps	Tables	Logo Icon
Nature	N1	Ecotourism	Tourism Malaysia	1*	2	19			
	N2	National Parks	Tourism Malaysia	1*	2	13			
	N3	Cave Exploration	Tourism Malaysia	1*	2	8			
	N4	Bird Watching	Tourism Malaysia	1*	2	15			
	N5	Ecotourism in Malaysia	TM Corporate						1
	N6	Lok Kawi Wildlife Park, Sabah	TM Corporate						1
	N7	Exploring the Wilds of Sabah, Borneo	TM Corporate						1
	N8	In the Heart of the Rainforest (Sabah)	TM Corporate						1
	N9	Kenong Rimba Park (Pahang)	Tourism Malaysia		9				
	N10	Kinabalu Park, Sabah	Tourism Malaysia		19				
	N11	Danum Valley Conservation Area (Sabah)	Sabah Tourism	1	8				
	N12	Taman Negara (Pahang)	Tourism Pahang	1*	37				
	N13	Cherating Beach (Pahang)	Tourism Pahang	1*	20				
	N14	Fraser's Hill (Pahang)	Tourism Pahang	1*	32				
	N15	Cameron Highlands (Pahang)	Tourism Pahang	1*	85				

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Table 7.3 (continued)

Themes	Appendix I	Advertorials (Title)	Website	Pictures	Thumbnail Pictures	Other Related Thumbnail Pictures	Maps	Tables	Logo Icon
Shopping	S1	Malaysia Year End Sale 2010	TM Corporate						1
	S2	Malaysia GP Sale	TM Corporate						1
	S3	Malaysia Mega Sale Carnival 2010	TM Corporate						1
	S4	Shopping	Tourism Malaysia	1*	2				
	S5	Shopper's Paradise	Visit KL	11*					
	S6	Petaling Street, Kuala Lumpur	Tourism Malaysia		12				
	S7	Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, Kuala Lumpur	Tourism Malaysia		8				
	S8	Central Market, Kuala Lumpur	Tourism Malaysia		6				
Total				**66**	**414**	**75**	**1**	**9**	**13**
No. of advertorials with visuals				**26**	**35**	**6**	**1**	**4**	**13**
Percentage of advertorials with visuals (%)				**53.06**	**71.43**	**12.24**	**2.04**	**8.16**	**26.53**

Note: * comprises of one main picture at the top of the advertorial.

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Due to the extensive variety of multimodal features found in the homepages and advertorials as afforded by the new media, the present study only concentrates on analysing their compositional meaning such as the layout, photographs and colours used in the sixteen tourism homepages and forty-nine advertorials. This study employs a visual social semiotics theoretical framework, specifically Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996, 2001) social semiotic framework for analysing images, to examine how the homepage layout and images convey meaning. This framework stresses on the fact that visual images are the result of social processes, whereby the meaning is a negotiation between the producer and the viewer, reflecting their socio-cultural beliefs, values and attitudes. Furthermore, as the web-mediated tourism genre has the purpose of persuading readers or users of a viewpoint, which is to consume the tourism products and services, visual social semiotics can help the producers to understand the rhetorical meaning-making potential of visuals in relation to the texts.

Although visual images can be analysed from three metafunctions, the present study only analyses the textual metafunction or compositional meaning of the genre's page layout and visual images. This metafunction is selected as the focus of analysis because it brings together the individual parts of representation and interaction into a recognisable kind of wholes of specific kinds of text or communicative event, such as advertisements, conversations, etc. The interrelated systems of the compositional metafunction can be used to characterise the representational and interactive meanings of spatial composition. These systems can apply to individual visual images or to combinations of elements such as in the case of the present study where a homepage consists of textual information, logos, photographs, headings and content indicators; and the advertorials which contain product descriptions, photographs, colours, etc. The ways that the elements are made to attract attention, the way they are arranged, and the

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way they are connected or separated from each other give the overall meaning of those elements and of the composition as a whole. The compositional structures can be applied to the layout of composite texts such as homepages and advertorials (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).

The findings from the analysis of the compositional metafunction of the tourism homepages is presented and discussed according to each of the resources of the compositional meaning first because the homepage is the macro-structure of where the micro-structure of advertorials are found on the tourism websites. It will be followed by the presentation of findings and discussion of the tourism advertorials according to the resources of the compositional meaning, wherever applicable, in the respective subsections.

7.2 Compositional Meaning

The findings of this metafunction based on the sixteen tourism homepages and forty-nine advertorials are presented and discussed according to the following four resources of the compositional meaning.

7.2.1 Information Values

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) deliberated four types of composition structures or layout. Information values are realised by the placement of elements in the composition. In other words, the four patterns of page organisation give meaning to elements that are placed within those positions. This resource accords meaning on the notion that the role of any particular element depends on its placement on the picture

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space or page, whether it is placed in the upper or lower part, on the left or right, or in the centre or margin. The top or bottom difference corresponds to the ideal or real, and the left or right difference corresponds to the given or new. The table below shows the types of compositional structures that are employed in the sixteen NTO homepages.

Table 7.4

Compositional Structures of the Official Malaysian Tourism Homepages

Compositional Structures / HOMEPAGE (URL)	Top/Bottom	Left/Right	Triptych	Centre/Margin
Tourism Malaysia (http://www.tourism.gov.my)	√	√	√ VH	
Tourism Malaysia Corporate (http://corporate.tourism.gov.my)	√	√	√ V	
Kuala Lumpur (http://www.visitkl.gov.my)	√	√		
Perlis (http://www.perlis.gov.my)			√ V	
Kedah (http://www.visitkedah.com.my)	√	√	√ V	
Penang (http://www.tourismpenang.gov.my)	√	√	√ VH	
Perak (http://www.peraktourism.com)	√	√	√ V	
Selangor (http://www.tourismselangor.gov.my)		√	√ H	
Negeri Sembilan (http://www.ns.gov.my/tourism)	√	√		
Malacca (http://www.melakatourism.gov.my)	√	√	√ VH	
Johor (http://www.tourismjohor.com)	√	√	√ VH	
Pahang (http://www.tourismpahang.com)	√			√
Kelantan (http://www.tic.kelantan.gov.my)				√
Terengganu (http://tourism.terengganu.gov.my)	√	√	√ V	
Sabah (http://www.sabahtourism.com)	√	√	√ V	
Sarawak (http://www.sarawaktourism.com)	√			√
Total	**13**	**12**	**11**	**3**
Percentage of homepages (%)	**81.25**	**75.00**	**68.75**	**18.75**

Key: V – vertical
H - horizontal

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It should be noted that the uniformity or consistency of a homepage's layout design re-enforces ease of its use and gives an image of professionalism, thereby reinforcing integrity and reliability of the website and the organisation.

Similarly, Table 7.5 on the next page presents the types of compositional structures used in the forty-nine online tourism advertorials. A detailed discussion on the informational value of the tourism homepages as well as the online tourism advertorials according to the various compositional layouts ensues Table 7.5.

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Table 7.5

Compositional Structures of the Online Tourism Advertorials

Themes	Appendix I	Advertorials (Title)	Top/Bottom	Left/Right	Triptych	Centre/Margin
Adventure	A1	Diving		√	√ v	
	A2	Sail And Cruise		√	√ v	
	A3	A Taste of Survivor Island (Sabah)	√			
	A4	The Klias Wetlands River Cruise Adventure (Sabah)	√			
	A5	Mount Kinabalu – Where the World's Highest via Ferrata Resides (Sabah)	√			
	A6	Mountaineering Potential in Malaysia (Sabah)	√			
	A7	Sipadan Island (Sabah)		√	√ v	
	A8	Tunku Abdul Rahman Park (Sabah)		√	√ v	
	A9	Tioman Island (Pahang)	√			
	A10	Tioman Island (Pahang)		√	√ v	
	A11	Layang Layang Island, Sabah	√			
	A12	Mabul Island, Sabah	√			
	A13	Pulau Tiga Marine Park, Sabah	√			
Culture	C1	Homestay		√	√ v	
	C2	Sabah – Lest We Forget	(√)			
	C3	The Malaysia Homestay Programme: Experincing Life in the Country	(√)			
	C4	Mari Mari Cultural Village (Sabah)		√	√ v	
	C5	Monsopiad Cultural Village (Sabah)		√	√ v	
	C6	Maranjak Longhouse Homestay (Sabah)		√	√ v	
	C7	Murut Cultural Centre (Sabah)		√	√ v	
	C8	Linangkit Cultural Village (Sabah)		√	√ v	

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Table 7.5 (continued)

Themes	Appendix I	Advertorials (Title)	Top/Bottom	Left/Right	Triptych	Centre/Margin
Food & Beach	F1	Food		√	√ v	
	F2	Eat, Drink and be Merry (Penang)	√	√		
	F3	Street Food (local hawker fare) [Penang]	√	√		
	F4	Georgetown - Cultural Heartland, Food Paradise (Penang)	√			
	F5	Batu Ferringhi, Penang	√			
Nature	N1	Ecotourism		√	√ v	
	N2	National Parks		√	√ v	
	N3	Cave Exploration		√	√ v	
	N4	Bird Watching		√	√ v	
	N5	Ecotourism in Malaysia	(√)			
	N6	Lok Kawi Wildlife Park, Sabah	(√)			
	N7	Exploring the Wilds of Sabah, Borneo	(√)			
	N8	In the Heart of the Rainforest (Sabah)	(√)			
	N9	Kenong Rimba Park (Pahang)	√			
	N10	Kinabalu Park, Sabah	√			
	N11	Danum Valley Conservation Area (Sabah)		√	√ v	
	N12	Taman Negara (Pahang)		√	√ v	
	N13	Cherating Beach (Pahang)		√	√ v	
	N14	Fraser's Hill (Pahang)		√	√ v	
	N15	Cameron Highlands (Pahang)		√	√ v	

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Table 7.5 (continued)

Themes	Appendix I	Advertorials (Title)	Top/Bottom	Left/Right	Triptych	Centre/Margin
Shopping	S1	Malaysia Year End Sale 2010	(√)			
	S2	Malaysia GP Sale	(√)			
	S3	Malaysia Mega Sale Carnival 2010	(√)			
	S4	Shopping		√	√ v	
	S5	Shopper's Paradise		√	√ v	
	S6	Petaling Street, Kuala Lumpur	√			
	S7	Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, Kuala Lumpur	√			
	S8	Central Market, Kuala Lumpur	√			
Total			**17 + (9) =26**	**25**	**23**	**0**
Percentage of advertorials with visuals (%)			**34.7 + (2.0) =53.1**	**51.0**	**46.9**	**0**

Key: V – vertical
H - horizontal

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(a) Top and Bottom / Ideal and Real Information

Thirteen (81.25%) of the sixteen tourism websites use a top and bottom structure in the design of their homepage layout to provide tourism information, a practice that is common in many different homepages (Baldry & Thibault, 2006: 105). The elements on the upper part of the page appeal to the viewer's emotions, expressing 'what might be'. The bottom elements have an informative appeal, showing 'what is' (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996: 183). These contrasting appeals can be assigned the values of ideal and real, where ideal elements are more salient and simply contain the general essence of information; and real elements give practical and specific information (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996: 183). The thirteen homepages that utilise this top and bottom compositional structure generally present the ideal information in the form of visuals of the respective destination's tourist attractions, as the masthead. The real information is communicated below the masthead or visuals and gives the more realistic and factual information. Placing photos of the tourist attractions in the masthead at the top, functions to give the viewers a general idea of the destination's attractions. This is followed by providing details of the destination and its attractions underneath.

Take for example Malaysia's main NTO homepage, *Tourism Malaysia* (Appendix H-1), which justifies this notion. The picture of a lady carrying shopping bags and smiling, and the superimposed Malaysia Mega Sale logo (alongside one of the shopping bags) and caption in the masthead introduce one of the current tourism attractions that is idealised. This idealised tourism activity is held throughout the country, and attracts many tourists to shop in Malaysia during this period. This generalised essence of the activity is realised by the information listed below the masthead under the heading *Events & Celebrations* which gives the more specific information and details of the carnival, and placed among the specific information of other current events and

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celebrations. The section on *Featured Destinations* on the homepage also demonstrates the meaning potentials of the top and bottom structure. The three thumbnail pictures of the featured destinations show the idealised information of the destinations or attractions that can be seen at those destinations. The brief descriptions below the thumbnail pictures at the bottom half of this section is the real or specific information and details regarding the destinations' attractions. These two examples show that the elements presented at the top sections of the webpage and respective information space which are recognized by the visuals are what Kress & van Leeuwen (1996) call the 'ideal', and what is placed at the bottom as the 'real'.

The *Tourism Malaysia Official Corporate* homepage (Appendix H-2) also follows this principle of top and bottom information values. Its masthead shows two persons making a toast over dinner to denote gratitude or to celebrate an accomplishment. This action usually takes place after a successful business venture; hence the idea is portrayed in the picture to symbolize a corporate site. The action of celebrating a successful enterprise as depicted on the top space of the homepage conveys the ideal meaning potential, while the real information is communicated in the space below under the heading *Facts & Figures Overview* which includes the favourable statistics of tourist arrivals and receipts to Malaysia, and information on trade news and promotions as listed in the *News Desk [Media Releases]*, *Featuring Malaysia*, and *News from Trade Friend* sub-sections.

Out of the forty-nine advertorials analysed in the study, eighteen (36.73%) of them (indicated by an asterisk in the fifth column of Table 7.3) have one main picture at the top of the advertorial. This main picture, which resembles a masthead, mainly functions to attract the readers' attention to the advertorial. Due to the positioning of these

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eighteen pictures at the top of the advertorials, they also function to provide the information value of the ideal, while the real elements or details of the tourist destination and attraction are provided in the descriptive text below the main picture. Other than its position at the top of the advertorial, the main picture is further assigned the ideal information value because of its larger size which makes it more salient compared to other pictures that may be found within the advertorial. However, these eighteen advertorials which have include a main picture at the top of the text may have also utilised a triptych compositional structure where they have provided other thumbnail pictures or lists of other nearby destinations at the bottom of the text after the descriptive write-up of the destination. These advertorials been identified to follow the triptych compositional structure as shown in Table 7.5 which identifies the overall compositional structure of the forty-nine online tourism advertorials.

Thirty-five (71.43%) of the advertorials as shown in Table 7.3 have included thumbnail pictures either at the top or at the end of the advertorials. In the instance where thumbnail pictures are positioned at the top of the advertorial, these visuals not only show the idealised essence of the tourist destination or attraction, but also function as supporting visuals to attraction the readers' attention and to indicate the value of the tourist destination or attraction. When the thumbnail pictures are positioned at the bottom of the advertorial, they are assigned the real information value and function to illustrate relevant details as well as indicate the value of visiting the destination or tourist attraction. The size of the visuals will be discussed in more detail when discussing the issue of salience as the third resource of the compositional meaning of visuals.

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The nine advertorials which have been listed as being presented in a top-bottom manner with a tick in parenthesis (√) as shown in Table 7.5, are considered to be presented in a top-down compositional layout. These advertorials only comprise of a textual description of the tourism destination or event with a few sub-titles and no visuals. They are also not separated between the left and right. Hence, they are regarded as seeming to follow a top-bottom compositional layout.

(b) Left and Right / Given and New Information

This kind of composition arranges elements on a left-right axis to generate different meanings. The elements positioned on the left side of a page have the value of being 'given' information which is known, familiar, past or current, or common sense knowledge; while elements that are placed on the right are 'new' information that is applicable in the present or in the future, unfamiliar, an issue and a solution or the possible (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996: 188). They also suggest that when visuals appear on the left, they may be shown as necessities but when they are on the right, they are lifestyles and shown as possibilities. An explanation of this compositional structure based on the data collected for the present study is given below.

Three quarters (75%) of the homepages analysed apply the left and right compositional structure in the design of their homepage layout to provide relevant information on their destinations and tourist attractions. However, these twelve homepages have different explanations in conveying their given and new information values. Half of these homepages that applied the left and right compositional structure in their layout design presented the main menu, navigational menu or factual information on the left space, and the dynamic information of current events and promotions on the right space of the

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homepage. These information on the left relate to the given information value, and the information on the right convey the new information value. These six homepages concur with the claim made by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) concerning the left and right compositional structure which corresponds with the given and real meaning potentials of the information space.

The other six homepages that applied the left and right compositional structure in their layout design have provided information of current events and news on the left space, and the navigational menu and factual information on the right space of the homepages. However, some of the elements on the right area of these homepages also include dynamic information or links to such information, as can be seen on the homepages of *Tourism Malaysia*, *Tourism Malaysia Official Corporate*, *Perak Tourism*, *Tourism Johor* and *Tourism Terengganu*. The dynamic information or links are to such elements as blogs, social networking sites, current exhibitions and promotions, RSS feeds, forum and events held in the year. Further explanations on occurrences of this compositional structure are discussed below.

The left and right compositional structure in the *Tourism Malaysia* homepage (Appendix H-1) conveys a varied account of the given and new information values. The information on current events and feature destinations presented on the left of the second half of the *Tourism Malaysia* homepage is accorded the given information. The information on the right, *Travel to Malaysia START HERE*, although not exactly new, is pertinent information for tourists to realise or consume the tourism products identified and presented on the left side. The three banner tab links of *Follow Us on Twitter*, *Malaysia Pavillion @ World Expo* and *1Malaysia Green & Clean* campaign on the bottom right also presents the 'new' information of present and upcoming events. Some

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of the other information on the right is also considered 'new' because the blogs entries and Twitter updates are communicated in real-time, while the exhibition and campaign are forthcoming and on-going.

Likewise, the *Tourism Malaysia Official Corporate* homepage (Appendix H-2) contains the left and right compositional structure which expresses the given and new information values. The information on the left, below the masthead, lists the past years' tourist arrivals and receipts to Malaysia and the latest news or information available based on the respective categories, while the information on the right – *Trade Promo*, *Note to Malaysian travel suppliers*, and *Travel to Malaysia START HERE*, etc. provides the new, upcoming and on-going information. These 'given' and 'new' information can be compared by referring to the year or dates of the published information or events on the left and the dates of the tourism promotions on the right of the homepage.

With regards to the forty-nine advertorials, twenty-five (51%) of them seem to be presented according to the left and right compositional structure. However, not all of them rigidly adhere to this left and right compositional structure to correspond with the given and new meaning potentials of the information. Only ten (40%) of these twenty-five advertorials have been presented strictly according to this left-right structure. The left and right information value as purported by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) is more evident when the visuals are place on the left side of the descriptive information. The advertorial, *Street Food (local hawker fare)* (Appendix I-F3) illustrates this claim. The visuals of the ten different types of local hawker fare found in the state of Penang are all placed on the left of their respective textual descriptions in the advertorial to identify the types of street food synonymous with the state, thus indicating the given information

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value. Here, the given is defined by the visuals in order for the new to be introduced. Their textual descriptions presented on the right space of the advertorial introduce and give details of the different types of local hawker fare which have been identified on the left, thus conveying the new meaning potential which are not necessarily agreed upon by the readers. The placement of the visuals on the left also indicates that the identified street foods are the "must-try" items and a necessity for tourists to consume when they are there.

In some of the advertorial compositions, the opposite scenario can be discovered. Visual images can instead be found to the right space of the advertorial where they are positioned as the new, while the textual information is on the left and presented as the given. In these advertorials, the given value locates the advertorial into given discourses of tourism, and the new shows the possibility. In order to elaborate this contention, the advertorials on Sabah's adventure tourism, *Sipadan Island* (Appendix I-A7), and ecotourism, *Danum Valley Conservation Area* (Appendix I-N11), are referred to. The visuals of a fish, and a green snake placed on the right of the first two paragraphs of the textual information in the two advertorials show only one of the many possible fauna species that can be witnessed at the respective destinations. There is a possibility that a tourist may or may not see these exact particular types of wildlife, but instead have the opportunity to spot other species of fauna found at those locations. The visual showing an aerial view of one of the cluster islands of the Tunku Abdul Rahman Marine Park is positioned on the top right of the *Tunku Abdul Rahman Park* advertorial (Appendix I-A8). It is possible for a tourist to view such a panorama if he/she engages the services of a pilot to fly over the marine park, but this is not obligatory.

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Other than the *Street Food (local hawker fare)* advertorial (Appendix I-F3), nine advertorials which describe the general tourism activities (Appendices I: A1 - A2, C1, F1, N1 – N4, and S4) that appear on the *Tourism Malaysia* website also have a more rigid left and right compositional structure to convey the given and new information values. As with the aforementioned advertorials, the given informative description in these nine advertorials is placed on the left side of the advertorials, while the new information on 'Key Tips' is presented on the right space of the advertorials. The key tips are relevant information for potential tourists to realise the tourist attraction described on the left. The tips given on the right may or may not be accepted by or applicable to the individual tourists.

Similarly, four of the five advertorials obtained from the *Tourism Pahang* website for analysis (Appendices I: A10, and N12 - N15) have placed some details that hold new meaning potential within the advertorials. This new, contested and possible information is conveyed by the list of links on 'Where to stay' with ratings, where applicable, for the accommodations at the right side of the quotation and first few paragraphs of the textual description. However, the rest of the advertorial does not maintain such a compositional structure.

The other advertorials do not rigidly follow the given and new meaning potentials to associate with the left and right compositional structure. Different semiotic modes positioned on the left and/or right can also be found in the compositional structure of the advertorials analysed, as demonstrated in Appendix I-C6. Visuals are put on either side of the textual descriptions to attract readers' attention and to indicate the value of the destination or tourism attraction, especially when they incorporate the dynamic transition feature whereby the visuals automatically change intermittently, as

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exemplified in a few of *Sabah Tourism*'s culture tourism advertorials (Appendices I: C4 and C5).

Consequently, it can be concluded that the homepages and advertorials were not strictly designed to follow a left and right compositional structure to adhere to the given and new meaning potentials of the information. The choice of this or the other compositional structures may depend on the individual NTO website designers. The layout or compositional structure also depends on the purposes and capabilities of the visual images utilised in a particular advertorial. The issue of salience, which will be discussed later in this chapter, also plays a part in the positioning of elements either on the left or right area of the composition.

(c) Triptych

Triptych is when elements are placed centrally with information above and below or on both sides of the element. The central element has a mediating role. A triptych can also be a classification or sequence of activities whereby the elements may be positioned sequentially in a line, such as a cartoon strip. This compositional structure can be found in eleven or 68.75% of the homepages. There are two types of triptych compositional structure used in the tourism homepages analysed in the study. A triptych structure may be placed horizontally or vertically on the homepages. The use of only a horizontal triptych compositional structure can be seen in one of the homepages, the use of only a vertical triptych can be seen in six of the homepages, while the use of both horizontal and vertical triptych can be seen in four other homepages.

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The homepage that uses only the horizontal triptych compositional structure is *Tourism Selangor* (Appendix H-8). This compositional structure is utilised in the homepage to categorise the tourism themes of *Health Tourism*, *Education Tourism* and *Homestays*.

On the contrary, a vertical triptych compositional structure can be found in most of the homepages (62.5%) analysed in the study. As shown in Table 7.2, six of these homepages uses only the vertical triptych on their homepages. The vertical triptych is mostly used on these tourism homepages to list the sequence of events and celebrations. The events and celebrations are listed in ascending order of the occasions, from an earlier event to a later one. In addition, two of these homepages also used this type of triptych compositional structure to categorise their tourism attractions (Perlis's *7 Wonders of Perlis*) and tourism activities (Tourism Penang's *Top 10 Picks*).

Similarly, a vertical triptych compositional structure is used in the *Tourism Malaysia Official Corporate* homepage (Appendix H-2), whereby the sequence of information in the frames are listed in a descending order of the year or dates. In other words, the information within each frame of *Tourist Arrivals and Receipts to Malaysia*, *News Desk [Media Releases]*, *Featuring Malaysia*, *News from our Trade Friends*, and *Events and Celebrations* are sequenced from the latest to an earlier item, in contrast to most of the other homepages that utilized the vertical triptych compositional structure which sequenced the events in an ascending order, from an earlier occasion to a later occasion.

Other homepages analysed in the study that use the descending order of the vertical triptych to sequence their tourism events and celebrations are *Tourism Penang* (Appendix H-6) and *Perak Tourism* (Appendix H-7). The homepage of *Visit Kedah* (Appendix H-5) also employed a descending order of the vertical triptych compositional

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structure. However, the descending order of its vertical triptych is used to sequence the messages from its local authorities. These messages are organised according to their power of authority in terms of the tourism industry, from the Sultan, Chief Minister, Tourism EXCO to the State Secretary.

The use of a combination of the horizontal and vertical triptych is found in four (25%) of the homepages analysed. A horizontal triptych compositional structure can be seen on the *Tourism Malaysia* homepage (Appendix H-1), as shown by the arrangement of the three picture banner links of *Truly asia TV, View E-Brochures* and *Travel packages*, as well as the pictures and descriptions in the *Featured Destinations* section. The former composition provides three types of related tourism information – videos, brochures and travel packages, and the latter introduces selected places of interest. Note how the former three picture banner links are categorised or framed together by their grey background. The horizontal triptych of the three pictures and descriptions in the *Featured Destinations* section are made more obvious with the use of alternate shades of grey for their backgrounds. This background colour method of framing also functions to separate the destinations on the one hand and at the same time connects them by using different shades of the same colour. A vertical triptych compositional structure is also used in this homepage, as exemplified in the listing of events and celebrations in the *Events and Celebrations* section of the homepage. These events and celebrations are sequenced according to the starting date of the tourism activities, and the concept of using alternating shades for their background colour is also applied here to differentiate as well as connect them.

As can be seen in Table 7.5, 46.9% of the tourism advertorials analysed in the present study follows a triptych compositional structure in providing information about the

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destination or tourism attraction. All these twenty-three advertorials have employed the vertical form of the triptych compositional structure. The advertorials are produced according to a certain sequence, such as an introduction, the body and a conclusion. Many of the advertorials have included sub-headings for the ease of reference, which double up as frame lines. Some of the advertorials also contain visual elements such as pictures, maps and tables to illustrate the textual information. Furthermore, these visual elements can break the monotony of reading a mere textual advertorial.

(d) Centre and Margin

Three (18.75%) of the sixteen homepages analysed in the study applied the centre and margin compositional structure in the design of their homepage layout to provide relevant information about their tourist destinations and attractions. In this kind of composition, the central element holds the marginal or other elements around it together and gives them meaning and coherence. The element in the centre is the main focus or highlighted information and is surrounded by other relevant information at the margins. The marginal elements are thus elements belonging and subservient to the centre.

The homepages of *Tourism Pahang*, *Kelantan Tourism Information Centre* and *Sarawak Tourism* made use of this centre and margin compositional structure in their homepage layout. The central element on *Tourism Pahang*'s homepage (Appendix H-12) is the current highlight or feature of a local tourist destination or attraction. The marginal elements are the related and relevant information for realising a visit to the destination, such as a list of other local tourist destinations, quotations of tour agents' services, the local weather, relevant travel information and tips, photos and videos of the destination(s), and accommodation packages. *Kelantan Tourism Information Centre*

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homepage's (Appendix H-13) central element consists of a virtual poster and description about Visit Kelantan Year 2010 followed by a description of the state, its tourism information centre and a small sized collage of visuals. At the margin are elements presenting related and relevant tourism information on the Kelantan state, its various local destinations by theme, attractions, accommodation by type, travel services, e-tourism information and quick links to other websites or webpages. Likewise, *Sarawak Tourism* homepage's (Appendix H-16) central elements show a poster inviting viewers to visit the state with an option to download information on Sarawak's adventure packages. This is followed by a feature promoting Sarawak/Malaysia My Second Home programme, and news on current events. These central elements connect the marginal elements which include information on other events, a photo gallery, e-cards and e-brochure, domestic flights schedule, airlines and cruise ships operating into the state, trade exhibitions, the local map, a video gallery, RSS feeds which provide updates on regularly changing web contents, Sarawak Tourism Board's newsletters, and links to other related websites.

7.2.2 Framing

The term 'framing' indicates that elements in a visual composition can either be represented as belonging together, or given separate identities. Frames can show boundaries or segregation, but also create integration between the elements within the boundary, while their absence can show natural connections. Connection can be created in many ways through similarities and assonances of colour and form as can be seen in many of the tourism homepages in this study, through vectors that connect elements, or through the absence of frame lines or empty spaces. Detachment can be achieved through frame lines and empty spaces between the elements (i.e. edges of photographs),

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through contrast or discontinuity of colour, form (i.e. size, shape and regularity), or any visual feature. Hence, the broad meaning potential and hierarchy of salience can be made more specific through the context and methods of framing selected. Van Leeuwen (2005) believes that there are various terms to describe different types or degrees of detachment and connection, and suggested some categories of describing the semiotic potential for different kinds of framing or linking. As the semiotic meaning potentials of the various categories of association on framing are rather subjective, the findings on framing from the multimodal analysis are discussed based on selected homepages that are exemplified below.

All the sixteen homepages have used framing to show the connection and detachment of various tourism information. The descriptions, visuals and tourism information are framed or categorised according to certain themes and subjects depending on the respective tourism homepages. All the descriptions also have a title, subject or heading at the top of the frame. The titles or headings themselves also act as frame lines for the information and descriptions. This resource of the compositional meaning has been described incidentally in connection with sub-section 7.2.1(c) above.

In order to illustrate this resource of framing in relation to the compositional meaning of the tourism homepages further, the homepage of *Tourism Penang* is referred to. As can be seen on the printout of this homepage (Appendix H-6), framing is achieved mainly by the use of colour rhymes. Firstly, the main menu at the top of the homepage is segregated from the other elements on the homepage by its dark green background colour. The different categories of tabs in the main menu are further separated by a divider between the categories and the change of its background colour to red when the cursor rolls over the respective tabs to access the links. The navigation bar or strip,

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which also contains the day, date and time of webpage access on the right, is in beige colour and formed by the top border of the masthead that is made up of a transition of six pictures and two thumbnail pictures on the lower right of the masthead. The bottom border of the masthead separates the ideal and real information on the homepage.

The real or specific information is put against a vertical tapering of light tan to white background. The different elements of the given information (i.e. *Penang Island Map*, and *Events and news*) on the left of this real information space on the homepage are placed against a horizontal tapering of light tan and light aqua backgrounds respectively. Their different background colours form frames to denote separation of the elements. The two items within the *Events and news* frame are further separated by a thin line between them. The new information (i.e. *Top 10 Picks, Heritage Walks*, and *Living Heritage*) on the right of the real information space of the homepage which corresponds with the header tab of the respective information, are placed within a fine frame line and against a white background. The new information of the *Top 10 Picks* is further divided into three different categories, Top 10 – *What to See*, *What to Eat* and *What to Do*, by a fine horizontal line between the categories. These three tourism activities are also differentiated by the colour contrast of, and the verb on, their respective virtual bamboo blinds (i.e. green, pink and blue) that will roll up to reveal the half hidden activity when the cursor is placed over the visual. The related websites for the different tourism themes and relevant links at the bottom of the real information space are separated from the other real information elements by a fine line across this information value space. The tourism themes and relevant links are further separated by presenting them in different square frames with rounded edges. The titles of the themes and links overlap the visuals which denote the themes.

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Finally, all those descriptions, visuals and tourism information related to the state are connected altogether by the use of a brown colour background and how all the elements are presented within this background colour.

In relation to the tourism advertorials analysed, all of them have a title, and many have sub-titles or sub-headings at the top of the frames and between frames. As mentioned in sub-section 7.2.1(c) above, the sub-titles or sub-headings themselves also act as frame lines for the information and descriptions. The sub-headings have the effect of creating different levels of connection between the sub-heading and the text that follows. The sub-titles act to divide the advertorials into sections. The division of the advertorials into sections resemble the clear-cut structures of authentic reliable papers such as scientific reports and academic articles. This similar visual layout structure of sub-titles presents a seemingly logical and confident description to the advertorials (Zhou, 2012).

7.2.3 Salience

This term indicates that some elements can be made to stand out or be more noticeable than others. It refers to the ability of elements in capturing the viewers' attention, and that they credit more attention compared to other elements. Salience may also indicate the most important element in the visual composition. It can be achieved through many different ways via symbols, size, colour, tone, focus, foregrounding, overlap, repetition, etc. A hierarchy of salience can be created by the different degrees of the factors that interact. The larger the element, the greater the salience; strong saturated colours have greater salience than faint colours; a high tonal contrast has greater salience; an element that is well-defined or sharp has more salience than a blurred element; an element in the foreground has greater salience than an element in the background; and the element that

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overlaps other elements in the composition is the most salient. All the above factors interact to create salience of varying degrees. In short, salience identifies the most important elements in the composition. Based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) analytical model, some notable patterns of this compositional metafunction resource of the layout and photographs have been identified and are presented below.

In relation to size, one of the largest elements found on the tourism homepages is probably the masthead, other than some large visuals such as photographs, banners or posters which may be included in these homepages. The biggest element in the homepage composition, coupled with visuals that are saturated with colours, of high tonal contrast, and well-defined are the most salient. These characteristics are evident in eleven of the sixteen homepages' mastheads, although all the homepages analysed contain a masthead. To add salience to the masthead, nine out of these eleven homepages have incorporated the dynamic transition functionality, where the pictures automatically change intermittently.

The other five homepages' mastheads lack salience because they are merely made up of text with a small logo and/or emblem, and the colours used for the masthead are in low tonal contrast, such as in the case of the tourism homepages of *Visit KL*, Perlis, *Visit Kedah*, *Tourism Selangor* and *Kelantan Tourism Information Center*. Visuals such as photographs, banners or posters which are larger, in saturated colours, of high tonal contrast, well-defined, of high modality, and presented with the transition functionality that are found in these five homepages are more salient compared to their mastheads.

Although *Visit KL*'s homepage (Appendix H-3) has incorporated animation in its masthead, depicting a bus that travels from the right to the left of the masthead, two

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butterflies that expand and contract, and a hot air balloon that flies up into the sky on the right space of the masthead, it is not the most salient element on the homepage. This is because the masthead has low modality in that it is made up of a two-dimensional cartoon-like drawing in flat, simple and unmodulated colours.

With regard to the factor of focus, it is suggested that the least 'salient' information tends to be in the bottom left and the most 'salient' in the top right of a page layout (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). This corresponds with the ideal elements which are situated on the top, coupled with the new elements presented on the right of a page are more salient; in contrast to the real elements which give practical and specific information presented at the bottom, combined with the given information on the left are less salient. When a page uses the centre and margin layout, then the centre is the more salient in comparison to the elements that are placed at the margins. This notion of page salience of the tourism homepages depends on what the respective NTO intends to focus on. Almost all of the tourism homepages analysed in this study have practised this notion whereby the more important and current information, such as current promotions, important notices, recommended tourism activities or attractions, and highlights, are placed on the top, top right or centre of the page layout. However**,** one of the webpages, Perlis's tourism webpage (Appendix H-4) uses the triptych compositional structure to list its tourism attractions, *7 Wonders of Perlis*. In this case, the attractions are in no particular order of significance.

The notion of foregrounding can be seen in the virtual poster on the homepage of *Kelantan Tourism Information Center* (Appendix H-14). The wooden Sultan Ismail Petra Arch is foregrounded, hence presenting it as the most salient element in the poster.

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The concept of overlap is best illustrated in the eleven mastheads of the homepages analysed in the study that are composed of photographs. The captions, logos, letterings, thumbnail pictures or other visual features overlap the photographs on these mastheads. Other elements that demonstrate this factor are the virtual posters and banners that appear in most of the tourism homepages analysed.

In relation to the advertorials analysed in the present study, it should be noted that all the pictures presented in the online tourism advertorials are photographs of the destinations and tourist attractions. They are all featured in colour and are well-defined. Their differences are in their size and tonal contrast. Therefore, in terms of colour saturation and visual definition, the pictures are prominent.

Eighteen (36.73%) of the advertorials, as indicated by an asterisk in the fifth column of Table 8.3, have placed a large visual at the top of the advertorial. These larger pictures, combined with their strong saturated colours, high tonal contrast and high definition, which are positioned at the top are akin to a masthead and form as the most salient element in the advertorials compared to other pictures that may be found within these advertorials. Due to their size, colour, tone and definition, these pictures can undoubtedly capture viewers' attention.

The other advertorials that have not included a large picture at the top derive salience to the advertorials via pictures that are positioned within the body of the advertorials. Pictures that have incorporated the dynamic transition functionality, where the visuals automatically change intermittently as exemplified in a few of *Sabah Tourism*'s culture tourism advertorials (Appendices I: C4 and C5), are more salient compared to still pictures. Pictures that are positioned at the top of the advertorials are also more salient

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compared to those that are located at the end of the advertorials. This is because visuals that are presented at the top of the visual field are more conspicuous and thus capable of attracting viewers' attention to the advertorial, whereas visuals that are situated at the bottom of an advertorial function as supporting visuals to indicate the value of the tourism attraction being described. Moreover, those visuals that are placed at the bottom of an online advertorial require the viewers to scroll down the screen before they can be viewed as they are not shown immediately on the computer screen when the webpage is accessed. Thus, those pictures are not as salient as those that are placed at the beginning of an online advertorial.

Letters can come in different typefaces or fonts. Other than the typeface, letters may be bold, italicised, underlined or coloured. Basically, all the forty-nine advertorials are consistent in terms of the textual typeface and font colour. Besides being in a bigger font size, bold and/or underlined, most of the letterings in the titles, sub-titles and descriptive information of the body texts are of one consistent typeface and coloured black. In some instances, some words in the body texts may be in blue colour to denote a hyperlink as can be seen in some of the advertorials (e.g. the names of specific places mentioned in the description are in olive green to match with the green background colour of the advertorials as exemplified in Appendix I: C6 - 8). These colours are commonly viewed as relatively serious colours which are associated with power and truth as reported by Zhou (2012). As such, the advertorials are designed to stimulate the style of serious reports.

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7.2.4 Modality

Modality is the social semiotic approach to the question of truth. It refers to the reliability of the visuals. Images with higher modality appear more real than those with lower modality. The modality markers or visual cues indicate the "realness" of a visual, and they comprise of colour saturation, differentiation and modulation; contextualisation; depth; and illumination. A full colour image denotes high modality, while a black and white image suggests low modality. Images that have a fully conceived background indicate high modality compared to images with the background completely absent. When an image has depth, it has high modality compared to an image without any perspective of depth. An image that has illumination or representation of light and shade indicates high modality, as opposed to a picture absent of light and shade which conveys low modality. The degree of modality also depends on the interaction of the modality markers identified above. A discussion on the concept of modality based on the findings from the tourism homepages analysed in this study will be presented first followed by a discussion on the findings gathered from the online tourism advertorials.

The masthead of *Tourism Malaysia*'s homepage (Appendix H-1) has lower modality as opposed to other homepages' mastheads that comprise of photographs. Although its masthead consists of a photograph which shows a real lady carrying shopping bags and smiling, the background is absent. *Visit KL*'s masthead (Appendix H-3) also has low modality. As mentioned in the previous sub-section, *Visit KL*'s masthead is made up of a two-dimensional cartoon-like drawing in flat, simple and unmodulated colours.

In relation to the advertorials analysed in the present study, all pictures presented in the advertorials are photographs of the destinations and tourist attractions. As such these

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photographs depict the actual scenes of the destinations and tourism attractions described in the advertorials. Since most of the advertorials use photographs to support the textual descriptions and ideas on the advertorials, the visual modality is high. Photography suggests a reality that is far stronger than that of drawings, illustrations and paintings. Photographs suggest realism and may be seen to provide 'evidence' of the appearance of the destinations and tourism attractions. These high modality photographs are presented in the advertorials so that the ideal will not be depicted as 'what might be' but will be described as 'what is' (Harrison, 2003: 56).

7.3 Summary

This chapter has presented the findings and discussed the multimodal compositional meaning of the visual social semiotic resources found in the tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials. It has attempted to answer the third research question by analysing the non-linguistic and multimodal features which support the generic moves structures found on the Malaysian tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials.

The findings on the multimodal features and visual social semiotic resources as presented in this chapter show that visual elements and multimodality are vital components of the online tourism genre in achieving the communicative purpose of promoting the destinations and tourist attractions in order to attract tourists to visit the destinations. Findings on the compositional meaning of the visuals and multimodal characteristics have contributed to a better understanding of the online tourism genre. The pertinent meaning potentials also play their roles in helping to achieve the purposes of providing relevant tourism information and promoting the destinations and their tourism products and services online.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

THE SOCIO-COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE OF TOURISM HOMEPAGES AND WEB-MEDIATED TOURISM ADVERTORIALS

8.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the socio-cognitive perspective of the findings gathered from the questionnaire disseminated to tourist respondents. The socio-cognitive perspective needs to be examined because genres may incorporate interests and values of a particular social group and reinforce social rules and relations between writers and readers. This perspective is more directed at the social aspects of communities and less focused on text forms. Therefore, to understand the meanings of a text it is necessary to understand the relationships between the participants of the social event of which the text or genre is part (Bazerman, 2004; Miller, 1984, 1994).

The responses of the tourist respondents are considered socio-cognitive because they provide information on audience reception and insights (Bhatia, 2004: 161) of the tourism homepages and online advertorials. Other than being asked what their preferences for an effective informative and persuasive tourism website, they were also asked to evaluate and provide their opinions on the respective tourism websites and advertorials found in these websites that are analysed in the study. In other words, the tourist respondents' responses not only provide information of the social aspect in the effective creation of the web-mediated genre, but also provide pertinent information from the socio-cognitive perspective in the interpretation, evaluation and improvement of the genre.

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The social and socio-cognitive perspective data gathered from the questionnaire will be analysed to answer the fourth research question: What are the communicative features of the Malaysian tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials that attract potential tourists to and in the country?

Although the approach to the study is mainly qualitative, the findings from the questionnaire are presented in a quantitative manner using frequency counts and percentages to report on the options in the questionnaire which were selected by the respondents. The results of the findings from the questionnaire are then tabulated and analysed. A summary of the results and interpretation of the findings based on the data are also included in this chapter.

8.1 Findings and Discussion

The findings from the data collected from the questionnaire are presented, analysed and discussed in this section of the thesis. They are presented according to the four domains of the questionnaire.

8.1.1 Questionnaire – potential tourists (i.e. foreign & local tourists)

Knowledge of audience characteristics helps a writer to use appropriate and effective communicative strategies to influence the reader, especially in the case of persuasive genres where various kinds of appeals are chosen depending upon the analysis of audience characteristics (Bhatia, 1999: 28). Thus, this study has employed a questionnaire as a tool to find out the communicative strategies that can effectively

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influence the audiences' preferences and acceptance of Malaysian online tourism advertorials.

In order to find out the views on the generic moves and multimodal preferences of official Malaysian online tourism advertorials, a questionnaire (Appendix G) was disseminated to foreign and local tourists. The responses of a total of sixty respondents, who consist of thirty foreign and thirty local tourists, were obtained. A detailed quantitative findings of the tourists' responses was tabulated on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and can be viewed in Appendix O.

There are thirty questions altogether in the questionnaire, with space for further relevant comments at the end of the questionnaire. These questions were classified into four domains:

Part A: Demographic Information

This part attempted to find out the types of tourists that read online tourism advertorials.

Part B: Travel-Planning Experiences

The second part of the questionnaire attempted to find out how the tourists plan their vacation and the various means of obtaining tourism information.

Part C: Online Experiences

The third part of the questionnaire attempted to find out the potential tourists' online experiences and preferences in order to get more information on the places that they intend to visit. These included their preferences and frequency of online usage in gathering more information about a place or country, and the preferred website contents

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or information that they would like to obtain online. This section of the questionnaire also attempted to find out the multimodal elements that attracted tourists to visit the country and its places of interest.

Part D: Online Experiences of Malaysian Tourism Websites

Part D of the questionnaire attempted to obtain the tourists' opinion of the official tourism websites of Malaysia and its states.

8.1.1.1 Part A: Demographic Information

This subsection reports on the demographic information of the sixty respondents of the questionnaire. It is important to know the demographics of the tourism website visitors, who are also prospective tourists, in order to cater to their needs by ensuring that the information presented in the websites are relevant for the audience. The communicative purposes of the tourism websites will also be achieved with knowledge on the audience's or potential tourist's demographics.

The first part of the questionnaire attempted to find out the types of tourists that read online tourism advertorials. It consists of six questions which mainly required respondents to tick the appropriate boxes of information that are relevant to them, except for questions 3, 4, 5 and 6 which required the respondents to provide extra or more specific information when they had ticked the 'Others' option.

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Table 8.1

Gender of Respondents

Gender / Tourists	Male	Female	Grand Total
Local	7	23	**30**
Foreign	13	17	**30**
Total	**20**	**40**	**60**

(No. 1)

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the target number of respondents for this questionnaire was thirty foreign and thirty local tourists. As tabulated in Table 8.1, out of the total number of sixty respondents, twenty are males (M) and forty are females (F). The local tourist respondents comprised of seven males and twenty-three females; whereas the foreign tourist respondents comprised of thirteen males and seventeen females. However, the gender of the tourists will not be considered as a variable in the present study.

Table 8.2

Age-Groups of Respondents

Range	Local	Foreign	Grand Total	%
Below 20 years	2	2	**4**	**6.7**
21 - 30 years	8	10	**18**	**30.0**
31 - 40 years	14	9	**23**	**38.3**
41 – 50 years	3	9	**12**	**20.0**
51 – 60 years	2	0	**2**	**3.3**
Above 60 years	1	0	**1**	**1.7**
Total	**30**	**30**	**60**	**100.0**

(No. 2)

The age-groups of the respondents are shown in Table 8.2. The majority (38.3%) of the respondents are from the range of 31 to 40 years of age, which is closely followed by the age group of 21 to 30 years old at 30.0%. Tourist respondents from the 41 to 50

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years of age are the thirds largest group (20.0%) in the study; followed by teenagers (below 20 years old) at 6.7%; 51 – 60 years old (3.3%); and 1.7% for the above 60 years of age group.

The bulk of the foreign and local tourist respondents in this study are those between the ages of 21 and 50 years old. Based on the present study, this finding can loosely translate to the age group of tourists who have travelled to and around Malaysia. A possible reason for this is that people from these ages are generally those of a working age or who have started working. Thus, they would be those who can afford to travel for leisure as they are earning an income. These people may also be travelling for business purposes as compared to people from the younger and older age groups as they may be either not working yet or have retired from work. However, more research on the age groups of tourists to Malaysia with a larger corpus need to be conducted before this can be conclusive.

The third question in this part of the questionnaire was to identify if the tourist-respondent is a local tourist or foreign tourist; and their state of origin if they are Malaysian tourists, or their country of origin if they are foreign tourists.

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Table 6.3

Nationality of Respondents

Tourists	Country / State of Origin	No. of Tourists	%
Local (Malaysian)	Kedah	1	1.67
	Kuala Lumpur	1	1.67
	Negeri Sembilan	1	1.67
	Penang	15	25.0
	Sarawak	1	1.67
	Selangor	10	16.67
	Terengganu	1	1.67
	Total	**30**	**50.02**
Foreign	Australia	4	6.67
	Britain	1	1.67
	Brunei	2	3.33
	China	5	8.33
	Colombia	1	1.67
	France	3	5.00
	Germany	1	1.67
	Indonesia	1	1.67
	Singapore	3	5.00
	South Korea	2	3.33
	Sudan	1	1.67
	United States of America	4	6.67
	Yemen	2	3.33
	Total	**30**	**50.01**
Grand Total		**60**	**100.0**

(No. 3 & 6)

Table 8.3 shows the state of origin of the Malaysian tourist-respondents, and nationalities of the foreign tourist-respondents. In order to be accounted for in the study, the respondent has to have travelled out of his state of origin to be considered a local tourist, or has travelled to and visited Malaysia to be considered a foreign tourist. The foreign tourists who responded to the questionnaire are from thirteen countries.

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The nationalities of the foreign tourists are American, Australian, British, Bruneian, Chinese (from China), Colombian, French, German, Indonesia, Singaporean, South Korean, Sudanese and Yemeni.

Table 8.4

Academic Qualification of Respondents

Highest Academic Qualification (or equivalent)	**Local**	**Foreign**	**Grand Total**	**%**
SPM / O-Level	4	1	**5**	**8.3**
STPM / A-Level	3	0	**3**	**5.0**
Diploma	8	1	**9**	**15.0**
Bachelor's degree	10	15	**25**	**1.7**
Master's degree	5	9	**14**	**23.3**
PhD degree	0	3	**3**	**5.0**
Others	0	1	**1**	**1.7**
Total	**30**	**30**	**60**	**100.0**

(No. 5)

Question 5 of the questionnaire tried to find out the respondents' highest level of academic qualification. The tourists who responded to the questionnaire comprised of those who hold at least an O-Level/SPM certificate or its equivalent. The levels of academic qualification can be divided into three groups – the SPM and STPM / O and A-Levels; the Diploma and Bachelor degree levels; and Master's and PhD degree levels. These three categories relate to the close or common age groups of the certificate or degree holders.

The level of academic qualification with the highest number of respondents at 28.3% is the Master's (23.3%) and PhD (5.0%) degrees, followed by 16.7% respondents with a Diploma (15%) and Bachelor's degree (1.7%). 13.2% of the respondents hold an

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SPM/O-Level (8.3%) and STPM/A-Level (5.0%) certificate or their equivalent. This finding relates to the ages of the tourists and their capability to travel. It is presumed that those who hold a Master's and/or Doctorate degrees will hold a senior position at the workplace, and those who have obtained the Diploma and/or Bachelor's degrees would have started their career and earning an income. A general assumption is that respondents with a higher level of academic qualification will normally earn more than a person with a lower academic qualification. Hence, it is more likely that a person who has an occupation will have the ability and more opportunity to travel, compared to a person who is still schooling or have just obtained his/her SPM and STPM or O and A-Levels. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that there are exceptions to this assumption.

8.1.1.2 Part B: Travel-Planning Experiences

Part B of the questionnaire which consists of four questions attempted to find out how tourists plan their vacation. The responses to those questions which are analysed and reported below reveal the potential tourists' travel planning experiences and the various means of obtaining tourism information.

The first question in this part aimed to find out the validity of the respondents for the study. As shown in Table 8.5 on the next page, all the tourists have previously travelled out of state and/or country. Only when the respondents stated that they had travelled out of state and/or country in the past, hence indicating that they were tourists in/to Malaysia, were their responses taken into consideration for the present study. Their confirmation of having had the experience of travelling to a different state and/or country will add to the reliability and validity of their responses as tourists.

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Table 8.5

Travelling Experience

Tourists / Experience	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Yes	30	30	**60**	**100.0**
No	0	0	**0**	**0**

(No. 7)

The responses to the questions and their options in the questionnaire will be regarded as practically significant if the findings are more than 50%. This figure will indicate that the factor or feature that has obtained an outcome of 50% and above will be significant in having an effect on the issue being investigated.

Question 8 of the questionnaire attempted to find out the respondents' methods of selecting a destination to visit. For this question, respondents could tick as many options as they deem relevant. The findings as shown in Table 8.6 on the next page reveals that the common practice in deciding a travel destination is through the recommendations from friends/family (76.7%). This seems to be the most popular method of selection because their friends/family would have first-hand experience in visiting the place, and would not have recommended it if they did not think that it was worth visiting. The second manner of selection is through one's reading about the destination from a printed media (71.7%). The mode of selecting a place to tour is via the electronic media which includes the radio, television and Internet that had broadcasted or published a destination is the third most popular (66.7%). The method that is least popular is recommendations from tour agents or consultants (10%). The respondents do not fully trust travel consultants and feel that the tour agents will not give an objective opinion of a tour destination because they perceive that the tour agents' ultimate goal is to just to sell them a tour package.

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Table 8.6

Methods of Selecting Destinations to Tour

Method of Selection	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Recommendations from friends/family	22	24	**46**	**76.7**
Read about it from printed media	23	20	**43**	**71.7**
Heard/Viewed from electronic media	18	22	**40**	**66.7**
Recommendations from tour consultants	2	4	**6**	**10**
Others	6	7	**13**	**1.7**

(No. 8)

Other comments and forms of selecting a destination to visit or tour by the respondents include the following:

(a) Personal interest. (7F)

(b) Don't really trust travel consultants (marketing). Depends on (i) situation & interest – travelling alone or group (mutual agreement or individual taste), I'll visit Nepal. E.g. Himalayan outback countryside; (ii) budget; (iii) timing; (iv) distance. (25M)

(c) Studies. (13M)

(d) Near family/friends. (11F)

(e) I go to where friends and relatives live. (12F)

(f) Recommended by my university. (14F)

(g) Fell in love the image/idea of the place from various impressions from early on, during childhood etc. Fascinated with cultural heritage of the place, or maybe from movies/books I've read. (17M)

(h) Own preference. (22M)

(i) Family-oriented places. (28M)

(j) Own choice. (29M)

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(k) Blogs, Profile of Friends on *Facebook*, Search engines. (30M)

(l) Go along with family (family members' selection). (25F)

(m) Study tours. (27F)

(n) Trips organised by the university. (30F)

(Note: The number and alphabet in parenthesis denote the tourist as listed in Appendix O.)

Table 8.7

Sources of Information on Selected Destination to Tour

Source	Local	Foreign	Total	%
People who have visited the destinations	21	20	**41**	**68.3**
Printed media	18	17	**35**	**58.3**
The Internet	23	28	**51**	**85.0**
Electronic media	10	8	**18**	**30.0**
Tour agencies/companies	8	6	**14**	**23.2**
Others	1	0	**1**	**1.7**

(No. 9)

The next question of the questionnaire tried to gather information on the sources of information that the respondents rely on after they have decided on the destination to tour or visit. The findings show that the Internet is the main source of information that 85.0% tourist respondents refer to for tourism information (Table 8.7). The percentage of respondents seeking information regarding a destination from other sources of information was much lower at 68.3% from people who have previously visited the place; 58.3% from the printed media; and 30.0% from electronic media, other than the Internet, such as the radio and television. The lower percentage of potential tourists

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seeking information from the printed media and electronic media other than the Internet is due to the absence of feedback in such one-way media.

Only 23.2% of the tourist respondents would gather tourism information from tour agencies or companies. This low figure is supported by feedback from the tourist respondents who revealed that they have more confidence in the information obtained from official tourism websites, rather than information given by tourist agents or companies whose ultimate intention is to sell them a tour package and make a profit.

The only respondent (1.7%) who ticked the 'Others' option stated that she would watch travel documentaries, such as by Ian Wright a travel documentary reporter, to attain information about a destination. However, this manner of obtaining information is rather coincidental than intentional.

Table 8.8 presents findings on the types of information that the tourist respondents would like to gather concerning a destination or country that they intend to visit.

Table 8.8

Types of Information on Selected Destination to Tour

Type of Information	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Places of interest	27	27	**54**	**90.0**
Local events	25	19	**44**	**73.3**
Nature	12	13	**25**	**41.7**
Local cuisine	23	23	**46**	**76.7**
Local people	18	18	**36**	**60.0**
Climate	22	20	**42**	**70.0**
Others	12	6	**18**	**30.0**

(No. 10)

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90% of the respondents would like information on the places of interest in the country or state. The second most important information that the tourists want is the local cuisine (76.7%); followed by local events (73.3%); information on the local weather (70.0%) and local people (60.0%); and information on the nature distinctive to the country (41.7%). There were eighteen respondents (30.0%) who wanted other kinds of information other than the six categories that were provided. They included local facilities such as public transportation, lodging and security. The following are the other specific information that the tourists require:

(a) Security, cost. (1M)

(b) Good shopping spot and what are the things that are worth buying there. (2M)

(c) Currency, visa requirements, health certificate requirements, language. transport facilities, tipping policy, drinking water. (10M)

(d) Affordable hotels / mode of transport. (11M)

(e) Costs/expenses. (7F)

(f) Adventure tourism available and price range. (13M)

(g) Shopping. (9F)

(h) Children friendly facilities. (10F)

(i) Sports I can practice and those I can see as a fan. (12F)

(j) Practical stuff like lodging, transport, various expenses (17M)

(k) The language that their people speak. (18M)

(l) Travelling cost, food, transportations, accommodations. (20M)

(m) Exchange rates/currency, hotel rates and transportation, especially if going for backpack or do-it-yourself (DIY). (25M)

(n) Types of amenities available and accessibility (hotels, restaurants, transportation, safety issues). (21F)

(o) Hotels & lodging. (27M)

(p) Halal food [for Muslims], accommodation. (28M)

(q) Prices, necessities (that aren't available). (30M)

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(r) History [of the place]. (27M)

8.1.1.3 Part C: Online Experiences

The third part of this questionnaire attempted to find out the tourists' online experiences and preferences in order to get more information on the places that they intend to visit. This subsection reports on the tourists' preferences and frequency of online usage in finding out more about a place or country, and the preferred contents or information that they would like to obtain online. This subsection also reports on the multimodal elements that tourists are attracted to, which may captivate them to visit the country and its places of interest.

8.1.1.3.1 Preferences & Frequency of Online Usage

The five questions in the first subsection of Part C of the questionnaire intended to find out the tourists' experiences, preferences and frequency of online usage in order to gather tourism information on destinations.

All of the respondents, irrespective of nationality, are aware that they can obtain tourism information about a destination that they intend to visit from the Internet as presented in Table 8.9 below.

Table 8.9

Knowledge of Information about Destinations in the Internet

Tourists / Knowledge	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Yes	30	30	**60**	**100.0**
No	0	0	**0**	**0**

(No. 11)

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However, not all of them (96.7%) have surfed the Internet personally to gather information about the destination that they intended to visit (Table 8.10).

Table 8.10

Gathering of Information about Destinations from the Internet

Tourists / Experience	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Yes	28	30	**58**	**96.7**
No	2	0	**2**	**3.3**

(No. 12)

This finding correlates with the findings presented earlier in Table 8.2 which show that the people who surf the Internet to gather information from tourism websites are mostly those between the ages of 21 and 50 years old. A possible reason among others is that people in the 21 to 50 years age groups are more likely to have been exposed to the use of computer technology and the Internet as a source of information for their studies or work, and thus may be more comfortable with gathering information even for leisure from the new media. The younger generation may also be more computer savvy as they are likely to be more familiar with the use of the new technology and media from a young age. However, people from the older age group will be interested to use this new technology and utilise the Internet as a source of information if they have experienced the benefits, ease and speed of gaining information via the Internet, or have acquired the competence of using the Internet to do so. This is reflected in the findings where 66.7% (two out of three) of the respondents above 50 years old have stated that they had previously gathered tourism information about destinations that they visited from the Internet. Another reason is that there were only three respondents who were above 50

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years old, and this number is rather small to represent their age groups of people who prefer to gather tourism information from the Internet.

Table 8.11

Preferences of Online Tourism Information Gathering

Tourists / Preference	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Like	29	29	**58**	**96.7**
Dislike	1	1	**2**	**3.3**

(No. 13)

Table 8.11 shows that almost all of the respondents (96.7%) like to obtain tourism information from the Internet. Most of them have even justified their liking for online tourism information. The reasons given by these tourists for their preference to online tourism information are listed in Appendix P. The thirty-two justifications given by the respondents can be broadly categorised into the following five reasons:

(a) There are a lot of relevant and valid information on tourism in the Internet.

(b) It is easy, convenient and fast to obtain online tourism information.

(c) Reviews from past tourists are available in the Internet.

(d) The online tourism information includes many colourful pictures that vividly describe the destinations.

(e) This new media affords capabilities for interactive communication and facilities for making reservations via the Internet.

On the other hand, the two respondents (3.3%) who did not like to obtain tourism information from the Internet gave the following reasons for their dislike:

(a) Do not own a computer. Even at an Internet cafe, need help to get what I want. Time-consuming when need to pay by the hour (to use the computer). (28M)

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(b) Some things are not true in the Internet. Seeing is believing. (26F)

The reasons given by the local tourist respondent is that she did not own a computer, and therefore did not have easy access to such online information. This does not mean that she was not able to get adequate or useful information from tourism websites. As for the foreign tourist respondent, he had a negative preconceived idea about the information on such websites as he may have thought that the function of tourism websites is only to promote and sell, rather than to disseminate information.

Table 8.12

Activity of Online Tourism Information Gathering

Tourists / Activity	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Before	25	26	**51**	**85.0**
After	7	4	**11**	**18.3**

(No. 14)

As can be seen from Table 8.12 above, 85% of the respondents would surf the Internet for information on places to visit even before they have made their decision to visit a destination. 18.3% of the respondents would obtain more information about the destination after they have decided to visit the country or states. Two respondents stated that they would surf the Internet both before and after they have made their selection of country of state to visit. This finding clearly shows that the tourism websites can be a means of distribution of information as well as promoting a destination. Therefore, it is important that tourism websites, especially those that are maintained by official entities and governments are appropriately maintained so as to provide accurate, attractive and reliable information, which can also be utilised as a channel to promote a country and its attractions.

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Table 8.13

Frequency of Online Tourism Information Gathering

Tourists / Frequency	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Never	0	0	**0**	**0**
Seldom	4	3	**7**	**1.7**
Occasionally	12	8	**20**	**33.3**
Frequently	14	19	**33**	**55.0**

(No. 15)

The table above shows the respondents' frequency of gathering tourism information from the Internet. They would either surf the Internet themselves or ask someone else to do so to obtain the online information for them. More than half of the respondents (55.5%) revealed that they frequently gather online information about a destination and its attractions. 33.3% would occasionally obtain tourism information from the Internet, while 1.7% of the respondents would seldom do so. The data also reveals that none of the respondents have never tried to obtain tourism information from the Internet by themselves or asked someone to do so. This finding shows that although respondents who were not fond of surfing the internet to gather information for some reason or other, they would still get assistance from someone else to obtain tourism information for them. This further clearly shows the importance of the Internet as a source of information.

8.1.1.3.2 Preferred Contents of Online Information

The next eight questions, in the second subsection of Part C, of the questionnaire focused on the online tourism information contents that are preferred by tourists.

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Potential tourists surf the Internet in order to obtain various information regarding a destination that they intend to visit. Some of the information and contents that they would like to gather from online tourism websites include written descriptions, pictures and videos on places of interest, festivals, local events/cuisine, etc; reviews by past tourists; feedback and frequently asked questions; and information on facilities and climate.

Table 8.14 summarises the findings of the first question in this sub-section of the questionnaire, which concerns the types of information that the tourist respondents of the present study expect to see in an online tourism website.

Table 8.14

Expectation of Types of Online Tourism Information

Types of Information	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Descriptions about places of interest/festivals & local events/cuisine, etc	27	29	**56**	**93.3**
Pictures of places of interest/festivals & local events/cuisine, etc	30	27	**57**	**95.0**
Videos on places of interest/festivals & local events/cuisine, etc	12	14	**26**	**43.3**
Reviews / ratings by past tourists	22	24	**46**	**76.7**
Feedback to questions	15	14	**29**	**48.3**
Local facilities	24	25	**49**	**81.7**
Geographical information	22	23	**45**	**75.0**
Others	5	6	**11**	**18.3**

(No. 16)

The type of online tourism information that the tourist respondents would expect most is pictures of places of interest/activities/festivals and local events/cuisine, etc. Fifty-

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seven of the respondents (95.0%) have indicated that they expect to see pictures of the places of interest/activities/festivals or local cuisine in online tourism websites. This high expectation proves the importance of visuals in attracting potential tourists to the destination or to take part in the activities/events as illustrated in the webpages. The pictures will enable the prospective tourists to visualise the place that they will get to experience when they visit the destination or take part in the activity/event, etc.

Descriptions on the places of interest, festivals and local events, cuisine, etc are another type of information that the tourist respondents (93.3%) highly expect to obtain from online tourism websites. These two types of information are ranked very high in the tourists' expectations because prospective tourists would like to read about those descriptions of places of interest, festivals and local events/cuisine, and also view those descriptions in other non-linear, more concrete forms such as photographs that depict those descriptions.

The percentages of information on the local facilities (81.7%), reviews and ratings by past tourists (76.7%), and geographical information of the target destination (75.0%) are also quite high. Such information would also contribute to the potential tourists' choice of destination to visit. This is because in selecting a potential destination to visit, information on the convenience and suitability in terms of the infrastructure facilities and the local public transportation are needed. Tourists would prefer to select a place that offers at least some basic convenience of the aforementioned, especially if they have to spend a sum of money to visit the place. This is reflected in 81.7% (forty-nine) of the respondents who require information on the local facilities of a destination.

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As revealed in the findings from the questionnaire, 76.7% of the respondents, with more than half (twenty-four) of this figure (forty-six) comprising of foreign tourists, would expect to read reviews from past tourists. This is because the price of visiting a foreign country is higher than visiting a local destination. Furthermore, the reviews and ratings by past tourists will further confirm their selection and make them feel more assured that they have made a correct choice or decision.

Geographical information of the destination, which includes the natural features, weather conditions, is also required by forty-five or 75.0% of the respondents. This information will allow them to prepare the essential personal necessities, such as suitable clothing, shoes, etc, when they visit the place or take part in the activities/events.

The other three types of information that were categorised in the question that seeks to find out tourists' expectation of the kinds of information that they hope to obtain from tourism websites did not receive very high responses. Less than 50% of the respondents picked out these three options.

The first of these three options is feedback to questions, where twenty-nine or 48.3% of the respondents expect this type of information. Although the findings did not reveal that feedback to enquiries posed by potential tourists is very important, this channel to acquire specific information that are not provided in the websites is still required by almost half of the tourists. This can be catered for in a frequently-asked-question (FAQ) and enquiries platforms, as well as providing the contact information for prospective tourists to seek further information. Different tourists will have their individual questions concerning a tourist destination or activity. Many of the tourism

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websites analysed in the present study in fact provide this platform to answer tourists' queries, as have been revealed in the findings of the tourism website genre in Chapter Six.

The findings from the tourist questionnaire shows that videos depicting places of interest/festivals & local events/cuisine, etc are not as highly expected as the abovementioned types of information. It ranks seventh on the types of information that the respondents expect to see in an online tourism website, with only twenty-six out of the sixty or 43.3% of them indicating their anticipation for this option. This discovery implies that not all forms of multimodal communications are highly preferred. This finding corresponds with the findings of questions 17, and 18 to 22 of the questionnaire which concerns the multimodal varieties of communication, as will be reported and discussed later in this chapter.

An option to state any other types of expected information not listed in this question was also available for the respondents. Eleven or 18.3% of the respondents provided other types of information that they expect a tourism website to contain. The features are listed below:

(a) Information and bookings of hotel accommodation. (1F)

(b) Business opportunities. (7M)

(c) Estimated costs/expenses. (7F)

(d) Language spoken, visa requirements if any, currency & current exchange rate. (15M)

(e) Sport teams to see. (12F)

(f) Local people's habits. (14F)

(g) Special warnings when need be. For instance if I want to go to south Africa or Brazil, which are dangerous countries, I would like to know which places are too dangerous to go to. (15F)

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(h) Expenses. (27M)

(i) Historical values. (28M)

(j) Frequently Asked Question (FAQ), important numbers/contact details, basic legal and customary 'laws' to follow. (30M)

(k) Sequence of Information that is expected from an online tourism website – 1. Pictures of the places/festivals/cuisine, etc; 2. Description about ...; 3. Videos on ...; 4. Geographical information. (29F)

The kinds of tourism information that are presented on the Internet have the ability to influence and persuade online readers and potential tourists to visit a destination. The different types of information also create different degrees of persuasion on the tourists. This inference is demonstrated by the findings on the types of online tourism information that has influenced the tourists' decision to visit a destination, as presented in Table 8.15 below.

Table 8.15

Types of Online Tourism Information that has Influenced the Decision to Visit a Destination

Types of Information	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Descriptions about places of interest/festivals & local events/cuisine, etc	21	23	**44**	**73.3**
Pictures of places of interest/festivals & local events/cuisine, etc	27	25	**52**	**86.7**
Videos on places of interest/festivals & local events/cuisine, etc	9	9	**18**	**30.0**
Reviews / ratings by past tourists	16	19	**35**	**58.3**
Local facilities	18	18	**36**	**60.0**
Geographical information	11	13	**24**	**40.0**
Others	4	3	**7**	**11.7**

(No. 17)

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Another benefit of including pictures of places of interest, events, cuisine, etc is that they can greatly persuade the prospective customer to experience the places and activities as portrayed in those visuals. This is reflected in the findings where fifty-two out of sixty of the tourist respondents stated that pictures are the main type of online tourism information that has influenced their decision to visit a destination. 86.7% of them believe that after looking at the pictures uploaded onto the tourism websites, they will be attracted to those places and activities, and be convinced to experience them. This type of multimodal discourse is preferred to textual descriptions because as the saying goes, "pictures paint a thousand words". Moreover, pictures can give a more accurate description since they are visual representations of those destination, activities, etc.

Written descriptions about the places of interest, local events, cuisine, etc is the next type of tourism information that has played a role in affecting the tourists' choice of destination to explore. It accounted for 73.3% of the respondents. Through textual descriptions, potential tourists will be able to obtain more details pertaining to the places and activities that are being described. These details may be important for them to plan their visits and make preparations for the trip.

Having adequate knowledge on the local facilities is also necessary in deciding a holiday destination for 60.0% of the respondents. The thirty-six respondents regard this information as essential in assessing the suitability of the destination as a place for them to tour. Tourists have their own requirements and desires; hence, their expectations may be different, according to their personalities and accustomed habits. Receiving information on the local facilities, such as transportation, lodging, communication, food, etc offered will enable them to estimate the convenience that they will expect of the

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destination. This information will enable them to make a sensible choice of their tour destination.

Evaluations by past tourists in the form of reviews also play a part in influencing the respondents' decision on the choice of destinations to visit. In relation to reviews and/or ratings as mentioned in the discussion on the types of information that potential tourists would expect to be included in the tourism websites above, 58.3% of the tourist respondents were influenced to visit the destination or country after reading the reviews on the tourism websites, with more than half of these respondents comprising of foreign tourists. The thirty-five respondents read the reviews by tourists who have experienced touring the destination which they intend to visit before making the decision to visit the place because they believe that the past tourists' reviews will give an unbiased evaluation of the destination under consideration. Although most websites will likely include mostly if not all positive reviews, these will nevertheless be regarded as additional information for the potential tourists in their deliberation of that place as a holiday destination. This further shows the influential ability of reviews and ratings by past tourists in persuading potential tourists to visit a destination or country.

Geographical information includes the location, physical attributes, climate, population and natural resources of the country. This type of information is regarded as having an influence on twenty-four or 40.0% of the respondents' decision in their selection of a tour destination. Just as textual descriptions, the geographical information of a country or place can provide further information on the attractions of a destination. Take for instance the information on the highest point in Malaysia which is Mount Kinabalu (4,095 meters), located in the state of Sabah. The height of Mount Kinabalu could be an attraction to mountaineering enthusiasts. Likewise, the population composition of a

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multi-racial Malaysia, creating a whole new culture that leads to a great combination of arts, belief and tradition of the Malaysian population, contributes to the country's tourist attractions. Knowledge on these types of information will therefore help the potential tourists to understand the destination better and be influenced to come and visit the country.

Videos are another kind of non-textual, multimodal form of communication. They can be placed in a tourism website to attract prospective tourists to visit a destination. However, the findings from the questionnaire do not show a high significance in persuading the tourist respondents to visit a destination, with only 30.0% of them having been influenced by online tourism videos in visiting a destination. This finding concurs with the finding of question 16 regarding tourists' expectation of videos in the online tourism websites. This implies that videos on tourist destinations do not have a very significant impact on the tourists' selection of a destination to visit.

Other types of information that can influence the tourists' decision to visit a destination include the following:

(a) Business Opportunities. (7M)

(b) Costs/expenses. (7F)

(c) Cost of living and related cost, such as travel, & accommodation. (15M)

(d) Children's activities available and facilities. (10F)

(e) Historical or famous places, i.e. the one that has a story behind it. (29F)

One of the respondents (29M) explained that, he/she was never influenced by any of the online information in deciding a tour destination. This respondent probably does not

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trust online tourist information due to past experiences and regard them as mere advertising. However, this view is not significantly represented.

The purpose of questions 18 to 22 of the questionnaire was to find out the significance of non-textual, multimodal forms of communication in tourism websites. The first two questions that deal with the impact of pictures on tourists. As can be seen in Table 8.16 below, all the tourist respondents affirmed that they expect to find some form of visual related to a destination in tourism websites. This further confirms the importance of pictures in promoting a tourist destination, which is why all the tourism websites analysed in the study contain high modality pictures.

Table 8.16

Expectations of Pictures related to a Destination in the Internet

Tourists / Expectations	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Yes	30	30	**60**	**100.0**
No	0	0	**0**	**0**

(No. 18)

In terms of the respondents' preferences of the types of pictures pertaining to a destination on the tourism website, 91.7% of them stated that they favoured pictures that are representative of the places of interest/festivals & local events/cuisine, etc – as explained by Respondent 25M, picture that are "real/true/factual representation, not made up". A genuine illustration of the destinations means that what they see on the website can be witnessed when they arrive at the destinations. This will eliminate the anxiety of false promotion, and instead make the website more reliable and dependable. In doing so, future tourists will be more confident in the informative contents of the

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tourism website and consequently have more faith in the services and information published on the website.

Table 8.17

Preferred Types of Pictures related to a Destination in the Internet

Tourists / Types of Pictures	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Colourful	13	15	**28**	**46.7**
Representative of the places of interest/festivals & local events/cuisine, etc	28	27	**55**	**91.7**
Others	6	5	**11**	**18.3**

(No. 19)

Based on the findings as illustrated in the table above, 46.7% of the respondents also prefer pictures that are colourful. This finding corroborates with Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996, 2006) and Machin's (2007) study on the salient features of visuals. Other preferred types of pictures elaborated by eleven of the respondents are listed below. These preferences do not relate to the quality of pictures, but more on the diversity and assortment of pictures, such as:

(a) Variety (1M)

(b) Realistic representation of what you're searching for – don't like to be disappointed if you are going to invest you hard earn money – you would want the experience to be as memorable (good memories – not bad one). (4M)

(c) Real life photos by travellers, not brochure types. (8F)

(d) Something that would interest me. It depends on what kind of thing actually. (13M)

(e) Recent pictures. (10F)

(f) Lovely but honest. Close to the streets or culture/real people as possible. Being in advertising, I know that pictures can sometimes be deceiving. (17M)

(g) Attractive & Real/true/factual representation, not made up. (25M)

(h) (Pictures depicting) People, culture, etc. (22F)

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(i) (Pictures depicting) Things unique to the country not found elsewhere. (30M)

(j) (Pictures depicting) The local people. (26M)

(k) (Pictures depicting) History (of the destination). (27F)

Question 20 of the questionnaire attempted to investigate the tourists' preferences of the audio feature in tourism websites. As revealed in the findings of question 16 and 17, the finding here further validates and strengthens the fact that respondents do not rank the audio feature as very important in its inclusion in the online tourism websites. Only 40.0% of the respondents gave the affirmative, while the majority (60.0%) preferred not to have any audio features in the tourism websites.

Table 8.18

Preferences of Audio Feature in Online Tourism Websites

Tourists / Preferences	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Yes	9	15	**24**	**40.0**
No	21	15	**36**	**60.0**

(No. 20)

Some of these thirty-six respondents were rather adamant about not having any audio features in the websites, and have provided their comments on this feature as "none" and "absolutely none", such as listed under the discussion on other types of audio features in the online tourism websites of question 21 below.

The types of audio features that the respondents have identified to be accepted in the tourism websites can be found in Table 8.19 on the next page as well as the list of other

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types of audio features not itemised but suggested by the respondents are listed below the table.

Table 8.19

Types of Audio Features Preferred in Online Tourism Websites

Tourists / Types of Audio Feature	Local	Foreign	Total	%
National anthem	0	1	**1**	**1.7**
Local language	3	7	**10**	**16.7**
Light music	19	10	**29**	**48.3**
Others	10	11	**21**	**35.0**
N.A. *	4	7	**11**	**18.3**

* N.A. – Not available
(No. 21)

The findings of question 21 do not show any major significance in any of the types of audio feature preferred, with all the options attaining less than 50.0% respondents. Even the option, 'Light music', with the highest percentage of 48.3% respondents, does not substantially reflect the respondents' fondness for the audio feature. The responses and reactions given by the respondents for the "Others" option received the following comments:

(a) Music/audio that represents the destination/country, e.g. folk music (without singing). (1M)

(b) Absolutely none. (3F)

(c) No preference. (4F)

(d) None. (6M)

(e) None. (8F)

(f) Typical music. (13M)

(g) Sounds related to local cultural events, musical instruments. (15M)

(h) Traditional music. (10F)

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(i) Folklore music from the country. (15F)

(j) Local or cultural music would be interesting. NO 'HOTEL LOUNGE' Music please. (17M)

(k) The country's music. (17F)

(l) The songs of the people from that country – traditional and current pop culture. (21M)

(m) None. (22M)

(n) The country's music. (19F)

(o) Traditional/cultural songs. Narration of the destination. (25M)

(p) Music that is indigenous to the country/destination. (21F)

(q) Catchy music that suits the graphics, and also to entice the traveller – music should be appropriate… very important. (22F)

(r) None. (29M)

(s) If I'm lazy to read, text-to-audio. (30M)

(t) Prefer without audio; but if you insist, light music reflecting the local taste/tunes. (24F)

(u) Traditional songs. (29F)

As mentioned in the earlier chapters and proven in the next two chapters, the existence of multimodal features can be a benefit in promoting a place as a tourist destination. Prospective tourists who surf tourism websites on the Internet may be persuaded to visit a destination or country with the inclusion of the varied multimodal forms of communication. Question 22 aims to investigate the impact of the different multimodal forms of communication, as well as validate the findings on those multimodal elements discussed earlier. The elements of online tourism website that have an effect on the tourist respondents, in descending order of attraction, are pictures (93.3%), layout (63.3%), textual information (61.7%), videos (33.3%), and audio sounds/music (15.0%).

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Table 8.20

Elements of Online Tourism Websites that Attract

Tourists / Elements	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Textual information	20	17	**37**	**61.7**
Layout	18	20	**38**	**63.3**
Pictures	28	28	**56**	**93.3**
Videos	9	11	**20**	**33.3**
Audio sounds / Music	4	5	**9**	**15.0**
Others	2	7	**9**	**15.0**

(No. 22)

It is evident from this finding that visuals or pictures have the highest capability of attracting potential tourist's attention, with 93.3% of them who opted for this element. The use of visuals adds variation to the monotony of an only written description. This also corresponds with Cook's (1992) view on the equal importance of both linguistic and non-linguistic semiotic resources, such as visual images, sound, and others, in contributing to communicative purposes. Bhatia, Flowerdew and Jones (2008) further assert that there is a common belief now that written information is not necessarily the most important form used for the construction and interpretations of meaning, and that multimodality plays equal importance in its construction and interpretation.

The layout and interface of a tourism website is also important in drawing the attention of the tourist respondents, as divulged by 63.3% of the respondents. A tourism website, or any website for that matter, should be presented in a systematic layout that is easy for obtaining varied information. The ease of finding information is related to how the information is arranged within the website. If the prospective tourist finds it difficult to obtain certain information from a website due to the haphazard and disorganised layout, he/she will abandon his/her search from that website and thus will not be exposed to the

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persuasive contents of the tourism website, regardless of how informative it may be. Consequently, this prospective tourist will not be persuaded to tour the destination or country. The following are some comments from the respondents that support this argument:

(a) Available links related to information or website. (1M)

(b) The web design. (3F)

(c) No pop ups. (10F)

(d) User friendly. (17F)

(e) Easy to use, clear layout, fast loading sites always preferred. Fancy slow-loading Flash animations are a waste of time and test one's patience. (18F)

(g) Ease of navigating through the website and no "broken links". (21F)

(h) Interactive, Comprehensive & Detailed info, provide useful links. (25M)

(i) Above all, user friendly and fast (some are very slow to load etc). (22F)

Textual information is written descriptions that include articles, reports, reviews and critiques. 61.7% of the respondents believe that they may be attracted to the kind of textual information found in the tourism websites. Although this finding did not produce a higher result of attraction as compared to the earlier two non-textual data discussed above, written information is not meant to be ignored. This is because specific details can only be efficiently written in the textual form. Some types of information are also not able to be conveyed precisely via a non-written mode of communication. Therefore, the textual mode of information is still indispensable.

Videos are a dynamic mode of multimodal communication. It is similar to visuals in that videos are a collection of actions or moving pictures with an inclusion of the audio element. They may attract online surfers to a tourism website. However, this element is

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not as well received as visuals, with only 33.3% of the respondents asserting that they will be attracted to this type of communication.

The finding for the audio element from this question reconfirms the earlier findings regarding tourist respondents' lack of interest for this form of multimodal communication. Only 15.0% of the respondents disclosed that they will be attracted to such an element. Some of the respondents find audio sounds too distracting especially when they want to read the textual descriptions simultaneously and view the visuals when the audio element is activated.

Nine (15.0%) of the respondents provided other elements that attract them to a tourism website. These elements are related to the website layout and link and have been listed above.

Due to the ease of obtaining relevant tourism information and the exciting multimodal features that are available in the tourism websites, all of the tourist respondents responded that they will in future surf the online tourism websites to gather information when selecting a holiday destination, as well as in preparation for their travels. This is illustrated in the table below.

Table 8.21

Future Activity of Gathering Tourism Information from Online Tourism Websites

Tourists / Preferences	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Yes	30	30	**60**	**100.0**
No	0	0	**0**	**0**

(No. 23)

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8.1.1.4 Part D: Online Experiences of Malaysian Tourism Websites

This subsection reports on the findings from Part D of the questionnaire which attempted to obtain the tourists' opinion of the official tourism websites of Malaysia and its states. These official tourism websites are managed by the Ministry of Tourism and the respective state tourism boards.

Table 8.22

Experiences of Viewing the Official Tourism Websites of Malaysia

Tourists / Experience	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Yes	24	21	**45**	**75.0**
No	6	9	**15**	**25.0**

(No. 24)

As can be seen in the table above, forty-five or 75.0% of the respondents have actually viewed at least one of the official tourism websites of Malaysia. As mentioned in the section 8.1.1.3.1 whilst discussing the findings of question 12, although 96.7% of the respondents have previously gathered information from tourism websites, some of them may not have gathered such information for the official tourism websites that are managed by the Ministry of Tourism of the respective state tourism boards. 25.0% of the respondents may have gathered such information from non-official websites. There are numerous websites on the Internet that provide tourism information, including those that are maintained by individuals, tour agencies, corporations, associations, and the like. However, the official tourism websites that are maintained by the government are believed to be more reliable and valid in terms of the information that is disseminated. Hence, the range of websites in this study is only the official tourism websites that are managed by the Malaysian Ministry of Tourism and its affiliated state tourism boards.

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The following table (Table 8.23) and chart (Figure 8.1) on the subsequent page show the distribution of the states in Malaysia that the sixty tourist respondents have visited. Most, if not all, of the respondents have visited more than one state in Malaysia.

Table 8.23

Malaysian States and Capital Visited by the Tourist Respondents

Tourists / State/ Destination	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Perlis	13	2	**15**	**25.0**
Kedah	21	9	**30**	**50.0**
Penang / Pulau Pinang	28	19	**47**	**78.3**
Perak	24	10	**34**	**56.7**
Selangor	28	15	**43**	**71.7**
Kuala Lumpur	29	28	**57**	**95.0**
Negeri Sembilan	22	6	**28**	**46.7**
Malacca / Melaka	26	18	**44**	**73.3**
Johor	17	12	**29**	**48.3**
Pahang	21	6	**27**	**45.0**
Terengganu	19	12	**31**	**51.7**
Kelantan	16	7	**23**	**38.3**
Sabah	8	6	**14**	**23.3**
Sarawak	14	4	**18**	**30.0**

(No. 25)

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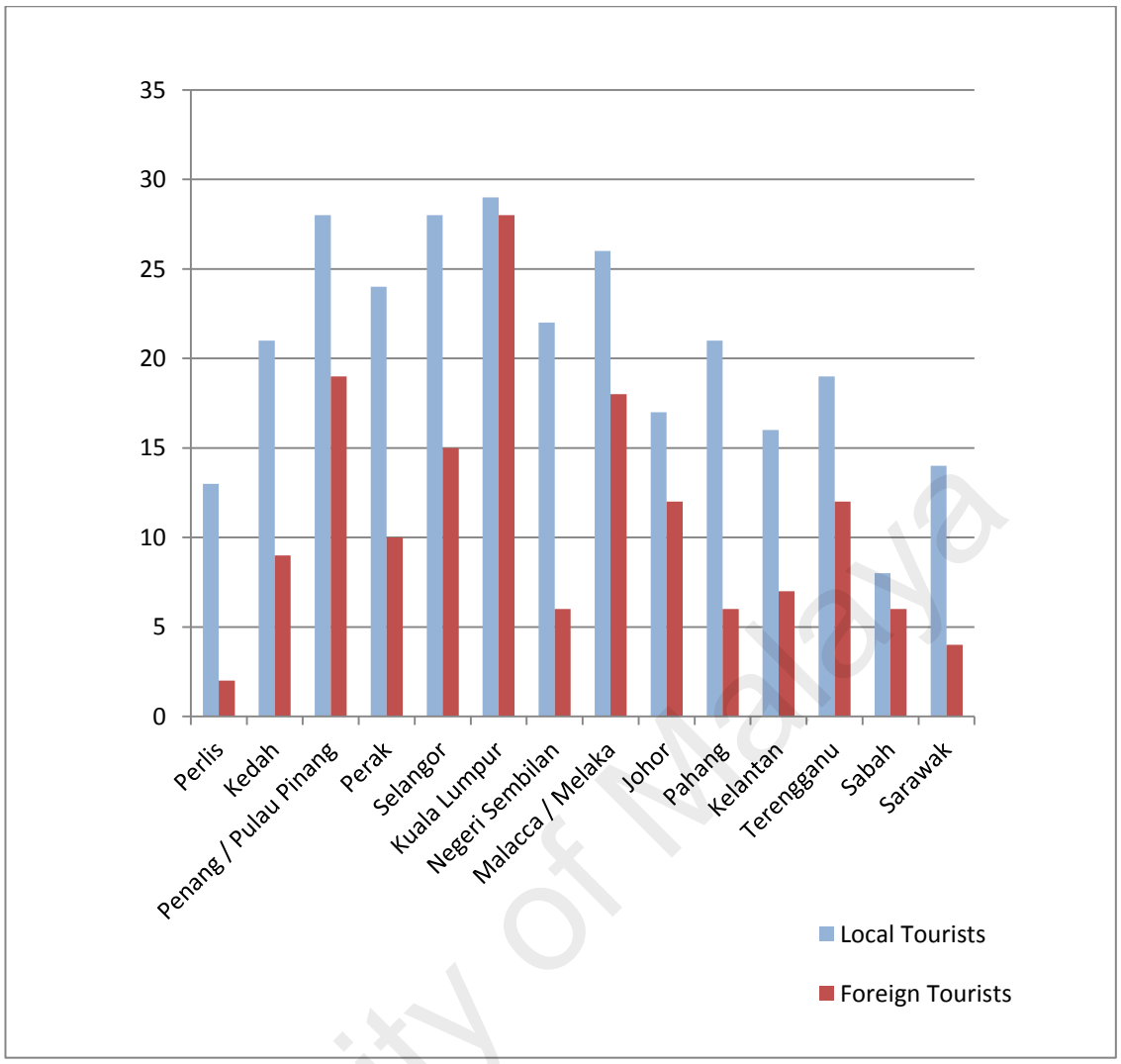

Figure 8.1

Malaysian States and Capital Visited by the Tourist Respondents

Table 8.24 on the next page reveals the descending order of total visits made by the respondents in the study. This, however, does not reflect or indicate the official statistics on the tourist arrivals for each state. The sequence is merely based on the responses by the sixty questionnaire respondents of this study.

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Table 8.24

Total Visits by the Entire Tourist Respondents

Tourists / State/ Destination	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Kuala Lumpur	29	28	**57**	**95.0**
Penang / Pulau Pinang	28	19	**47**	**78.3**
Malacca / Melaka	26	18	**44**	**73.3**
Selangor	28	15	**43**	**71.7**
Perak	24	10	**34**	**56.7**
Terengganu	19	12	**31**	**51.7**
Kedah	21	9	**30**	**50.0**
Johor	17	12	**29**	**48.3**
Negeri Sembilan	22	6	**28**	**46.7**
Pahang	21	6	**27**	**45.0**
Kelantan	16	7	**23**	**38.3**
Sarawak	14	4	**18**	**30.0**
Perlis	13	2	**15**	**25.0**
Sabah	8	6	**14**	**23.3**

The findings on the total visits made by the two groups of respondents in the study as tabulated above also generated slightly different results for the two groups of tourists, with similar first four destinations. This can be observed in the ensuing table on the next page. Nevertheless, both local (96.7%) and foreign (93.3%) tourists have recorded the most visits to the capital city of Kuala Lumpur, followed by Penang (93.3% and 63.3% for the respective two groups of tourists).

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Table 8.25

Malaysian States and Capital Visited by the Local and Foreign Tourist Respondents

Tourists / State/ Destination	Local	%	Tourists / State/ Destination	Foreign	%
Kuala Lumpur	29	**96.7**	Kuala Lumpur	28	**93.3**
Penang / Pulau Pinang	28	**93.3**	Penang / Pulau Pinang	19	**63.3**
Selangor	28	**93.3**	Malacca / Melaka	18	**60.0**
Malacca / Melaka	26	**86.7**	Selangor	15	**50.0**
Perak	24	**80.0**	Terengganu	12	**40.0**
Negeri Sembilan	22	**73.3**	Johor	12	**40.0**
Kedah	21	**70.0**	Perak	10	**33.3**
Pahang	21	**70.0**	Kedah	9	**30.0**
Terengganu	19	**63.3**	Kelantan	7	**23.3**
Johor	17	**56.7**	Negeri Sembilan	6	**20.0**
Kelantan	16	**53.3**	Pahang	6	**20.0**
Sarawak	14	**46.7**	Sabah	6	**20.0**
Perlis	13	**43.3**	Sarawak	4	**13.3**
Sabah	8	**26.7**	Perlis	2	**6.7**

This slight difference in the visits made by the two groups of tourists to other states in Malaysia reveals the different desires and expectations of the respective tourists. A domestic tourist from Peninsular Malaysia who wants to take a holiday at a beach setting may opt to visit Batu Feringghi in Penang, Pangkor Island in Perak, or Port Dickson in Negeri Sembilan. On the other hand, a foreign tourist who wants to have a similar holiday setting, might choose Redang Island or Perhentian Island in Terengganu, or Sipadan Island in Sabah as a holiday destination. This could be related to the cost, infrastructure and convenience involved. The local tourist may choose to spend less by

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touring the beach destinations within Peninsular Malaysia, as opposed to the foreign tourist who may choose to visit the destinations either in East Malaysia or the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia because there is not much difference in terms of the travelling costs to the two regions of Malaysia. Moreover, it is undeniable that tourists who are travelling with young children will preferably spend their holidays somewhere nearby and participate in less adventurous activities like enjoying a day at the seaside in Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan; as compared to a foreign traveller who is travelling from afar with his/her peers and are eager to take part in more adventurous activities like deep sea snorkelling in Pulau Sipadan, Sabah.

Since the objective of all online tourism websites is to promote the destination(s) and cater to all tourists, irrespective of domestic or foreign, these website should take into consideration the needs of all tourists when determining the contents of the tourism website.

Table 8.26

Relevance and Adequacy of Online Tourism Information on Malaysia and its States

Tourists / Relevance & Adequacy	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Yes	22	17	**39**	**65.0**
No	5	10	**15**	**25.0**
N.A. *	3	3	**6**	**10.0**

* N.A. – Not available
(No. 26)

Table 8.26 above shows the opinions of the two groups of tourist respondents on the relevance and adequacy of online tourism information on Malaysia. The respondents

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were asked if they obtained relevant and sufficient information regarding the Malaysian states and destinations that they have visited by surfing the Internet. 65.0% of them affirmed that they managed to get relevant and sufficient tourism information on Malaysia from the Internet, while 25.0% refuted this; and no response was provided by 10.0% of the respondents.

The last four questions of the questionnaire attempted to investigate the respondents' opinions on the official tourism websites of Malaysia - the capital and the thirteen states of Malaysia. As tabulated in the following table, 50.0% of the respondents confirmed that they have viewed the official Malaysian tourism website (http://www.tourism.gov.my), which is managed by Tourism Malaysia or the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB), the government agency in charge of promoting tourism in Malaysia. Although most of the tourists have surfed the Internet for tourism information on Malaysia, 46.7% of the respondents stated that they have not viewed the abovementioned website. Two of the foreign respondents did not provide a response to this question. These findings have been tabulated in Table 8.27 below.

Table 8.27

Viewing of the *Tourism Malaysia* Website

Tourists / Experience	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Yes	18	12	**30**	**50.0**
No	12	16	**28**	**46.7**
N.A. *	0	2	**2**	**3.3**

* N.A. – Not available
(No. 27)

This finding implies that a person may obtain tourism information from any of the numerous websites that deal with tourism on the Internet. However, part of the aim of

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this study is to come up with a guideline to produce appropriate and sufficiently informative official tourism websites to cater to the needs of prospective tourists, which can consequently enhance the tourism industry and boost the economy of a country.

Potential tourists surf the Internet in order to obtain various information regarding a destination that they intend to visit. However, most of them would rather obtain such information from official tourism websites that are published by the governmental tourism departments or official tourism boards of a country. This is because many potential tourists feel that they can obtain relevant and valid information from such official websites compared to websites that are managed by non-official individuals or private non-governmental organisations. The feedback from the tourist respondents have also revealed that they trust information obtained from official tourism websites, rather than information given by tourist agents or companies whose ultimate aim is to sell them a tour package.

Table 8.28 on the next page lists the findings of the respondents' experience of viewing the official tourism websites of Kuala Lumpur and the thirteen states of Malaysia, in descending order. These official state tourism websites are managed by the respective state tourism promotion boards.

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Table 8.28

Official State Tourism Websites of Malaysia Viewed

Tourists / State Tourism Websites	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Penang / Pulau Pinang http://www.tourismpenang.gov.my	17	9	**26**	**43.3**
Malacca / Melaka http://www.melakatourism.gov.my	11	8	**19**	**31.7**
Kuala Lumpur http://www.visitkl.gov.my	7	8	**15**	**25.0**
Sarawak http://www.sarawaktourism.com	13	2	**15**	**25.0**
Sabah http://www.sabahtourism.com	8	4	**12**	**20.0**
Selangor http://www.tourismselangor.gov.my	6	4	**10**	**16.7**
Pahang http://www. tourismpahang.com	6	3	**9**	**15.0**
Terengganu http://tourism.terengganu.gov.my	7	2	**9**	**15.0**
Perlis http://www.perlis.gov.my	4	0	**4**	**6.7**
Perak http://www.peraktourism.com	4	0	**4**	**6.7**
Kelantan http://www.tic.kelantan.gov.my	3	1	**4**	**6.7**
Negeri Sembilan http://www.ns.gov.my/tourism	3	0	**3**	**5.0**
Kedah http://www.visitkedah.com.my	2	0	**2**	**3.3**
Johor http://www.tourismjohor.com	2	0	**2**	**3.3**

(No. 28)

The official capital and all the state tourism websites have been viewed by at least two local tourist respondents. However, the foreign tourist respondents have not viewed five of the official state tourism websites of Perlis, Perak, Negeri Sembilan, Kedah and Johor, although they may have visited those states before. The findings from the foreign tourist respondents more or less correspond with the official statistics on the most visited states in Malaysia for the years 2009 and 2010 provided by the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB), as shown in the table that follows.

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Table 8.29

Comparison between States Visited by the Foreign Tourist Respondents and States' Tourist Arrivals

Tourism Websites Visited	Foreign Tourists	States	Tourist Arrivals for 2009	States	Tourist Arrivals for 2010
Penang / Pulau Pinang http://www.tourismpenang.gov.my	9	**Kuala Lumpur**	15,737,306	**Kuala Lumpur**	12,632,333
Malacca / Melaka http://www.melakatourism.gov.my	8	**Pahang**	9,652,909	**Pahang**	8,159,376
Kuala Lumpur http://www.visitkl.gov.my	8	**Penang**	5,960,329	**Penang**	5,990,864
Sabah http://www.sabahtourism.com	4	**Sabah**	5,362,270	Malacca	3,888,993
Selangor http://www.tourismselangor.gov.my	4	Sarawak	3,908,815	**Sabah**	3,640,772
Pahang http://www. tourismpahang.com	3	Kedah	3,846,529	Johor	3,618,932
Sarawak http://www.sarawaktourism.com	2	Malacca	3,759,515	Sarawak	3,336,499
Terengganu http://tourism.terengganu.gov.my	2	Johor	3,525,991	Kedah	2,751,556
Kelantan http://www.tic.kelantan.gov.my	1	Selangor	2,839,229	Selangor	2,590,423
Perlis http://www.perlis.gov.my	0	Perak	2,523,029	Perak	2,224,232
Perak http://www.peraktourism.com	0	Negeri Sembilan	1,602,804	Negeri Sembilan	1,637,374
Negeri Sembilan http://www.ns.gov.my/tourism	0	Terengganu	1,219,127	Terengganu	1,249,560
Kedah http://www.visitkedah.com.my	0	Kelantan	847,343	Kelantan	828,681
Johor http://www.tourismjohor.com	0	Perlis	102,547	Perlis	78,769

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Table 8.30 shows the tourist respondents' overall fondness in terms of the overall appearance of the sixteen official Malaysian tourism websites.

Table 8.30

Attractiveness of the Official Malaysian Tourism Websites

Tourists / Opinion	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Yes	16	19	**35**	**58.3**
No	10	3	**13**	**21.7**
N.A. *	4	8	**12**	**20.0**

* N.A. – Not available
(No. 29)

58.5% of the respondents thought that in general, the official Malaysian tourism websites were attractive. On the other hand, 21.7% of them did not consider the websites as attractive. There were no responses from twelve or 20.0% of the respondents because they have not viewed any of the official tourism websites of Malaysia, although they may have viewed other unofficial websites that promote Malaysia and/or its states. Although the majority of the respondents have the opinion that the official Malaysian tourism websites are attractive, there is still a significant percentage of them who thought otherwise. This implies that the official Malaysian tourism websites can still improve on the overall appearance and contents of their websites in terms of the textual information, visuals, layout, etc.

Table 8.31 tabulates the features of online tourism websites regarding Malaysia that attract the tourist respondents of the study. The respondents who have viewed the official tourism websites of Malaysia were asked to determine the features that they thought were attractive. For the respondents who have yet to view those websites, they could also provide information on the features of other tourism websites that they liked.

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This information provides specifics on what potential tourists search for in a tourism website and the features that are considered less attractive. These will enable the tourism promotional boards, advertisers and website creators to improve on those features that were less desirable. The features that are ranked highly attractive will also offer valuable information for the stakeholders to include those contents in their websites and concentrate on further strengthening them, as well as improving the other features that were deemed less attractive.

Table 8.31

Features of Tourism Websites on Malaysia that are Attractive

Tourists / Features	Local	Foreign	Total	%
Write-ups	14	18	**32**	**53.3**
Reviews / Ratings	7	3	**10**	**16.7**
Relevant information	15	14	**29**	**48.3**
Pictures	19	18	**37**	**61.7**
Videos	2	6	**8**	**13.3**
Layout of homepages	5	5	**10**	**16.7**
Language options	4	6	**10**	**16.7**
Others	2	1	**3**	**5.0**

(No. 30)

Just as the findings from the earlier questions in the questionnaire have indicated, visuals or pictures were the main feature that the respondents (61.7%) were attracted to. The second feature that the respondents (53.3%) look at is the descriptions or write-ups on the destination, its activities, etc. 48.3% of the tourist respondents would also be attracted to information that are relevant and needed for their selection of a tourist destination to visit, such as the local facilities available, weather, etc.

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The other features such as reviews or ratings, layout of the website, and the availability of language options did not significantly attract the respondents, with only 16.7% of them focusing on these features respectively. The video feature is even less important to the tourist respondents with only 13.3% of them responding to this item. Three of the respondents provided other features and information that attracted them or were important for them. They are:

(a) Links (25M),

(b) Knowing more about the country and places which I never knew existed (13M), and

(c) Suggestions of activities to do (21F).

Some respondents even gave further comments concerning the Malaysian tourism websites and the online tourism advertorials. These constructive comments are helpful in improving Malaysian tourism websites as a whole, and in particular online tourism advertorials as a promotional genre so as to meet the acceptability standards of the clients and cater to the needs of prospective tourists.

The further observations given by the nineteen respondents (seven local tourists and twelve foreign tourists) are as follows:

(a) Respondent from Canberra, Australia: The photos could be bigger. (1F)

(b) Respondent from Bavaria, Germany: The Tourism Board of Malaysia has a lot to do, especially overseas. They are not doing a good job. (2F)

(c) Respondent from Beijing, China: There are really good ones and some not so good. For example, the Negeri Sembilan website is slow to load, and most people will be too impatient to wait and just move on. Moreover, the URL www.ns.gov.my, is just not appropriate in my opinion since anybody who is not Malaysian will not know "ns" stands for Negeri Sembilan. (4F)

(d) Respondent from Selangor, Malaysia: I just came back from my Europe holidays 1 month ago and the tourism facilities was fantastic. No mistake on booking and everything was e-ticketing. Hope one day Malaysian have the mind set of doing what the European does [SIC]. (11M)

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(e) Respondent from Queensland, Australia: Some sites are quite informative but some are not regularly updated. Poor response to questions posted / to phone calls. (9F)

(f) Respondent from Adelaide, Australia: I have seen many websites regarding travelling in Malaysia- often they are badly laid out far too busy and often are incomplete. They give the impression that they were hastily put together with a lack of professionalism (*Tourism Malaysia* is an exception) A common failing is poor English, poor grammar in particular. This reflects poorly upon the country. (10F)

(g) Respondent from Inner Mongolia, China: I hope the tourism places are more truly [described/represented] so that we can make decisions without any doubt. (14F)

(h) Respondent from KL, Malaysia: Needs to move away from clichés with key phrases like 'multicultural' or 'diverse' and actually mine deeper for truly unique things about our country.

For example, there is a small town (I think somewhere in Langkawi) where they make mini axes. Apparently the origin of these axes was, men would throw them into the skulls of guys who committed adultery with their wives. Or so I heard. Interesting facts & cultural tidbits (say, some trivia about the place Jimmy Choo or Zang Toi was born) might help add further interest.

Or feature a piece on the best fish ball noodle stall in Ipoh or Penang, or the history of the oldest coffee shop in Malacca. Stuff like that. If I were a tourist I would rather discover things like that than, say, elephants performing tricks.

Enough with the tired images of pristine beaches & pretty Iban girls – most of our beaches are not that fantastic anymore, btw. But then I have a biased & tainted outlook anyway, being a bloody local, so maybe I'm not the best judge. ☺ (17M)

(i) Respondent from Penang, Malaysia: Very well done. (18M)

(j) Respondent from Kedah, Malaysia: The websites are supposed to have a lot of information about the place. As a tourist, I wish to get prepared before travel and that is why I need to gain as many information as I can. I think in every website, there is supposed to have a "Note for Visitors' column as some kind of acknowledgement/warning to tourists so that they know what to expect of the place. Many tourism websites only provide information about the good things, which sometimes, there's no good thing at all. Notes like "the tap water is not suitable for drinking, therefore you have to boil the water first before drinking" or "there will be a lot of monkeys, so watch your belongings while with them" sometime can be very helpful for the tourists. When the websites do not provide enough information about the place, it's like the admin of the websites and travel agencies or perhaps hotel companies are in a conspiracy to con us, the tourists. (20M)

(k) Respondent from Penang, Malaysia: Not updated frequently. (22M)

(l) Respondent from Singapore: suggest more interactive components including music, video etc…for instance, the official Penang tourism

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site has a lot of info but one has to read -- while some of the pix are also well taken, site would come more alive if its more interactive with music, pop up videos, etc. (22F)

(m) Respondent from Selangor, Malaysia: It will be nice to have famous or familiar faces like Ian Wright to promote the place ... just like in the *Astro* channel. – Celebrity Endorsement. (28M)

(n) Respondent from Selangor, Malaysia: Should be useful to both foreigners and local tourists (including those who originate from that state itself eg. a KLite discovering something new about KL from the website). Distances, bus routes (and other public transport), walking routes, places of interest on the way, a journey planner may be useful too. (30M)

(o) Respondent from California, USA: I think the Penang site is OK, but still can be improved on; the color scheme is overly colourful; and being a Penangite (and very proud of my Penang heritage) living overseas; I tend to want to showcase my home state to my non-Malaysian friends; but often I think that the official website does not show justice to the rich culture and heritage of Penang – I think Penang is truly a melting pot of Malaysia; and that fact is often neglected to be highlighted i.e. we [they] have a great blend of races and religion amongst Penangites in many expect, culture, food, language etc; but these are not highlighted. Instead, it's often divided into Malay, Chinese, Indian etc (OK, there's the Penanakan aspect that is a blended aspect, but also that's not exactly highlighted) Probably this is not the scope of this research, but I think we can still make it a bit more appealing and exciting. (24F)

(p) Respondent from Inner Mongolia China: Introduce some local character[istics] (the custom, food, price and the people – whether they are hospitable or indifferent to the foreigners). (26F)

(q) Respondent from Qinghai, China: Give some detailed information of transportations, because as a stranger here, it is very important to know how to get to the places of interest. What's more, the fee of travel to some places should be added. (27F)

(r) Respondent from Yemen: To get them more updated, and put more maps and sign directions to make it easy for foreigners to find his way there [to the tourist places]. (29F)

(s) Respondent from Yemen: Multi-language, video, maps (how to get there), costs, hotels, transport, food, facilities available, etc. [should be provided]. (30F)

8.2 Summary

This chapter has presented findings on the social preferences and socio-cognitive perspective of the web-mediated tourism genre and has provided answers to the forth

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research question of this study. The findings and implications presented in this chapter show that there are certain communicative features and types of information that are preferred and required by prospective tourists from the Malaysian online tourism websites in general and the advertorials in particular. The information and advertorials provided in the official Malaysian tourism organisations' websites have, on the whole, met the acceptability standards and needs of the of the tourism industry clients (i.e. current and potential tourists) in that they have generally attracted tourists to the country. There is, of course, still room for further improvement.

The findings in this chapter can be beneficial to NTOs in improving the types of information that they intend to communicate online to their website audiences, especially potential tourists. These can also serve as suitable information for NTOs to cater to potential tourists' various needs since shaping an effective tourism homepage and the advertorial genre is mutually constructed by the NTO and its audience. In short, the findings from this chapter can assist tourism organisations and industry players in providing and enhancing the kind of information needed by tourists in order to attract even more prospective tourists to Malaysia via the country's official tourism organisations' websites on the Internet.

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CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

9.0 Introduction

This chapter summarises the present study and draws conclusions derived from the various analyses undertaken in the study. The chapter starts with an overview of the study before presenting the main findings and conclusions that can be drawn from the results based on the research questions posed in Chapter One. It then continues with stating the implications of the study and ends with suggestions for further research.

9.1 Overview of the Study

This study was motivated by the premise that tourism has become an extremely important industry in Malaysia and that it is a major source of revenue and contributor to the socio-economic development of the country. The tourism industry in Malaysia is the country's second largest economic contributor after manufacturing and it is regarded as a very important source of employment for the nation's population. The growth of the tourism sector has opened up new employment opportunities across diverse industries, such as retail, food and beverage, accommodation, transport, etc.

One of the ways to ensure that the tourism industry remains as a lucrative source of income for the nation is through tourism marketing. In tourism marketing, promotion is considered the centre of all activities. Promotional texts, for instance, can play a crucial role in influencing potential tourists in deciding their holiday destinations. An indispensable tool used in promoting tourism is advertisement. Web-mediated advertorials, which is a form of advertisement, is considered a tool of mass

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communication where it can reach a huge target audience. Such web-based promotional materials are more well-received because of their immediacy, interactivity and their ability to support communication with and between various participants. Thus, it is vital that such texts need to be produced and communicated effectively in order to be successfully promotional, and also to convey a positive image of the tourism product or service as well as its provider or advertiser.

In relation to this motivation, the main aim of this study was to examine web-mediated tourism advertorials which promote Malaysia and its various destinations to potential tourists. In order to fulfil this aim, the study sought to analyse the generic structure and various contents of tourism homepages along with the rhetorical structure of online tourism advertorials to determine their communicative purposes and multimodal features in producing effective online tourism advertorials to attract tourists to visit Malaysia.

Recently, scholars and researchers of rhetoric, linguistics, and information sciences have begun to explore the relationships between new media and socio-contextual genre theories. However, these researchers have expressed concerns about the appropriateness of traditional genre theory for new media communication. Some linguists have argued that since genre theory was originally developed to describe written texts, the theory needs to be modified to account for non-linguistic communication because the traditional genre analysis is not sufficient to address non-written communication (Kress, 2003: 109), and that traditional written genre theory does not appropriately address the complexity of visual features and multi-modality of new media genres format (Miller and Shepherd, 2004; Askehave and Nielsen, 2005). Rhetoricians and information scientists have also pointed out that new media genres

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may develop and formalize more quickly than traditional written genres. They argue that the digital homepage is functioning as a new and discrete genre, suggesting that homepages "have no obvious paper equivalent" (Dillon and Gushrowski, 2000). Additionally, recent work in new media genre theory has explored how new communication technologies permit forms of genre hybridity where several related genres are re-mediated into a unique new media genre (Spinuzzi, 2003).

This study has attempted to address the concerns of these scholars and researchers by examining the data from a two-pronged analytical approach of genre analysis and multimodal discourse analysis. The study has also adopted a multi-perspective and multidimensional research procedure to genre-based analysis of online tourism advertorials, which draws on several types of analytical data. This study has undertaken a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of online tourism advertorials that went beyond the textual data to include the investigation of a number of socio-pragmatic aspects of construction, use and interpretation of the discourse or promotional text, based on Bhatia's (2004) multidimensional analytical framework. This study draws on the textual data by treating genre as a reflection of discursive practices of the disciplinary communities; on the ethnographic data to observe the genre in action and grounded in narrated insightful experiences of expert members of the community of practice; on the socio-critical and institutional data as structurally grounded accounts of the patterns of language and conditions under which systems of the genre is constructed and used by expert members of the disciplinary cultures to achieve their typical goals within the construct of their everyday professional activities; and on the socio-cognitive data to survey how the genre is interpreted by the recipients of the genre and if it meets their acceptability standards (Bhatia, 2004). This multidimensional investigation which uses

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a multi-perspective analysis with a qualitative-quantitative approach provides a thick description of the web-mediated tourism advertorial genre.

It can be concluded that this study has succeeded in meeting its objectives laid out in Chapter One. The analyses carried out on the sixteen tourism homepages and forty-nine online tourism advertorials, the interviews with seven specialist informants, and the sixty tourists' responses to the questionnaire have answered the research questions of the study.

9.2 Addressing the Research Questions

This section addresses the four research questions of the study as posed in Chapter One of this thesis, and presents the main findings and conclusions derived from the various analyses undertaken in the study. The present study attempted to answer the research questions as presented in Chapter One.

9.2.1 Research Question 1

The first research question: What are the communicative purposes of tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials and whether these purposes are the factors that influence the shaping of the generic structure of the web genre?, sought to discover the communicative purposes of web-mediated tourism genre from two types of data, tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials.

This research question was generally addressed by the findings gathered via the interviews with the specialist informants who provided information from the

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ethnographic and socio-critical perspectives as presented in Chapter Five. Other than to inform, the main intention of the institutional and disciplinary discourse community is to promote and persuade. These communicative purposes of the tourism homepages are also realised by the genre characteristics and elements that make up the tourism homepage genre, which include the contents, forms, and functionalities. These elements have been identified in Chapter Six of the thesis, and they can be categorised into the following seven communicative purposes:

- Creating a positive image,
- Introducing the organisation,
- Introducing the destination,
- Introducing and offering tourism products and services,
- Strengthening the relationship with the potential tourists,
- Giving information about the tourism website, and
- Advertising business and job opportunities.

The micro-level analysis of the online tourism advertorials has also identified the detailed communicative purposes of the web-mediated tourism advertorial genre. The findings from the analysis of rhetorical structures of the online tourism advertorials show that there are fourteen move structures of varying significance which relate to the communicative purposes of the tourism advertorials. They are:

- Attracting reader's attention,
- Targeting the market,
- Identifying and introducing the destination or tourist attraction,
- Describing and detailing the destination or tourist attraction,
- Appraising and indicating the value of the destination or tourist attraction,
- Justifying the need for visiting the destination or tourist attraction,

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- Establishing credentials,
- Locating the destination or tourist attraction,
- Endorsing the destination or tourist attraction,
- Offering incentives,
- Using pressure tactics,
- Calling for action and establishing contact,
- Giving related information, and
- Reinforcing the message at the end/closing.

From the analyses of moves and images, the communicative purposes of online tourism advertorials have been identified, namely to introduce the country and its destinations, to inform readers of the places of interest and tourist attractions, to establish the image of the country and its tourism industry, and to promote Malaysia and its places of interest. The analyses show that online tourism advertorials are partly informational and partly promotional. These purposes have also shown to be the motivating factors in shaping the structure of the web-mediated tourism genre. It can be concluded that other than to disseminate relevant and reliable information to potential tourists, the main communicative purpose of the web-mediated tourism genres is to promote the destinations and their tourist attractions with the hope of increasing tourist arrivals.

9.2.2 Research Question 2

This sub-section addresses the second research question of the study: What are the elements that constitute the generic structure of tourism homepages and the principal rhetorical structures of online tourism advertorials?

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The findings and information on the genre characteristics of tourism homepages, which include the content, form, functionality and purpose that have been analysed and discussed in Chapter Six, have also identified the elements that constitute the generic structure of the tourism homepages. The characteristics and elements that make up the tourism homepage genre have been summarised in Table 6.1 of Chapter Six on pages 234 to 239.

The major elements and contents that have contributed to the generic structure and appears in at least 50% of the tourism homepages analysed in the study are the masthead, contact information, descriptions or advertorials on the destination and tourist attractions, utility links, visuals, accommodation packages, taglines and slogans, copyright information, map links, links to relevant tourism information and service providers' websites, trademarks in the form of logos and emblems, icons, videos, affiliations, events calendar, links to a description about the tourism organisation, sitemaps or website index, disclaimer, links to social networking sites, and statistics on visitors to the website. The capabilities that are afforded by the new media include hyperlinks; multimedia; animation and transition of visuals, graphics and text; interactivity and email abilities for enquiries and feedback; updates on RSS which is a content delivery method that brings automatically updated information straight to the viewer's desktop; and calculation of hits or visitors to the tourism website.

The micro-level analysis of the online tourism advertorials has identified the preferred principal rhetorical move structures of online tourism advertorials. The more significant move structures which appear in more than 50% of the tourism advertorials are:

Move 1: Attracting reader's attention,

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Move 3: Identifying or introducing the destination or tourist attraction,

Move 4: Describing and detailing the destination or tourist attraction,

Move 5: Indicating the value of the destination or tourist attraction,

Move 13: Giving related tourist information,

Move 12: Establishing contact with potential tourists,

Move 8: Locating the destination or tourist attraction, and

Move 6: Justifying the need for visiting the destination or tourist attraction.

The first five rhetorical structures above (Moves 1, 3, 4, 5 and 13) appeared in all the online tourism advertorials analysed in the study, while the move of 'Using pressure tactics' (Move 11) is the least significant structure as reflected in the online tourism advertorial data of the study. The findings on the significance of the moves or rhetorical structure further reveal that the main communicative purposes of the online tourism advertorials are to disseminate relevant and reliable information to tourists and to promote the destination and its tourist attractions in order to persuade potential tourists to visit the destinations and experience the tourist attractions.

The findings on the rhetorical structures or moves from the micro-level analysis of the online tourism advertorials can assist tourism organisations and writers of such informative texts with a promotional intent, to effectively produce advertorials that can persuade prospective tourists to visit the country and its tourist destinations, and consequently increase tourist arrivals.

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9.2.3 Research Question 3

The analyses of the web-mediated tourism genre of the homepages and advertorials have shown the importance of both verbal and visual elements in achieving the genres' promotional objective. The verbal factor plays a fundamental role in providing essential information and unfolding the rhetorical structures of the genres. However, the visual elements and multimodal features also contribute as vital factors in the online tourism genres, and help to achieve the purpose of promoting a destination and its tourism products and services.

The third research question of the study is: How do the non-linguistic and multimodal features support the generic structures found on Malaysian tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials? The study has attempted to answer this third research question by analysing the non-linguistic and multimodal features of the layout and visuals related to the generic structures found on Malaysian tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996, 2006) framework on compositional meaning of page layout and visual communication.

The findings and discussion on the multimodal compositional meaning of the visual social semiotic resources found in the tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials have been presented in Chapter Seven of this thesis. The four resources of the compositional metafunction are information values, framing, salience and modality. The findings from the multimodal analysis of the tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials have shown that the four compositional meaning resources with their various degrees of the factors are important in achieving the desired effects. The compositional meaning resources as displayed in the data have principally concurred with Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996, 2006) framework on compositional meaning of

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page layout and visual communication, although the textual data conveys a varied account of the left and right compositional structure to adhere to the given and new meaning potentials of the information values. However, this diversity is justified by the purposes, capabilities and salience of the textual and visual information of the text as explained in Chapter Seven. The compositional structure and meaning potentials may also follow the direction that the culture writes and reads (van Leeuwen, 2005: 201). Some societies, such as in Malaysia which is predominantly a Muslim country, traditionally read from the right to left as opposed to the western culture which reads from the left to right. The effects of the other resources are created by the different degrees of the factors that interact.

The findings on the multimodal features and visual social semiotic resources as presented in Chapter Seven have shown that visual elements and multimodality are vital components of the online tourism genre in achieving the communicative purpose of promoting the destinations and tourist attractions in order to attract tourists to visit the destinations. The compositional meaning of the visuals and multimodal characteristics has contributed to a better understanding of the online discourse. The pertinent meaning potentials realised by the multimodal features also play their roles in helping to achieve the purposes of providing relevant tourism information and promoting the destinations and their tourism products and services online.

9.2.4 Research Question 4

The last research question of the study is: What are the communicative features of the Malaysian tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials that attract potential tourists to and in the country?

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The findings and implications presented in Chapter Eight have shown that there are certain communicative features and types of information that are preferred and required by prospective tourists in the Malaysian online tourism websites in general and the advertorials in particular. Findings on the types of information that tourist respondents would like to obtain from the Internet concerning a destination or country that they intend to visit, show that 90% of the respondents would like information regarding the places of interest in the country or state. The second most important information that the tourists want is information on the local cuisine (76.7%); followed by forthcoming local events (73.3%); the local weather (70.0%); the local people (60.0%); and information on the nature distinctive to the country (41.7%).

The form of online tourism information that the tourist respondents would expect most is pictures of places of interest, tourist attractions, local festivals and events, the local cuisine, etc. Nearly all the respondents (95.0%) have indicated that they expect to see pictures on online tourism websites. This high expectation proves the importance of visuals in attracting potential tourists to the destination or to take part in the activities or events as illustrated in the webpages. The pictures will enable the prospective tourists to visualise the place, activity or event that they will get to experience when they visit the destination. Textual descriptions on the places of interest, local festivals and events, cuisine, etc. ranks as the second type of information that the tourist respondents (93.3%) expect to obtain from online tourism websites. These two types of information are ranked very high in the tourists' expectations because prospective tourists would like to read about those descriptions of places of interest, local festivals and events, and local cuisine, as well as view those descriptions in other non-linear, more concrete forms such as in the form of photographs that depict those descriptions. In the travel industry,

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pictures especially in the form of photographs are very effective in arresting readers' attention and selling attractions to potential tourists. The photographs would show the viewer details of places, people and activities, while further information would be given in the accompanying text.

The tourists' expectations of other information on tourism websites are the local facilities (81.7%), reviews and ratings by past tourists (76.7%), and geographical information of the target destination (75.0%) are also quite highly ranked. Such information would also contribute to the potential tourists' choice of destination to visit. This is because in selecting a potential destination to visit, information on the convenience and suitability in terms of the infrastructure facilities and the local public transportation are needed. Tourists would prefer to select a place that offers at least some basic convenience of the aforementioned, especially if they have to spend a sum of money to visit the place.

As revealed in the findings from the questionnaire, the respondents, especially foreign potential tourists, would expect to read reviews from past tourists. This is because the price of visiting a foreign country is higher than visiting a local destination. Furthermore, the reviews and ratings by past tourists will further confirm their selection and make them feel more assured that they have made a correct choice or decision.

Geographical information of the destination, which includes the natural physical features and weather conditions, is also required by the respondents. This information will allow them to prepare the essential personal necessities, such as suitable clothing, shoes, etc. when they visit the place or take part in the tourist activities and events.

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The tourist respondents have affirmed that they expect to find some form of visuals related to a destination in tourism websites. This further confirms the importance of pictures in promoting a tourist destination, which is why all the tourism websites analysed in the study contain at least a few pictures. It is evident from the findings that visuals or pictures have the highest capability of attracting potential tourists' attention. The use of visuals adds variation to the monotony of an only written description. This also corresponds with Cook's (1992) view on the equal importance of both linguistic and non-linguistic semiotic resources, such as visual images, sound, and others, in contributing to communicative purposes. It also concurs with Bhatia, Flowerdew and Jones (2008) who assert that there is a common belief now that written information is not necessarily the most important form used for the construction and interpretations of meaning, and that multimodality plays equal importance in its construction and interpretation.

In terms of the respondents' preferences of the types of pictures pertaining to a destination on the tourism website, 91.7% of them stated that they favoured colourful pictures that are true representations of the places of interest, local festivals, events and cuisine, etc. A genuine illustration of the destinations means that what they see on the website can be witnessed when they arrive at the destinations. This will eliminate the anxiety of false promotion, and instead make the website more reliable and dependable. In doing so, future tourists will be more confident in the informative contents of the tourism website and consequently have more faith in the services and information published on the website.

The layout and online interface of a tourism website is also important in drawing the attention of the tourist respondents. A tourism website should be presented in a

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systematic layout that is easy for obtaining varied information. The ease of finding information is related to how the information is arranged within the website. If the prospective tourist finds it difficult to obtain certain information from a website due to the haphazard and disorganised layout, he/she will abandon his/her search for information from that website and thus will not be exposed to the persuasive contents of the tourism website, regardless of how informative it may be. Consequently, prospective tourists will not be persuaded to visit the destination or country.

The information and advertorials provided in the official Malaysian tourism organisations' websites have, on the whole, met the acceptability standards and needs of the current and potential tourism industry clients in that they have generally attracted tourists to the country. However, the NTOs can further enhance their tourism websites by including other types of information as identified in Chapter Eight that can further cater to the needs of potential tourists since shaping an effective tourism homepage genre is mutually constructed by the NTO and its audience.

The findings in Chapter Eight can also be beneficial to NTOs in improving the types of information that they intend to communicate online to their website audience, especially potential tourists. They can also serve as suitable information for NTOs to describe their products/services in catering to potential tourists' various needs. In short, these findings can assist tourism organisations and industry players in providing and enhancing the kinds of information needed by tourists in order to attract even more prospective tourists to Malaysia via the country's official tourism organisations' websites on the Internet.

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9.3 Implications of the Study and Recommendations

The present study has proven that web-mediated tourism advertorials, which is a form of advertisement, is considered an effective tool of mass communication where it can reach a huge target audience. David Ogilvy who founded and built Ogilvy & Mather into one of the biggest and most successful advertising agencies in the world stated in his 1983 book, *Ogilvy on Advertising*, in favour of long copy advertisements, that making advertisements look like editorial pages namely advertorials will attract more readers. Many of the best and successful advertising and marketing experts in the world such as David Ogilvy, John Caples and Gary C. Halbert have quoted readership studies which prove that material that appears to be editorial tend to get five to six times more readership than material that is obviously advertisement, particularly when the prospective customer needs to spend a lot of money on the product or service, such as tourism. The real prospective customers should be given enough information because they want to know as much as they can in order to make a sound decision on a purchase.

Therefore, it is vital that such texts need to be produced and communicated effectively in order to be successfully promotional, and in the context of the present study also to convey a positive image of the tourism products or services as well as its provider or advertiser. The information and findings gathered from the specialist informants interviewed in the study have also shed light on the best practices in their discipline and to produce effective promotional materials such as online tourism advertorials. Their views on advertorials have been incorporated in developing the following guideline as recommendations for producing effective promotional materials, specifically online advertorials that can achieve the objectives of promoting, advertising, and marketing or selling a product, brand or service. The online tourism advertorials should consider among others, the following factors:

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1. Headline or title

There should be a catchy headline or title to attract the attention of the readers or online users. A brief selling message can be put into the headline and sub-headings. The first paragraph of the advertorial should also capture the reader's attention. The headline and subheadings will act as a brief message for readers to glance through the advertorial, while the complete message that includes the pertinent and specific facts is in the advertorial. The sub-headings should summarize the main points of the message so that the message will be communicated even if the whole advertorial is not read all the way through. The sub-headings will also make the advertorial easy to read.

2. Personal experience

The writer of the advertorial needs to be knowledgeable in what he/she is writing about. One way of being knowledgeable is to experience the product or service personally. The writers, in the case of the present study, should go to those places that they are writing about to gather information and experience the places or activities. Upon visiting and experiencing the respective places themselves, they can also write better with feelings and passion.

3. Unique selling point

The advertorial should highlight the unique selling point (USP) of the product, brand or service (PBS) because that will differentiate the PBS from its competitors and give it an advantage over the rest. The USP has to be one of the first things which the promotional text viewers or potential consumers can notice. In the context of the present study, there should be more promotion on the niche tourism areas, and in the

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case of Malaysia, more descriptions about nature tourism and eco-tourism in Malaysia.

4. Indicate the value and justify the need

The advertorial should contain all the strongest and most persuasive reasons for the potential tourist to visit the destination and experience the tourist attractions. It should motivate the readers and bring about the desired action in the potential tourists. This can be achieved by connecting the advertorial to the tourists' interest and presenting the consumer benefits that the trip will bring them. Justifying the need for a product or service by giving significant and compelling reasons to do so is probably the most powerful way to persuade potential customers to take action and move towards consuming it.

5. Active web links

An important online media capability that should be utilised and built-into the online tourism advertorials is an active web link, which is also known as hyperlink. The hyperlinks will enable Internet users to navigate or browse hypertexts in order to make references that the readers can directly follow. The hyperlinks can directly provide the prospective customers or tourists the convenience of gathering further relevant information regarding the product/service/PBS, and in the case of the present study the destination with just a click of the mouse. The easier it is to navigate inter- and intra-text, the more likely it is that potential customers/tourists will want to come back to get relevant information, not just for the first purchase/trip, but perhaps for a repeated purchase/trip as well.

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6. Updates on the information and details

The descriptions and information on events should be updated periodically. An up-to-date online advertorial or website will reinforce the integrity, validity and reliability of the information provided in the website. Hence, potential tourists will have more confidence in the information and descriptions that are presented in the tourism website and consequently be persuaded to visit the country and its tourist attractions. In turn, this will also increase tourist arrivals to the country.

7. Modes of contact

The advertorials or somewhere within the webpage should also include the publishers' and service providers' contact information, such as the physical address, telephone, fax and email or a *Contact Us* link to enable readers to contact the website owners or service providers for further information. The contact information can also tell potential tourists where and how to make reservations. The *Contact Us* link, which includes email capabilities, will enable readers to contact the NTOs immediately via the Internet for further information. An interactive online helpdesk to answer any queries that online readers or potential tourists may have is also important. The new media affords this ability to send an enquiry and get feedback from tourism organisations, and a channel to send an email via the 'contact us' link easily and quickly. Hence, communication with a tourism organisation is now much easier with this online medium. The offline contact information is another option for potential tourists who lack confidence and ability to contact online and prefer a more personal mode of offline communication. The provision of the contact information can also enhance the readers' confidence in the tourism products and services described in the advertorials because this information demonstrates accountability of

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the advertiser or NTO for their willingness to take responsibility and answer questions related to the published materials.

8. Legible and appealing

It is recommended that the advertorial pageview to be in full colour, with legible fonts and a suitable font size, citing the Vernada as a preferred font for the tourism websites analysed. The page layout should also not be cluttered so as to ensure easy and pleasant readability. Just as the findings from the socio-cognitive or recipients' perspective of the web-mediated genre indicate, pictures should be included where possible, so that the advertorials are not only textually informative but also visually dynamic. In selecting the accompanying visuals, the most current images which do not exaggerate the message must be ensured. The visuals or images should also create illustrations that best compliment the concept and message that the tourism organisation wants to be communicated to the potential tourists. Video footages can also be included as an option for potential tourists who may be interested in viewing the videos.

The advantages of publishing advertorials on the Internet have also been discussed in the study. The perceived influence and benefits of tourism organisations in having a web presence and publishing advertorials online are plentiful. They include the following factors and their justifications:

1. Ease of Use
   - Availability of updated information
   - Easy navigation to relevant information within and across websites
   - Prompt online purchasing and reservations

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- Prompt feedback to enquiries

2. Ease of Comparison of the Product/Service and Price
   - Able to obtain competitive and useful information regarding product/service
   - Easy product/service comparison from several vendors
   - Easy price comparison from several vendors
   - Possibility of getting the lowest price for product/service purchased

3. Ease of Information Access and Exchange
   - Increase in speed of information gathering from vendor
   - Increase in speed of information dissemination

4. Reduction in Time and Monetary Costs
   - Reduction in purchase processing time
   - Reduced purchasing costs

Therefore, both tourism service providers and tourists can reduce time and overall cost of the purchase or procurement process, either in terms of money, time, and in many other ways through the basic and advanced knowledge of Internet use. Consequently, online influence on the tourism purchases can help tourism organisations and businesses gain a competitive edge in today's and also future tourism marketplace.

9.4 Suggestions for Further Research

This section presents some suggestions for future research which can be carried out to investigate on other issues pertaining to online tourism advertorials.

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It is recommended that comparative studies be conducted in which Malaysian online tourism advertorials can be compared with online tourism advertorials of other countries' tourism organisations. It will be noteworthy to know how other NTOs publish their promotional materials online in order to persuade prospective tourists to visit their countries, and the effects of the tourism promotional texts in relation to their number of tourist arrivals.

Further investigation can also be conducted on the multimodal features and visual images of the advertorials from the other two metafunctions of systemic functional linguistics, the representational meaning and interactive meaning. The findings can enhance the findings of the present study and provide a complete analysis of all the metafunctions. The multimodal features of the online tourism advertorials from all the metafunctions of multimodal discourse analysis will then have been analysed to account for the other semiotic perspectives, and provide an even more comprehensive description of the genre.

Finally, it is recommended that research on other visual elements such as videos, theme songs that are synchronized with the videos, colour and typography can also be carried out to identify their characteristics in the online tourism homepages and advertorials, and their effects on the recipients. The findings can further enhance the findings of the present study.

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9.5 Conclusion

The study is a comprehensive analysis of the Malaysian online tourism advertorials. It started with an analysis on the ethnographic, socio-critical and socio-cognitive perspectives of the genre to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the genre through examining the practitioners' advice, and how the physical situation affects the construction and reception of online tourism advertorials as a genre. The study then examined the online advertorial genre from the textual perspective by investigating the elements, forms and functions of the official Malaysian tourism homepages before identifying the rhetorical structures as well as the visual components present in the tourism homepages and online tourism advertorials, and then describing how these components are placed in their layout. The genre analysis is enhanced by the description of the layout and visual images as they have not been widely researched concurrently in a text analysis within the Malaysian tourism context. Finally, the study ends with a brief guideline on how to produce online advertorials that can effectively promote a destination or tourist attraction so that potential tourists will be persuaded to visit the destination.

The study's focus on a critical genre analysis and multimodal analysis of web-mediated tourism advertorials is opportune with the expansion of the Internet as a preferred contemporary communication technology. The new media has made these texts even more multimodal. This shows that apart from language, visuals play an important role in present day communication and promotional texts. The presence of visuals in web-mediated texts such as online tourism advertorials makes them an important source of meaning making besides language. Therefore, there is a vital need to include visual analysis of web-mediated texts to give visuals their proper recognition in forming meanings in such promotional texts. This study has therefore, contributed pertinent

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information about the Malaysian online tourism advertorials and has enhanced knowledge specifically in the areas of genre analysis and multimodality, and online communication in general, as these areas are continually evolving in this era of globalisation.

Advertising texts may have been examined. However, not much research has been conducted with regards to web-mediated tourism advertorials. As such, it is hoped that the findings of this study can contribute to a better understanding of web-mediated tourism advertorials in terms of their elements, forms, purposes, and layout; and how these factors conform to demonstrate the generic integrity of the texts. It is also hoped that these findings will be useful as a reference for advertisers and text producers in designing online advertorials that can effectively persuade viewers and potential consumers. This study, therefore, has made important contributions in the fields of advertising and tourism communication.

Pedagogical implications can also be derived from the study, whereby the findings of the study can be modified for a language for specific purposes course in the disciplines of advertising and tourism to incorporate both the verbal and visual language. The findings of the present study and the guideline for producing effective promotional texts as proposed in this chapter will be beneficial to language instructors of the advertising and tourism programmes in helping their students learn ways of producing effective web-mediated promotional materials.

In general, the study contributes to the disciplines of applied linguistics, professional and institutional communication, and web marketing. It offers insights into different

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ways of designing appealing and effective advertorials and websites not only in the tourism industry but also other key industries of Malaysia's economy.

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