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วารสารวิชาการเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ (สาขามนุษยศาสตร์และสังคมศาสตร์)

## บทความวิจัย

- สภาพปัญหาด้านบุคลากรในสถานประกอบการของรัฐในภูมิภาคตะวันตก  
ดร.นิภาพรรณ เชนกันติกุล
- ปัจจัยส่วนประสมทางการตลาดที่มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจซื้อสินค้าแบรนด์ของผู้บริโภค  
ในกลุ่มพหุชนบท การศึกษา อำเภอวังน้อย จังหวัดสุพรรณบุรี สาขาบางนา  
ดร.ภูษิต วรรณเม็ก
- คุณภาพบริการโลจิสติกส์ที่ส่งผลต่อความพึงพอใจของผู้ใช้บริการศูนย์บริการรถยนต์โตโยต้า  
จังหวัดสมุทรปราการ  
ชนาก ชนโสภากรรณ, ดร.ปฐมา ปาระโยชน์อุบลกิจ, ดร.ภูษิต วรรณเม็ก
- ความต้องการพัฒนาตนเองของบุคลากรที่มีผลต่อนักงานปลัดกระทรวงทรัพยากรธรรมชาติและ  
สิ่งแวดล้อม  
สุธิรา อัมพลา, ปฐิพัทธ์ จันทร์รุ่งเรือง
- ความคิดเห็นของพนักงานต่อการบริหารตามบรรษัทภิบาลของผู้บริหาร กรณีศึกษา  
บริษัท การบินไทยจำกัด (มหาชน)  
ดร.อุพร อีธรรมวรรณ
- A GENRE ANALYSIS OF TOURIST DESTINATION OVERVIEWS (TDO):  
HOW E-BROCHURE PROMOTES THAI TOURIST DESTINATION IMAGE  
Athip Thumvichit
- การศึกษาระดับความสามารถในการแก้ปัญหาทางคณิตศาสตร์ของนักเรียน  
ชั้นมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ 1-3 โดยใช้หลักการการทศาคาสตร์คุณธรรม  
วรรณสิรินทร์ อุธยา, ณัฐกรณต์ สุระภา, ชนัญญา คลังใหญ่, ดร. นิธยา จันทร์คุณ, ดร. อนุณี จันทร์ศิริ
- อาชีวศึกษานิคมในประเทศไทย : กรณีศึกษาบริษัท ซีพีออลล์ จำกัด (มหาชน)  
ฉัตรวิภา อภินันท์ใจดีสกุล, ดร. อภิรักษ์ พันธะภณ, ดร. นิตยาวิญญู ออศิริ

## บทวิจารณ์หนังสือ

- Book Review : เมื่อภูเขาน้ำแข็งละลาย (Our Iceberg is Melting)  
วสิริ อารมไพศาลย์

A GENRE ANALYSIS OF TOURIST DESTINATION OVERVIEWS (TDO):  
HOW E-BROCHURE PROMOTES THAI TOURIST DESTINATION IMAGE  
ปริจเฉทวิเคราะห์ของข้อมูลย่อของแหล่งท่องเที่ยว บทบาทของอิเล็กทรอนิกส์โบรชัวร์  
บนอินเทอร์เน็ตในการประชาสัมพันธ์ภาพลักษณ์สถานที่ท่องเที่ยวในประเทศไทย

Athip Thumvichit \*

### Abstract

The present study of genre aims to identify move structures and linguistic features of e-brochures with a view of revealing findings that can lead to material developments for ESP courses. The present study was influenced by the genre analysis model developed by Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993). The data were collected from e-brochure on Amazing Thailand website which published by the Promotional Material Production Division. 30 overviews of tourist destinations in Thailand collected from the e-brochures made up a 2,367-word corpus. The results revealed five moves and some steps were also found within a few of moves. Factual information covered most parts of the text. Although the authors were free to use promotional strategies to persuade potential tourists, the strategies were found in Move 3 'Establishing credentials' as identifiable in all texts.

**Keywords :** Genre analysis, E-brochure, Tourist destination image, English for specific purposes

### บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยปริจเฉทวิเคราะห์ (Genre Analysis) นี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อจะระบุโครงสร้างอัตถภาค (Move) และ มุ่งจะอธิบายลักษณะทางภาษาของอิเล็กทรอนิกส์โบรชัวร์ ซึ่งผลของงานวิจัยนี้จะมีบทบาทในการพัฒนาสื่อการเรียนการสอนของวิชาในกลุ่มภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อวัตถุประสงค์เฉพาะ (English for Specific Purposes) งานวิจัยนี้ใช้รูปแบบการศึกษาปริเฉทโดย Swales (1990) และ

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Bhatia (1993) โดยได้เก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลจากโบรชัวร์ของเว็บไซต์ Amazing Thailand ซึ่งผลิตโดยแผนกสื่อและประชาสัมพันธ์ ข้อมูลบทย่อยของ 30 สถานที่ท่องเที่ยวในประเทศถูกเลือก ผลที่ได้คือคลังภาษาที่มี 2,367 คำ ผลของงานวิจัยบ่งชี้ 5 อุตภาค และอนุวัจน์ (Step) ซึ่งพบในบางอุตภาค ส่วนประกอบส่วนใหญ่ของบทย่อยคือข้อมูลเท็จจริง (Factual Information) แต่ผู้เขียนมีอิสระในการใช้กลยุทธ์ต่าง ๆ ในการประชาสัมพันธ์แหล่งท่องเที่ยว ซึ่งกลยุทธ์เหล่านี้ถูกพบในอุตภาคที่ 3 (Establishing Credentials)

**คำสำคัญ :** ปริจเฉทวิเคราะห์ โบรชัวร์ ภาพลักษณ์ของสถานที่ท่องเที่ยว ภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อวัตถุประสงค์เฉพาะ

## Introduction

Over the last decades, tourism industry has experienced a rapid growth and received attention from researchers. As part of the national development policies, tourism is one of the most influential areas which are persistently promoted by Thai Ministry of Tourism and Sports. Utilization promotional methods (i.e. brochures, websites, and posters) is an open way of delivering messages to potential tourists. According to Nolan (1976) brochure is one of the most frequently used sources of travel-related information. Beerli and Martin (2004) also note that brochures have an impact on image generation of a destination. However, this topic has not drawn much attention from linguistic scholars.

Genre analysis allows researchers to discuss how discourses are structured in the way they exist. Tourism brochure discourse is considered a community built on the basis of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The discourse community of tourism brochures strives to formulate and promote the tourism images. There are some previous studies working on the brochure discourse (e.g. tourism and hotel), but an attempt to investigate overviews of tourist destinations in the brochure format is rarely seen. A single brochure may comprise several attraction overviews which provide overall detail of what travelers can expect to experience. Each overview shares a communicative purpose which makes up a brochure discourse. In other words, each tourist brochure needs its own overviews achieve communication results.

In the age of globalization, EFL learners are expected to meet international communication requirements. Preparing students for both international and professional communications has become the top priorities for hospitality and tourism (H&T) programs. Previous studies have expressed concerns about listening and speaking skills, as what learners should acquire for their professional practices. However, Wildes and Nyheim (2009) argue that writing skill should not be overlooked, because writing is permanent and errors or mistakes can cause more damages compared to oral productions. Yang (2012) adds that the written messages usually reaches customers first, so they have an impact on customers' first impressions of the service providers. Thus, writing skill in hospitality and tourism industries is essential.

Providing students with authentic experience is necessary. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses aim to prepare students for professional communications. From a teaching perspective, preparing students in hospitality and tourism management programs to compose professional tourist attraction overviews for brochure publications is always part of the curriculum. In a language classroom, we cannot deny the fact that teachers and students rely too much on commercial textbooks. Although the collection of textbooks for ESP is quite large, there is no guarantee that students will experience genuine up-to-date professional communications. As an ESP lecturer, the researcher is always eager to find out how these overviews are constructed by professionals in authentic settings. What he found in this study will lead to materials developments for Business English and English for Hospitality and Tourism. The present study attempts to add understanding to how the overviews in tourism brochures are composed by identifying generic structures, lexical choices, and expressions. With an authentic ESP manual, students are given the opportunity to practice producing the necessary language, or lexical vocabulary, appropriate to their future work situations. It is expected that their language skills are professionalized to handle after-school experiences. This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the communicative purposes of tourist destination overviews on e-brochure?

2. What is the generic structure (moves and steps) and linguistic features employed by the authors?

## Literature Review

### Genre Theory

Genre analysis serves a useful purpose of helping scholars gain insight into the textual conventions of the particular genre under discussion (Bhatia, 1993; Hyland, 2009; Swales, 1990). According to Bhatia (1993), genre framework is the most analytical model which is capable of both unveiling form-function and helping to add understanding to cognitive structuring of specific areas of discourse. In other words, genre analysis allows researchers to explore rules and conventions of a discourse in connection with linguistic, social, academic, or professional convention. Bhatia (1993) and Swales (1990) conclude that although there are plenty of areas in a genre to be focused on, its communicative purpose is always the key. For decades, genre analysis has drawn attention from scholars from different disciplines employing different approaches (Panseeta & Todd, 2014). That is, genre analysis can provide textual patterns (e.g. rhetorical strategies) and linguistic characteristics (e.g. lexical choices) information which can contribute to language-related teaching and learning. There might be many text types within one specific genre, but they normally share a similar purpose (Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1990). This means that the internal structure of each discourse community is built to help the members achieve their communicative purposes. Although there is no visible rule nor regulation for composing a text, a discourse community will develop patterns which can help each member reach a shared goal. For instance, tourist attraction overviews written in tourism brochures can be analyzed for common pattern which comprises several communicative units.

One of the key steps in genre analysis is to identify communicative units and investigate the rhetorical structures of particular genres. Introduced by Swale, a move-step approach has been used to break texts into purposeful units (moves and steps); the move-step strategy can also be adapted by other researchers for their own purposes and genres. Biber, Connor, and Upton (2007) explain that a move is the section of a text that shows a particular communicative function; not only has its

own goal, each move also represents the bigger picture of the communicative purpose of the genre.

The early model developed by Swales (1990) has greatly influenced genre analysis in ESP perspective. The typical trajectory of genre analysis involves 3 main steps—identifying the discourse community and defining the communicative purposes, examining genre’s organization, and examining the textual and linguistic features. This does not mean that all ESP genre studies will follow these steps, but with these three steps together, the researchers can add understanding to genre analysis in both academic and professional settings. Hyland (2004) adds that the genre models can help ESP teachers and learners identify textual structures and understand sociocultural contexts.

### **Tourism Promotional Genre**

We cannot deny the fact that the promotional discourse plays a crucial role in our everyday lives. It can take several forms such as press releases (Maat, 2007), sales letters (Vergaro, 2004), brochures (Yang, 2012), and even academic discourse (Bhatia, 1993). In this regard, promotional genre is considered the most functional and fast-growing discourse (Bhatia, 2005). Advertising is one of the most powerful methods that professionals commonly use to achieve persuasive communications. There is no doubt that tourism promotional genre aims to build up destination image.

Tourism destination images have to do with the travelers’ holistic impressions of tourist destinations (Huang, 2015). *Projected image* and *perceived image* are the elements that make up tourism destination image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Projected image has to do with the image established by the destination, whereas perceived image refers to the travelers’ received image which aims to make impressions (Zhang, Xu, Lu, & Lei, 2015). It can be implied that the tourist destination is expected to create image (projected image) which is delivered to tourists. The purpose of sending this image is to make impression among tourists who receive the image (perceived image). Obviously the tourist attractions try to draw tourists’ attention by projecting impressive image. To achieve their goal, perceived image has to be the same as projected image. The researcher found this

worth mentioning this because building positive destination images is the main purpose of tourism promotional genre. A study of Huang (2015) tourist images created by brief tourist information (BTI) by Huang (2015) revealed three communicative purposes: to provide information, to capture attention, and to persuade. To provide information, the text offers factual information about a tourist destination such as its location, and unique features. Such knowledge then builds up an image. The authors also aim to attract readers' attention. This has to do with the materials that deliver the message and the language used in the text: these two components help the text draw more attention. Similar to other types of promotional texts, the ultimate goal of a tourism promotional genre is to persuade potential tourists to pay a visit. Although the persuasive connotation is not clearly stated, there is always a subliminal message which attracts readers to visit.

Previous studies of genre analysis of promotional tourism and hospitality discourses have attempted to explore both at the micro (linguistic features) and macro levels (generic structures). Henry and Roseberry (1996) found that there are four essential moves in promotional tourism texts: *Identification*, *Facility/Activity*, *Location*, and *Description*. To be more specific, Huang's study revealed five moves: *Headline*, *Background Information*, *Establishing Credentials*, *Directive Information*, and *Soliciting Response*. As its name suggested, BTI texts deliver brief information about tourist destinations. This genre can be found on tourist-related websites which try to promote the tourism industry of a particular region.

Promotional travel texts are persuasive in nature. Lexis is an important element in such a way that it allows the authors to use subjective language (i.e. emotional, commentary, and axiological adjectives). Also, the tense level is viewed important. For instance, previous studies found that tourism promotional discourse was constructed with the consistent use of imperatives and the simple present tense (Lam, 2006; Moya, 2006). Thus, the researcher found it worth investigating not only conventional structures of the texts, but also lexical choices and expressions. It is important to provide learners with essential words for the text composition. With these mentioned components, learners are given some spaces to create the text that can fit in the genre community.

## Methodology

### Data Collection

30 tourist destination overviews were collected for the analysis. The data were gathered from the e-brochures “Amazing Thailand” produced by the Promotional Material Production Division, Marketing Services Segment, Tourism Authority of Thailand. The materials were distributed on [tourismthailand.org](http://tourismthailand.org). The overviews were taken from various topics ranging from natural landscapes (i.e. mountains, forests,), cultural tourist destinations (i.e. temples, local buildings,), and historical sites (i.e. monuments, history museums), to artificial landscapes (i.e. botanical gardens, aquaria). Thus, to be qualified for the present study, the overviews needed to be taken from the four above topics. To make sure that the information was authentic, the overviews were collected based on the researcher’s visiting experiences. Collecting 30 texts from the e-brochures resulted in a specialized corpus of 2,367 words, ranging from 28 words to 203 words in each text.

### Model of Analysis

The present study took the notion of the models developed by Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993) focusing on generic structure which includes move and step organization. Since the notion emphasizes the conventional structure of the promotional text, this study made an attempt to first explore at the macro level by identifying moves and steps and then it investigated the linguistic features of the text. According to Bhatia (1993), moves refer to the distinctive units of the text, whereas steps are optional sub-units showing creativity and innovativeness of the authors. In other words, steps represent the author’s writing style and are used to fulfill a larger communicative goal. In genre research, move analysis is always (by no means exclusively) considered the main part. To answer the research questions, Swale’s move analysis was used to underline textual structures (moves and steps).

After the specialized corpus was compiled, the researcher manually went through each text multiple times to explore the communicative units which were then coded. Some moves were realized with steps which were part of the relative communicative success of the moves. The data were coded by two inter-raters, an instructor in the English department and a graduate student who had experience in



analyzing communicative units. Then, linguistic features in each move were also identified.

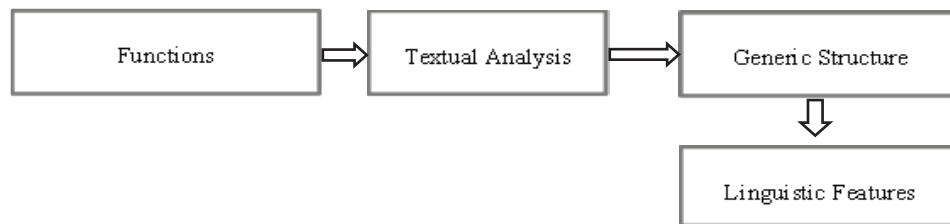


Figure 1 : Analytical procedure of the present study

## Results

### Communicative Purposes

Before going into the textual level, it is essential to explore the communicative purposes of the community. The communicative purposes of tourist destination overviews (TDO) on e-brochures are closely related to the advertisement genre. Luo and Huang, (2015). demonstrated that with advertisement, potential clients are given very limited information about a particular product or service. That is, adverts leave potential customers in a blind spot of the product or service. On the other hand, for the TDO, potential tourists are offered authentic images, and they build up incentives themselves. Although advertisement and TDO are both persuasive in nature, the persuasive function of TDO is much weaker than that of advertisement. After reading through the texts, endorsements from media or former travelers were not detected. Pressure sales tactics are totally absent in the texts. Tourist destination overviews provide potential visitors with factual information without the contamination of unnecessary details. With such information, the reader receives an overall ideal about a particular place. For example, one of the texts gave information about geographical locations, accessibility, unique features, and history.

However, previous researchers considered tourism brochures as a type of promotional genre. As one can see that advertisements and tourism brochures are different, but they both belong to the promotional community. Besides conveying truthful information of a place, the texts also try to draw potential tourists' attention by using fancy linguistic forms (e.g. 'Priceless treasures from the crypts of Wat Mahathat and Wat Ratchburana enrich Thailand's second largest museum....').

Another function is to persuade readers to visit the attraction. It may not be

clearly stated, but the texts showed strong sense of promotional strategy. TDOs try to encourage potential tourists to pay a visit. Aside from giving factual information and using fancy language to draw attention, the way the messages are delivered makes TDO very convincing (e.g. ‘The large lake has beautiful scenery and during the cool season the landscape is covered in a profusion of colorful flowers and blooms’).

### Generic Structure and Linguistic Features

With move analysis, the texts were divided into two separate sections: title and body. Title is a name of the destination, whereas body is an overview of the destination. The results revealed four moves and several steps within some moves. Each move represents a communicative unit of the genre. In tourism destination overviews, the conventional pattern is rarely detected; the authors fired off information without any particular model. For example, the structure of one message may be totally different from the others. Previous genre research on business-specific text like hotel responses to negative reviews (Panseeta & Todd, 2014) indicated a stronger conventional structure compared with promotional texts like tourism destination overviews. The following table shows moves and steps identified in the texts.

**Table 1** The coding protocol of move and step in tourism destination overviews on e-brochures

Move and Step	Example
Move 1: Title	"Wat Traphang Thong"
Move 2: Background	"The Portuguese were the first Europeans to...."
Move 3: Establishing Credentials	"Located about 120 km. south of Buri Ram town...."
Step 3a: Location	"....the favourite spot for younger travellers"
Step 3b: Reputation	"this is the country's largest earthen dam"
Step 3c: Value	"Hilltribe handicrafts, including woven cloth...."
Step 3d: Key features	"Open Wednesday to Sunday, 8.30 a.m.-4 p.m."
Move 4: Guiding Information	"For more information, call 0 5564 1571."
Move 5: Soliciting Response	

### **Move 1: *Title***

As stated, the texts were broken into two pieces: title and body. The *Title* move indicated the name of the destination without any other communicative function. Headline is the must-have component of tourist destination overviews. It plays a leading role in drawing readers' attention because the word choices employed by the authors are different from the texts. Commonly the authors simply used Thai words (written in English) to represent Thainess which is the unique character of Thailand; for instance, the titles of the samples included Wat (temple), Suan (garden), Ko (island), etc. These terms are actually used by Thai people, so potential tourists can catch an idea how these places were referred by Thai people. Some examples are as follows:

- (1) "Ko Samet"
- (2) "Wat Pa Sak"
- (3) "Prasat Hin Phanom Rung"

However, not all destinations were presented with Thainess. In some cases, the authors insisted on keeping the English form:

- (4) "Sirikit Dam"
- (5) "Kok River"
- (6) "Lotus Field"

### **Move 2: *Background***

The *Background* move contains general information of a destination including first establishment, development processes, purposes, stories related to significant figure in Thai history, etc. The purpose of this move is to inform readers of the history of the destination. Thus, only factual information was considered.

- (7) "....being immortalized by the classical Thai poet Sunthon Phu...."
- (8) ".... dating from the 1380s Constructed by King Bobmaraja I...."
- (9) ".... a dispute over ownership was settled by a ruling of the international Court of Justice...."

History behind the destinations may sound interesting to some tourists. Huang (2015) noted that "as treasure of tourism resources, history is likely to be

attractive for some people”. It can be implied that the history reflects the value of the destination.

### **Move 3: *Establishing Credentials***

After move 1 was realized, the rest of the move fell into the body part of the text. *Establishing Credentials* move covered most part of the message. The move was found essential in attracting readers’ attention because it included advantages of visiting places. As shown in Table 1, move 3 comprises four steps which are considered components making up to serve the main communicative functions.

#### **Step 3a: Location**

Typically, the tourist destination overviews started the message with the location of the destination. In this step, the authors were given the opportunity to mention other places nearby. For example, “The centre, located some 15 kilometres along Doi Mae Salong Road...” The location itself does not make the texts persuasive, but the connection between a destination and other places does. It was found that the authors tried to link the destination with a more famous place. Let’s revisit the example above; the destination is Hilltribe Development and Welfare Centre which was claimed to be located along Doi Mae Salong, one of the most popular mountains in the north of Thailand. Relating a destination with a tourist spot can entice potential tourists to pay a visit. The authors frequently started this step with “located” or “situated”.

(10) “Situated to the north of Wat Mahathat is San Ta Pha Daeng.”

(11) “Located at Sawankhalok town, 38 km. north of Sukhothai...”

#### **Step 3b: Reputation**

The *Reputation* step, as its name suggests, had to do with the popularity of a destination among a certain group of travelers. This step played a vital role in the Move 3, since it aimed to impress readers by informing them how popular the destination is.

(12) “Samui was originally put on the travel map by backpackers...”

(13) “....as a popular destination for overseas visitors and weekend excursionists from Bangkok.”

In example (9), the target group of the destination was backpackers. Each tourist attraction is popular in its own way, and the target group was mentioned in order to impress tourists who belonged to the same group.

### **Step 3c: *Value***

Making impressions is the top priority of this move. The *Value* step was constructed to show what made the destination stand out. For example:

(14) “....this is the country’s largest earthen dam.”

(15) “....as Thailand largest and best collection of indigenous arts and utensils.”

(16) “....enrich Thailand’s second largest museum....”

In term of linguistic features, this step frequently utilized superlative-degree adjectives (e.g. largest, biggest, best, most beautiful, etc.). The favorable adjective underlined the value of visiting and it can make penitential tourists believe that it is worth paying a visit.

### **Step 3d: *Key Features***

*Key Features* is another major component used attract readers’ attention. In this step, the authors employed various types of important attractions to arouse readers’ interests such as main activities, attractive feature, and event. Some examples are as follows:

(17) “....the destination is most popular with scuba enthusiasts....” (Main activity)

(18) “Lying 6.5 km offshore and appearing as a thin silver of land shaped roughly like a nail....” (Attractive feature)

(19) “....get packed out during the full moon parties....” (Event)

Although the step contained factual information, the way the authors presented information made the destinations more attractive. The metaphors were commonly used to describe the key features; for example, in (17), “.... appearing as a thin silver of land....” The authors used a metaphor a thin silver to describe a piece of land. Huang (2015) states that in tourist information, metaphor is used to project beautiful image in readers’ mind.

#### **Move 4: Guiding Information**

*Guiding Information* offers potential tourists useful information. It is found that the authors gave factual information without contamination of promotional tactics. To fulfill such a communicative goal, the information offered included accessibility, operational hours, and the entrance fee. Generally this move is placed after the Move 3, because for those who are interested in the destination, they may expect to receive this information to help them make a decision. It is typical that this move was constructed with accessibility, operational hours, and entrance fee respectively. Following are examples of this move.

(20) “....can be reached by a local bus (once daily, 50 mins) from Si Satchanalai....”

(21) “Open Wednesday to Sunday, 8.30 a.m.-4 p.m.; except public holiday.”

(22) “Entrance fees are 20 baht for an adult and 10 baht for a child”

#### **Move 5: Soliciting Response**

Like other promotional letters, tourist destination overviews call for action by giving potential tourists a direct access to a service provider. According to in promotional genre, impoliteness is always found in this move. However, TDO community is not as intimidating as other promotion messages (e.g. sale letters, and advertisements). In this study, *Soliciting Response* move just offers direct contact information such as phone numbers, email addresses, and websites. For example:

(23) “Call 025331152,..... for more information”

(24) “Contact Tel. 0-3429-7091 to make arrangements”

#### **Discussion**

The present study explores tourist destination overviews (TDO) on e-brochure from Amazing Thailand webpage. Although the overviews are considered promotional texts, they do not employ all the promotional tactics detected in authentic promotion genres. Since, they mostly contained factual details, the texts were found to be informative rather than persuasive. Move analysis showed five distinctive communicative units which carry their own respective function. The exact

pattern of these moves was absent; one text might ended with Move 2, whereas the others might end with Move 3. This flexible strategy showed that different types of destinations used different patterns. The most essential move was Establishing Credentials move which appeared in all texts. In this move, the authors were given opportunities to capture readers' attention by using different promotional strategies.

In ESP perspective, genre analysis allows ESP material developers to shape the language for a particular purpose which meets the need of students who need to be prepared for professional situations. The tourist destination overviews' conventional structure identified in the present study could be further developed into writing materials for ESP learners. This approach can tackle one of the problems in ESP traditional classroom wherein a few sample texts are given to students who then expected to master a certain genre. ESP instructors should not overestimate students by expected expecting them to discover conventional structure of genres themselves. The study of genre allows ESP teachers to break genres into smaller steps which students can follow as a guideline for their textual construction. In addition, the exploration of linguistic features also shed some light on pedagogical orientation. It is necessary to raise awareness of linguistic variations which are embedded in genres. The results of this study do not only support classroom practitioners but also professionals who are required or developing genre competence to take part in tourist destination overview community.

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