



**A Comparative Move Analysis of Principals’
Messages of Independent Schools in the UK and
British International School in Thailand**

Chanaradee Tupjaiharn^{a,*}, Chanika Gampper^b

^a Chanaradeet@gmail.com, Language Institute, Thammasat University,
Thailand

^b Chanika.g@litu.tu.ac.th, Language Institute, Thammasat University,
Thailand

* Corresponding author, Chanaradeet@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study compares the moves and passive voice found in principals' messages from British international schools in Thailand and independent schools in the UK. The increasing trend of Thai students studying abroad and the importance of principals' messages in school marketing provide the background of parent decision making. The objectives were to compare the moves in the promotional genre and the passive voice used in these messages. A corpus of 64 principals' messages (32 from each country) was analyzed for rhetorical moves and passive voice. The findings indicated that while both types of schools generally adhere to standard promotional genre norms, fine differences in linguistic features can be seen, particularly in the use of passive voice, and in the specific emphasis of their persuasive appeals. British international schools in Thailand used passive voice more extensively, especially in relaying information on curriculum and standards, allegedly to formalize their offer and emphasize their British

	heritage. Thai schools emphasized international recognition and UK quality, whereas UK schools highlighted tradition and cultural values. The study provides insight into the rhetorical climate of education marketing across markets and cultures. Keywords: move analysis, principals' messages, promotional genre, passive voice
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Introduction

Current studies show that there is a notable increase in the number of Thai students choosing international schools in Thailand and independent schools in the United Kingdom. This trend has been validated by statistical evidence collected between 2014 and 2017, using the moving average and linear methods, which show that the United Kingdom is the premier choice for Thai students (Lertjanyakit, 2019; Tarry, 2008). However, there is a research gap in understanding how the schools strategically communicate their identities to influence parental decision making.

To fill this gap, this study analyzes how school principals, as key figures, play a central role in shaping the school's online messaging, presenting statements that construct institutional value, credibility, and identity. Principals' messages are the statements that present the value and identity of the school. It is the page that parents searched 14% more often than other pages of the school website (Rally, 2024). This message is important for parents who need to find the right school for their children. Therefore, this study aims to conduct a comparative genre-based and linguistic analysis to explain how British international schools in Thailand and independent schools in the UK employ specific rhetorical strategies to capture this target audience.

The previous research of Teo and Ren's (2019) which analyzed online messages of university presidents provides an essential theoretical framework to this work. Their use of Critical Discourse Analysis in the promotional genre of the university websites to show how leaders of institutions use language to craft a particular brand identity and compete in the education marketplace. They uncovered how "marketization" influences the content and form of these messages, structuring the discourse to recruit prospective students and faculty. Similarly, this study's move analysis will discuss how principals' messages become a form of educational marketing. However, while substantial research has explored institutional discourse in higher education, a comparative genre analysis focusing on secondary school leadership communications across distinct geographic and cultural markets remains significantly under researched.

The comparison between the independent schools in the UK and the British international schools in Thailand offers an interesting socio-cultural comparison. In Thailand, where parents place great emphasis on being able to speak English and gaining international accreditation, the local principals have to be very tactical about how they legitimate themselves through conforming to the global norm. On the other hand, the domestic independent schools in the UK are operating within a mature market, where the British curriculum is already accepted. This research takes into account this context through its double analytical approach.

On a macro level, a five-moves coding model involving Establishing a Presence (P), Educational Values (V), Curriculum and Standards (C), Support System (S), and Encouraging Engagement (E) has been modified from Teo and Ren's (2019) framework, inductively. In micro-level analysis, this paper looks into how often and strategically the use of passive voice is employed in each move. As pointed out by Biber et al. (1999), the passive voice enables writers to focus on the process or the organizational object in contrast to people doing actions, hence creating an authoritative voice in accordance with the effectiveness of the promotional genre.

Analysis was restricted to the written text of principals' messages published on an official website for each school. The text length is between 100 to 500 words. All other forms of school communication or marketing materials fall outside the scope of this study. This paper also examines how the strategic deployment of the passive voice enhances institutional values and persuasive strategies in these messages across the two groups of schools. The geographical scope was bound within the UK and Thailand, while schools included those that were easily accessible through online search engines and that publish a principal's message on their website. The temporal scope concerned only the current messages available on the websites at the time of data collection in 2025.

In the end, through the comparison of the strategies and language used in both the settings, it is expected that this research will help identify how the messages of the principals are employed as an instrument for educational marketing. This study yields significant contributions not only in the area of intercultural rhetoric and genre studies but also in the practical applications for educational marketers and school administrators. The research questions are as follows:

- 1) What are the similarities and differences in the moves in the promotional genre in principals' messages of independent schools in the UK and British international schools in Thailand?
- 2) What are the similarities and differences in the passive construction in principals' messages of independent schools in the UK and British international schools in Thailand?

Literature Review

The Role of School Principals

The role of school principals is central in shaping the educational experiences and outcomes of students, influencing the overall climate and culture of schools (Starratt, 2004). Principals are not only key figures in setting the direction for their schools but also have to deal with all the staff, children, and parents. Their work is challenging, and it is unsurprising that they spend a disproportionate amount of their time on matters relating to extra education (Stevenson-Jacobson et al., 2006)

Another important dimension of the role of a principal involves the capacity to engage with the school community. The study by Epstein (2018), has emphasized that the development of partnerships with parents, organizations within the community, and community members can aid or assist students in learning. The principals of the school liaise between the school and the general community for easy communication and collaboration. Involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes enhances not only support for educational initiatives but also trust and accountability within the community.

The principals also have a role to play in implementing multiple initiatives within schools that would lead to improving student outcomes. For example, it is claimed that principals have a major role in initiating school reform in areas like curriculum implementation and technology use in classrooms (Fullan, 2007). Effective principals are proactive in identifying areas of improvement and marshal resources to stimulate innovation in their schools. The ability to influence and bring change is an integral aspect of educators in today's fast-changing educational times.

While being of utmost importance for successful education, school principals may have to face a myriad of issues in the process of their work processes which might impact the final outcome. The examples of such issues are high stakes testing, lack of resources, and other pressures for accountability, which take away their focus from the leadership functions, according to Grissom et al. (2013). Also, the coronavirus pandemic, which had posed numerous challenges, highlighted the need for school principals to act as adaptive leaders while still taking care of student welfare and performance (Smith and Riley, 2012).

The existing literature has shown the multitude of roles that school principals have to perform when leading the educational change. These include visionary leadership, instructional leadership, community building, and success advocacy for students. Within these ever-changing educational landscapes, successful school leadership fosters learning, inclusiveness, and

development of schools as institutions. Further research might explore the evolution of these roles of school principals due to the challenges.

Passive Voice

The use of passive voice is a matter of great concern, given its impact on objectivity, clarity, and disciplinary convention. Studies have established that the employment of passive structures is widespread across various disciplines whose chief purpose is to highlight the content or result rather than the agent.

Quantitative analysis research on the passive voice has been concentrated mainly on the quantitative aspect of the issue, which involves counting how often the passive voice is used in certain texts and how it is distributed. Djuwari and Prestoza (2024) compared the conclusions in research articles and found out that the passive sentences are used most often to describe the information presented in an objective manner, activities described in the text, and outcomes of actions, therefore sounding formal and neutral. The examples above show that the tendency of using passive constructions in the language is quantitative as it is characteristic of formal academic writings. Fauziah and Bashtomi (2024) revealed another quantitative aspect of usage of passive voice, namely, that there are differences between disciplines because Indonesian journals in English contain more examples of the passive than English journals. According to Hardjanto and Roselani (2022), the occurrence of agentless passives is common in genre such as research articles for the purpose of performing functions such as hedging and impersonalization. These results are in line with the hypothesis that the use of passive voice can be measured and that the frequency of passive voice differs from one discipline to another due to the form and function maps associated with various academic communities. In a systematic review carried out by Lubis et al. (2024), it was found that active voice texts are better understood than passive voice texts.

At the level of frequency, further analysis of passive voice requires the context-based examination of usage of passive voice and its rhetoric purposes. As stated by Djuwari and Prestoza (2024), passive voice continues to be preferred in certain rhetorical situations in which it helps to accomplish particular communicative purposes, such as being objective and focusing on results rather than agents. As was mentioned by Hardjanto and Roselani (2022), agentless passives are used to establish distance between the subject and action performed by the latter in order to hedge and create the impression of scientific objectivity. At this point, the use of passive voice enables the writer to emphasize the action in particular. The use of passive voice in rhetorical situations shows rhetorical techniques. In the genre of

advertisements in schools, for example, passive voice can help in creating benefits in the form of effort made by the school or its staff for the reader or the student. For example, such a statement as "students are provided with a supportive environment" helps to highlight the benefit for the reader or the product or the service in question without any self-promotion.

In general, while active voice is preferred for its interest and clarity, passive voice continues to be used in academic and other professional writing due to tradition, disciplinary convention, and rhetorical needs. Effective pedagogy in academic writing must therefore recognize these functional and disciplinary variations, challenging writers to use active and passive forms in a synthesis appropriate to both stylistic and communicative purposes.

Move Analysis in Promotional Genre Context

Move analysis, originally proposed by Swales (1981), is a method of examining the rhetorical structure of different genres, such as research papers. Swales (1990) later defined moves as units of rhetoric which can include clauses or paragraphs used with specific communicative functions. Other scholars, such as Hyland (2012), have expanded on this method, and advocate the application of data triangulation to ensure maximum validity of analyses using the integration of knowledge from authors, editors, and reviewers.

Against Swales' content-focused approach, Paltridge (1994) promoted a more linguistically oriented approach to move analysis. This debate was further joined by scholars such as Swales (2004), who detailed the linguistic features which cue rhetorical move boundaries. However, Pho (2008) questioned the potential for circularity in this type of embedded bottom-up and top-down analysis, which, she said, is a problem inherent in hermeneutic methods of analysis generally (Geertz, 1980). Flowerdew (2002) suggests that the different levels of analysis function interactively and indicates the complexity in textual interpretation.

The new insights into how marketing messages construct meaning incorporate move analysis into the study of the promotional genre. Therefore, criteria for selecting keywords to identify lexical bundles may overlook other critical signals, as suggested by Moreno (1998) and Parkinson (2011); thus, only focusing on longer word combinations might be too limiting, as Cortes (2013) suggests. This observation brings home the fact that move analysis demands nuance, especially when it involves promotional texts, for which every word is carefully chosen based on a calculated aim of persuasion.

Current studies in promotion settings use move analysis to consider cross-disciplinary variation (Basturkmen, 2012; Cotos et al., 2015, 2017) and cross-cultural variation (Amnuai & Wannaruk, 2013; ElMalik & Nesi, 2008; Loi & Evans, 2010; Yakhontova, 2006). These studies mostly note variations

at the step level, which once more highlights the importance of step-level annotation for replication and rendering analyses more dependable.

The principal's message on a school website is a straight application of the promotional genre to education. It is not an informative text intended to convey facts but to persuade prospective parents and students to join the school. It is a rational piece of communication designed to build credibility and highlight the school's distinctive value proposition. Scholars in discourse analysis and education marketing have both recognized school-related messages as marketization, with schools competing for customers in much the same way as for-profit firms (Teo & Ren, 2019). The message of the principal is, therefore, a significant marketing tool, which functions as a "move" within the overall school's promotional scheme.

A good example is the study entitled "Marketization of Universities in China: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the University President's Message." This study critically investigates how marketization is represented in messages from the presidents of 36 Chinese universities by using critical discourse and genre analysis. It identifies three interconnected discursive strands, namely, bureaucratic, conversational, and advertising, to show how these messages simultaneously project a global image and adhere to national ideologies. Utilizing a coding scheme informed by rhetorical move analysis (Bhatia, 2013; Swales, 1990) in conjunction with a corpus-based approach (Biber et al., 2007), six different rhetorical moves were found.

Teo and Ren's (2019) study of Chinese university presidents' messages is a good example for analyzing promotional genres within the educational context. It utilizes a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, identifying the way institutions frame words in an attempt to create a brand image and navigate market pressure. The research broke down the presidents' messages as follows.

Table 1

List of Code for Move Analysis of Teo and Ren (2019)

Move Name	Description
Welcoming Remark	Aims to capture readers' attention or connect with readers by greeting them or introducing the university.
Mission Statement	Offers information about the aim and mission of the

Move Name	Description
	university, and the contributions the university strives to make.
University Profile	Establishes the university's credentials by highlighting its: 1. academic strength: extols the university's research achievements, facilities, faculty and students, academic programs, and quality graduates and alumni. 2. historical tradition: portrays the history and tradition of the university, such as the origin of the university's name and its cultural heritage. 3. physical landscape: stresses the location and size of the university. 4. political support: emphasizes the governmental recognition and administrative affiliation by stating the support and evaluation from political leaders and governmental institutions. 5. social responsibility: highlights the contributions the university has made to the nation and the society. 6. global outlook: emphasizes the university's role in international cooperation and programs, and its global vision.
Future Aspirations	States the university's goals and communicates its aspirations to the readers.
Closing Remark	Invites readers to find out more about the university, or to study or work at the university.
Signature or Name	Provides the credentials of the president.

Teo and Ren's paper uncovers an essential tension, or "interdiscursivity," where these maneuvers interlace threads of three discourses: a bureaucratic discourse (government affiliation, authority), a conversational discourse (personal, friendly tone), and an advertising

discourse (rival university selling points). This shows how a supposedly unproblematic message is actually a complex negotiation between shifting institutional demands and marketplace exigencies.

Obligatory and Optional Moves

An important characteristic of genre analysis is the categorization of rhetorical moves in terms of their frequency of occurrence, positioning them as obligatory, conventional, or optional (Kanoksilapatham, 2005). For this study, if the move occurs 100% is an obligation which is required and happens in all messages. If the move occurs between 99-60% is a conventional which is utilized on a routine basis albeit not in all messages, mirroring common rhetorical strategies. If the frequency of move occurs below 59% is an optional which is uncommon and is considered non-obligatory.

The typicality of each move in this paper will be established through a frequency analysis, which provides information on how frequent each move is in the corpus.

Categorization helps to distinguish between those features that are the characteristic, defining features of a genre and those that are merely stylistic choices. Biber et al. (2007) and other researchers have noted that it is not true that all of the moves occur with equal frequency. Movement in nearly all members of a genre is obligatory, whereas movements that occur at some frequency are typical or conventional. Movements that are rare are optional.

The place at which a move becomes obligatory as opposed to optional is not rigid and is one that the researcher may determine depending on the type of corpus and what questions are being posed. For example, in a content analysis of biochemistry articles, Kanoksilapatham (2005) created a 60% cutoff point to separate convention and optional movement, arguing that this high threshold was fruitful in isolating seminal differences. However, because the promotional genre, for example, fundraising letters, is argumentative and flexible, a more flexible approach may more accurately document the whole gamut of rhetorical measures employed.

In the analysis here, move frequency in principals' messages will be investigated to see what moves are most central to the promotional genre in this specific educational context. Moves that are present in virtually all messages will be considered obligatory, and moves that are present in a majority of texts will be considered optional, showing their centrality in meeting audience expectations. This approach allows for the creation of a subtle analysis of the rhetorical choices principals undertake to fulfill their communicative goals of enrolling students and parents.

Research Methodology

This research uses the mixed method Comparative Genre Analysis. The quantitative part (macro level) involves calculation of the frequencies and percentages of the moves to demonstrate their structure patterns, along with the frequency density of passive structures per the number of words. The qualitative aspect (micro level) includes contextual analysis of authentic samples of texts in order to show the strategies that the communicative decisions serve. Using the combination of Swales' (1990) Move Analysis and the micro level linguistic analysis of the passive voice, this research tries to explore how these linguistic and communicative features are strategically used in the genre of marketized educational discourse promoted by Teo and Ren (2019).

Data

The data was collected from individual school websites in 2025, where they were mostly shown on the principal's message page. However, the list of British schools in Thailand came from www.international-schools-database.com and independent schools in the UK came from www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk.

www.international-schools-database.com is the online database that allows having a nearly complete overview of the institutions providing international education within a specific country. While the database is comprehensive, some of the small or newer schools may not be included. The database inclusion criteria were checked to ensure the information met the criteria of the research, which may have further limited the pool of schools. This data has been verified, to the degree possible, by accessing schools' websites, against the International Schools Database for accuracy.

www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk is a very informative website with reviews and comprehensive information on a large number of independent schools in the UK; a good source from where information regarding school profiles and their characteristics may be obtained. The Good Schools Guide focuses on schools that meet its particular criteria and are included within its guide. This immediately introduces a problem of selection bias, where schools listed could represent some sort of segment in the independent school market, such as higher-performing schools or more affluent schools. These reviews and comments are subjective in nature and may prejudice a perception about the schools. The analysis therefore placed more reliance on the objective information contained on the websites of the schools than on subjective reviews.

Sampling Method

In this study, messages of UK independent school principals will be analyzed and contrasted with those of British international schools in Thailand. A list of 36 British international schools in Thailand and 119 independent schools in the UK were initially screened for potential entry. These initial samples were subjected to a rigorous selection process, based on certain criteria described below, in order to ensure comparability and relevance with the research questions. This filtering process generated a final sample of 32 schools for each corpus, giving a total of 64 schools to be analyzed. The study will predominantly employ move analysis of the promotion genre, supported by passive voice analysis as a second confirmation method.

The final number of schools sampled for each corpus will be 32 schools, resulting in 64 schools altogether. This size of the corpus fits within the methodology conventions of comparative genre analysis of specialized websites, whereby a sample of 30–40 texts is considered a methodologically sound number for such an analysis (Biber et al., 2007; Pho, 2008).

British International Schools in Thailand

From the initial list of 36 schools, the exclusion process was as follows: four schools were excluded because their websites did not have a clear principal's message page. Of the remaining 32 schools, none were excluded based on the word count or curriculum, as all met the criteria. This process resulted in a final sample of 32 schools that met all the selection criteria.

Selection of schools in Thailand was based on the following criteria for the purpose of comparison and to ensure this was consistent with the UK samples. Only schools which offer the British curriculum were selected for comparison with independent schools in the UK. Schools offering education beyond the primary years' range, which excludes kindergartens and preparatory schools, extending through to the sixth form (ages 11-18) were chosen. Only those schools whose message from the principal is easily located on the institution's web page were considered. The message needs to be between 100 and 500 words to compare it with another corpus. Both boarding and day schools were selected because there are possibilities for Thai students to attend either boarding or day schools in Thailand. Schools that had accreditation from only recognized and reputable accreditation bodies were selected as an assurance of quality, similar to those in the UK context.

Independent Schools in the UK

From the initial list of 119 schools, the exclusion process was more extensive. Schools that did not offer boarding facilities were immediately excluded, as the study focuses on a sample that could be appealing to international students. This reduced the initial list to 65 schools. An additional 18 schools were excluded due to the absence of a principal's message on their website. Finally, 15 schools were excluded because their principal's message was either below the 100-word minimum or above the 500-word maximum. This rigorous filtering resulted in a final sample of 32 schools that met all the required criteria for this study.

Selection of the UK independent schools was based on their mirroring the selection criteria used in Thailand, to ensure a balanced comparison. Schools offering the British curriculum were chosen for consistency with the international schools researched in Thailand. Only schools continuing beyond primary school were selected, offering continuity through to sixth form (ages 11-18). Schools were chosen if there was a message from the principal on the official website of the school. The messages had to fall within 100-500 words so that comparisons would be consistent. Only those schools offering boarding facilities were included. This reflects the possibilities of marketing for international students who need to stay in a boarding house only while studying in the UK. In addition, schools were selected on the basis of recognition from reputable sources, such as the Good Schools Guide, ensuring a standard of quality comparable to those in the Thai context.

Size of Corpus

The corpus used in this study consisted of 20,305 words across 64 online principals' messages, with 32 messages in each corpus. The word ranges of the Thai corpus and the UK corpus are 158–488 and 157–497 respectively. The information below details the sizes of the corpora, including their mean and standard deviation of message length. The mean length of messages in the Thai corpus was approximately 318.47 words with a standard deviation of about 105.58, while in the UK corpus, the mean was approximately 316.06 words with a standard deviation of about 104.29.

Since both corpora have means of about 316-318 words, it is a sign that, on average, principals in both international (Thai) and UK independent schools post messages of about the same average length. An SD of about 105 suggests that most of the messages deviate from the mean by about 105 words in either direction. The similar means and SDs are a sign that both groups tend to post messages of the same length with similar variability by nature.

This could suggest equivalent practices or cultural assumptions regarding writing messages from principals in the two environments.

Data Analysis

The study uses a dual approach in data analysis of both macro and micro analyses of the principal's messages from the two selected corpora: British International Schools in Thailand and Independent Schools in the UK.

Macro Analysis: Move Analysis in the Promotional Genre

The macro analysis involved manually reading each message of a principal to identify and categorize the rhetorical moves employed, following the framework of the promotional genre. It enabled an in-depth study of the way messages were written in order to influence and gain the attention of the target audience that consisted of both parents and students. Micro analysis results complemented macro analysis results in providing a comprehensive understanding of the texts.

A message of each principal was manually analyzed and coded in terms of established moves including Establishment of Presence, Highlighting of Educational Values, Emphasizing Curriculum and Standards, Showcase Community and Support, and Call to Engagement.

Table 2

List of Codes for Move Analysis

Move Name	Code	Description
Establishing a Presence	Move P	Introducing the school name
Educational Values	Move V	School's educational philosophy and core values
Curriculum Achievements and Standards	Move C	Information about the curriculum offered and academic

Move Name	Code	Description
Support System	Move S	School's community, support structures, and personalized
Encouraging Engagement	Move E	Calls to action for parents and students to engage further, such as visiting the school or scheduling a tour.

The frequency and distribution of each move were documented, allowing an overall picture of how each school represented its values and offerings. The results were compared to outline the similarities in the moves used in the messages of principals. Such a comparison underlined the most common strategies adopted in both contexts and allowed answering Research Question 1.

An important characteristic of genre analysis is the categorization of rhetorical moves in terms of their frequency of occurrence, positioning them as obligatory, conventional, or optional (Kanoksilapatham, 2005). The typicality of each move will be established through a frequency analysis, which provides information on how frequent each move is in the corpus.

Micro Analysis: Passive Voice

For quantitative analysis, the passive analysis in this study counted only full passive clauses and reduced passive clauses, excluding past participles solely functioning as adjectives. Passive constructions were counted in order to compare both datasets and to determine how often the passive voice had been used in principle messages.

For contextual analysis, the passive construction was analyzed in depth regarding the context in which it occurred; this referred to whether the focus was on the action performed or on the subjects receiving the action. Thematic similarities in the use of passive voice were underlined to outline how principals in both contexts placed emphasis on the particular aspects of their educational message.

The results regarding passive voice were summarized, outlining any striking resemblance in style, emphasis, and rhetorical intent of the two contexts, with a view to answering Research Question 2.

Linking Move Analysis (macro) and Passive Voice Analysis (micro)

Along with the analysis, what tied the micro and macro analyses together was how the passive voice contributed to the rhetorical effect of each move.

Each message was manually coded according to the five moves identified in the data. After the coding, the study then isolated the use of the passive construction within each of the five moves to examine the effect of the construction in achieving the promotional objectives of the messages. Converging results from the move analysis and the identification of passive voice used to describe general themes suggest implications for best practices in writing principals' messages within the promotional genre of educational communications.

Results

This section reports on the analysis, which combined a macro-level analysis of moves frequency and pattern with a micro-level analysis of passive voice constructions to determine how promotional genre is used within these two contexts.

Research Question 1. What are the similarities and differences in the moves patterns in the promotional genre in principals' messages of independent schools in the UK and British international schools in Thailand?

Move Frequency and Pattern

All messages were analyzed to establish the rhetorical moves employed and group them under categories. The complete profile of the corpus is provided in Appendix A. The findings indicate the similarities and differences of the promotional strategies the schools undertake, providing an understanding of what the schools are most concerned with while communicating and how they attempt to persuade.

Table 3

Number of Moves in Two Corpora

List of Move	Thai Corpus	UK Corpus
Move P: Establishing a Presence	32 (100%)	32 (100%)
Move V: Educational Values	30 (93.75%)	32 (100%)

List of Move	Thai Corpus	UK Corpus
Move C: Curriculum and Standards	27 (84.38%)	26 (81.25%)
Move S: Support System	29 (90.63%)	29 (90.63%)
Move E: Encouraging Engagement	26 (81.25%)	25 (78.13%)
Total number of move	144	144

Table 4

The Most Frequent Patterns of Moves in Two Corpora (top 5)

Pattern of Move	Thai Corpus	UK Corpus	Total number of occurrences
Pattern 1: P, V, C, S, E	14 (43.75%)	10 (31.25%)	24
Pattern 4: P, C, V, S, E	4 (12.50%)	3 (9.38%)	7
Pattern 11: P, V, S, E	1 (3.13%)	5 (15.63%)	6
Pattern 5: P, C, S, V, E	1 (3.13%)	2 (6.25%)	3
Pattern 9: P, V, C, S	2 (6.25%)	1 (3.13%)	3

Move Analysis

According to Table 2, Number of Moves in Two Corpora, both the Thai and UK corpora reveal a nearly identical distribution of moves within the five categories: Establishing a Presence, Educational Values, Curriculum and Standards, Support System, and Encouraging Engagement. This suggests that principals in both contexts prioritize these aspects above all else in promoting their schools.

Establishing a Presence (Move P) is the most frequent move within the two corpora, appearing in 100% of all messages. It is considered an obligatory move without which the text would not function as an introductory message. It indicates just how important having an effective good starting point is, as well as officially informing the reader of the existence of the school by welcoming them to it.

"Welcome to RBIS International School! On behalf of our entire RBIS community, I am delighted to extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to all students, parents, and visitors."

(TH6 Rasami British International School)

"I am very proud, as the Headmaster of Kimbolton, to welcome you to our very special school."

(UK15 Kimbolton School)

Educational Values (Move V) appear recurrently across both corpora, with Move V at 93.75% in the Thai corpus and at 100% in the UK corpus. This demonstrates the high importance schools place on affirming their educational philosophy.

"Our educational philosophy is centered around the core values of Respect, Integrity, Care, Enquiry, Resilience, and Reflection."

(TH23 Garden International School, Bangkok)

"We believe in the pursuit of academic excellence and success, but this is not at the expense of an all-round and broad education."

(UK16 Repton School)

Curriculum and Standards (Move C) appears in 84.38% of Thai messages and 81.25% of UK messages.

"At SIH, we take pride in offering a truly comprehensive and diverse curriculum that spans from Early Years to Year 13."

(TH13 Southern International School Hat Yai)

"Through superb teaching and a wealth of academic choices we make certain that every young person is supported, encouraged and driven to achieve their very best."

(UK24 Clifton College)

Support System (Move S) appear recurrently across both corpora at 90.63% in the Thai corpus and at 90.63% in the UK corpus. This demonstrates the high importance schools place on support systems.

"Our ethos emphasizes academic excellence, character development, and global citizenship, while creating an abundance of opportunities for personal growth, self-exploration and leadership development."

(TH6 Rasami British International School)

"To join our school at any stage is to enter a friendly and inclusive environment that provides the space and support for children to grow into themselves."

(UK15 Kimbolton School)

Encouraging Engagement (Move E) is the least common move in both corpora, appearing in 81.25% of Thai messages and 78.13% of UK messages, indicating that schools want to engage their audience. This feature may be less stressed than creating their Presence, Values, and Support systems.

"I invite you to explore our website and learn more about our RBIS community."

(TH6 Rasami British International School)

"I look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to our vibrant Stoke College community."

(UK2 Stoke College)

From the perspective of genre analysis, these frequencies reflect a hierarchical structure in the promotional genre of principals' messages. The establishment of a Presence (Move P), which is present in all messages under analysis, can be seen as an obligation move. Educational Values (Move V), Curriculum and Standards (Move C), and Support System (Move S) are conventional moves, realized in a vast majority of texts, consistent with their high expectation and salience in constructing an image of the comprehensive school. Encouraging Engagement (Move E), while the least frequent, still appears in a substantial number of messages (26 and 25 occurrences), classifying it as a conventional move rather than merely optional, as a call to action is a typical persuasive strategy in promotional discourse.

Passive Voice Frequency and Occurrence

Research Question 2. What are the similarities and differences in the passive construction in principals' messages of independent schools in the UK and British international schools in Thailand?

Frequency of Passive Voice

The study found a wide difference in the overall frequency of passive voice constructions between the two corpora. The Thai corpus consisted of a more frequent use of passive voice constructions than the UK corpus. Specifically, the Thai corpus included a total of 82 passive voice constructions in 10,191 words, while the UK corpus included 51 in 10,114 words.

Table 5*Overall Frequency of Passive Voice Constructions*

Corpus	Total Word Count	Total Passive Voice Constructions
Thailand (TH)	10,191	0.82%
United Kingdom (UK)	10,114	0.51%

Analysis

The higher rate of passive voice in the Thai corpus might be an indication of greater emphasis on formal or objective tone in promotion writing. Both corpora use passive voice to describe the specific activities that a school undertakes to develop and nurture learners.

Passive voice is employed time and again to draw focus to the recognition, accreditation, and awards achieved by a school.

"Our students **are encouraged** to be enquiring, creative, reflective and motivated learners and their individual talents **are nourished and celebrated** within our inclusive environment".
(TH4 Bangkok International Preparatory & Secondary School)

"Sixth Form students **are prepared** for entry into top universities and they have a choice between two acclaimed systems".
(TH26 Singapore International School of Bangkok)

"We **were founded** in 1555 after a bequest to the Fishmongers' Company to set up a school by Sir John Gresham".
(UK9 Gresham's)

"The School **was founded** in 1712 at Greenwich, London, by Royal Charter to 'improve navigation' through education".
(UK10 The Royal Hospital School)

Both corpora favor agentless passive constructions. This is typical in promotional writing, where the focus is on what is being offered to the audience and they already know the actor. This approach helps create a perception of communal responsibility and shared achievement. The passive voice is also used with modal verbs to highlight future benefits and opportunities for students, such as "can be found" and "will be welcomed"

Linking Passive Voice Analysis and Move Analysis

The data in Table 6 corroborates the overall finding from Move Frequency and Pattern as the Thai corpus exhibits a higher total frequency of passive voice constructions (82 times) compared to the UK corpus (51 times). More significantly, this table reveals the specific rhetorical functions where passive voice is most prevalent in each context.

Table 6

Passive Voice in the List of Moves of Two Corpora

List of Move	Thai Corpus	UK Corpus
Move P: Establishing a Presence	11 (13.41%)	8 (15.69%)
Move V: Educational Values	32 (39.02%)	22 (43.14%)
Move C: Curriculum and Standards	18 (21.95%)	4 (7.84%)
Move S: Support System	17 (20.73%)	13 (25.49%)
Move E: Encouraging Engagement	4 (4.88%)	4 (7.84%)
Total number of passive voice in the list of moves	82	51

Move V (Educational Values) and Passive Voice

According to Table 6, the highest concentration of passive voice is found in the "Educational Values" (Move V) section for both corpora, accounting for 39.02% of passive constructions in the Thai corpus and 43.14% in the UK corpus. This suggests a shared rhetorical move in both educational settings; when articulating the school's underlying philosophy and teaching approaches, principals tend to use the passive voice. This construction has the effect of depersonalizing the agent, making the values themselves or the recipients of these values the focus. These values present as inherent principles or normative practices of the institution, rather than actions initiated by people.

"I **was also molded** by good teachers at school who taught me about the value of serving others; that I think is what real education truly entails."

(TH1 Harrow International School)

"Students **are recognised** as individuals at St. Andrews and **are encouraged** to challenge themselves in all areas of school life and to do their best."

(TH18 St. Andrews International School, Dusit)

"Kimbolton is, first and foremost, a happy place where every child **is valued**."

(UK15 Kimbolton School)

"...the talents of each individual **are nurtured and valued**..."

(UK16 Repton School)

Move C (Curriculum and Standards) and Passive Voice

In terms of passive voice, the most notable differences between the two corpora are seen in the "Curriculum and Standards" (Move C) move. The Thai corpus applies passive voice much more often (18 times) for this move compared to the UK corpus (4 times). This results in passive constructions making up 21.95% of the total passive voice usage in the Thai corpus, but only 7.84% in the UK corpus. This huge discrepancy indicates another mode of presenting scholastic offerings. In the Thai context, greater reliance on passive voice to describe curriculum, credentials, and academic performance diverts attention away from implementers to curriculum, thus the educational process, and the outcomes. This perhaps serves to foreground the quality and structure of the academic program itself, or to establish British curricula as "standard" and internationally known, and thus to establish trust and credibility without focusing on the specific implementers. This is particularly relevant given that Thai parents often prioritize English proficiency and academic rigor when choosing an international school.

"We aim to give our children the very best possible start to their learning journey and to provide a firm foundation on which their future education, life experiences, and aspirations **can be developed, nurtured, and built upon**."

(TH21 Shrewsbury International School City Campus)

"The superb range of extra-curricular activities (ECAs) **are underpinned** by astonishing facilities."

(TH10 BCIS, Phuket)

"Our broad curriculum **is guided** by a desire to see young adults emerge with many strings to their bows"

(UK15 Kimbolton School)

"Our students' hard work **is rewarded** with outstanding GCSE and A Level results, and Concord **is annually ranked** very highly in UK school league tables"

(UK20 Concord College)

Move P (Establishing a Presence) and Passive Voice

The "Establishing a Presence" (Move P) move indicates a relatively similar application of passive voice in the two corpora (Thai: 11; UK: 8). This accounts for 13.41% of passive constructions in the Thai corpus and 15.69% in the UK corpus. This is related with the manner in which schools would formally introduce themselves, describe their history, or make their purpose known, often resorting to passive constructions for the purpose of emphasizing the institutional rather than personal founders.

"King's in Wimbledon **was established** by the British Prime Minister, The Duke of Wellington, by royal charter from His Majesty King George IV."

(TH5 King's College International School Bangkok)

"We **were founded** in 1600 as a grammar school for Huntingdonshire and, since becoming fully independent in 1977, have continued to keep local families at the heart of all we do."

(UK15 Kimbolton School)

Move S (Support System) and Passive Voice

In the "Support System" (Move S) move, the use of passive voice is also the same by both corpora (Thai: 17; UK: 13), making up 20.73% and 25.49% of their total passive constructions, respectively. This includes descriptions of pastoral care, student services, or community building, where what is provided to or experienced by the students is emphasized.

"Conveniently located in Chonburi, our 80-acre, purpose-built campus and its state-of-the-art facilities **were designed** by top architects and designers."

(TH8 Rugby School Thailand)

"All of this **is underpinned** by our pastoral care, rooted in the House system with its determined focus on seeing every young person make the very most of their time at Clifton, growing into kind, empathetic individuals."

(UK24 Clifton College)

Move E (Encouraging Engagement) and Passive Voice

Both corpora also have a low and regular frequency of passive voice constructions for the "Encouraging Engagement" (Move E) move. This is expected because guidance is direct and active in nature. When passive voice is used here, it tends to emphasize the outcome or experience of involvement.

"Please follow our story online. Most of all, please come and visit us where you **will be warmly welcomed**."

(UK17 Kingswood School)

"Together, we will continue to uphold the legacy of excellence that Harrow Bangkok **is known for**, and I am confident that our future will be bright and inspiring."

(TH1 Harrow International School)

Based on the analysis, Move V (Educational Values) contains a much higher percentage of passive voice forms, showing a considered use of passive voice as a means of stating values in an objective and authoritative manner. The Thai corpus uses greater frequencies of passive forms in Move P (Establishing Presence) than the UK corpus, which may suggest that Thai schools are using passive voice to write in a more formal tone for their openings. While both corpora have the same frequency of passive voice for Move E (Encouraging Engagement), both more frequently use active voice when requesting audience action. These findings show that schools use passive voice as a strategic device to achieve some rhetorical functions in their promotional rhetoric. Differences in passive voice frequency between the Thai and UK corpora could indicate cultural differences in communication or marketing policy differences.

The main purpose of passive voice is to show its constructs, the presentation and reception of information. For instance, the high rate of occurrence of agentless passive sentences within the two corpora allows for the principals to point to the activities and their implications to the school's programs without overtly mentioning referents or named institutions. This can produce a perception of communal responsibility and joint achievement. It also sustains the image of the school. Moreover, the type of passive constructions employed can add force to the argumentative content. For example, the combination of modal verbs with the passive voice emphasizes potential development and growth in the school environment.

The conclusions using this analysis of passive voice occurrence are thus an important component for the moves analysis. By examining the specific moves used within the principals' messages and how these are performed by means of language features such as the use of the passive voice,

we can better understand how these schools deploy persuasive practice to sell their schools and recruit prospective students and parents.

Discussion and Conclusion

This section will present an interpretative analysis of the results obtained from the study, focusing on each research question one by one and looking at the significance of similarities and differences observed in the two schools.

Similarities and Differences in Rhetorical Moves (RQ 1)

The equivalence in overall distribution and dominant patterns of rhetorical moves between the British international schools in Thailand and independent schools in the UK suggests a point where it managed to become a promotional genre in the education sector. The repeated use and frequent employment of "Establishing a Presence" (Move P), "Educational Values" (Move V), and "Support System" (Move S) are indicative that these are the key rhetorical moves for the making of a first impression, stating core beliefs, and reassuring potential families of the nurturing climate. This accords with genre theory, where it is assumed that textual patterns recur as a result of communicative functions, and in promotion genres where audience demands are paramount, as is credibility building.

The frequency of the P, V, C, S, E sequence in both corpora again corroborates this idea of an ideal persuasive text. This sequence of introduction moves from core values, student support, and finally, an open invitation to continuous participation. One important finding that emerged from this research was the identification of an obligatory move for this particular genre of promotion. In the words of Bhatia (2013), the establishment of credentials is an obligatory move in the promotional genre. Indeed, this finding validates this since "Establishing a Presence" (Move P) occurs in 100% of the messages in the Thai and UK corpora. This move goes beyond being merely a greeting but acts as the key move for establishing legitimacy in terms of the institution and the principal to the reader. Indeed, as Teo and Ren (2019) found out, in this shift, it is not about the mere delivery of cold and unemotional facts but rather the conscious selection of these facts with the intention of presenting them in the most attractive manner, thus blurring the line between informing and selling.

The remarkable similarity in the distribution of language features and the common emphasis on the P, V, C, S, E sequence among British international schools in Thailand and independent schools in the UK highlighted the standardized development of the principal's message into an

advanced selling discourse. In both cases, the emphasis on “Establishing a Presence” (Move P) as an obligatory move, which appears in 100% of the corpora, supports Bhatia’s (2013) claim that credential-building is essential in persuasive discourse. The common emphasis on legitimizing the institution and core values and support systems indicates a global trend towards the marketisation of education. In the end, the similarities between the two corpora indicate that, irrespective of geographical location, the communicative purpose of the principal’s message has developed from a simple informational greeting to a tool that aims to combine institutional credibility with persuasive “selling,” meeting the demands of a contemporary, consumerist audience.

Similarities and Differences in Passive Voice Usage (RQ 2)

It was found that the Thai corpus made greater use of passive voice than the UK corpus. This suggests a more pronounced preference for a more formal, objective, perhaps more conservative tone in British international schools' marketing writing in Thailand. Passive voice, in drawing the focus on the action or receiver rather than the agent, can be employed to lend an air of universality, set facts, or institutional endorsement.

The frequent heavy use of passive voice in "Educational Values" (Move V) in both contexts is particularly illuminating. In reporting values such as "Excellence is valued" or "Students are encouraged," it is shown that passive voice has the function of making the values seem intrinsic to the organization, rather than dependent on specific individuals. This helps to produce a strong institutional culture, presenting the values as facts instead of as ephemeral statements that are dependent on specific personnel.

The biggest difference is in "Curriculum and Standards" (Move C). The much higher use of passive voice in the Thai corpus (18 times, which is 21.95% of the total passive constructions) has a clear rhetorical purpose. Within an international context in which parents might be seeking reassurance as to the quality and authenticity of a British curriculum, using passive voice (e.g., "Our curriculum is based on the National Curriculum for England," "students are being prepared for examinations") can be employed to Objectify the Curriculum, Highlight Outcomes and Signal Conformity and Credibility.

This strategic linguistic move is consistent with marketization of higher education described by Fairclough (1993), where quality is measured in terms of 'quantifiable performative achievements' and prestige.

The passive voice removes the focus from a particular teacher, a stranger to the potential parent, and places it on the curriculum itself, which is known and reliable. It would be a valuable strategy to engage parents in a

busy marketplace, especially in the geopolitics of today. Up to 2026, the United Kingdom is still a top choice for Thai students, a trend supported by an original academic system and top universities, compared with the United States where unstable political issues exist. UK education has traditionally been seen as a safer and surer gamble on the future of a child. Therefore, Thailand principals have to utilize language strategically within the information they send in order to legitimize and formalize their provisions, reassuring parents that sending a child to a British international school is a straightforward ticket to a stable and internationally recognized UK higher education.

Conversely, the lower UK independent school use of passive voice in Move C (4 times, which is just 7.84% of the total passive constructions) can point to a greater emphasis on the teacher's active role, new methods of teaching, or unique aspects of their curriculum actively being promoted by the school. This would be consistent with a home market where the "British curriculum" is taken for granted, and the variation occurs in the manner in which it's taught.

This study analyzed and compared the rhetorical moves and passive voice use in principals' messages from British international schools in Thailand and independent schools in the UK. As a result of the study, it is found that although there are similarities between the two kinds of schools in regard to the promotional genres used in the macro level of message design, some differences appear in terms of language use, especially use of passive voice, and persuasion strategy. It appears that the British international schools in Thailand are more certain about passive voice use in relation to describing standards and curriculum, which may be due to their attempt to formalize their offerings and use their British identity as leverage.

One of the key discoveries of this study is that "Establishing a Presence" (Move P) is an obligatory move in the promotional genre of principals' messages of both types of schools. The discovery supports the theoretical study of Bhatia (2013) in genre analysis, that this type of function is important for establishing an institution's credibility and positioning itself in a competitive market. The prevalence of this move in every single one of the messages analyzed highlights its fundamental importance in the communicative work of these texts. It suggests that regardless of location, culture, or local market pressures, the first and most basic rhetorical task for a principal is to establish their authority and that of the identity of the school.

For English language teachers who highlight the significance of promotional messages, they could teach the passive voice as a powerful tool to shift focus from the often unknown agent to the known and reliable institutional element such as the curriculum or values. This is relevant in teaching specialized genres. The teacher should show how the high density

of passive constructions in the Thai corpus such as the "Curriculum and Standards" move serves to objectify, formalize, and legitimize the British provision in a competitive overseas market. ELT curricula should integrate genre analysis, training students to identify obligatory moves that signal the text's persuasive, market-driven purpose, regardless of location.

For the audience of potential parents, the study provides a critical lens. It is important for parents to know that the frequent use of the voice without an agent is a conscious strategy on behalf of organizations, which stresses the importance of the quality and stability of institutions, not of individual employees. The understanding that the "Establishing a Presence" maneuver is obligatory makes one conclude that the main idea of the principal's text is basically persuasive and oriented on the market logic of establishing credibility before sharing information.

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About the Authors

Chanaradee Tupjaiharn: A master's degree candidate in English Language Teaching at the Language Institute, Thammasat University, and an educational counselor. Her current research interests include the marketization of international education and the linguistic strategies used to establish credibility in Thailand education.

Chanika Gampper: A Ph.D. holder in Second Language Acquisition and Teaching from the University of Arizona, USA, and currently a lecturer at the Language Institute, Thammasat University, Thailand, with primary research interests including corpus linguistics, language testing and evaluation, genre analysis, contrastive rhetoric, and discourse analysis.

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Appendix A
Table 7*Corpus of Principals' Messages of British International Schools in Thailand*

No.	British International School in Thailand	Number of words	Move
TH1	Harrow International School	487	P, S, V, E
TH2	Bromsgrove International School Thailand (BIST)	478	P, C, V, S, E
TH3	Crescent International School	478	P, V, C, S, E
TH4	Bangkok International Preparatory & Secondary School	474	P, V, C, S, E
TH5	King's College International School Bangkok	455	P, V, S
TH6	Rasami British International School	445	P, V, C, S, E
TH7	Regent's International School, Rama 9	439	P, V, C, S
TH8	Rugby School Thailand	402	P, C, V, S
TH9	Mooltripakdee International School	396	P, V, C, S, E
TH10	BCIS Phuket	394	P, C, V, S, E
TH11	HeadStart International School	355	P, C, S, V, E
TH12	Regents International School Pattaya	353	P, V, C, S, E
TH13	Southern International School HatYai	342	P, V, C, S, E
TH14	Denla British International School	341	P, V, C, S, E
TH15	St. Andrews International School, Sathorn	336	P, C, V, S, E
TH16	St. Andrews International School, Green Valley	335	P, V, S, C, E

No.	British International School in Thailand	Number of words	Move
TH17	St. Andrews International School, Bang Na	329	P, V, S, E
TH18	St. Andrews International School, Dusit	317	P, V, C, S, E
TH19	Malvern College	292	P, V, C, S, E
TH20	Garden International School, Rayong	283	P, V, C, S, E
TH21	Shrewsbury International School City Campus	279	P, V, C, S, E
TH22	Brighton College International School	245	P, V, C, S, E
TH23	Garden International School, Bangkok	236	P, C, V, S, E
TH24	Ascot International School	224	P, V, C, S
TH25	Heathfield International School	206	P, V, C, S, E
TH26	Singapore International School of Bangkok	205	P, C, V, E
TH27	St. Stephen's International School, Khao Yai	186	P, S, C, E
TH28	Panyaden International School	185	P, V
TH29	Beaconhouse Yamsaard International School	180	P, V, C, S, E
TH30	Hua Hin International School	179	P, S, C, V, E
TH31	Wellington College International School Bangkok	177	P, S, V, C
TH32	Shrewsbury International School Riverside	158	P, V, E
Total number of words		10,191	

Appendix B

Table 8

Corpus of Principals' Messages of Independent Schools in the United Kingdom

No.	Independent School in the United Kingdom	Number of words	Move
UK1	Eastbourne College	497	P, V, C, S, E
UK2	Stoke College	491	P, V, S, C, E
UK3	Cheltenham College	471	P, V, C, S, E
UK4	Prior Park College	454	P, V, C, S, E
UK5	Kingsley School	448	P, V, C, S, E
UK6	St John's School (Leatherhead)	426	P, V, C, S, E
UK7	Wychwood School	424	P, V, C, S, E
UK8	Sevenoaks School	405	P, V, C, S, E
UK9	Gresham's	388	P, V, S, E
UK10	The Royal Hospital School	379	P, C, V, S, E
UK11	Stowe School	360	P, V, C, S
UK12	Framlingham College	359	P, V, S, E
UK13	Caterham School	349	P, V, C, S, E
UK14	Oakham School	346	P, V, S, E
UK15	Kimbolton School	339	P, S, V, C, E
UK16	Repton School	329	P, C, S, V, E
UK17	Kingswood School	320	P, V, C, S, E
UK18	Leweston School	311	P, C, S, V, E
UK19	Dauntsey's School	295	P, V, C, S, E

No.	Independent School in the United Kingdom	Number of words	Move
UK20	Concord College	294	P, V, C, E, S
UK21	Sedbergh School	256	P, C, V, S, E
UK22	Durham School	247	P, V, S, C
UK23	Monkton Combe School	223	P, C, V, E
UK24	Clifton College	218	P, C, V, S
UK25	Rossall School	210	P, C, V, S, E
UK26	Cobham Hall	203	P, V, S
UK27	Rugby School	196	P, V, S, C
UK28	Giggleswick School	190	P, S, V, C
UK29	Brighton College	187	P, V, C
UK30	Mill Hill School	179	P, V, C, E
UK31	Ampleforth College	163	P, V, S, E
UK32	Culford School	157	P, V, S, E
Total number of words		10,114	