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Ciclo XXXII

**Max Mara's corporate communication strategies: a multimodal corpus-based  
analysis of press releases, articles on WeChat and news reports**

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## Abstract

(English version)

The Italy-China trade exceeded 50 billion U.S. dollars in 2018 and their investment surpassed 20 billion dollars in accumulative terms. With the growing importance of Sino-Italian trade relations, Italian fashion is immensely popular among Chinese consumers. The present study draws attention to how corporate communication strategies are realized from a corpus linguistic perspective and a multimodal approach through a case study of successful Italian fashion communication. This thesis is designed to identify the female image conveyed by Max Mara: from press releases to articles of Max Mara's Chinese official account on WeChat and their subsequent news reports, and to investigate the multimodal strategies in the genre of news reports, highlighting corporate communication strategies and the reception of the messages on local media.

This research implies a multi-angled study, with corporate communication at the center as well as a secondary focus on media reception of corporate communication. In order to carry out a corpus-based multimodal analysis, the present study is based on two small corpora: the corporate corpus (CC) and the media corpus (MC). The corporate corpus is composed of 12 press releases in Italian and English (PR-IE) issued by Max Mara from 2017 to 2019 and 6 articles in Chinese (WeChat-Ch) issued by the company's official account on WeChat – Max Mara China for its communication strategy addressed to the Chinese market. The media corpus is composed of 118 news reports (NR-ICE) issued in Italian, English, and Chinese by fashion journalists in online fashion magazines or websites with fashion section covering the same period and events.

The analysis applies both qualitative and quantitative research methods to conduct a more inclusive study. The qualitative research is carried out through the KWIC search use of the *Concordance* tool of the *AntConc* software in order to

investigate the female image conveyed by the three genres. The quantitative analysis emerges by, applying the GeM model (Bateman, 2008), annotations of the base layer, layout layer, and rhetorical layer of each of the news reports in the corpus NR-ICE-T and the building of an XML-based multimodal corpus. The annotated corpus enables an analysis of the various semiotic resources for realizing semantic analysis so as to explore the possible effect of hierarchical rhetorical relations on conveying the female image.

Subsequently, these two analytical areas are complemented by a further contextual analysis, which explores how the messages of corporate communication are received by the local media.

This study contributes to a more refined understanding of the female image of Max Mara woman conveyed by different genres as well as the understanding of the RST relations between language and images employed in news reports. The results of this study could also facilitate the establishment of a profile of the communication strategies adopted by Max Mara while in China, leading to reflections on cross-cultural corporate discourses in the Chinese fashion world in reference to the Italian model, and improving web-based annotation tools applied to build potential future multimodal corpora.

(Italian version)

Nel 2018, i proventi derivanti dagli accordi commerciali conclusi sono stati di 50 miliardi di dollari statunitensi, con investimenti di oltre 20 miliardi di dollari. Attualmente il commercio sino-italiano ha acquistato una rilevanza sempre maggiore, influenzando vari settori produttivi tra cui spicca quello della moda italiana la cui popolarità presso i consumatori cinesi è diventata sempre più eclatante. A partire da una prospettiva linguistica e adoperando un approccio multimodale, il presente studio pone l'attenzione sulla attuazione delle strategie di comunicazione aziendale, prendendo in analisi il caso della celebre azienda di moda italiana Max Mara. Nella fattispecie, l'obiettivo che ci si è posti è quello di identificare il tipo di immagine

femminile comunicato da Max Mara attraverso la stampa e i social media, e investigare le strategie multimodali adoperate a tal fine.

Per l'analisi linguistico-comunicativa, lo studio si basa su due piccoli corpora: un corpus aziendale e un media corpus. Il corpus aziendale è composto da dodici comunicati stampa in italiano e in inglese (PR-IE), pubblicati da Max Mara tra il 2017 e il 2019, e sei recensioni in cinese (WeChat-Ch) prodotte nello stesso periodo dall'account ufficiale WeChat - Max Mara China come strategia comunicativa rivolta principalmente al mercato cinese. Il media corpus è composto da 118 notiziari (NR-ICE) pubblicati in italiano, inglese e cinese da giornalisti del settore e comparsi su diversi siti internet di moda, sempre tra il 2017 e il 2019.

Lo studio si basa sia su metodi di ricerca qualitativi sia su metodi quantitativi al fine di favorire un'analisi più approfondita. La metodologia qualitativa è realizzata tramite l'indice di ricerca KWIC dello strumento *Concordance* del software *AntConc* al fine di analizzare la figura femminile trasmessa dai tre generi. La metodologia quantitativa, invece, emerge attraverso l'applicazione del modello GeM (Bateman, 2008), l'annotazione dello strato di base, di impaginazione e dello strato retorico per ciascun reportage all'interno del corpus NR-ICE-T, e infine, la creazione di corpus multimediale XML. L'annotazione del corpus permette un'analisi delle varie risorse semiotiche al fine di realizzare analisi semantiche così che si possa esplorare il potenziale effetto delle relazioni di gerarchia retorica circa la trasmissione dell'immagine femminile.

Inoltre, queste due aree analitiche sono supportate da una ulteriore analisi contestuale, che esplora come i messaggi aziendali di comunicazione vengano recepiti dai media locali.

Questo studio contribuisce a concepire un'immagine più sofisticata della donna Max Mara così come pensata da diversi generi e delle relazioni RST tra lingua e immagini all'interno dei reportage. I risultati di questa ricerca potrebbero, inoltre, facilitare la creazione di un profilo di strategie comunicative per Max Mara durante il proprio soggiorno in Cina. Così facendo sarà possibile riflettere sul tema delle relazioni inter-culturali tra aziende all'interno del mondo della moda cinese in

riferimento al modello italiano e migliorare le annotazioni basate sullo strumento web per la realizzazione di potenziali corpora multimediali nel futuro.

**Keywords:**

Corporate communication; multimodality; genre analysis; GeM model; corpus linguistics; press releases; social media; news reports; fashion show

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## **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter introduces the background and rationale of the present study (Section 1.1), provides an outline of the research purpose and the research questions that this thesis will answer (Section 1.2), and describes how the materials were selected (Section 1.3) and what methodological approach was adopted in the analysis (Section 1.4) with an overview of the following chapters to conclude (Section 1.5).

### **1.1 Background and rationale for the research**

#### **Why business?**

The year 1970 witnessed the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Italy, the trade and payment agreement was achieved in the following year to promote trade and strengthen the economic tie between them, and China and Italy reached the economic cooperation agreement so as to further their economic relations in 1979. As key trading and investment partners for each other, China and Italy have deeply entwined interests. Italy was the destination of the ancient silk roads and it is also an important point of “One Belt One Road” (The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road), the new direction of Chinese economic policy. In the context of “One Belt One Road” and “Economic Centers along the New Silk Road”, Italy is China's fifth largest trading partner in Europe and China is Italy's largest trading partner in Asia. In 2015, an EXPO was held in Milan and China responded with great enthusiasm that the Chinese pavilion was the second-largest in size after that of Germany. In 2016, The president Xi had a stopover in Sardinia. In May 2017, the then Italian president, Gentiloni, is the only one of the G7 leaders to attend the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing. Italy easily becomes the strategic determination of the Maritime Silk Road with its locale as the Mediterranean center and its highly efficient port infrastructure. The two-way trade exceeded 50 billion U.S. dollars in 2018 and investment surpassed 20 billion dollars

in accumulative terms<sup>1</sup>. In the beginning of the year 2019, President Xi paid a state visit to Italy, which further confirming the close relations between the two countries. During this time, Italy as the first G7 country signed agreements on Belt and Road cooperation with China in addition to a memorandum of understanding, 19 cooperation agreements and 10 commerce agreements, leading to a new strategic chapter of the China-Italy relations. Later this year, China and Italy celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of the establishment of their comprehensive strategic partnership and 2020 marked the 50th anniversary of their diplomatic relations, the year when the friendship between China and Italy was strengthened despite the global COVID-19 pandemic. In February, the Italian government donated abundant medical supplies to China and this olive branch entailing a team of professional medical workers was reciprocated at the time of the aggravated pandemic in Italy. The mutual assistance will further our bilateral diplomatic relations, boosting our economic and trade development. Looking ahead, the China-Italy cooperation will continue to flourish and prosper.

### **Why fashion?**

In the last few years, fashion has increasingly come to be recognized as an aspect of culture and as a creative tool for the expression of one's individuality and personality; as a result, growing attention has been devoted to the investigation and the assessment of the influence it exercises on individuals and societies. As the primary function of dressing is increasingly identified in individual self-expression, fashion is more and more conceptualized as a repository of self-affirming and symbolic significance (cf. Featherstone, 1999; Kellner, 1994; Finkelstein, 1991), and as a way of communicating identities (cf. Barnard, 1996), hence the growing interest in fashion as a social phenomenon actively involved in the shaping and self-representation of society.

The fashion designers present their collections twice a year, usually in

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<sup>1</sup> Jinping Xi, (2019). East Meets West: A New Chapter of Sino-Italian Friendship, Chinadaily.com.cn.

February/March for the autumn-winter collections and September/October for the spring-summer collections at different times for men and women (cf. Bradford, 2014: 129). Collections are usually displayed during a “fashion week”, lasting approximately one week, where fashion designers, brands or houses launch their latest collections of clothing and/or accessories in runway fashion shows to “an international audience of celebrities, reporters, fashion critics and buyers” (Catenaccio, 2008b: 130). But because of many different looks presented in a very short time (in the case of Max Mara around 50), it is difficult for the audience to understand sophisticated materials, fabrics and patterns. In this sense, it is necessary to issue press releases on the occasion of the presentation of the collections, offering specific information to the audience.

Fashion press releases provide text correspondence to the dominant fashion communication such as fashion runway shows. In this sense, it is necessary to focus on the verbal explicitation of fashion press releases issued by the fashion firms in order to study the discursive construction of fashion in contemporary society. In fact, drawing on Negrin (1999), Catenaccio (2008b: 128) suggests that “this topic has attracted a great deal of interest in recent years, with much effort being devoted to exploring the manner in which discourses of fashion shape concepts of the body and of the self, as well as of people’s (especially women’s) place and role in society (cf. Negrin 1999 for an overview)”. Although this attention has often extended to studies of fashion advertising, to my knowledge, little focus has been given to fashion press releases or other forms of external corporate communication.

### **Why Max Mara?**

“Made in Italy” is a guarantee of quality; Italian fashion brands are immensely popular among Chinese consumers. The Italian brand Max Mara wanted to promote itself even more strongly in China, where it has become, as many other Western luxury brands, very successful in just a decade. To strengthen its presence in China,

where the brand has been operating since the early 1990s, the Italian high-end fashion house hosted its first fashion show in Shanghai presenting its new Pre-Fall 2017 Collection, which included a capsule collection designed in collaboration with one of China's most prominent artists Liu Wei. The exclusive event, called Monopolis, took place on December 15th, 2016 in Shanghai's Exhibition Center. Given the largely positive responses to Max Mara's show in Shanghai, the company expected to see continued growth in future— which would echo its long-running consistent expansion in China.

## **1.2 Research purpose and research questions**

The purpose of this study is to identify the female image conveyed by Max Mara: from press releases to articles of Max Mara's Chinese official account on WeChat and their sequent news reports, which communicate to the audience the brand's fashion orientation and target customers. While focusing on the female image conveyed by the female-related words employed in the three different genres, I also investigate the multimodal strategies in the genre of news reports, highlighting corporate communication strategies and the reception of the messages on local media. The specific purposes of the study are:

1. To explore and describe the main features of Max Mara press releases (in English and in Italian).
2. To investigate the female image conveyed by Max Mara fashion press releases (in English and in Italian).
3. To investigate the female image conveyed by the articles on WeChat (in Chinese).
4. To investigate the female image conveyed by news reports in the three languages, Italian, English, and Chinese in their similarities and differences.
5. To understand how the news reports in the three languages convey the female image using the multimodal strategies.

Considering these general purposes, the research questions can therefore be formulated as follows:

1. What are the genre characteristics of Max Mara press releases? Are there any significant differences between the Italian and the English versions?
2. What are the differences of the female image of Max Mara woman conveyed by press releases and that by articles on WeChat from the perspective of corporate communication?
3. How is the female image conveyed by Max Mara press releases and articles on WeChat dealt with by fashion journalists in the three languages, respectively Italian, English and Chinese?
4. What are the similarities and differences of the female image of Max Mara woman conveyed by news reports in three different languages, Italian, English, and Chinese?
5. How do the female images conveyed by news reports in three languages manifest themselves in multimodality?

RQ 1, RQ 2, RQ 3, and RQ 4 will be answered in Chapter 5, and RQ 5 will be answered in Chapter 6.

### **1.3 The selection of the brand and texts**

The research materials used to answer these questions are related to the Max Mara fashion shows held in Milan Fashion Week (MFW) from the beginning of 2017 to the end of 2019. Because Max Mara hosted its first fashion show in Shanghai presenting the new Pre-Fall 2017 Collection on December 15th, 2016 in Shanghai, China. The data for the present study are collected after this special show.

The Max Mara brand is chosen because firstly, Max Mara Fashion Group is localized in the area of Modena and Reggio Emilia and occupies an excellent position

in the global market. Secondly, the brand Max Mara is the first and mainline brand among 9 brands of the group and has obtained a good international reputation from the outset. Thirdly, Max Mara hosted its first fashion show in Shanghai presenting the new Pre-Fall 2017 Collection and got largely positive responses, so that the company continues its long-running consistent expansion in China.

All the materials comprise 12 press releases, 6 articles on WeChat and 118 news reports. The materials were originally realized in Italian, English, and Chinese. Press releases are issued by Max Mara, articles by Max Mara official social media platform-WeChat, and news reports by fashion journalists in in online fashion magazines or websites with fashion section. Albei t the unbalanced number of articles among the three types, the data is regarded as appropriate to represent the discourse practice in the different markets.

#### **1.4 Methodological approach**

In order to investigate the different genres referring to Max Mara's new collections (press releases, articles on WeChat) and their subsequent uptake in news reports, this study looks at the communicative function of the texts.

The present study adopts primarily a genre perspective to analyze fashion press releases. Genre analysis is a branch of discourse analysis which aims at exploring generic features of specific discourses. The analysis applies both qualitative and quantitative research methods to conduct a more inclusive study.

The qualitative research is carried out through the KWIC search use of the *Concordance* tool of the *AntConc* software in order to investigate the female image conveyed by the three genres. A *concordance* is "a list of all of the occurrences of a particular search term in a corpus, presented within the context that they occur in" (Baker, 2006: 71). Concordance analysis is more qualitative than other analyses in corpus linguistics.

For quantitative analysis of the news reports, the GeM-annotated sub-corpora are built by applying GeM model (Bateman, 2008) and its annotation schema (Henschel, 2003). The corpus annotation and visualization are realized by using the software of markup language editor and other computational tools. An XML (eXtensible Markup Language) editor called oXygen is employed to annotate the base, the layout and the rhetorical layers of each of the news reports. The gem-tools developed by Hiippala (2015a) are used to visualize three discourse structures (i.e. rhetorical structure, layout structure, rhetorical-layout structure). All the visualization graphs and statistics provided by the gem-tools make it effective to search the sub-corpora for patterns relevant for the research questions.

## **1.5 Outline of the research**

The present chapter has introduced the background, the rationale, and the research purpose of the study. In particular, main questions have been elaborated, the responses to which will be summarized in Section 7.1.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of corporate communication and the media, with a focus on press releases, social media and news reports.

Chapter 3 outlines relevant concepts, theories, and claims which fall under the genre analysis and corpus linguistics.

Chapter 4 describes the details of the corpora built for the purpose of the study and presents the methods and procedures that we followed in analyzing the texts.

In terms of the analytical chapters, Chapter 5 analyzes the female image conveyed by press releases, articles on WeChat and news reports. Afterwards, Chapter 6 investigate the multimodal features of news reports applying GeM model. Finally, in Chapter 7, the research questions are picked up again, and responses are provided. The final sections include a discussion of implications on female image conveyed by Max Mara and Multimodality strategies, with a reflection on research limitations and directions for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2 CORPORATE COMMUNICATION AND THE MEDIA: PRESS RELEASES, SOCIAL MEDIA AND NEWS REPORTS**

This chapter provides an overview of the practice context for the three genres employed in the present study, with the aim to understand the context in which each genre is situated. The chapter will answer the question: “Who communicate with whom, for what purpose, and how?” Section 2.1 gives a more inclusive interpretation of corporate communication, focusing on its definition and purpose. Section 2.2 introduces one key genre of corporate communication – press releases and their subsequent news reports. Section 2.3 discusses about the social media tools for corporate communication, specifically the Chinese social media platform-WeChat.

### **2.1 Corporate communication**

“Communication is the lifeblood of all organizations: it is the medium through which companies large and small access the vital resources they need in order to operate” (van Riel & Fombrun, 2007: 1). Especially in the twenty-first-century context in which corporations act, corporate communication encompasses different communicative activities within the organizational setting, in order to “project one uniform and unambiguous image of what the corporation is and stands for” (Christensen, 2002: 162; as cited in Breeze, 2013: 20). Communication is a critical part of establishing and maintaining reputation which, in turn, is the basis for the sustainability and success of a company due to the fact that the company’s license to operate is granted by its stakeholders<sup>2</sup> (see, e.g., Cornelissen, 2014; Capriotti, 2011; van Riel & Fombrun, 2007).

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<sup>2</sup> Stakeholders in a company can usefully be understood to fall into four categories: customers, who buy from the company; persons and entities linked to the company through some legal or normative relationship, such as shareholders or regulatory agencies; people or entities who habitually work in or with the company, such as employees, unions or suppliers; and the wider public, such as special interest groups, the media or the community (Dowling, 2001: 33).



### **2.1.1 What is corporate communication?**

Perhaps the best way to define corporate communication is to explore how a modern corporate communication function has developed in companies. Until the 1970s, the so called “public relations” (also known as PR), which was tactical in most companies, had been used by corporate communicators to describe interaction with stakeholders; and for quite a long time, the PR firms dominated the communications field. But when other organizations’ stakeholders, both internal and external, wanted to have more information from the company, the simple internal PR function and the outside consultant from a PR firm could not satisfy their requirement. In this situation communication professionals started to consider communication as being more than just “public relations” and “the roots of the new corporate communication function started to take hold” (Argenti, 1996: 75-77). According to Argenti, this new function encompasses different specialized disciplines in a large corporation including “corporate image and identity, corporate advertising, media relations, financial communications, employee relations, community relations and corporate philanthropy, government relations and crisis management” (Argenti, 1996: 77). “An important characteristic of the new function is that it focuses on the organization as a whole and on the important task of how an organization presents itself to all its key stakeholders, both internal and external” (Cornelissen, 2014: 2).

This distinct characteristic also refers to the word “corporate” in corporate communication. “Derived from the latin ‘corpus’ meaning ‘body’ or ‘the whole’, it invites communication specialists to focus, first and foremost, on the problems of the organization as a whole” (van Riel & Fombrun, 2007: 22). In this case, from the company’s perspective, the corporate communication function considers the organization as a whole when communicating with internal and external stakeholders instead of looking at specialized disciplines or stakeholder groups separately (Christensen et al., 2008). Goodman (2000) also states that corporate communication desires to have:

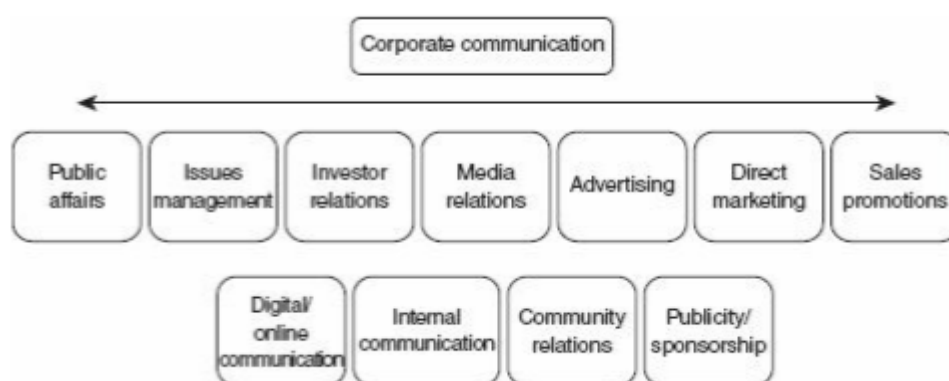
a strong corporate culture; a coherent corporate identity; a genuine sense of corporate citizenship; an appropriate and professional relationship with the press; a quick and responsible way of communicating in a crisis or emergency situation; an understanding of communication tools and technologies; a sophisticated approach to global communication. (p. 70)

In other words, corporate communication can be characterized as a management function that can forge the different aspects of communication together in “a coherent, overall corporate communication strategy” (Breeze, 2013: 20). Van Riel and Fombrun (2007: 25) define corporate communication “as the set of activities involved in managing and orchestrating all internal and external communications aimed at creating favorable starting points with stakeholders on which the company depends”. Corporate communication consists of informative transmission by many specialists and professionals in an organization “with the common goal of enhancing the organization’s ability to retain its license to operate” (ibid). Defined in this way, “corporate communication obviously involves a whole range of ‘managerial’ activities such as planning, coordinating and counseling the CEO and senior managers in the organization as well as ‘tactical’ skills involved in producing and disseminating messages to relevant stakeholder groups” (Cornelissen, 2014: 2-3). Cornelissen (2014) also provides a similar definition of corporate communication based on these characteristics:

Corporate communication is a management function that offers a framework for the effective coordination of all internal and external communication with the overall purpose of establishing and maintaining favourable reputations with stakeholder groups upon which the organization is dependent. (Cornelissen, 2014: 3)

Van Riel and Fombrun (2007: 22) state that “corporate communication encompasses three types: marketing communications, management communications and

organizational communications”<sup>3</sup>. This study concentrates mainly on organizational communications which encompass public relations, corporate advertising, investor relations, etc. In fact, the corporate communication system includes several disciplines such as public relations, marketing, investor relations, employee communications, and also institutional communications (ibid); several years later, Cornelissen (2014: 27), in his work, reviewed “different perspectives on the relationship between two main disciplines of communication: marketing and public relation”, and he indicated that “corporate communication is a management framework to guide and coordinate marketing communication and public relations”. Figure 2.1 shows this integrated framework of corporate communication. Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, press releases can be organized as part of public relations activities. But in which form is corporate communication presented?



**Figure 2.1** Corporate communication as an integrated framework for managing communication (Cornelissen, 2014: 28)

<sup>3</sup> Management communications take place between the management level of the organization and its internal or external audiences; marketing communications get the bulk of the budgets in most organizations, and consists of product advertising, direct mail, personal selling, and sponsorship activities; and organizational communications encompass public relations, public affairs, investor relations, corporate advertising, environmental communication, and internal communication. (van Riel & Fombrun, 2007).

### 2.1.2 What is corporate discourse?

Corporations manage many different activities, one of which focuses on the production and distribution of corporate texts. “Corporate texts are distributed through various channels to, and interpreted by, different categories of stakeholders” (Koller, 2009: 270). These different types of texts issued by companies with the purpose of communicating include a wide range of written documents, as well as spoken forms such as job interviews, verbal reports, speeches, or informal communication (Grant & Nyberg, 2011; Breeze, 2013). Corporate texts present multiple genres such as press releases, mission statements, advertisements, annual reports, CSR reports, CEO letters, internal memos, websites, etc. (Breeze, 2013)

Corporate discourse is considered as a different type of communication activities of the company; in other words, it is the product of corporate communication. “The highly complex process of text production, distribution and interpretation constitutes corporate discourse as a social practice” (Fairclough, 1995: 35). Breeze (2013: 19) takes “corporate discourse to include the set of messages that a corporation chooses to send to the world at large, and to its target markets or existing customers”; moreover her understanding of corporate discourse also includes “messages that are intended for internal consumption only, such as those used to communicate with employees, or those intended for a predefined set of stakeholders, such as those who hold shares in the company”. The point is that corporate discourse “as comprising a set of interrelated texts that, along with the structures and practices related to text production, dissemination and consumption, brings an object or idea into being” (Grant & Nyberg, 2011: 536).

Corporate discourse could be understood “not primarily as something contained in genres, or as something used in a dialogic relationship with other parties, but rather as something that can be classified into types or categories according to its functions<sup>4</sup>”.

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<sup>4</sup> “Promotional discourse” can be defined as a type of discourse which is most characteristic of advertising or of public relations activities, and which has the primary purpose of presenting its object in a positive light and persuading the audience to accept or perhaps purchase it; and “informative

(Breeze, 2013: 25). For example, the press release is the promotional and informative genre in corporate discourse. Table 2.1 represents an attempt to illustrate how Breeze (2013: 26) classifies corporate discourse and discourses in different ways: by “origin”, by presumed recipient of “addressee”, by “genre”, and by “discourse type”. Of course, this does not mean that there is no possibility of other divisions, for example, “a classification based on a more fine-grained exploration of origin”.

Defined by origin	Corporate discourse – discourse generated by corporation			
Defined by addressee	Corporate discourse to employees	Corporate discourse to customers	Corporate discourse to investors	Corporate discourse to general public
Defined by genre	Employee Handbook Employee Website Job interview	Advertisement TV commercial Advertorial Customer website	Annual Report Shareholders Website	Website Press releases Sponsorship Activities
Defined by discourse type	Promotion Information Control	Promotion Information	Information Promotion	Promotion Information Legitimation

**Table 2.1** Corporate discourse (Breeze, 2013: 26)

In brief, corporations manage internally and externally corporate communication with their different types of stakeholders through texts. The various corporate communications, in form of press releases, advertisements, annual reports, CSR reports, mission statements, etc. shape the corporate discourse of a specific company which includes the set of messages that a corporation chooses to send to its audiences. Then comes one question: who produces these texts for the purpose of corporate communication and how?

### **2.1.3 Who manages corporate communication for whom and how is it done?**

As previously mentioned, corporate discourse is considered as a different type of discourse” as a type of discourse that is fundamentally concerned with conveying information, facts or news. (Breeze, 2013)

communication activities of the company; here we explore how it is organized inside the corporation. To begin with, it is only natural that the mechanism of the organization intrinsically varies with each company. Functional integration of communication activities relates to their departmental organization (e.g. Holtzhausen, 2002; Argenti, 2006; Vos & Westerhoudt, 2008), and the organization is linked both to “the departmental arrangement” of activities and to “the organizational relationship between departments” (Cornelissen & Thorpe, 2001: 415). The organization of communication activities is also connected to the issue of whether the range of communications disciplines can be centralized in a single department in order to ensure integration or decentralized among multiple departments for the purpose of greater flexibility and adaptation (Argenti, 2006). Pollach et al. (2012) observe that, principally:

there are three ways in which a company can choose to organize its communication activities on a centralization-decentralization continuum: the various activities can be merged into one or two central departments; they can stand alone as separate departments; or they can be subordinated to other functions. (p. 206)

Through surveying corporations, the researchers noticed that corporate communication is indispensable for companies and that many organizations have started to put different communications activities together into a single department so that knowledge and skills of professionals could be shared. Cornelissen (2014: 29) expresses his idea to “consolidate most communication disciplines into a single department so that communication can be strategically managed from a central corporate perspective”; meanwhile he also offers the figure which “illustrates this greater consolidation of communication disciplines in Siemens<sup>5</sup>”. In addition, he observes that “larger organization, such as multi-divisional companies and multinational corporations, often locate the corporate communication at a high level”

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<sup>5</sup> Siemens, one of the world’s largest electrical engineering and electronics companies.

and the communication department mainly reports to the CEO and executive team (ibid).

Moreover, van Riel and Fombrun (2007: 182) also observe that “most companies have created specialized departments responsible for communicating about and with these groups”: for example, *Internal Communications* would face to employees, *Marketing Communications* address the company’s customer accounts, *Investor Relations* communicate with investors and analysts, *Government Relations* or *Public Affairs* take care of the communication with regulators, legislators and other government representatives, and *Public Relations* would interact with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), activist groups, and other concerned stakeholders.

These different departments responsible for communications activities also indicate the possible text receiver of corporate communication, and the categories of people for whom it is done. These audiences are generally the key stakeholder groups on which companies are dependent, such as employees, customers, investors, government, and the public. For instance, the Annual Report must be specifically directed to all shareholders and answer for “the legal requirement to inform about the corporation’s financial performance”; nevertheless, it also “has to be made available to a wider public interested in the company’s activities and provides an excellent opportunity for corporate communication in a wider sense” (Breeze, 2013: 84).

After highlighting that communications activities might be organized in one or various departments comes another question: who produces the texts? Mautner (2008) indicates that in corporate communications literature the question of who produces texts refers to linguistic techniques such as nominalization, passivization, or collective agents; however, in social practice, the corporation owns communication professionals who might belongs to various functional areas and it is also usual to outsource the work to consultancies and agencies.

In their research into corporate communication, Dozier and Broom (1995: 22) identify two main roles for communicators: communication technicians and communication managers; and they define a technician as “a creator and disseminator

of messages, intimately involved in production, operating independent of management decision making, strategic planning, issues management, environmental scanning, and program evaluation”. The communication technicians focus on “activities such as writing communication materials, editing and/or rewriting for grammar and spelling, handling the technical aspects, producing brochures or pamphlets, doing photography and graphics, and maintaining media contacts and placing press releases”; by contrast, the communication managers “make strategy or policy decisions, are held accountable for program success or failure and are primarily concerned with externally oriented, long-term decisions; activities within the manager role include advising management at all levels in the organization with regard to strategic decisions and courses of action taking into account their public ramifications and the organization’s social or citizenship responsibilities, making communication program decisions, evaluating program results, supervising the work of others, planning and managing budgets, planning communications programs and campaigns, and meeting other executives” (Cornelissen, 2014: 96-97).

The next question in line should be the “how”. Managing corporate communication requires a communication strategy that “involves the formulation of a desired position for the organization in terms of how it wants to be seen by its different stakeholder groups”, and also “provides a strategic vision for the entire organization in terms of product, market or geographical scope or matters as fundamental as ownership of the organization”; “a communication strategy in turn is a functional or operational strategy concerned with how corporate communication can develop communication programs towards different stakeholders to achieve that vision and to support the corporate objectives in the corporate strategy” (Cornelissen, 2014: 90-94)). The link between corporate strategy and communication strategy reveals how corporate discourse is shaped by corporate purposes and motivations. Figure 2.2 illustrates this dynamic between the corporate strategy and the corporate communication strategy.



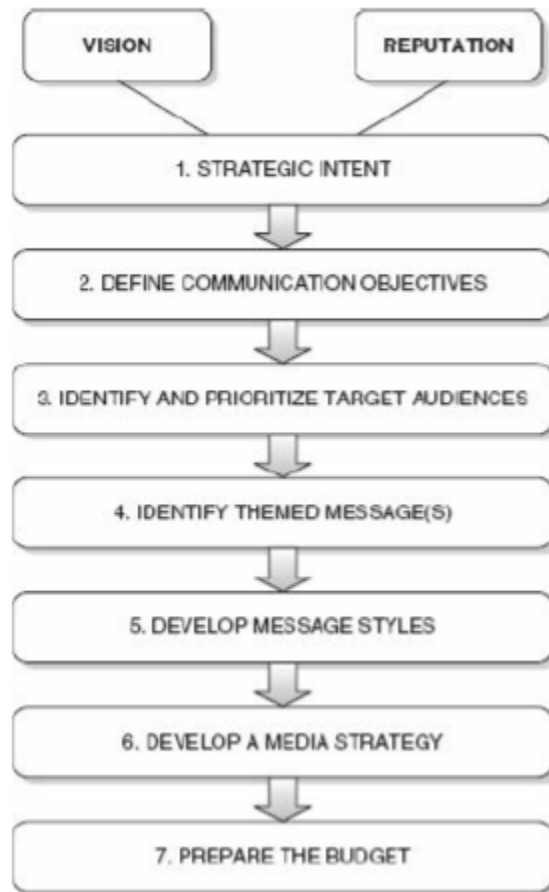


**Figure 2.2** The link between corporate strategy and communication strategy (Cornelissen, 2014: 95)

Then corporate communicators bring the content into specific communication programs and campaigns towards the different stakeholder groups. Cornelissen (2014) describes a framework of planning corporate communication programs and campaigns in the following seven steps:

- 1) Clarify strategic intent of the company;
- 2) Define tightly communication objectives as possible: specific, measurable, actionable, realistic and timely;
- 3) Identify and prioritize target audiences;
- 4) Identify themed messages;
- 5) Develop message styles;
- 6) Develop a media strategy;
- 7) Prepare the budget.

**Figure 2.3** below shows a framework for identifying the purposes of corporate communication and for planning effective communication programs and campaigns.



**Figure 2.3** The process of planning communication programs and campaigns (Cornelissen, 2014: 112)

In summary, communications activities of the corporation might be organized in one or various departments and communication practitioners can design communication programs and campaigns based on corporate purposes and motivations. Meanwhile, a new question emerges: what is the purpose of corporate communication?

#### **2.1.4 The purpose of corporate communication**

According to the above-mentioned model, corporate communication, in the shape of one or various departments, is dedicated to project one uniform corporate image. Cornelissen (2014) indicates that the core task of corporate communication is to build, maintain and protect strong corporate reputations with stakeholders. Such strong reputations are established when organizations project a distinctive positive image of

the corporation, defined as a corporate identity.

Fombrun and van Riel (2004) observe that corporations with the strongest reputations are on average characterized by high levels of *visibility* (the degree to which corporate themes are visible in all internal and external communication), *distinctiveness* (the degree to which the corporate identity or positioning of the organization is distinctive), *authenticity* (the degree to which an organization communicates values that are embedded in its culture), *transparency* (the degree to which an organization is open and transparent about its behaviour), and *consistency* (the degree to which organizations communicate consistent messages through all internal and external communication channels) in corporate communication.

In fact, reputation management and corporate communication are two related points for analysis<sup>6</sup>. Doorley and Garcia (2011: 32) define “reputation as the sum of images or performance plus behavior plus communication”. The authors list the ten precepts of reputation management:

- 1) Know and honor your organization’s intrinsic identity;
- 2) Know and honor your constituents;
- 3) Build the safeguards strong and durable, for they are the infrastructure of a strong reputation;
- 4) Beware the conflict of interest, for it can mortally wound your organization;
- 5) Beware of the “CEO Disease,” because there is no treatment for it;
- 6) Beware of organizational myopia, for it will obscure the long-term view;
- 7) Be slow to forgive an action or inaction that hurts reputation;
- 8) Do not lie;
- 9) Dance with the one that “brung” you;
- 10) Reputation is an asset and must be managed like other assets.

(Doorley & Garcia, 2011: 29-32)

As we have seen, one of them is “Do not lie”. Here they point out that lying might be

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<sup>6</sup> For example, the subtitle of Doorley and Garcia’s (2011) book *Reputation management: The key to successful public relations and corporate communication*.

the “slippery slope” and “significant converse consequences”. (ibid) Indeed, Doorley and Garcia talk about ethics and communication in the second chapter of their book. But how do corporations manage reputation based on these precepts and enhance the company’s image and reputation in the eyes of stakeholders?

Related to this point, Hardy (2004: 415) analyzes corporate discourse and indicates “all assertions of knowledge and claims to represent ‘reality’ should be regarded with suspicion”, in particular, since discourse must be comprehended as the key vehicle for constructing corporate reality. Corporate discourse that operates through many different genres like press releases, Annual Reports, job advertisements, CSR reports, corporate websites etc., “is largely concerned with the promotion of the corporate entity” and, in another perspective, it plays an important role in building the credibility of the corporation. (Breeze, 2013: 179). Corporate discourse is meant to project a specific set of values such as “profitability, cost-effectiveness or expansion” and it “takes many aspects for granted, apparently feeling little need to justify many of its claims”. (ibid, 180)

Besides a general suspicion of the credibility of corporate discourse produced within the companies, communication practitioners also have to deal with discourses produced by other agents on the same issue, which sometimes could be counterproductive to corporate interests. Ihlen (2005) argues that PR has increasingly dedicated to the function of establishing and maintaining beneficial relationship which is considered as the social capital of the corporation (see also Cook, 2008)

In summary, the establishment of corporate image and reputation is required for the purpose of corporate communication and it can be realized through corporate discourse. Furthermore, Breeze (2013: 180) points out that “the purpose of corporate discourse is to present the company to its multiple stakeholders in such a way that they will continue to work for it, invest in it or generally support it”. Consequently, the press release is one type of genre of corporate discourse and could be understood as a particular arrangement of corporate communication, so what is the role of press releases within corporate communication? The next section focuses on press releases.

## **2.2 Press releases in corporate communication**

As mentioned in the previous section, corporate discourse can be classified by genre, such as press releases, mission statements, advertisements, annual reports, CSR reports, CEO letters, internal memos, websites, etc. This study implies a multi-angled study, with corporate communication at the center and a secondary focus on media reception of corporate communication. Press releases, as “a key genre of external corporate communication”, are therefore “one of the most effective ways through which organizations can construct their own image and communicate it to their various stakeholders” (Catenaccio, 2008b: 7-8). “The aim of press release writing is to convey to media professionals the information which they can use to produce feature articles about the company, product and institution” (ibid). This section focuses on press releases and their subsequent use in news reports.

### **2.2.1 The origin and definition of press releases**

Press releases, as the core textual genre at the heart of public relations, could date back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>7</sup>, although there’s some debate in PR discipline over the value of the press release in today’s media environment. The invention of the press release is widely credited to Ivy Lee who is considered as the father of American public relations. In 1906 his agency was collaborating with the Pennsylvania Railroad about an accident that left more than 50 people dead. Realizing that the event was going to get lots of media attention and reflect badly on his client, Ivy Lee wrote a statement about the incident and provided it to the media. Thus, the press release was invented and “continues to this day to play a crucial role as a public relations genre”. (cf. Catenaccio, 2008b: 19).

Then from 1906, the press release has become the topic of interest to PR

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<sup>7</sup> Most scholars concur in dating the origins of the press release to 1906; some (for example Bates, 2006) pre-date it to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

practitioners, especially those working in PR education<sup>8</sup>. Only in the past 20 years, the study for this genre extended to scholars working in the domain of linguistics. These studies mainly focus on three directions: 1) the textual and discursive features of press releases (Jacobs, 1999; McLaren & Gurău, 2005; Catenaccio, 2008a, 2008b); 2) the professional practices and textual outcomes surrounding the production of press releases (Sleurs, Jacobs & van Waes, 2003; Sleurs & Jacobs, 2005; Lindhom, 2007; Van Hout & Jacobs, 2008); 3) the subsequent use of press releases in news reports (Walters & Walters, 1992; Walters, Walters & Starr, 1994; Lenaerts, 2002; Catenaccio, 2006; Pander Maat, 2007, 2008; Jansen, 2008).

Catenaccio (2008b: 7) defines press releases (also called news releases, or press statements) as “short pieces of written or recorded communication issued by companies, institutions and, rarely but today ever more frequently, by individuals to communicate newsworthy information about themselves or their products”. Press releases are, on the one hand, generally sent by mail, fax or other channels to “the journalist community” such as editors at newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations; and on the other, increasingly published on the websites of companies or on the Internet, often with the help of commercial news distribution services to the general public (ibid). The purpose of press releases is to have them picked up by media professionals and turned into actual news reports, “thus generating publicity, in the conviction that third-party endorsement is the best way to promote a company’s image and reputation” (cf. Catenaccio, 2008a: 11; Catenaccio, 2008b: 30).

As stated above, press releases play a crucial role as a public relations genre and communicate newsworthy information to promote the image and reputation of the corporation. To have a clearer understanding of this genre, an examination of its nature is in order.

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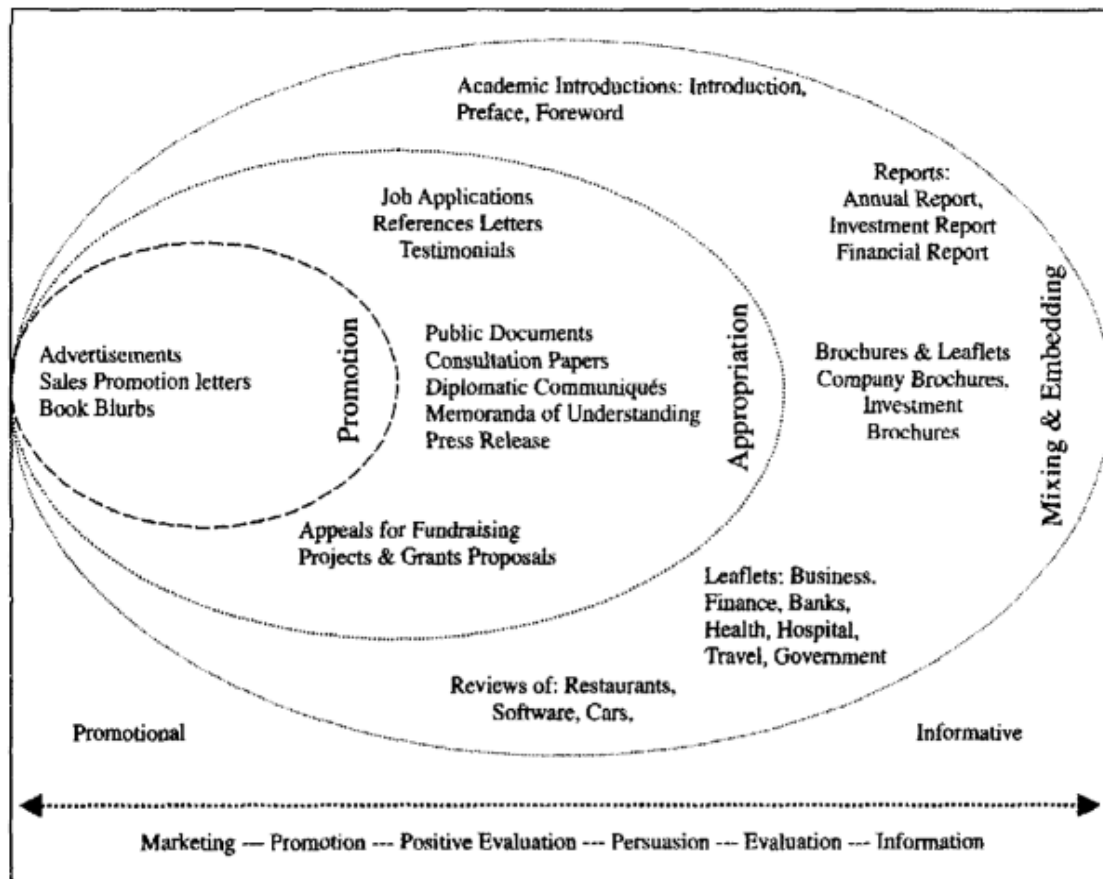
<sup>8</sup> There are so many tips on “how to write the perfect press release” and lots of books available on the topic (with best-sellers like McIntyre, 1992; Aronson, Spetner & Ames, 1998; Fletcher, 2004; Bartram, 2006) which are now accompanied by several software packages (such as Envision’s “Business-in-a-box”) that provide useful techniques to users to write and deliver reliable press releases.

### 2.2.2 Press releases as a hybrid genre

According to the definition given by Catenaccio (2008b), press releases communicate newsworthy information about themselves or their products, so in this sense, press releases have the function of disseminating information. Meanwhile, press releases, as a key genre of corporate communication, are related to the public relations function in corporate management, and recently they have “become an increasingly popular investor relations and marketing tool due to the potential of digital technology, especially Internet distribution” (Catenaccio, 2008b: 7); hence from this perspective, they can “incorporate persuasive and sometimes even promotional elements (PEs)” (Bhatia, 2004: 90). As a result, press releases show a typical combination of informative and promotional functions, which makes them prime examples of so called a “hybrid” genre (Fairclough, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2003) – i.e. genres can be seen as “the blurring of boundaries” of various discourses, and this hybridity of genres has received particularly intense attention in the domain of contemporary media, for example the texts of mass media (Fairclough 2003: 35).

In fact, in the conclusion to his study of 1999, Jacobs has pointed out this hybrid nature, paying attention to the fact that “the ‘unpaid publicity’ that press releases are said to be geared at seems to keep the middle ground between advertising and news reporting” (Jacobs, 1999: 307). Similarly, Fairclough (2003: 35) also indicated that “a genre within a chain characteristically enters both ‘retrospective’ and ‘prospective’ relations with the genres ‘preceding’ and ‘following’ it in the chain, which may progressively lead to hybridization of the genre through a sort of assimilation to these preceding and following genres”. He related such hybridization of the genre to the general trend called the “commodification” of discourse (Fairclough, 1992, 1993, 1994), i.e. the tendency of promotional genres to influence and even colonize other types of genres, such as many professional and academic genres, which are studied by Bhatia in his investigation of genre mixing and embedding for promotional purposes (Bhatia, 1997, 1999, 2002, 2004). Figure 2.4 is conducive to a clear idea of this colonization of genres in terms of genre mixing and embedding.

From this figure, we can see that one of the genres which have invaded other genres is “advertising”. It has become “the most predominant instrument of colonization” and has colonized “a number of professional genres, including academic, corporate, political, journalistic and many of the reporting genres” (Bhatia, 2004: 88).



**Figure 2.4** Colonization of academic, professional and other institutionalized genres (Bhatia, 2004: 90)

Due to the development of information technology, the use of new media, and the effect of promotional activities, both Fairclough and Bhatia consider this process of commodification or promotionalization as a feature of modernity, i.e. “the result of a ‘colonization’ of professional genres on the part of advertising” (Catenaccio, 2008b: 31). Actually, as the middle ground between advertising and news reporting pointed out by Jacobs (1999), press releases display the mix of information and promotion of



the genre from its very origin. It is worth noting that the first press releases issued in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were not only informative to the recipients. In fact, press releases were filled with advertising under false pretense, and at the beginning were opposed, and for this very reason Ivy Lee thought that it was necessary to accompany his press release with a “Declaration of Principles”, part of which reads as follows:

This is not a secret press bureau. All our work is done in the open. We aim to supply news. This is not an advertising agency; if you think any of our matter properly ought to go to your business office, do not use it. Our matter is accurate. Further details on any subject treated will be supplied promptly, and any editor will be assisted most cheerfully in verifying directly any statement of fact. In brief, our plan is, frankly and openly, on behalf of the business concerns and public institutions, to supply to the press and public of the United States prompt and accurate information concerning subjects which it is of value and interest to the public to know about. (Ivy Lee, 1906, quoted in Harrison & Moloney, 2004)

The declaration issued by Lee implies a desire to assuage the suspicion raised by the perceived encroaching of “the world of private intentions” (Bhatia, 2004), but it is hard to persuade journalists about his protestations to disinterestedness. Nonetheless, press releases remain a fixed presence in public relations, based on mutual understanding between press release authors and journalists, which also means that the self-promotion information provided in press releases does not undermine its dissemination and validity.

Regarding promotional language in press releases, the study of Pander Maat (2007) examines how promotional language in corporate press releases is dealt with by journalists in their subsequent use in news reports. Thus, promotional language contained in “informative only” press releases is recognized by the PR community, and when journalists reframe press release information in different journalistic genres, it could be eliminated or retained depending on different communicative purposes, types of publication and target audience (cf. Pander Maat, 2007, 2008; Pander Maat & de Jong, 2012).

This implies that “there is, in press releases, a tension between overtly acknowledged and tacitly understood communicative purposes” (Catenaccio, 2008b: 32). Although it may appear that two functions of language, i.e. informational and promotional, are less likely to create tension, it doesn’t mean that it will always be the case (cf. Bhatia, 2004: 89). According to Catenaccio (2008b: 32), “such tension is a direct consequence of the hybrid nature of the press release”, maybe not from a rhetorical point of view, but from a professional perspective. In this sense, the communicative purpose is considered as a key factor to give a full description of the hybrid nature of press releases. As argued in section 2.1.1, the notion of communicative purpose is acknowledged to be one of the key criteria to define a genre and is adopted by most scholars in genre analysis (cf. Miller, 1984; Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993; Johns, 1997; Askehave & Swales, 2001; Fairclough, 2003). However, in the case of the press release, defining communicative purpose seems very difficult, even impossible, because this has been doubted by Lassen (2006: 526), who has argued that “the press release is not a genre if functional criteria are invoked”. She also suggests that the press release resembles a media channel. i.e. in systemic terms, an element of Mode (ibid).

In summary, although the genre identity of press releases has been challenged by Lassen (2006), most scholars (Fairclough 1994, 1995, 2003; Jacobs, 1999; Bhatia, 2004; Catenaccio, 2008a, 2008b) in the field acknowledge press releases as a hybrid genre, i.e. a genre mixing information and promotion. In the domain of corporate communication, press releases, besides the hybrid nature, show also the characteristics as a business or corporate genre. The next section refers to corporate press releases.

### **2.2.3 Corporate press releases as a business genre**

Press releases are one type of business or corporate genre such as business letters, advertisements, annual reports, CSR reports, internal memos, websites. In their research on organizational genres, Yates and Orlikowski (1992) and Orlikowski and

Yates (1994) investigate some business genres, for example, the business letter, the memo and the report, and they suggest that all genres including organizational genres are all examples of “typified rhetorical action in the context of socially defined recurrent situations” (Yates & Orlikowski, 1992: 301). According to McLaren and Gurču (2005: 10), “corporate press releases respond to a specific recurring situation and have their own distinctive purposes – that is, to communicate news about the company, usually in relation to a specific event or development, to a wide audience (chiefly external to the company, but internal too), and to serve the public relations needs of the company”.

Generally, the notions of genre respond to recurrent social situations. In an investigation of business genres in the corporate context, Van Nus (1999: 190) observes that “business genres are defined as responses to organizational communicative needs in recurrent business situations (cf. Miller, 1984; Yates & Orlikowski, 1992)”. Yates and Orlikowski (1992: 301) examine the features of texts which are extracted from organizational and business genres, and show that the business genre is characterized by “similar substance and form: substance refers to the social motives, themes, and topics being expressed in the communication (e.g., the positive or negative recommendation and the supporting characteristics of the recommendee; the proposing of the project including its rationale and design); form refers to the observable physical and linguistic features of the communication (e.g., inside address and salutation of a letter; standard sections of a proposal)”.

From the point of view of “substance”, drawing on Miller (1984), Orlikowski and Yates (1994: 543) argue that: “[t]he communicative purpose of a genre is not rooted in a single individual’s motive for communicating, but in a purpose that is constructed, recognized, and reinforced within a community”. With the aim to explain this point clearly, they give two examples: 1) the aim of an annual shareholders’ meeting is to “report on the company’s past accomplishments and present its future outlook to stockholders”; 2) while the purpose of a business letter is to “communicate and simultaneously document business matters to a party external to the writer’s organization” (Orlikowski & Yates, 1994: 543). Similarly, the purpose of a corporate

press release is to public news about the company, to communicate newsworthy information about themselves or their products into the public domain (cf. McLaren & Gurču, 2005; Catenaccio, 2008b). Through press releases, companies can construct their own corporate image and communicate it to their various stakeholders with the aim to show “how well they are doing and to persuade potential investors that the company is worth investing in, as well as reassuring existing investors that their choice is still a good one” (McLaren & Gurču, 2005: 12).

Press releases have different types of audiences depending on the sector in which the company operates. As mentioned in section 2.2.2, press releases can be said to aim at conveying newsworthy corporate information to media professionals, and through them to the general public, in a standardized textual form (Catenaccio, 2008b). In fact, Jacobs (1998, 1999a, b) points out the “preformulated” nature of press releases, and indicates that press releases are written for journalists who produce news reports about the company or new products. He argues that “press releases seem to be aimed at two different audiences at the same time, viz. journalists as well as those journalists’ own audiences of newspaper readers, TV viewers etc... the role of the journalists seems to be the pivotal one of retelling press releases, of forwarding the news supplied to them.” (1999a: 46).

Nowadays, with the development of Internet technology, companies have the opportunities to publish their website news directly and to prepare materials for the press in the hope that they will be taken up. In fact, online press releases are also communicated directly to some other audiences. For instance, in this study, Max Mara post online press releases accompanied by the videos of fashion shows in the section entitled “RUNWAY”<sup>9</sup> of the brand website, which can be accessed by users of the website. This means that press releases are created ultimately for customers, shareholders, and potential investors. There are also lots of other audience groups, such as market analysts or competitors, who are possible determining factors for the production of press releases and who would be “auditors” in Bell’s (1984) model of

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<sup>9</sup> <https://world.maxmara.com/>

audience design. Although these receivers of press releases will get the information only after the reporting of the journalist, this is not the case for all. Gurču and McLaren (2003) observe that in modern society, companies are more able to communicate directly with their audiences through their websites and can perhaps influence the communication process.

From the point of “form”, Yates and Orlikowski (1992) claim that “there are at least three aspects of form in organizational communication: structural features (e.g., text-formatting devices such as lists and fields and devices for structuring group interactions, such as an agenda and a chairperson for a meeting), communication medium (e.g., pen and paper or face to face), and language or symbol system (which would include linguistic characteristics such as formality and the specialized vocabulary of technical or legal jargon)” (Yates & Orlikowski, 1992: 301-302). Referring to corporate press releases, it can be safely argued that the communication medium is the written medium, but it is worth noting that “press releases are often accompanied by a press conference, which is indeed an interactive genre of a similar type to a meeting” (McLaren & Gurču, 2005: 13). And in the case of fashion press releases, they usually coincide with fashion shows of new collections. Research on the structural and linguistic features of press releases (Jacobs, 1999a, b; McLaren & Gurču, 2005; Catenaccio, 2008a, 2008b) provides interesting indications on the formal features of the genre.

Jacobs's study mostly relates to corporate press releases. Although he does not focus explicitly on features of format or structure in his work, he analyzes textual and linguistic conventions and proposes the concept of the “metapragmatics of press releases”. Under this heading, he identifies “self-reference” through person, time and place deixis, “self-quotation” and “explicit semi-performatives” (Jacobs, 1999a: 27-30), all of which he describes as “standard features of press releases” (Jacobs, 1999a: 79). According to Jacobs, all these features have preformulated functions:

- *self-reference* (in particular through third-person reference) makes it easy for journalists to copy part or whole of press releases in their own news reports.

Jacobs points out that there are hardly any first-person pronouns (e.g. I, we) to be found in press releases which he observes “is unexpected, to say the least”, because press releases (like other types of corporate discourse, such as CSR reports) are issued when companies “want to say something about themselves (Jacobs, 1999a: 85; 1999b: 220)”. Instead he finds that “it is a characteristic feature of the production of press releases that self-referencing is almost exclusively realized in the third person, in particular through the use of the organization’s proper name” (ibid), for example: “A., leader in the fashion industry, presents today a collection...”(Catenaccio, 2007b: 36);

- *self-quotation* (which is often fictional) lends itself to be partially or wholly transformed into the news report, and also allows writers of press releases to have distance from what is being reported. Jacobs notes that press releases have the characteristics of what Bell (1991: 60) calls “pseudo-direct speech”, where the words “were almost certainly not verbalized by the named source [, but] written by a press officer and merely approved by the source (sometimes not even that)”. He argues that self-quotation is used with many of the same functions as third-person self-reference,: “it appears as if the writer of the press release is switching out of his or her own perspective and takes that of the journalists, who are expected to retell the press release in their own news reporting” (Jacobs, 1999a: 183). He also notes that self-quotation has the function to make press releases look neutral, i.e. it “serves to anticipate the typical objectivity requirements of news reporting” (Jacobs, 1999a: 195), and reliable, i.e. “quotation marks are traditionally assumed to signal verbatim reporting... as a result, they lend an air of reliability to the report” (Jacobs, 1999a: 196). Example: “Mr A, the founder and creative director of A, declared: ‘A. strives to combine technological research with glamorous elegance...’.” (Catenaccio, 2007b: 36); and lastly,
- *explicit semi-performatives* (third-person performatives) are identified by Jacobs (1999a: 246) as the announcement or remark in press releases, such as “The Customs and Excise Administration announces that...”, where the

method of the announcement is the press release itself. In other words, the press release is the announcement and this responds to Allan Bell's (1991) claim that press releases are performative documents. According to Catenaccio (2007b: 36), semi-performatives used in press releases serve to "function as a bridge between performatives (from the issuer's point view: I, A. hereby announce...) and declaratives (as used in the journalist's article, which reports an event and has therefore no performative force in itself)", i.e. as such they serve a preformulating function. Similarly, Jacobs also links the use of such semi-performatives to preformulation: "the explicit semi-performative utterances in extracts from press releases... can easily be retold verbatim by journalists in their own news reporting" (1999a: 251)

In their 2005 study, McLaren and Gurău explore the main features of corporate press releases and relate such features to issues of context and pragmatics. The data for analysis come from the UK biotechnology sector. In the conclusion, they show the findings of analysis from two perspectives: 1) In terms of format or structure, all press releases in the corpus follow a standard move structure which can be schematically described as (1) Announcement – (2) Elaboration of the announcement – (3) Comment from the CEO or another important figure – (4) Contact details – (5) Editor's note, with moves 1 and 2 being mostly information-oriented, move 3 being more clearly evaluative, and move 5 being optional; 2) in regard to textual and linguistic conventions, the analysis verifies the occurrence of certain textural features identified by Jacobs (e.g. 1999a) such as third-person self-reference, self-quotation, etc. i.e. examples of the "metapragmatics of press releases" and "the fact that these and other features are more common in certain parts of the press releases than in others, in accordance with the different purposes the various components are designed to fulfil" (McLaren & Gurău, 2005: 25-26).

The volume by Catenaccio (2008b: 149) provides an overview of corporate press releases which highlights "the formal and functional flexibility of this text type, whose longstanding career as a key genre of external corporate communication

testifies to its versatility and adaptability”. In particular, Chapter 3 focuses on the genre’s textual features and the linguistic strategies associated with them through investigating communicative purposes of press releases, and proposes a move-structure for the press release which is tested against several samples of the genre; chapter 8 focuses on fashion press releases, a type of text which is different from other corporate press releases, such as CSR reports, advertisements, etc. (cf. Catenaccio, 2008b). Since the present study mostly focuses on corporate communication, taking Max Mara fashion press releases as a case in this sense, the key point of the examination shifts from press releases focusing on corporate issues to specific brand-related press releases, i.e. the fashion press releases.

#### **2.2.4 Fashion press releases**

Fashion press releases are especially product and brand-oriented and they can be sent to fashion journalists or posted on the websites of fashion houses. However, not all fashion houses have a section entitled “Pressroom”, “Press” or “Media” on their websites, and when they do, it is easy to find that “the only press releases available are those related to fashion collection launches, especially in the case of high-end fashion houses”. (Catenaccio, 2008b: 128) As indicated in section 2.2.3, Max Mara post their press releases accompanied with the videos of fashion shows in the section entitled “RUNWAY” of the brand website. Before moving on to the research on fashion press releases, a simple presentation should be given about the context surrounding the issuing of collection-related fashion press releases.

The fashion designers present their collections twice a year, usually in February/March for the autumn-winter collections and September/October for the spring-summer collections at different times for men and women (cf. Bradford, 2014: 129). Collections are usually displayed during a “fashion week”, lasting approximately one week, where fashion designers, brands or houses launch their latest collections of clothing and/or accessories in runway fashion shows to “an international audience of celebrities, reporters, fashion critics and buyers” (Catenaccio,



2008b: 130). During a fashion week, about 10-12 runway fashion shows take place every day at different locations and these events influence trends for the current and upcoming seasons. The most prominent fashion weeks are held in four fashion capitals of the world: New York, London, Milan, and Paris, so called “the big four”, which receive the majority of press coverage; but specialist fashion shows might also be presented on other fashion weeks, such as Shanghai, Copenhagen, Sydney and San Paolo (cf. Bradford, 2014: 129; Dillon, 2011: 115). For instance, in this study, Max Mara usually hosts the fashion shows every February and September at Milan Fashion Week (MFW), and on December 15<sup>th</sup> 2016 this Italian high-end fashion house hosted its first fashion show called Monopolis in Shanghai’s Exhibition Center presenting its new Pre-Fall 2017 Collection.

In the typical fashion shows, models walk the catwalk dressed in the clothing created by the designer. These shows are mainly visual events, where the setting, the lighting, the special effects, the order of models’ appearance, the music, the style of stage arrangement, etc. are planned based on the statement that the designers want to express through the new collections with the purpose to encourage the audience to “read” the clothes correctly and appreciate the detail and craftsmanship of every single piece. But due to many different looks being presented in a very short amount of time (in the case of Max Mara, around 50), it is difficult for the audience to understand sophisticated materials, fabrics and patterns. In this sense, it is necessary to issue press releases on the occasion of the presentation of the collections, offering specific information to the audience. Thus, fashion press releases share the descriptive nature of many other product-related press releases. However, they also need to provide details for the interpretation of the clothes in accordance to the fashion house’s established style, “including an interpretative component largely absent from more conventional product-related press releases” (Catenaccio, 2008b: 130).

As discussed above, fashion press releases provide text correspondence to the dominant fashion communication such as fashion runway shows. In this sense, it is necessary to focus on the verbal explicitation of fashion press releases issued by the fashion sector in order to study the discursive construction of fashion in contemporary

society. In fact, drawing on Negrin (1999), Catenaccio (2008b: 128) suggests that “this topic has attracted a great deal of interest in recent years, with much effort being devoted to exploring the manner in which discourses of fashion shape concepts of the body and of the self, as well as of people’s (especially women’s) place and role in society (cf. Negrin 1999 for an overview)”. Although this attention has often extended to studies of fashion advertising, to the best of my knowledge until now, little or no focus has been given to fashion press releases. Here I present a case study on fashion press releases.

Catenaccio (2008b) dedicates one whole chapter to fashion press releases, and more specifically to the interplay of company, brand and customer identity in the texts analyzed. She investigates the discursive and linguistic construction of press releases in Italian and in English issued by four Italian international fashion designers (Armani, Trussardi, Cavalli and Dolce & Gabbana), focusing on how fashion designers communicate verbally their image and identity and construct the ideal customer(s) who are interested in their collections.

The analysis based on a small corpus of fashion press releases suggests the sequent conclusions: 1. Based on Jacobs’s concept of the “metapragmatics” of press releases, the author shows that fashion press releases partly share common features as those of corporate press releases, but meanwhile partly differ from them, even quite substantially: “third-person reference appears in all texts in the corpus, but semi-performatives are very rare, and pseudo-quotation entirely absent”; 2. Focusing on cultural references in press releases and on their treatments in the different language versions, the author verifies that in fashion press releases a focus on cultural adaptation to the target audiences may “affect discursive organization and shift the balance – in drafting bilingual versions of press releases – from translation to re-writing” (Catenaccio, 2008b: 145).

The present study firstly focuses on corporate communication from two perspectives: 1) the main features of Max Mara fashion press releases; 2) the female image conveyed by press releases, articles on WeChat and their subsequent news reports which will be analyzed in detail in chapter 5. In addition, the relation between

press releases and news reports requires a discussion in detail, which will be presented in the following section.

### **2.2.5 From press releases to news reports: a genre-analytical discussion**

As discussed above, the writers of press releases provide information to journalists in the hope that it will be turned into actual news reports and passed on to the general public (cf. Catenaccio, 2008b). Indeed, in the domain of public relations (PR), many researchers have found that press releases do influence news reports' writing. For instance, according to Walters and Walters (1996: 167), "given time and resource constraints, reporters find it difficult to perform solo". Bell (1991: 58) shows that press releases are "openly despised but heavily used". Turk (1986) states that daily newspapers adopt more press releases than they reject. Because they cannot cover all newsworthy events in person, journalists need for their news reports the "information subsidies" provided by press releases (Gandy, 1982: 61).

Thus, from the perspective of genre theory, press releases and news reports could be an example of what Swales (2004) has called genre chains, i.e. a regular succession of discourse genres that conventionally respond to each other. In such chains, the second genre could be the successor of the first. Although it cannot be said that news reports are definitely the successors of press releases, there certainly are news reports that would not appear without the previous press releases. Nonetheless, it is necessary to know that the successive genre in a chain does not always explicitly acknowledge the antecedent genre. For instance, news reports based on press releases avoid mentioning the original source. According to Fairclough (1992), the relation between the two genres can constitute intertextuality, but not very obviously. Although Clough, Gaizauskas, & Piao (2002: 1678) note that "the re-use of other's text without acknowledgment is, in academic life, a cardinal sin", in fact, it seems to be "standard business practice" in journalistic discourse. Once the materials from press releases are accepted, they can be fully re-used by the journalist.

How can we maximize the chance of a press release being reused by journalists?

Many researchers have explored how press releases were appropriated as “a news pre-formulating device” (Lassen, 2006: 23). Jacobs (1999a, 1999b) has analyzed the “preformulate” functions of press releases (as discussed in 2.2.3) and has suggested that “the only *raison d’être* of the Press Release is to be retold [. . .] as accurately as possible, preferably even verbatim, in news reporting” (1999a: xi). As investigated by Jacobs, before the Internet developed and spread, the fate of press releases was mainly determined by journalists. Only when journalists recognize the information and style provided by the corporate press release writers could the press release be adopted and published. The result is that such a situation severely affected the production of press release writers, who tried to match the formal requirements of news reporting, so it is not difficult to explain that the readers see the relatively stable structure and form in many printed releases. For instance, the writers usually adopt a third-person perspective on the events they are involved in themselves and use past tense when writing about events that have not yet taken place at the moment of writing. (cf. Jacobs, 1999a, 1999b; Morton, 1988; Walters et al., 1994; Sleurs et al., 2003.) Such research refers to how press release writers could most effectively have their releases picked up by media professionals. Morton (1988) investigated the effectiveness of camera-ready copy in press releases and noted that camera-ready materials could be published with a better possibility. Walters et al. (1994) analyzed 60 press releases in order to verify that press releases are often written in a certain form and style that makes it easier for journalists to edit the materials to match editorial and stylistic requirements. Mostly, this could be carried out by reducing the length of press releases and by simplifying syntax.

In the new century, with the development of the Internet and the emergence of Web 2.0, press releases are increasingly being placed on websites or social media platforms (such as Facebook, Instagram, Weibo or WeChat) by individual companies, which undoubtedly will challenge the relationship between journalists who traditionally work for the media and company press release writers. Due to the Internet’s rapidly expanding access to press releases, now companies can communicate directly with non-professional audiences and provide them with

newsworthy information that was once designed mostly for journalists and this phenomenon has been noticed by many researchers. Strobbe and Jacobs (2005: 291) suggest that “the Internet is rapidly changing the use and language of press releases” and explore how preformulating practices may be affected in the process. Lassen (2006: 508) claims that “with the Internet, companies have gained unprecedented freedom as to what they write in their press releases because they no longer depend on the opinion of a journalist to the same extent, but have the possibility to publish directly on their websites”. And Catenaccio (2008a: 15) argues that by extending the “primary readership beyond the members of the journalistic profession, press release writers can convey promotional messages couched in a report-like form which may make them more easily acceptable than plain and blunt advertising”. However, in a case study on the construction of pseudo-quotations in press releases (Sleurs et al., 2003), the pre-formulating function demonstrated by Jacobs (1999a) continues to be an underlying assumption as may be seen from the following quotation:

As the nature of journalists’ professional routines is rapidly changing, press releases continue to play a major role in the production of today’s news, either on paper or online. (Jacobs, 1999a: 193)

But the quotation also shows that online press releases begin to enter the view of the general public. That the assumption may be a valid one is substantiated by newer research of Internet-based press releases. An example of such research is Callison’s study of all Fortune 500 company websites accessible in 2001. The purpose was to determine to what extent companies use the Internet to meet journalists’ informational needs (Callison, 2003). Callison (2003) referred to The Seventh Annual Middleburg/Ross Survey of Media in the Wired World, which had demonstrated a significant increase of journalists’ use of the Internet for article research between 1995 and 2001 – from 60 percent to 92 percent – to get ideas for stories (O’Keefe, 1997, cited in Callison, 2003). This partly confirms Sleurs et al.’s assumption that press releases serve the purpose of pre-formulating the news and partly lines up a new

situation in which the Internet plays an increasingly significant role to two constituencies: the journalists who write media stories and the press release writers, who are no longer constrained by strict gatekeeper rules and conventions.

Although companies have gained unprecedented freedom for their press releases' writing owing to the ever evolving Internet, press releases continue to play a major role in the production of news reports and many researchers in the field continue to adopt Jacob's preformulating strategies in their research. As discussed in section 2.2.3, Jacobs (1999a: 232) argues that companies commonly use third-person self-reference to make their "press releases look disinterested and neutral rather than self-interested, promotional". According to Jacobs (1999a, 1999b), self-reference is a "point of view operation" (Brown & Levinson, 1987) that has two related purposes. On the one hand, self-reference, in particular through third-person reference, makes it easy for journalists to incorporate information of press releases into their own news reports; on the other hand, it makes content appear more objective and thus "flow in sync" with recognized standards of journalistic reporting (Jacobs, 1999a: 233). Similar to Jacobs, Pander Maat (2007: 92) suggests that press releases "adopt certain genre conventions from news reports, especially in their move structure (heading, lead, and body) and perspective (third- as opposed to first-person style)" (cf. McLaren & Gurču, 2005). The flow of information for these authors is relatively linear: companies issue the press release; journalists adopt it totally or modify it based on their needs; and non-professional audiences receive the information of events that has been verified by conscientious professionals (Pander Maat, 2008).

## **2.3 Social media for corporate communication**

### **2.3.1 Social media and Web 2.0**

With the development of the Internet and digital communication technologies, social media has become widely used not only for personal information exchange but also for communication between organizations and their stakeholders, such as employees,

local communities, customers and the news media. According to The Oxford English Dictionary (OED, 2018), social media means “websites and applications, which enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking”. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 61) define social media as “internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content”. In this sense, social media is part of the Web 2.0 revolution. In 1999, IT consultant Darcy Di Nucci proposed the term Web 2.0 that was later popularized in 2004 by O’Reilly (Visser, 2010). Web 2.0 can be defined as “the effects of extensive collaboration and user participation on the marketplace and corporate world” (Visser, 2010: 14), which are web applications that facilitate collaboration and information exchange. Web 2.0 is also a powerful tool that can provide companies with a lot of opportunities to communicate directly with the public, thereby improving customer relations and spreading corporate culture (Hearn et al, 2008).

With the emergence of Web 2.0, a myriad of social platforms or social network sites (SNS) such as Facebook (launched in 2004), YouTube (launched in 2005), Twitter (launched in 2006), Instagram, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp have appeared. In this sense, there is a broad class of social media that need to be distinguished further. To create such a helpful classification scheme, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 61) refer to “a set of theories in the field of media research (social presence, media richness) and social processes (self-presentation, self-disclosure), the two key elements of social media”. Combining the two dimensions leads to a classification of social media which is shown in table 2.2.

		Social presence/ Media richness		
		Low	Medium	High
Self-presentation/ Self-disclosure	High	Blogs	Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook)	Virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life)
	Low	Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia)	Content communities (e.g., YouTube)	Virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft)

**Table 2.2** Classification of Social Media by social presence/media richness and self-presentation/self-disclosure (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 62)

This classification emphasizes the broad class of social media, and their possible use as the tools of corporate communication. However, Cornelissen (2014: 267) argues that “such classification should not be seen as set in stone”. New applications may emerge between the types categorized in Table 2.2. For example, microblogging such as Twitter, Sina Weibo (named Weibo in Chinese, launched in 2009, a Chinese microblogging website like Twitter) largely follow the description of blogging, they are also “more interactive than the classic blog” and “allows for the quick and real-time exchange of messages”, such as corporate news or crisis events (ibid).

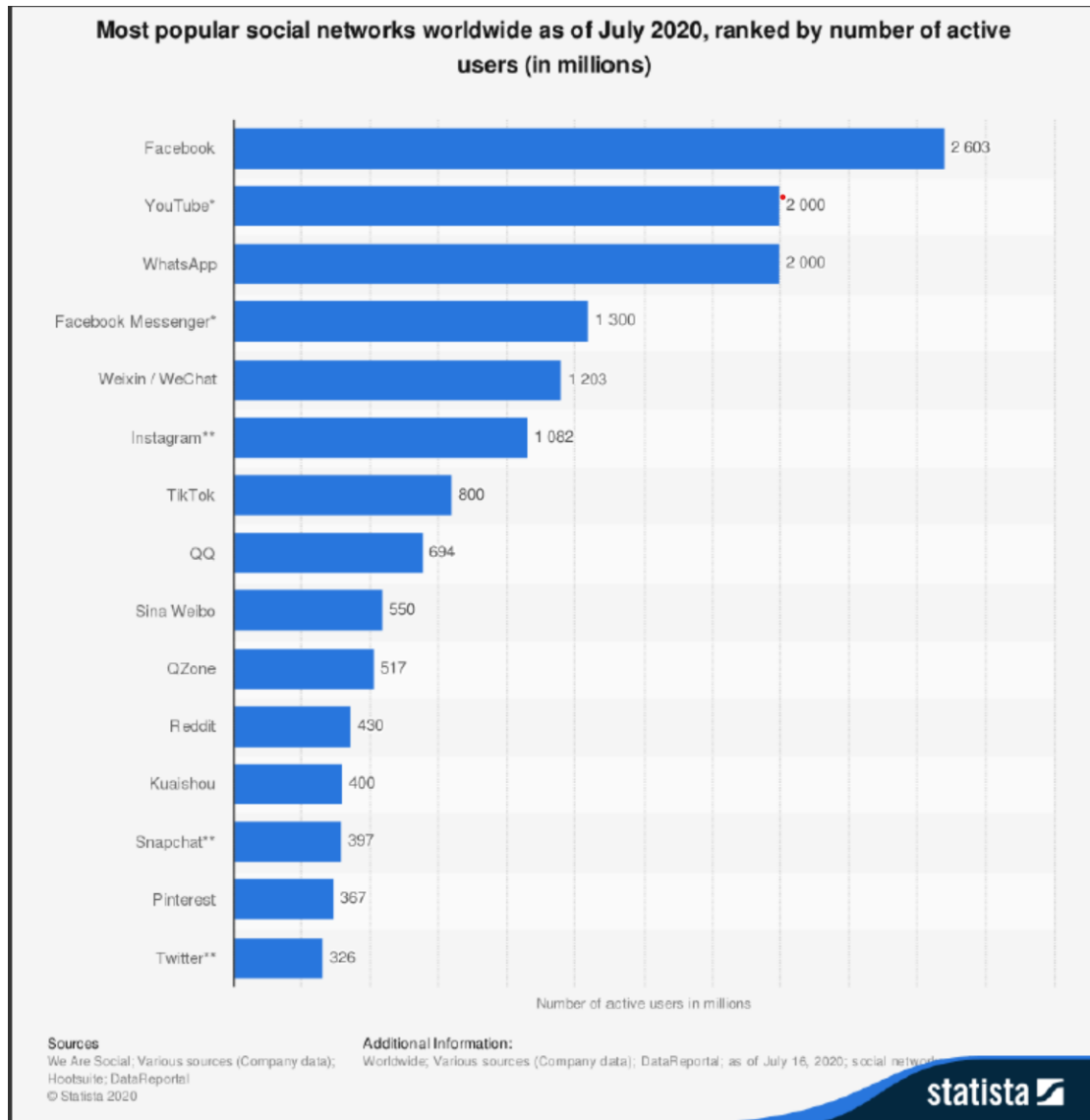
It is important to consider some numbers to understand the huge spread of social media on human life. Figure 2.5 shows a list of the most popular social networks worldwide as of July 2020<sup>10</sup>. The graph shows that Facebook is still the biggest SNS<sup>11</sup>, with a huge gap from the second most popular one -YouTube. They are followed by three instant-messaging applications, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and WeChat (named Weixin in Chinese, launched in 2011, starting as an instant messenger app like WhatsApp and expanding with the social networking feature under WeChat Moments); and then another two big platforms Instagram and TikTok (known in China as Douyin, launched in 2016, a Chinese video-sharing social networking application) can be found.

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<sup>10</sup> Clement, J. (2020). Most popular social networks worldwide as of July 2020, ranked by number of active users (in millions). In Statista – The Statistics Portal.

<sup>11</sup> Boyd and Ellison (2007) defined social network sites as web-based services that allow people to create a public or semi-public profile, and have a list of other users that share a connection.





**Figure 2.5** Most popular social networks worldwide as of July 2020, ranked by number of active users (in millions) (Clement, 2020)

With an amazingly growing rate, social media has brought us plenty of new opportunities, one of which is “social media marketing” when the social media platforms and websites are used to promote brands, products or services (De Aquino Carlsson, 2017). Due to digital communication technologies (e.g. portable mobiles and computers), social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram have made social media marketing become a strategic way for companies to enhance their brands’ visibility and maintain customer relations (Rouse, 2011). In this case, for example, Facebook is not only used for social interactions but also considered as a

strong corporate communication tool. Thus, social media becomes very important for corporate communication.

### 2.3.2 The importance of social media for corporate communication

As previously mentioned, social media platforms or social networking sites (SNSs) such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Sina Weibo and WeChat are believed to be important corporate communication tools. Now companies realized being talked about by lots of customers online, so they have adopted social media for their external and internal corporate communication.

Public relations practitioners believe that social media has impacted the activities of corporate communication since the emergence of blogs (Wright & Hinson, 2010). Now social media has been also an interesting topic for investigating different approaches in the corporate communication field (Wright & Hinson, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2011, 2010; Cornelissen, 2014; Briones et al, 2011; Schultz, et al, 2011; Avery et al, 2010; Sweetser, 2010; Hearn et al, 2008).

Wright and Hinson (2015) have asked a particular question (for 10 years) to public relations practitioners in order to know how the emergence of social and other emerging media has impacted the corporate communications. Table 2.3 shows that 2015 findings are even more pronounced and represent the highest mean scores in the ten years.

**Mean analyses of responses to the question: “Please tell us whether you agree or disagree that the emergence of social and other emerging media has changed the way your organization (or your client organizations)”**

	2006 n=482	2007 n=476	2008 n=496	2009 n=574	2010 n=563	2011 n=479	2012 n=622	2013 n=378	2014 n=393	2015 n=329
Communicates?	3.27	3.38	3.44	3.81	4.02	4.10	4.24	4.14	4.27	4.35
Handles external communication?	3.23	3.35	3.40	3.69	3.97	4.06	4.18	4.17	4.30	4.37
Handles internal communication?	3.01	3.06	3.06	3.22	3.05	3.14	3.21	3.08	3.17	3.27

*Note: Mean scores throughout this report are based on responses to five-point Likert-type scales where “1” = “Strongly Disagree,” “Very Unimportant,” “Very Infrequently,” etc., and “5” = “Strongly Agree,” “Very Important,” “Very Frequently,” etc.” Consequently, the higher the mean score the greater the agreement, importance, frequency, etc.*

**Table 2.3** Mean analyses of responses to the question: “Please tell us whether you

agree or disagree that the emergence of social and other emerging media has changed the way your organization (or your client organizations)” (Wright & Hinson, 2015: 9)

The advancement of digital technologies has brought new opportunities for the corporate communication field, because companies not only can provide information, but also evaluate the effectiveness of the communication process (Argenti, 2006). Social media platforms bring opportunities to corporations with the aim to establish dialogue with internal and external audiences. For stakeholders, social media also brings opportunities because it is easier for them to be watchdogs and track companies with unethical communication behaviors (Sweetser, 2010). For this reason, companies cannot shy away from social media channels; they need to be more present than ever to engage in conversations with stakeholders.

At present, with the advent of Web 2.0 platforms, companies lose the absolute power to control corporate information; therefore, stakeholders are claiming more transparency, open communication, and engagement through social media platforms.

A growing number of companies have adopted social media as an effective method of corporate communication. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 67) note that “social media allow firms to engage in timely and direct end-consumer contact at relatively low cost and higher levels of efficiency than can be achieved with more traditional communication tools”. Heggstuen and Danova (2013) indicate that over two-thirds of Fortune companies use frequently corporate Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Actually, many CEOs are using Twitter as a quick communication channel with corporate stakeholders. Girginova (2015: 58) shows that CEOs in big companies tend to adopt Twitter for internal, company building goals. Social platforms like Facebook allow companies to create a Facebook group that includes employees to exchange information and improve the employee relationship. However, much attention is given to how social platforms have affected external corporate communication, in particular communicating with customers. According to many marketers, SNSs have helped the connection between companies and customers (Menon, 2017). Particularly, some

SNSs like Facebook allow companies and customers to interact with each other through Facebook chat, post, and comments. Through online customer reviews and feedbacks on SNSs, corporations can better listen to and understand the market as well as enhance their communication and marketing campaigns towards customers. For example, the examination of Rybalko and Seltzer (2010) shows how Fortune 500 companies use Twitter to facilitate dialogic communication with stakeholders. With a content analysis methodology, 93 Twitter company profiles and 930 individual tweets were analysed for the use of dialogic features within Twitter. They concluded that 61% of the organizations were classified as “dialogic” and 39% “non-dialogic”. According to their results, both types of companies did not differ at the moment of providing useful information. However, in the use of conservation of visitors (encouragement of visitors to stay on the site) and generation of return visits (incentive to users to return to the site), dialogic companies obtained a significantly greater degree than non-dialogic companies.

As research in social media, corporate communication, and public relations continues to grow, corporations will increasingly understand the powerful role that social media has for internal and external communications.

### **2.3.3 The most popular Chinese social media platforms for fashion corporate communication**

As discussed in Section 2.3.1 and Section 2.3.2, social media platforms, this newly emerged type of communication, yield huge effect on many proportions of our daily lives, such as work, studies, socialization, and expenditure. Both in China and abroad, numerous famous applications are accessible for the users. Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter are the most influential ones of all abroad, and in response to their unavailability in China, an array of social media platforms with similar functions came into place, such as WeChat, Weibo, QQ, and Tik Tok.

Compared to the West, Chinese social media is one of the key marketing channels for fashion brands in promoting. Instead of revamping their websites, brands are

solely invested in optimizing social-specific strategies, bombarding followers with the best offers.

Figure 2.5 shows that WeChat comes in the fifth place with over 1.2 billion monthly users on the list of the most popular social networks worldwide, and TikTok, QQ, and Sina Weibo, respectively seventh, eighth, and ninth.

TikTok, known in China as Douyin, is a Chinese video-sharing social networking application like Instagram. It is used to create short music, lip-sync, dance, comedy and talent videos of 3 to 15 seconds, and short looping videos of 3 to 60 seconds. Douyin was first launched into the Chinese market in September 2016. Later, TikTok was launched in 2017 for iOS and Android in most markets outside of mainland China; however, it only became available worldwide, including the United States, after merging with another Chinese social media service Musical.ly on 2nd August 2018, which accounts for a rapid increase in its users over the last few years.

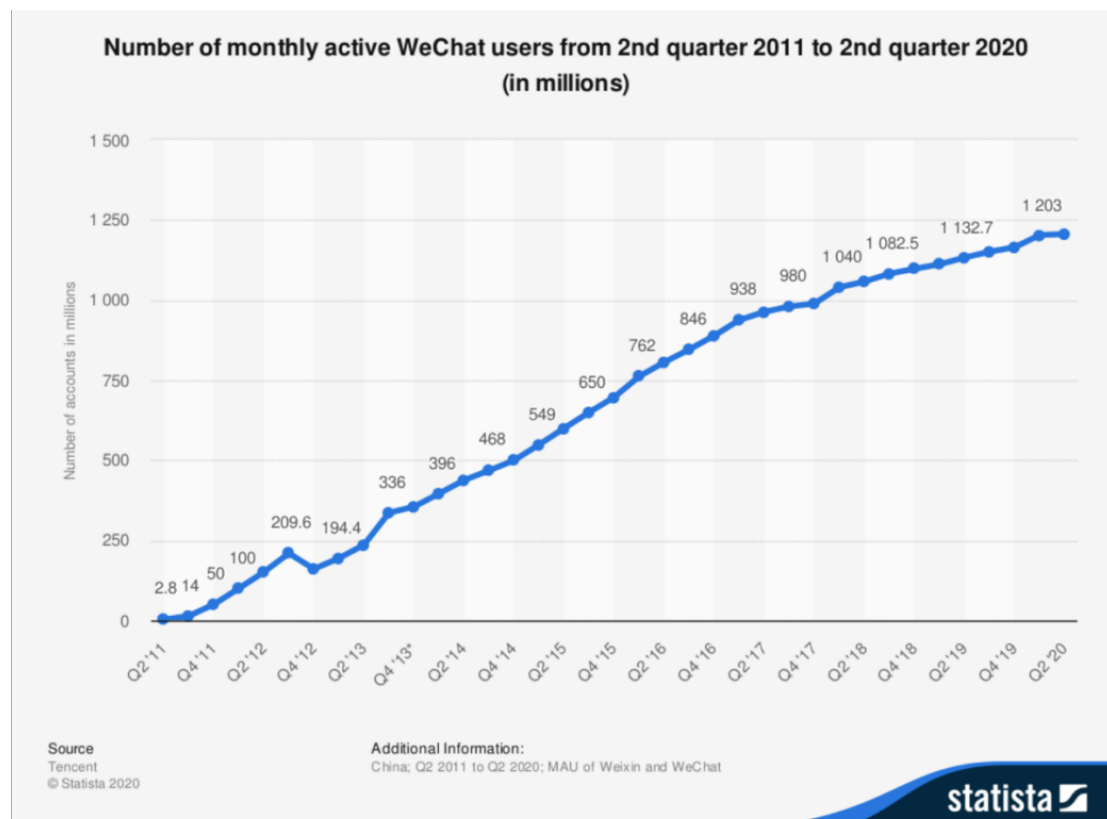
QQ, an instant messaging software service provider and web portal developed by the Chinese tech giant Tencent in 1999, offers services including online social games, music, shopping, microblogging, movies, and group and voice chat. QQ has dominated China ever since its birth as the largest social media platform, later to give way to WeChat at the end of 2016.

Among these different social media platforms and apps, WeChat and Weibo are the two most effective for international fashion brands. Both networks are constantly updating their platforms to provide brand as many customization opportunities as possible - for each brand to have its own identity and way to communicate with its audience.

Sina Weibo, essentially China's Twitter, launched in 2009 by Sina, is one of the top social networking platforms in China. Weibo has regular users, verified individual users with an orange V icon, organizations and companies with a blue V icon, and paid VIP members with extra features. Weibo users can publish posts and follow other users, especially, celebrities, businesses, and government agencies. Besides following other users and publishing Weibo posts under 2,000 Chinese characters (limited to 140 initially), users can also perform live broadcasting, buy and sell products, and

initiate polls, etc. In particular, business accounts are able to utilize this platform for promotion, for example, by sharing posts about their new products and enterprise posters. Meanwhile, Weibo is still a celebrity-first platform where the brands can tap into their influence to sell their products and services.

Nonetheless, as far as the impact of social media on fashion corporate communication, the focus of the present study lies in WeChat. WeChat, namely Weixin in Chinese, launched in 2011 by Tencent, is a multi-purpose messaging, social media and mobile payment app (WeChat Pay). From 2011 to 2020, it gradually became the largest and most influential social network in China, as shown in Figure 2.6 (see also Figure 2.5).



**Figure 2.6** Number of monthly active WeChat users from 2nd quarter 2011 to 2nd quarter 2020 (in millions) (Thomala, 2020)

WeChat was initially described as a cross between Facebook and WhatsApp, but it's evolved a long way from there. Official accounts are one of the major services of

WeChat, including service accounts and subscription accounts. WeChat holds a strong appeal to retailers, with nearly every major luxury label having an official account on its platform for the following merits:

1. Display of products and activities;
2. Regular updates for patrons;
3. Expanding customer base via patrons by sharing post links;
4. No locale;
5. Interactive to maintain customers

Brands can strengthen their edge and promotion via the official accounts on WeChat. For the present study, the official account for the brand Max Mara keeps a regular update of posts of seasonal fashion shows and brand friends to promote the new arrivals. The articles in the corporate communication corpus for this study are original posts of Max Mara's Chinese official account on WeChat.

## **CHAPTER 3 GENRE, MULTIMODALITY AND CORPUS LINGUISTICS**

The previous chapter provides the three different genres for analyzing in the present study. In order to provide a theoretical basis for doing analysis, the chapter gives the literature on genre, multimodality and corpus linguistics. Section 3.1 begins with a discussion of genre theory in general, then presents the approaches to genre in SFL, ESP and RGS and a framework to multimodal genre analysis. Section 3.2 introduces the corpus-based methodology for analyzing genre.

### **3.1 Genre and multimodality**

#### **3.1.1 Definitions of genre**

The term “genre” has a long history in different domains of research, for instance, media and communication studies (Fairclough, 1995, 2003; Frow, 2005), the study of rhetoric (Miller, 1984; Bazerman, 1988; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995), literature (Fowler, 1982), etc. Within linguistics, Lassen (2006: 503-504) indicates that “traditionally, linguists have been preoccupied with formal textual features more than with construing contextual (social, cultural) patterns”. However, as discussed by Devitt (1993: 581) it is almost impossible to talk about context apart from text because “contexts are always textualized”. In his 1990 study, Swales shows the similarities between genre studies in these different areas and notes that they share “a distrust of classification [...], a sense that genres are important for integrating past and present, a recognition that genres are situated within discourse communities [...], an emphasis on communicative purpose and social action, an interest in generic structure (and its rationale), [and] an understanding of the double generative capacity of genres — to establish rhetorical goals and to further their accomplishment” (Swales, 1990: 44-45).

Based on these similarities of genre studies, Swales (1990), with a pedagogical purpose in academic writing, gives a classical definition of genre:



A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. (Swales, 1990: 58)

Drawing on Swales' definition of genre, Bhatia (1993) focuses on the psychological and cognitive aspects of genre and views genre as such:

It is a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalized with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. These constraints, however, are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purpose(s). (Bhatia, 1993: 13)

According to these definitions, the communicative purposes, which constitute the rationale for the genre, are to be recognizable by the expert members of the discourse community and “may in fact serve as the key characteristic for placing discourses into generic categories” (Tardy & Swales, 2014: 166). While the concept of communicative purpose remains central and valid to many analysts and experts, it has been challenged by Askehave and Swales (2001) for its complexity, multiplicity and variability. They have pointed out some problems in privileging communicative purpose as genre determinant, suggesting that “the purposes, goals, or public outcomes are more evasive, multiple layered, and complex than originally envisaged” (Askehave & Swales, 2001: 197).

The present study shall follow the argument by Askehave and Swales (2001: 210)

on the understanding that, although communicative purpose is not “privileged by centrality, prominence or self-evident clarity”, it is still a valid concept in genre analysis.

In fact, in the field of linguistics, Genre Analysis is considered a branch of Discourse Analysis, and “an important tool for research into the pragmatics of discourse” (Tardy & Swales, 2014: 165), while the communicative purpose of a text segment is related to its speech act in the term of pragmatics.

Genre Analysis is defined as “a way of analyzing, interpreting, and accounting for some of the discursive actions taking place in specific academic and professional contexts, and considers context and any form of specific genre knowledge as an important contributor to its understanding of genre” (Bhatia & Nodoushan, 2015: 22).

However, how do analysts conduct genre studies? In the following section, different approaches to genre studies will be discussed in detail.

### **3.1.2 Approaches to genre**

In the stage named “organization of discourse”, Bhatia (2004) indicates three distinct traditions regarding the genre studies in discourse analysis: the North American school (Miller, 1984, 1994; Bazerman, 1988, 1994; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995); the Australian or Sydney school (Martin, Christy & Rothery, 1987; Martin, 1992, 1993; Halliday & Hasan 1989; Halliday, 1978, 1994); and the British school (Swales, 1981, 1990, 2004; Bhatia, 1982, 1993, 2004) (Bathia, 2004: 10). Indeed, these three current approaches used for analyzing genre are originally examined by Hyon (1996) in her influential article entitled “Genre in Three Traditions”.

#### **3.1.2.1 Genre in SFL e ESP**

The Sydney school, which has its basis on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1978), adopts a systemic functional approach to genre analysis. Recently,

this approach has been recognized internationally through lots of studies that investigate genres across various contexts and languages. Broadly speaking, SFL is related to the relationship between language and its functions in social contexts (Hyon, 1996: 696). Key features of the surrounding social context, which are defined by Halliday as field (the activity going on), tenor (the relationships between participants) and mode (the channel of communication), shape the forms of language (Halliday, 1978, 1994; Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Hammond, Burns, Joyce, Brosnan, & Gerot, 1992). These three elements together determine the register of language (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Hasan, 1989). Drawing on Halliday's concern for linking form, function, and social context, Martin (1984: 25) defines genre as "staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage in as members of our culture", highlighting that "[g]enres are how things get done, where language is used to accomplish them" (Martin, 1985: 250). The key concept of the SFL approach is "realization" that emphasizes the linguistic realization of generic stages, and the scholars in the field seek to link the social purpose and context of the genre with the linguistic forms (Christie & Martin, 1997). The fundamental analytical focus of the SFL approach in genre analysis is on the identification of stages and elements which constitute a text's internal organization (e.g., Hasan, 1989; Martin, 1992). Hasan (1978) is the first SFL analyst for the study of spoken genre. The core concept that she proposed is the "Generic Structural Potential (GSP)" (Hasan, 1989, 1996), emphasizing that the rhetorical structure of a text is predictable and is determined by the "contextual configuration", which is a product of variables of *field*, *tenor*, and *mode*. Hasan's GSP model of generic analysis represents a fundamental basis for the SFL approach of genre analysis.

The British school, popularly known as the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach, which has been influenced by the other two approaches, but which has gained significant development due to its fruitful research in Applied Linguistics (AL) and Languages for Specific Purpose (LSP), is the approach to genre analysis conducted by Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993, 2004). Lancaster, Aull, and Escudero (2015) examined the theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical contributions of

John Swales' seminal book: *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings* (1990). They suggest that the key concepts of Swales in *Genre Analysis* (GA) include “genre, discourse community, communicative purpose, rhetorical move analysis, and language-learning task”, and his approach to genre analysis has contributed greatly to three fields: “discourse / rhetorical genre theory, methods of discourse analysis, and approaches to English language teaching” (Lancaster, Aull, & Escudero, 2015: 1). The New Rhetoric is mainly concerned with teaching in an L1 context, the ESP approach recognizes genre as a tool for analyzing and teaching the spoken and written language required of non-native speakers in academic and professional settings (cf. Bhatia, 1993; Flowerdew, 1993; Swales, 1990), and influences pedagogic theories such as corpus-informed pedagogy and English as a Lingua Franca (Flowerdew, 2015: 1). However, although “[g]enre Analysis was initially inspired by ESP, it soon started contributing to other forms of language teaching, especially Business Communication and various other professional contexts”, and “is now being widely used to analyze non-pedagogical aspects of the professional world, in particular the study of institutions, organizations, and other forms of corporate behaviour” (Bhatia & Salmani Nodoushan, 2015: 127).

### **3.1.2.2 Genre in RGS**

The North American school, known as Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS), which is based on rhetoric and social constructionism (cf. Freedman & Medway, 1994; Coe, 1994, 2002), draws on studies of classical Greek rhetoric and analyzes genre in a New Rhetoric perspective. New Rhetoric studies describe a framework of the North American school from different disciplines related to L1 teaching, including rhetoric, composition studies, and professional writing (cf. Hyon, 1996). Genre scholars note the usefulness of rhetorical tools to examine real-world uses of language, but place a heavy emphasis more on the situational contexts which genres encounter rather than on their forms and focus on social purposes, or actions (Bazerman, 1988, 1994; Coe,

1994, 2002; Devitt, 1993; Freedman & Medway, 1994; Miller, 1984, 1994). Miller's seminal article "Genre as Social Action" (1984) played an important role in shaping New Rhetoric genre theory within L1 disciplines, in which she defines genre as "typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations" (Miller, 1984: 159) and argues that genre "must be centered not on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish" (Miller, 1984: 151), emphasizing that genres are significant social actions with the aim to align personal goals with the social context. With a focus on the analysis of functional and contextual aspects of genres, a number of scholars in New Rhetoric fields take an ethnomethodological approach rather than textual analysis for genre studies (Fakhruddin & Hassan, 2015: 55).

In their 2015 study, reviewing three influential genre approaches within linguistic and rhetorical traditions, Fakhruddin and Hassan note that each of them has "distinct definition, purpose, concepts and methods of analysis". ESP and SFL approaches "share the fundamental view that linguistic features of texts are connected to social context and function" (Fakhruddin & Hassan, 2015: 65), thus both of the approaches adopt linguistic methods for analyzing genre. RGS, in contrast, investigates genres as sociological concepts in which genre is studied thus taking an ethnographic approach. (Fakhruddin & Hassan, 2015: 65-6). Despite difference in their approaches, aims, focus and ways of analyzing genres, RGS, ESP and SFL agree on "the importance of genre as a social phenomenon" (Brezze, 2013: 38) and share a fundamental scope of describing and explaining "regularities of purpose, form and situated social action" (Hyland, 2002:115).

This study adopts mainly concepts developed in the SFL approach, and draws on the multimodal analysis. The following section provides a further discussion of this approach.

### **3.1.3 Multimodal genre analysis (MGA)**

Due to the development of discourse technology, more and more interest has been paid to "the multimodal nature of texts" which incorporate not just written text but

also non-textual elements such as visual images or oral text (Tardy & Swales, 2014: 173). *Multimodal genre analysis* has become a new trend within genre analysis (Tardy & Swales, 2014), especially after the excellent introductory research of Bateman (2008). It focuses on non-textual elements such as visual images or oral texts (e.g., Miller, 1998; Kress, 2003; Bateman, 2008).

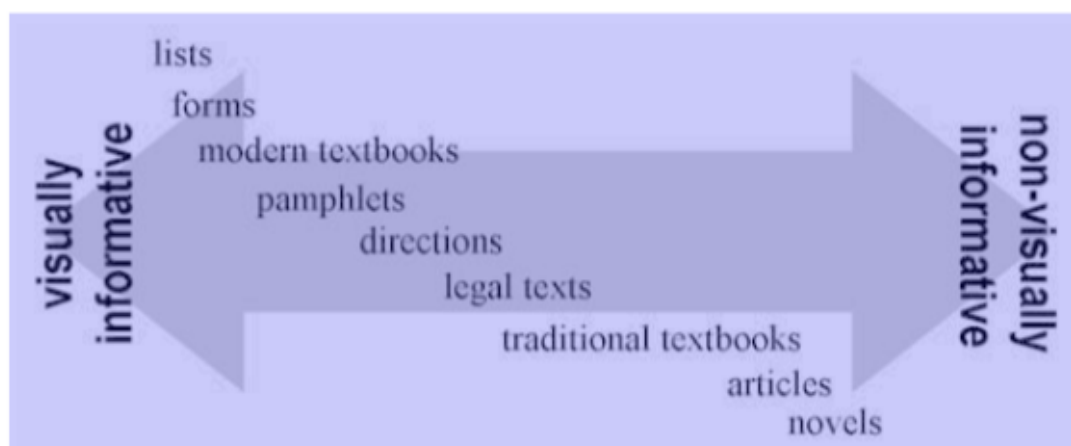
### **3.1.3.1 What's multimodal analysis?**

Generally speaking, mode is one of the three key features of the context within the SFL, the other two being field and tenor (Halliday, 1978, 1994; Halliday & Hasan, 1989). It refers to the channel of communication such as spoken mode, written mode, electronic mode, etc. The use and change of these modes could affect information flow. Mode means channels and the media of communication, including language, technology, images, colors, music, etc. Kress (2010: 79) considers multimodality as “a socially shaped and culturally given semiotic resource for making meaning”. Kress (2010: 49) maintained that *rhetoric* and *design* dually generate a frame for the representation and communication of meanings; the former, to the experts' propensity, aligns message with its ideological position, and the position of the audience with their ideological position, whereas the latter is its subordinate (Kress, 2010: 50). The messages take form, adorned with semiotic elements, through representational resources, and the mechanism of the representation and communication of the rhetor's messages by semiotic design is being taken into scrutiny by multimodal analysis.

### **3.1.3.2 Definition and importance of genre in multimodal analysis**

Van Leeuwen (2005) points out that genre is in relation to multimodality. In fact, the notion of genre plays a particularly important role in analyzing multimodal documents. Genre can describe an aspect of textual organization, i.e. that allows people to interpret the social relations of the participants in the making, receiving and reading of the texts (Kress, 2003). It is important to analyze multimodality from the perspective

of a particular genre, because meanings that are being made in multimodal documents are anchored in the historical and societal context where a particular genre is produced (cf. Bateman, 2008: 9). And since both the verbal and the non-verbal texts are the social practices and they can both indicate the social relations, then genre can be applied regardless of their modes (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). Moreover, the societal context helps to understand better what constraints a genre has in the choice of visual resources. Bateman (2008: 3) suggests that genre is a “multi-stratal” phenomenon, which means that the “semiotic work” required for deploying a genre involves making choices on several strata (Hiippala, 2013). He views genres as “points” or regions, which provide an “entire space of genre possibilities” open to documents (Bateman, 2008: 10). As defined by Bateman (ibid), Bernhardt (1985: 20) proposes a continuum of different types of documents according to the possibilities of exploitation of visual layout and visual presentation modes, which is given in Figure 3.1 graphically. However, these possibilities are constrained by “a combination of physical, production and consumption constraints” (Bateman, 2008: 17).



**Figure 3.1** A continuum of visual-textual deployment (Bernhardt, 1985: 20)

In order to investigate how multimodal documents work, Bateman (2008: 14) proposes the “incorporation of methods of empirical study developed within corpus-based linguistics”. With this purpose, a strong model is required for developing corpus-based approaches to multimodal documents, and this model will be

discussed in the next section.

### **3.1.3.3 A framework for multimodal genre analysis: The GeM model**

Although multimodality approaches draw also on the concepts of semiotic theory, several influential multimodal theories are mainly based on Systematic Functional Linguistics (Martin, 1992; Halliday, 1978, 1994; Halliday & Mathiessen, 2004).

Bateman (2008) puts forward the Genre and Multimodality framework (GeM model) in terms of multimodal analysis of genre-based documents.

With the setting up of multimodal genre analysis, scholars began to show interest in using this framework to analyze various texts. It was firstly used to analyze the newspaper genre. Caple (2009) notes that newspapers always draw on the strength of the visual images to catch and retain the attention of the readers. She analyzed many texts and found that headings combined together with the images are an idiomatic expression suitable for the major idea of the photos in the newspaper. There are three components in the newspaper texts: the headings, the image and the caption. The image functions as the orientation to intertextual references, especially to the reader's social and cultural knowledge. Knox (2009) investigates online newspapers and notes that online newspapers are more dynamic than print newspapers mainly due to the fact that online-papers can be often updated. The entry point on the homepage provides the abstract and links to the main part of the newspaper. On the homepage, there is an overview of the news and the headline news. And it is divided into several sections based on the topics so that readers can choose their news of interest more conveniently. Later on, multimodal genre analysis has moved from static texts to dynamic texts. (Riemer & Filius, 2008; Montagnolo & Messina, 2008; Ekenel & Semela, 2011). The multimodal analysis in this study will focus on images and videos related to Max Mara fashion shows that appeared in press releases, their related news reports, and posts on corporate social media (WeChat).



## 3.2 Corpus-based linguistics and genre analysis

Corpus linguistics offers very useful tools for analyzing genres. In genre analysis, the rhetorical conventions which are adopted by a community to produce a genre are important aspects to be explored. Corpora are the most effective way to reveal repetitive patterns in certain constraints and contexts and this is why “ESP genre analysts have taken to corpora with some enthusiasm” (Hyland, 2015: 34). This section gives the definition of corpus and Corpus Linguistics (CL) (3.2.1, 3.2.2), corpus design principles (3.2.3), types of corpora (3.2.4) and provide an overview of the tools of corpus linguistics for genre analysis (3.2.5).

### 3.2.1 What is a corpus?

With the rapid development of Corpus Linguistics (CL) over the past decades, different scholars have tried to give a definition of the corpus. Sinclair (1991: 171) defines corpus as “a collection of naturally-occurring language text, chosen to characterize a state or variety of a language” in his book *Corpus, Concordance, Collocation*, establishing fundamental methodologies for linguistic research. In the new century, Hunston (2002) has elaborated the definition and views it as:

A collection of naturally occurring examples of language, consisting of anything from a few sentences to a set of written texts or tape recordings, which have been collected for linguistic study. More recently, the word has been reserved for collections of texts (or parts of text) that are stored and accessed electronically. (Hunston, 2002: 2)

With the development of the Internet, it is redefined as “a collection of pieces of language text in electronic form, selected according to external criteria to represent, as far as possible, a language or language variety as a source of data for linguistic research” (Sinclair, 2005a: 16) or “a collection of texts that has been compiled to represent a particular use of a language and it is made accessible by means of corpus

linguistic software that allows the user to search for a variety of language features” (Cheng, 2012: 5).

### 3.2.2 What is corpus linguistics?

Since the first electronic corpus was compiled in the 60s, Corpus Linguistics (CL) began to develop prosperously (Liang, 2012: 1). McEnery and Wilson (1996/2004: 20-25) investigated CL from 1950s to 1980s, observing four main phases of development: *humanities computing*, *mechanolinguistics*, *English grammar*, and *neo-Firthians*.

Indeed, a corpus study offers an “empirical approach” which is “inductive in that statements of theoretical nature about the language or the culture are arrived at from observations of real cases” (Ali, 2007: 216). As Hoffman (1991: 159) argues, “the outcome of text-linguistic research into LSP is an important prerequisite of informational and documentational work, particularly if it is combined with automatic language data processing, or in other words, corpus linguistics”. Corpus studies, which are “primarily quantitative” though the trend of “a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques” occurring in the recent research (Cheng, 2014: 13), provide the powerful linguistic evidence-based accounts of language, supplementing and extending discourse analysis. Whilst exploring professional discourse, corpus study offers a useful methodology “which generally proves more reliable and objective than introspection or observation” (Breeze, 2011: 95).

Cheng (2012: 6) defines corpus linguistics simply as “the compilation and analysis of corpora”. However, there is one of the most debated questions about corpus linguistics: is corpus linguistics considered as a methodology of language studies or a theory in itself? This debate is covered elsewhere by, for example, Tognini-Bonelli (2001) and McEnery *et al.* (2006). McEnery and Hardie (2011:1) point out, that “( it ) is very important to realize that corpus linguistics is a heterogeneous field” and “differences exist within corpus linguistics which separate out and subcategorize varying approaches to the use of corpus data”. The

heterogeneity of perspectives taken on corpus linguistics is discussed at length by Taylor (2008), who mentions, among the others, definitions of corpus linguistics as “a tool, a method, a methodology, a methodological approach, a discipline, a theory, a theoretical approach, a paradigm (theoretical or methodological), or a combination of these.” (Taylor, 2008:180)

Among those supporting CL as a “linguistic theory”, Taylor (2008) mentions Leech (1992), Stubbs (1993), Teubert (2005), Mahlberg (2005) and of course, Sinclair (1991) whose work stands at the core of the contributions to the rising of computerized corpus-driven<sup>12</sup> analysis of texts. Halliday (1993b: 4) asserts that corpus linguistics “re-unites data gathering and theorizing and this is leading to a qualitative change in our understanding of language”.

On the other hand, corpus linguistics is viewed by some as an empirical method of linguistic analysis and description, using real-life examples of language data stored in corpora as the starting point (Crystal, 1992; Jackson, 2007). Corpus linguistics is “maturing methodologically” (McEnery & Wilson, 2001); it is “an approach or methodology for studying language use” (Bowker and Pearson, 2002: 9). While nowadays some do not hesitate in calling it a methodology (Gries, 2009: 1), McEnery and Hardie (2011), who argue how:

[...] it is a priori impossible for text on paper, or even on disk, to explain itself. Theorizing is a human act which occurs when a human being interacts with data and posits some explanatory principle or principles and ‘corpus-as-theory’ means simply that the analyst will not utilize any theoretical concepts that pre-exist their encounter with the corpus. (McEnery and Hardie, 2011: 148)

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<sup>12</sup>Corpus studies could be classified as “corpus-driven”, “corpus-based”, “corpus-assisted” and “corpus-informed” given “why and how a corpus is used for carrying out research” (Cheng, 2014:13), among which two major approaches are frequently adopted, namely corpus-based and corpus-driven. In a corpus-based study, corpus evidence is exploited “mainly as a repository of examples to expound, test or exemplify given theoretical statements”; in a corpus-driven study, no example is selected to “support or quantify a pre-existing theoretical category” (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001: 10-11).

Moreover, Thompson and Hunston (2006: 8) claim that at “its most basic, corpus linguistics is a methodology that can be aligned to any theoretical approach to language”. The distinction is not irrelevant because, as we shall see, the position one takes is likely to influence the approach adopted in a corpus linguistic study. Simply put, those who see corpus linguistics as a methodology (e.g., McEnery *et al.*, 2006: 7–11) use what is termed the “corpus-based approach” whereby they “use corpus linguistics to test existing theories or frameworks against evidence in the corpus” (Cheng, 2012: 6); while those who view corpus linguistics as a theory or discipline in its own right (e.g., Tognini-Bonelli, 2001; Sinclair, 1991, 1996, 2004; Biber, 2009.) use the corpus as the starting point for “exploring data to identify linguistic evidences, generating a hypothesis based on the linguistic evidences, generalizing recurrent patterns, and consolidating the findings into a theoretical statement” (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001: 14) and they describe their approach as “corpus-driven”. Anyway, the debate is likely to continue and may never be fully resolved. In fact, it is difficult and not necessary to distinguish two approaches or use them separately. Many researchers mix these two approaches in their studies. The present study adopt mostly corpus-based approach for analyzing the data.

### **3.2.3 Core corpus design principles**

From the definitions of corpus, we know that a corpus is defined as a collection of pieces of language text in electronic form, but a corpus is not just any collection of texts; it is “a collection of naturally occurring language texts, chosen to characterize a state or variety of a language” (Sinclair, 1991: 171). In other words, a corpus is designed and compiled based on corpus design principles. Sinclair (2005a) establishes a set of core principles and these are listed below:

1. The contents of a corpus should be selected without regard for the language they contain but according to their communicative function in the community in which they arise.

2. Corpus builders should strive to make their corpus as representative as possible of the language from which it is chosen.
3. Only those components of corpora which have been designed to be independently contrastive are contrasted (i.e., ‘orientation’).
4. Criteria for determining the structure of a corpus should be small in number, clearly separate from each other, and efficient as a group in delineating a corpus that is representative of the language or variety under examination (i.e., ‘criteria’).
5. Any information about a text other than the alphanumeric string of its words and punctuation should be stored separately from the plain text and merged when required in applications (i.e., ‘criteria’).
6. Samples of language for a corpus should whenever possible consist of entire documents or transcriptions of complete speech events or should get as close to this target as possible. This means that samples will differ substantially in size (i.e., ‘sampling’).
7. The design and composition of the corpus should be documented fully with information about the contents and arguments in justifications of the decisions taken.
8. The corpus builder should retain, as target notions, representativeness and balance. While these are not precisely definable and attainable goals, they must be used to guild the design of a corpus and the selection of its components. (i.e., ‘balance’).
9. Any control of subject matter in the corpus is imposed by the use of external, and not internal, criteria.
10. A corpus should aim for homogeneity in its components while maintaining adequate coverage, and rogue texts should be avoided.

(from Sinclair, 2005a: 1–16)

One of the corpus design principles is “orientation” (i.e., only those components of corpora which have been designed to be independently contrastive are contrasted) (Sinclair, 2005a: 3). If your purpose is to find out what a standard language is like, you will examine a reference corpus such as British National Corpus (BNC) (100

million words), Bank of English (650 million words as of 2011), or the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (425 million words, 1990–2011). If you want to find out whether the grammar in different registers is different, you will examine register-based corpora; see, for example, Biber et al.'s (1999) corpus-based description of the grammar of four registers of English: conversation, fiction, news and academic texts. Now that with many corpus management systems it is possible to “dial-a-corpus” to your own requirements, it is important to note that the burden of demonstrating representativeness lies with the user of such selections and not with the original corpus builder. It is perfectly possible, and indeed very likely, that a corpus component can be adequate for representing its variety within a large normative corpus, but inadequate to represent its variety when freestanding.

Any selection must be on some criteria and the first major step in corpus building is the determination of the criteria on which the texts that form the corpus will be selected. External, rather than internal, criteria need to be used when selecting subject matter for the corpus (Sinclair, 2005a: 11). Common external criteria include: the mode of the text (e.g., speech, writing and electronic mode); the type of text (e.g., in the case of a written corpus, whether books, journals, emails or letters should be chosen); the domain of the text (e.g., academic or popular); the language, languages or language varieties of the corpus (e.g., Australian, Irish or American English); the location of the texts (e.g., the English of the UK or Australia); and the date the texts were spoken or written (e.g., the Time Magazine Corpus (100 million words, 1923–2006) compiled by Mark Davies).

### **3.2.4 Types of corpora and how to build specialized corpora?**

Before thinking about how to set about building a corpus, it is useful to know a little about the ways that different corpora can be categorized into types. Researchers have produced a range of recognizable types of corpora, depending on the sorts of research goals that they have had in mind.

In an overview of what corpora are available, Lee (2010) describes three

categories of corpora: major English language corpora (Table 3.1), developmental, learner and lingua franca corpora (Table 3.2), and non-English corpora and multilingual corpora (Table 3.3). Many of the corpora are listed in Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3, as well as many that are not listed.

Types of English language corpora	Representative corpora
'General English' corpora (written, spoken and both)	Brown Corpus of written American English, FROWN (Freiburg-Brown Corpus of written American English), Lancaster Oslo-Bergen (LOB) corpus of written British English, FLOB (Freiburg- LOB corpus of written British English, Wellington Corpus of Written New Zealand English, Australian Corpus of English (ACE), Kolhapur Corpus of Indian English, International Corpus of English (ICE), Bank of English, British National Corpus (BNC), American National Corpus (ANC), Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)
Speech corpora	Spoken English Corpus (SEC), Machine Readable Spoken English Corpus (MARSEC), London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English, Intonation Variation in English (IViE) Corpus, Freiburg Corpus of English Dialects FRED (FRED), Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English (CANCODE), Switchboard Corpus, Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (SBCSAE)
Parsed written corpora	Lancaster Parsed Corpus (LPC), Surface and Underlying Structural Analyses of Naturalistic English (SUSANNE) Corpus, ICB-GB (Great Britain), Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English, York-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Poetry

Historical corpora	Helsinki Corpus of English, A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers (ARCHER), Corpus of Historical American English (COHA), Lampeter Corpus, Newdigate Newsletter Corpus, Corpus of Early English Correspondence (CEEC), Corpus of Late Eighteenth- Century Prose, Corpus of later Modern English Prose, Zurich English Newspaper Corpus, Old Bailey Corpus, Corpus of English Dialogues (CED)
Specialised corpora	Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE), British Academic Spoken English corpus (BASE), Limerick-Belfast Corpus of Academic Spoken English (LIBEL CASE), City University Corpus of Academic Spoken English (CUCASE), British National Corpus (academic component), LOB (category J texts: 'learned and scientific writings'), Chemnitz Corpus of Specialised and Popular Academic English (SPACE), Reading Academic Text corpus (RAT), Professional English Research Corpus (PERC), Wolverhampton Business English Corpus, Business Letters Corpus (BLC)
Multimedia corpora	Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (SBCSAE), Scottish Corpus of Texts and Speech (SCOTS), English Language Interview Corpus as a Second-Language Application, Singapore Corpus of Research in Education (SCoRE), multimedia corpus of European teenager talk (SACODEYL project)

**Table 3.1** Major English language corpora (Lee, 2010: 109–16)

Types of developmental, learner and lingua franca corpora	Representative corpora
Developmental	CHILDES database and Polytechnic of Wales (POW) Corpus,



language corpora	Louvian Corpus of Native English Essays (LOCNESS; 324,000 words), British Academic Written English Corpus (BAWE; 6.5 million words), Michigan Corpus of Upper-level Student Papers (MICUSP; 2 million words)
ESL/EFL learner corpora	International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE; 3.7 million written words), Louvian International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage (LINDSEI; 1 million words), Lancaster Corpus of Academic Written English (LANCAWE), Montclair Electronic Language Learners' Database (MELD; 98,000 words), Chinese Academic Written English (CAWE; 408,000 words), International Corpus of Crosslinguistic Interlanguage (ICCI), Japanese EFL Learner Corpus (JEFLC; 700,000 words), Learner Business Letters Corpus (Learner BLC; 200,000 words), Learning Prosody in a Foreign Language (LeaP corpus; more than twelve hours of recordings)
Lingua franca corpora	Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE Corpus; 1 million words, 120 hours), The Corpus of English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings (ELFA Corpus; 1 million words, 131 hours)

**Table 3.2** Developmental, learner and lingua franca corpora (Lee, 2010: 116–18)

Types of non-English corpora and multilingual corpora	Representative corpora
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<p>Monolingual non-English corpora</p>	<p>CORIS/CODIS (Italian), Czech National Corpus), Hungarian National Corpus, Hellenic National Corpus (also known as the ILSP Corpus), German National Corpus, Modern Chinese Language Corpus (MCLC), Polish National Corpus, Russian Reference Corpus (BOKR), Slovak National Corpus and the Korean National Corpus (or Sejong Balanced Corpus), the Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese (BCCWJ; 100 million words), Academia Sinica Balanced Corpus (five million words of Taiwanese Mandarin), the Peking University corpora (hundreds of millions of Chinese characters), the New Corpus for Ireland (NCI; thirty million words of Irish, and twenty-five million words of Irish English), Cronfa Electroneg o Gymraeg (one million words of Welsh, Scottish Corpus of Texts and Speech (SCOTS; target of four million words); Oslo Corpus of Bosnian Texts (1.5 million), the ‘Brown’ Corpus of Bulgarian (one million words)</p>
<p>Parallel and comparable multilingual corpora</p>	<p>English–Norwegian Parallel Corpus (ENPC), English–Swedish Parallel Corpus (ESPC), Oslo Multilingual Corpus (OMC), IJS–ELAN Slovene–English Parallel Corpus, BFSU Chinese–English Parallel Corpus (by Beijing Foreign Studies University), Babel Chinese–English Parallel Corpus, Kacenska (English to Czech), MULTEXT-East (English to nine different languages) , HKIEd English–Chinese Parallel Corpus</p>

**Table 3.3** Non-English corpora and multilingual corpora (Lee, 2010: 118–20)

Referring to parallel and comparable corpora, Johansson (2007: 9–11) gives the following definitions: *translation corpora* contain “original texts and their translations into one or more other languages”; *comparable corpora* contain “original texts in two

or more languages matched by criteria such as genre, time of publication, etc.”, while the term *parallel corpus* is reserved for “bidirectional translation corpora”, a combination of translation corpora and comparable corpora that use the same framework (i.e. comparable originals in at least two languages plus their translations into the other language(s)). Johansson’s equation of parallel with bidirectional is not observed by everyone, and for the purposes of this chapter, the terms and definitions given by Aston (1999) will be used instead, as summarized in Table 3.4.

Language A		Language B	
Comparable corpora (multilingual)	Specialized corpus		Specialized corpus of same design
Unidirectional parallel corpora	Specialized corpus	⇒	Translations of texts contained in A
Bidirectional parallel corpora	A1 Specialized corpus		B1 Specialized corpus of same design as A1
	A2 Translations of B1	↔	B2 Translations of A1

**Table 3.4** Comparable and parallel multilingual corpora (Aston, 1999)

In corpus linguistics, a corpus is often described as being either “general” or “specialized”. General corpora are usually much bigger than specialized corpora. For example, the Bank of English is over 600 million words; COCA is more than 400 million words; and the BNC is 100 million words, and all are general corpora. Specialized corpora, on the other hand, can usually be measured in the thousands or low millions of words, although there are some that are very large. However, size is not the main factor distinguishing the two types of corpora. What distinguishes general corpora from specialized corpora is the purpose for which they are compiled.

General corpora aim to examine patterns of language use for a language as a whole, and specialized corpora are compiled to describe language use in a specific variety, register or genre (Cheng, 2012).

Specialized corpora cover a wide range of registers, genres, language forms and language varieties and a specialized corpus would be used in order to study aspects of a particular variety, register or genre of language, so for example, we might just be interested in the language of newspapers, press releases, or the language used in academic essays, or in spoken conversations between an Italian company and a Chinese company. As corpus linguistics has grown, so too has the demand for more specific studies and applications that specialized corpora are often best designed to meet. Having a specific focus can also mean that they can be used to inform the learning and teaching of language for specific purposes, especially when the patterns of language use are benchmarked with a general corpus to highlight similarities and differences. It would make sense then to collect texts that conform to the specialized criteria. A good example of a specialized corpus would be Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English; the texts in this corpus consisting of transcripts of spoken language recorded in academic institutions across America. (Baker, 2006)

When discussing building small specialized corpora, Koester (2010: 67–8) asks “How small and how specialized?”, and answers the question by quoting Flowerdew (2004: 21):

- Specific purpose for compilation, e.g., to investigate a particular grammatical or lexical item.
- Contextualization: particular setting, participants and communicative purposes, e.g. a job interview that involves a candidate and a panel of interviewers.
- Genre, e.g. promotional (grant proposals, sales letters).
- Type of text/discourse, e.g. biology textbooks, casual conversation.
- Subject matter/topic, e.g., economics.
- Variety of English, e.g., Learner English.

Increasingly, multi-modal corpora are becoming important. Multi-modal corpora consist of “video, audio and textual records of interaction (and associated metadata information) extracted from recordings of naturally occurring conversational episodes which are streamed in an easy-to-use interface” (Knight et al., 2010: 16). An example is the Nottingham eLanguage Corpus comprising both “Text-based eLanguage data” (e.g. SMS/MMS messages, emails and blogging entries) and “Language ‘in the wild’” that captures the receptive (not productive) linguistic experience of ‘specific language individuals on a day-to-day basis’ (Knight et al., 2010: 16), including texts, video, audio and field notes.

### 3.2.5 The tools of corpus linguistics for genre analysis

Bondi, Gavioli, and Silver (2004: 7) notice that “the tools of corpus analysis, especially with reference to small, specialized corpora, have greatly contributed to the study of language variation across genres and across disciplines”. Baker (2006) investigates the application of corpus linguistics into discourse analysis, which is also suitable for genre analysis. He examines the 4 most commonly used functions of corpus concordancer: frequency and dispersion, concordances, collocates, and keywords.

A *concordance* is “a list of all of the occurrences of a particular search term in a corpus, presented within the context that they occur in” (Baker, 2006: 71). Concordance analysis is more qualitative than other analyses in corpus linguistics.

In order to do an adequate concordance analysis, Baker suggests a step-by-step guide, which is shown in Table 3.5.

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Build o obtain access to a corpus</li><li>2) Decide on the search term (e.g. refugee) – bearing in mind that search terms can be expanded to include plurals (refugees), euphemisms (aliens), anaphora (them, they) and proper nouns of relevant individuals. In order to do this it might be useful to initially carry out a pilot study, looking closely at a small sample of the corpus, or consulting other sources,</li><li>3) Obtain a concordance of the search term(s).</li><li>4) Clean the concordance – e.g. by removing repetitions or other lines which are not relevant –</li></ol> |
|--|

- for example, references that refer to aliens from space rather than aliens as refugees.
- 5) Sort the concordance repeatedly on different words to the left and right while looking for evidence of grammatical, semantic or discourse patterns.
  - 6) Look for further evidence of such patterns in the corpus.
  - 7) Investigate the presence of particular terms more closely – e.g. by exploring their collocates or distribution in reference corpora of general language.
  - 8) When no more patterns can be found, carry out a close analysis of the remaining concordance lines, looking for similarities or patterns in terms of meaning or discourse.
  - 9) Note rare or non-existent cases of discourses based on your own intuitions. See if such discourses occur in other more general corpora.
  - 10) Attempt to hypothesize why the patterns appear and relate this to issues of text production and reception.

**Table 3.5** Step-by-step guide to concordance analysis (adapted from Baker, 2006: 92-93)

*Collocates* refer to words that frequently occur next to or near each other. In a collocation, a *node* is the word that is being studied, and a *collocate* is the word that occurs next to or near the node (Sinclair, 1991: 115).

*Keywords* are “words that play a role in identifying important elements of the text” (Bondi, 2010: 1). Keywords can be single words and also lexical units (Sinclair, 1996). As searching and analytic tools, keywords are applied to explore the relationship between words and text, and are often taken to be markers of the “aboutness” of texts (Bondi, 2010:1).

## CHAPTER 4 THE STUDY: CORPORA AND METHODS

This chapter describes the corpora and the methods adopted in the analysis. First of all, Section 4.1 provides a brief presentation concerning the history of Max Mara Fashion Group (MMFG) and its brand Max Mara. Second of all, Section 4.2 delves into the criteria for data collection and provides a description of the corpora and sub-corpora that were compiled for the present study. Third, Section 4.3 outlines the theoretical and analytical framework--GeM (Genre and Multimodality) model employed in the present study.

### 4.1 The presentation of Max Mara Fashion Group<sup>13</sup> (MMFG)

#### 4.1.1 The overview of MMFG

In 1951, Cavaliere Achille Maramotti, Italian fashion entrepreneur (1927—2005), founded the first company of the Max Mara Fashion Group, which has ever since had benefited from significant fame and respect internationally.

In 1850 Marina Rinaldi, the founder's great grandmother, owned and managed a major workshop in the center of Reggio Emilia; her artisanal business distinguished itself especially thanks to its attention to details and finishes. This almost visceral passion was later passed on to her granddaughter, Giulia Fontanesi Maramotti, who began teaching herself sewing and patternmaking in 1925, publishing a series of volumes dedicated to the "theory of cutting".

Today, the Max Mara Fashion Group is one of the most prestigious international fashion houses and the first Italian clothing company which recognized worldwide as the forerunner of modern ready-to-wear as its "haute de gamme" women's clothing are produced by using excellent industrial processes.

Sophisticated designer outlets open worldwide, not only on the most famous

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.maxmarafashiongroup.com/?lang=en>

shopping streets of metropolises, such as Milan, Paris, London, Moscow, New York and Tokyo, but also in South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Australia, Brazil and New Caledonia. Furthermore, a network of over 245 sales outlets has been opened in less than ten years even in Chinese cities, extending from Beijing and Shanghai to Qingdao, Shenyang and Old Hangzhou. In total, the MMFG has chosen to operate in 105 countries with more than 2,500 single-brand stores and over 10,000 multi-brand stores.

MMFG possesses 9 brands: Max Mara, Sportmax, Weekend Max Mara, Max&Co, Marella, iBlues, Pennyblack, Marina Rinaldi, and Persona. Max Mara is the first and mainline brand among the 9 brands. The Max Mara collection is dedicated to glamour chic women who enjoy rediscovering a refined yet dynamic and practical look in everyday life. Such women mirror the image of modern and contemporary females with a sophisticated and refined image, a look in line with the trends and suitable for the different occasions of social life. Distinctive traits of the Max Mara mood certainly are sartorial tradition, luxury materials, experimentation, international feel, modernity and status.

#### **4.1.2 The object of the study: The Max Mara brand**

The Max Mara brand is chosen primarily because Max Mara Fashion Group is ranked at the fourth position among the first 15 luxury goods companies in Italy in 2017 in terms of number of sales with over 1784 million dollars in net sales, as shown in Figure 4.1<sup>14</sup>. Max Mara is also the first and mainline brand among the 9 ones within the MMFG and it has obtained an excellent international reputation from the outset. Additionally, Max Mara hosted its first fashion show in Shanghai presenting its new Pre-Fall 2017 Collection, which was received with an overwhelmingly positive response. The company is continuing its long-running consistent expansion in China. Figure 4.2 represents the annual sales value of Max Mara Fashion Group from 2015 to 2017. According to the data, the sales of Max Mara Fashion Group have increased

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<sup>14</sup>Deloitte, Leading luxury goods companies in Italy in 2017, by sales (in US million dollars), in Statista – The Statistics Portal.

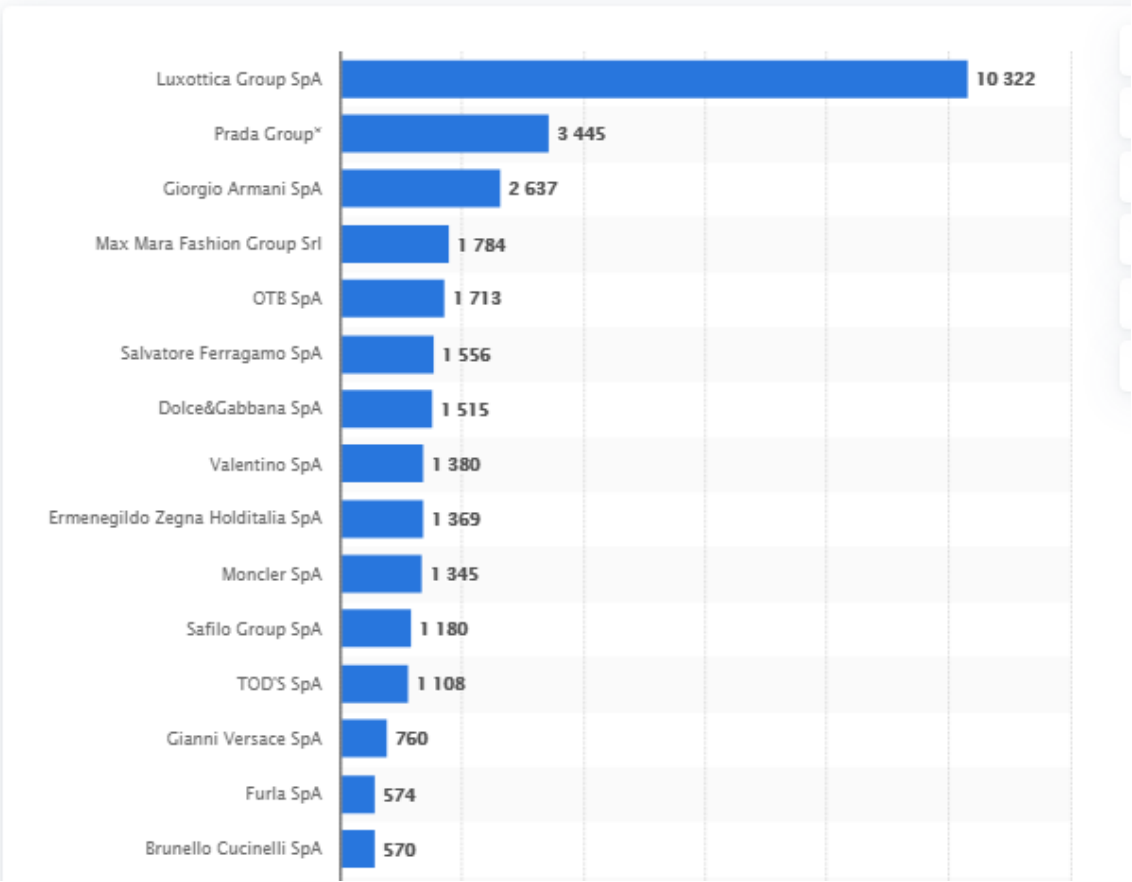


overall, growing from about 1.38 billion euros in 2015 to approximately 1.56 billion euros in 2017<sup>15</sup>. Based on the aforementioned considerations, the brand Max Mara is chosen to be the object of the present study.

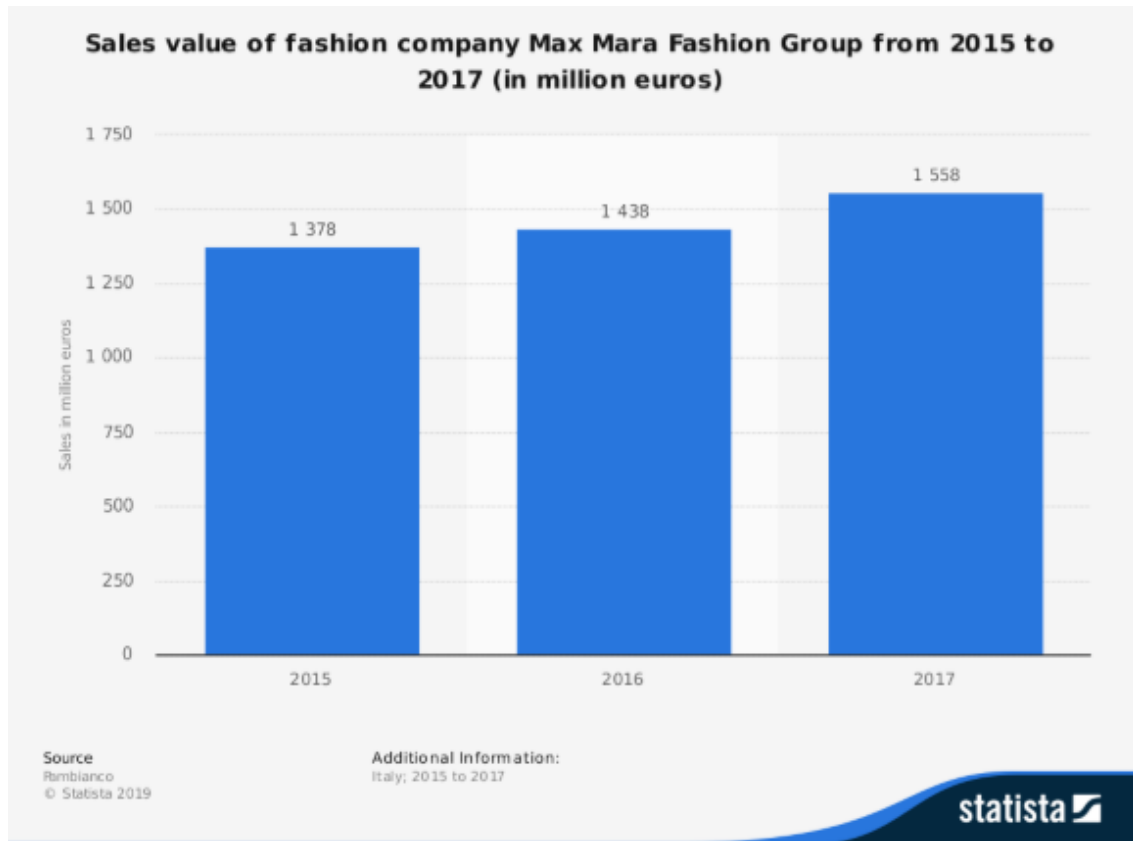
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<sup>15</sup> Pambianco & Issue, Sales value of fashion company Max Mara Group from 2015 to 2017 (in million euros), in Statista – The Statistics Portal.

# Leading luxury goods companies in Italy in 2017, by sales (in US million dollars)



**Figure 4.1** Leading luxury goods companies in Italy in 2017, by sales (in US million dollars), (Deloitte, 2019)



**Figure 4.2** Sales value of Max Mara Fashion Group from 2015 to 2017 (in million euros), (Pambianco & Issuu, 2019)

## 4.2 Data collection

This thesis is designed to identify the female image conveyed by Max Mara, and to investigate the multimodal strategies in the genre of news reports. In that end, the study is based on two general corpora: 1) the corporate corpus (CC), 2) the media corpus (MC). Furthermore, a sub-corpus of news reports is also considered. This section first highlights the criteria for the selection of materials (Section 4.2.1) and then provides a description of the corpora used in the present study (Section 4.2.2).

### 4.2.1 Criteria for the selection of the materials in the corpora

The materials are identified and selected in light of the research questions. The selection of the corpora is based on the following criteria:

1. Materials within the corpora are related to Max Mara fashion shows which were held at MFW from the beginning of 2017 to the end of 2019.
2. The materials produced by the company and their coverage by the media are deduced from the same fashion shows.
3. The reaction to the materials produced by the company was studied by looking at online fashion magazines, as well as fashion section of multiple news websites in three languages (Italian, Chinese and English). All articles reporting on the aforementioned events (totaling up to 127 news reports) are included.

Online fashion magazines or websites with fashion section from which the news reports were collected are chosen based on the following criteria. First, a general google search was carried out (only the first five google search pages were considered) using keywords, such as, “Max Mara primavera estate 2020”, “Max Mara spring summer 2020”, and “Max Mara 春夏 2020”. This was followed by identification of fashion websites and other websites with fashion section with reports on these fashion shows. In the case of news articles in the English language, only those articles dealing with the United States and the United Kingdom were considered. The articles that have around 100 or more than 100 words were selected, from time to time accompanied by pictures or videos. Most of the chosen websites are major international, Italian and Chinese (including Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau) fashion websites. The last step is an in-site keyword search in the websites of over four times occurrences to ensure the inclusion of as many new reports relevant to the fashion show in the corporate corpora as possible, including the date, title of the magazine, title of the article, type of media, name of journalist, Table of other information and the full list of these websites can be seen in Appendix 1.

#### **4.2.2 Description of the corpora**

The data used for the present study refer to Max Mara’s spring/summer and

fall/winter collections for three years (from 2017 to 2019). This period is chosen on account of the largely positive responses to Max Mara's new Pre-Fall 2017 Collection on December 15th, 2016 in Shanghai. After this show, the company expects to see a continued growth in the future Chinese market and that the Chinese fashion industry will pay more attention to the brand. Max Mara holds its fashion shows twice a year in MFW: the spring/summer shows in September/October of each year while the fall/winter shows in February/March of each year.

During the fashion shows, the company issues the related press releases in Italian and in English. Generally, Max Mara's online press releases are accompanied by the photos and the videos of fashion shows in the section entitled "RUNWAY" on the brand website<sup>16</sup>. Here it is paramount to mention that only the videos of fashion shows and press releases within the past one year are kept on the webpage, and when the brand's website was updated in 2019, the company issued only the videos and images related to the new collections. In this case, in the last stage of data collection, I contacted the communication department of the group in order to obtain the related materials in the past three years from 2017 to 2019 in PDF format. The press releases of 2017 and 2018 are the same as those downloaded in Word format from the brand's website. Meanwhile, Max Mara China issues the articles in Chinese referring to the same fashion shows on the company's official WeChat account for its communication strategy addressed towards the Chinese market. Indeed, the present study does not dwell too much on the press release in general or the media in general, but instead focuses on the presentation of the new collections in the different genres: press releases, articles on WeChat, and their reception in the media press.

The corporate corpus is composed of 12 press releases issued by Max Mara (PR-IE) and 6 articles by the official WeChat account (WeChat-Ch). The full CC is subdivided into three sub-corpora: PR-It (6 press releases in Italian), PR-En (6 press releases in English), and WeChat-Ch (6 articles in Chinese). All the press releases are provided by the Max Mara company in PDF format. Max Mara is an Italian brand and it can be argued that the source press release may be in Italian. If that is the case, the English version is the translation of the Italian version. There is also a possibility that the two different language versions are not translations of each other, but that they are created by native authors. Six articles are downloaded in PDF format from the Max

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<sup>16</sup> <https://world.maxmara.com/editorial/runway-fall-winter> (accessed on 24 June 2020)

Mara’s official social media platform WeChat. All of them are in Chinese. The articles in Chinese are based on press releases in Italian or those in English. Table 4.1 shows the data distribution of Corporate Corpus.

Date	No. of words in PR-It	No. of words in PR-En	No. of words in WeChat-Ch
FW2017/2018	424	447	805
SS2018	332	364	820
FW2018/2019	338	377	672
SS2019	343	309	571
FW2019/2020	427	410	1047
SS2020	397	412	1045
Total number of words	2261	2319	4690

**Table 4.1** Data distribution of Corporate Corpus

The media corpus is composed of 118 news reports (NR-ICE) collected from different sources, such as various online fashion magazines, as well as the fashion section of multiple news websites (e.g. Amica.it; Iodonna.it; Vogue.com; Thefemin.com; Sohu.com; Elle Taiwan). The MC is subdivided into three sub-corpora: NR-It (41 news reports in Italian), NR-Ch (44 news reports in Chinese) and NR-En (33 news reports in English). The number of news reports selected is dependent on the availability of the materials online. Table 2 shows the data distribution of Media Corpus.

Date	No. of articles (It)	No. of words in NR-It	No. of articles (Ch)	No. of words in NR-Ch	No. of articles (En)	No. of words in NR-En
FW2017/2018	6	2394	8	4489	6	1768
SS2018	8	3476	5	2170	5	1230

FW2018/2019	7	2755	6	3731	4	1934
SS2019	5	1557	8	4320	5	1339
FW2019/2020	7	2247	8	5547	5	2540
SS2020	8	2694	11	7828	8	2600
Total number of words	41	15546	44	28085	33	11411

**Table 4.2** Data distribution of Media Corpus

Table 4.1 shows that the number of words in Italian and English press releases are similar, but Chinese words are almost doubled in comparison to Italian and English. Table 4.2 shows that there are fewer news reports in English and no significant difference in the number of Italian and Chinese news reports, but a huge discrepancy between the numbers of the words of the news reports in the three languages. However, such a data distribution, albeit unbalanced among the three types, is the outcome of the carefully selected criteria.

From the archive of the NR-ICE, 18 news reports were selected for post-processing and inclusion in the fully annotated corpus. The sub-corpus of 18 news reports (NR-ICE-T) was annotated with base units, layout units, and rhetorical units (see Section 4.3 for details): 6 in Italian (NR-It-T), 6 in Chinese (NR-Ch-T), and 6 in English (NR-En-T). The news reports in the three languages in the sub-corpora were selected from the magazines with highest circulation and popularity with at least four occurrences in the media corpus.

With all the above aspects of the data selection considered and the data itself presented, the next Section (4.3) will describe the research methodology in detail.

### **4.3 Theoretical and analytical framework: The GeM model**

This section illustrates on how to apply the GeM framework to the genre of news reports in order to demonstrate the features of multimodal documents in such genre.

The section focuses on an overall overview of the GeM model as well as describes the steps required to compile a multimodal corpus using the GeM framework. In order to introduce the GeM model, Section 4.3.1 looks at the nature of the GeM model and the methodological steps to follow when applying such model; Section 4.3.2 describes the three analytical layers at length. With regards to the structure of the corpus, Section 4.3.3 then briefly presents the basic principles of the GeM annotation schema (Henschel, 2003) required to encode the multimodal documents (i.e. Extensible markup language XML for annotating); Section 4.3.4 introduces the visualization techniques--the gem-tools (Hiippala, 2015a) for visualizing the XML data. Finally, Sections 4.3.5 and 4.3.6 describe how the GeM-annotated corpus was built and verified.

### **4.3.1 The GeM model: the overall framework**

From 1999 until 2002, the GeM project, which is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, is based at the University of Stirling in the UK (Judy Delin<sup>17</sup>, Renate Henschel<sup>18</sup>) and the University of Bremen in Germany (John Bateman). It refers to different fields including linguistics, computer science, graphic and information design (e.g. Schriver, 1997), and typography (e.g. Waller, 1987). The GeM project focused on developing the first XML annotation scheme (Henschel, 2003) for multilayered description of illustrated documents with complex layout. The production of the GeM project<sup>19</sup> is the GeM model (cf. Bateman, 2008, 2014a; Bateman et al., 2004, 2007; Delin and Bateman, 2002; Delin et al., 2002; for its application to non-static multimodal artefacts, cf. Bateman, 2013b).

Bateman (2008) puts forward the Genre and Multimodality framework (GeM model) in terms of multimodal analysis of genre-based documents. An overview of

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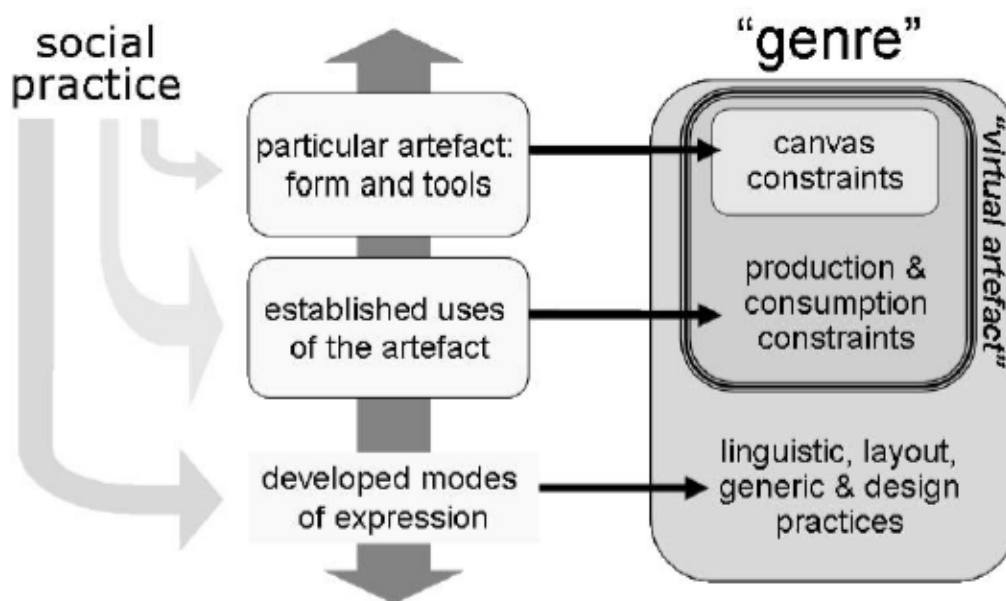
<sup>17</sup> Judy Delin focuses on syntax and discourse analysis - especially the structure of information and the layout of illustrated documents which involves more than one language.

<sup>18</sup> Renate Henschel is a computational linguist with specialties in multilingual natural language generation, machine translation, and XML-based linguistic annotation schemes.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.fb10.uni-bremen.de/anglistik/langpro/projects/gem/newframe.html>



the model is provided in Figure 4.3.



**Figure 4.3** The GeM model (Bateman, 2008: 16)

The figure shows the documents produced by configurations of social practices. Particular multimodal/virtual artefacts are created with particular forms and tools. Documents are produced physically on “canvas” which refers to the medium adopted as a basis for the construction of the artefact, such as paper, a monitor screen, an animal skin, and so on (cf. Bateman, 2008: 15-16). The production of multimodal artefacts is constrained by the physical substrate, production technology and consumption requirements. The constraints in these three aspects are summarized in Table 4.3.

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<i>Canvas constraints</i>	constraints arising out of the physical nature of the object being produced: paper or screen size; fold geometry such as for a leaflet
<i>Production constraints</i>	constraints arising out of the production technology: limit on pages, colors, size of included graphics, availability of photographs; constraints arising from the micro-and macro-economy of time or materials: e.g. deadlines; expense of using color; necessity of incorporating advertising
<i>Consumption constraints</i>	constraints arising out of the time, place, and manner of acquiring and consuming the document, such as method of selection at purchase point, or web browser sophistication and the changes it will make on downloading; also constraints arising out of the degree to which the document must be easy to read, understand, or otherwise use; fitness in relation to task (read straight through? Quick reference?); assumptions of expertise of readers

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**Table 4.3** The primary sources of constraints adopted by the Genre and Multimodality framework (Bateman, 2008: 18)

Based on the constraints mentioned in Table 4.3, online press releases and/or online news reports are taken here as an illustration. The online press releases are often published in PDF format; their physical nature constrains the possibilities of the use of visual elements in the documents as, for example, video can't be adopted in a PDF document. Additionally, the production constraints of both online press releases or news reports depend on the production technology, such as "limit of pages, colors, size of graphics, availability of photographs" (Bateman 2008: 18); page layout of online news reports can be "result of negotiations between publisher and advertisement companies" (ibid). Furthermore, the consumption constraints refer to "the time, place, and manner of acquiring and consuming the document" (ibid). For example, the exploitation of visual elements in online press releases or news reports depends on assumptions made by the producer of the document regarding the reading competence of targeted readers. These three sources of constraint create the "virtual artefact" (Bateman 2008: 16) of a particular genre, which can be characterized in terms of the semiotic modes deployed within a document.

To isolate the effects of genre constraints, the GeM model defines six primary layers for multimodal documents: *content structure*, *genre structure*, *rhetorical structure*, *linguistic structure*, *layout structure*, and *navigation structure* (cf. Bateman, 2008: 19), as shown in Table 4.4. These main descriptive layers defined by the GeM model provide the basis for the construction of multimodal documents corpora, which can also be adopted directly for the annotation (using XML annotation schema) of a multimodal corpus (ibid). Each of the primary layers play an independent role in achieving communicative purposes and conceptualizing the notion of multimodal genre.

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<i>Content structure</i>	the content-related structure of the information to be communicated—including propositional content
<i>Genre structure</i>	the individual stages or phases defined for a given genre: i.e., how the delivery of the content proceeds through particular stages of activity
<i>Rhetorical structure</i>	the rhetorical relationships between content elements: i.e., how the content is ‘argued’, divided into main material and supporting material, and structured rhetorically
<i>Linguistic structure</i>	the linguistic details of any verbal elements that are used to realize the layout elements of the page/document
<i>Layout structure</i>	the nature, appearance and position of communicative elements on the page, and their hierarchical interrelationships
<i>Navigation structure</i>	the ways in which the intended mode(s) of consumption of the document is/are supported: this includes all elements on a page that serve to direct or assist the reader’s consumption of the document

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**Table 4.4** The primary layers of the Genre and Multimodality framework (Bateman, 2008: 19)

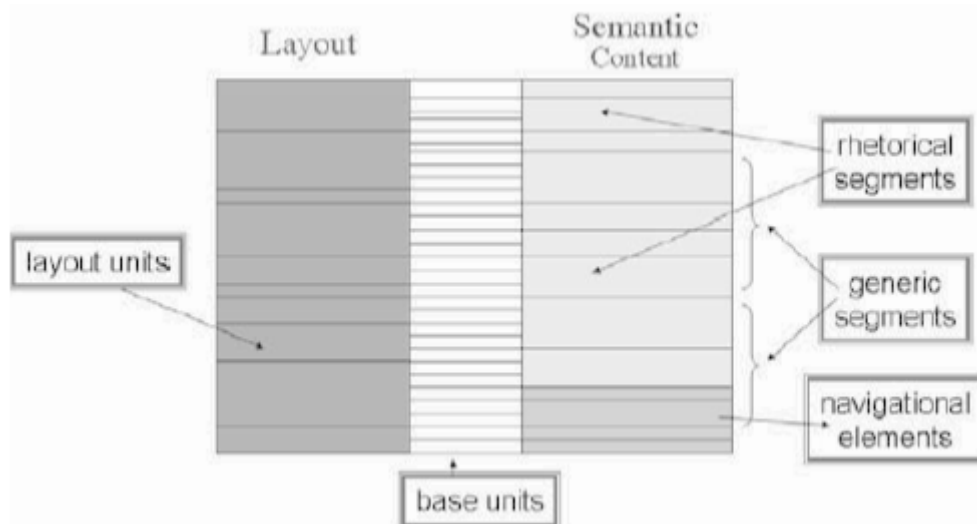
The GeM framework allows researchers to, “account for consistencies in visual style (including layout and typographical decisions) in terms of an extended notion of multimodal genre” (Bateman, 2014a: 32). It eventually also enables the

researchers to, “attack any example of a multimodal document with a single set of tools that can provide reproducible, and therefore evaluable analyses of what is involved in the multiplication of meanings discovered” (Bateman, 2008: 2).

Bateman (2008: 108) treats the multimodal page as a “multi-layered semiotic artefact”. In order to identify the relationships between text, image and layout, the author (Bateman, 2008: 175-176; see also Hiippala, 2015b; Bateman, 2009, 2011, 2016a, 2017b) suggests three distinct semiotic modes--text-flow, page-flow, and image-flow:

In essence, text-flow supports a linear unfolding of logical text organization and includes motivation for basic text-formatting options; page-flow draws in the two-dimensional possibilities of the page for expressing rhetorical relationships via spatial proximity and grouping; and image-flow uses the space of the page or a presentation in time for carrying an unfolding conjunctively-related discourse. (Bateman, 2009: 55)

The key terms from the aforementioned definitions are textual organization, rhetorical structure, and conjunctive relations respectively. In this case, it is necessary to compare and contrast distinct semiotic modes and to relate them. In order to achieve an empirical analysis of how multimodal documents function, Bateman (2008: 108) sets three principal layers of analysis in the GeM model according to the types of elements: “Base”, “Layout”, and “Semantic Content” (Bateman, 2008: 109). Among these, the semantic content is further divided into two sub-layers: the first layer is “Rhetorical Segments” and “Navigational Elements”, and the second layer is “Generic Segments” (cf. Li & Li, 2014: 58). This distribution is shown in Figure 4.4.

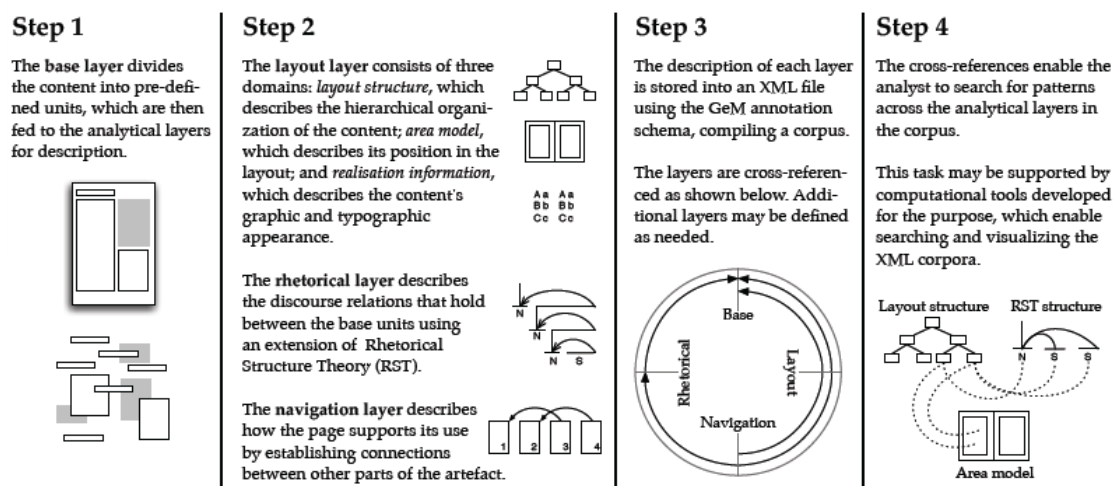


**Figure 4.4** The distribution of base elements to layout, rhetorical, generic and navigational elements (Bateman, 2008: 109)

Figure 4.4 describes that the GeM base layer is located between the layout layer and the semantic content layer. The GeM base layer provides the starting point for analysis. The main purpose of this layer is to identify the basic units physically occurring on a multimodal page or document that can serve subsequently to assume particular roles or functions within other layers. The layout layer is set to the left of the diagram, which focuses on the “presentational” information of the GeM model (Bateman, 2008: 109). The function of the layout units is to determine the layout features and structure of a page or document, providing “a site of visual integration” for the particular functionalities of the semantic content layer, such as rhetorical segments, navigational elements, and generic segments (Bateman, 2008: 110). Three groupings to the right constitute the semantic content layer. This layer aims to investigate the rhetorical relationship and the navigational function of the page or document analyzed, and combinations of rhetorical units and navigation elements can determine the generic segments within a genre to which the page or document belongs (cf. Bateman, 2008). It is important to point out that each layer has its own basic unit of analysis. However, the basic units in the base layer are the smallest particles. The units in other layers, such as layout units, can be composed of collection of basic units,

so they tend to have greater granularity (cf. Bateman, 2008; Li & Li, 2014).

For the purpose of the analysis to several layers, Hiippala (2017) provides a brief overview of the annotation layers and visualizes the entire analytical process (Figure 4.5).



**Figure 4.5** Methodological steps in applying the GeM framework (Hiippala, 2017: 278)

The multimodal analysis in the present study will focus on just the base layer, the layout layer, and the rhetorical layer within the GeM model that will be discussed at length in the following section.

### 4.3.2 Multiple analytical layers of the GeM model

#### 4.3.2.1 The base layer

The base layer provides the starting point for analysis (cf. Figure 4.5). The main purpose of this layer is to “identify the minimal elements which can serve as the common denominator for interpretative and textual elements as well as for layout elements in any analysis of a page or document” (Bateman, 2008: 110).

First, everything that can be seen on each page which is under consideration for

analysis “should be assigned to some base unit”; the analysts cannot “leave components of the page out of consideration because they do not intuitively appear central or relevant” (Ibid). Any element, which can be differentiated from its environment should be identified as a base unit. Second, the base layer provides the other analytical layers with a set of analytical units, which are defined according to a series of criteria. Table 4.5 shows a list of *Recognized Base Units* (RBU) for identifying the base units in the GeM model. These base unit candidates have been found adequate for the analytical goals within the GeM, but “more extensive empirical work may require the addition of new types or further subdivisions” (Bateman, 2008: 110). For example, Thomas (2009) and Hiippala (2015b) add “map” to the list of RBU in their research. Third, the categories in Table 4.5 are labelled in terms of their genre-specific functions with the aim to help the analyst locate them without considering further possible interpretation. Fourth, the base units in the base layer should be the smallest particles; other layers (e.g. the layout layer, the rhetorical layer) should not break a base unit into further smaller ones. For instance, individual sentences separated by a page or column break should “be marked as *two* base units rather than a single orthographic sentence” that will be picked up for analysis in the layout layer or the rhetorical layer; the captions of figures, tables etc.- need to be identified as single base units (Bateman, 2008: 111). In brief, the base layer provides the other analytical layers with a set of fine-grained segmentation of both verbal and visual elements, which "enable a comprehensive analysis of an artefact, page by page" (Hiippala, 2013: 53). Hence, it is better to be over-cautious when identifying the atomic base units: “1) never leave any units but include all of them; 2) never mark them but only label them in terms of their functions; 3) never group them at this stage” (Zhang, 2017: 136).

sentences	headings	titles	headlines
icons	table cells	list items	list labels
footnote label	items in a menu	page numbers	running heads
emphasized text	floating text		

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- sentence fragments initiating a list
- footnotes (*without footnote label*)
- photos, drawings, diagrams, figures (*without caption*)
- captions of photos, drawings, diagrams, tables
- text in photos, drawings, diagrams
- horizontal or vertical lines which function as delimiter between columns or rows
- lines, arrows, polylines which connect other units

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**Table 4.5** Recognized Base Units identified in the GeM model (Bateman, 2008: 111)

However, among the base units identified, the GeM model allows “base units inside other base units” (Bateman, 2008: 113). These embedded units proposed in the GeM framework are used in the following situations:

- emphasized text portions in a sentence/heading
- icons or similar pictorial signs within a sentence
- text pieces in a diagram or picture
- multimodally supported parts of a diagram or picture
- arrows and other graphical signs in a diagram or picture
- explicit references to other parts of a document occurring within a sentence
- menu items in an interactive pop up menu
- dynamically appearing pop up ‘labels’ provided by mouse-over behaviours on web-pages (Ibid)

This type of use of an embedded unit within another base unit not only preserves the unity of a unit as a whole but also marks their differences, although some of them can additionally also be marked as base units and can be grouped in layout and other layers. For example, any emphasized/highlighted text portion (e.g. typographical, italics, background, border) in a sentence should be also marked as a base unit because “it is likely that this will need to be picked up as a layout or navigation



element” (Ibid).

#### 4.3.2.2 The layout layer

The layout properties and structure are characterized for the analysis of the layout layer (cf. Figure 4.6). The role of this layer is to realize configurations of visual elements based on recognized base units. In order to capture “the layout grouping and spatial proximity, their mutual spatial relationship and their particular layout and formatting properties”, Bateman (2008: 115) defines the layout base as consisting of three major components: *layout segmentation*, *realization information*, and *layout structure information*. Together, these three parts provide information on the identification of layout units, the graphic and typographic features of the base layout units, and the hierarchical organization of the content in the layout and its use of area model. A particular description of each component will be now be provided separately in detail.

##### (1) Layout segmentation

This part focuses on the identification of the minimal layout units. Generally speaking, a page can be considered as a combination of the textual blocks and visual blocks. According to Bateman (2008: 116), the layout units presented in a page can be categorized into “typographic” (e.g. recognizable typographical paragraphs), “graphic” (e.g. diagrams), and “composite” (grouping elements). It is important to point out that the GeM model investigates “the typographical and formatting effects at a more global level of a page” (Bateman, 2008: 116). In this sense, paragraphs rather glyphs (in text) and sentences are identified as the basic layout elements in typography. However, in the case where a single sentence appears alone, it can be recognized as the layout unit. The basic layout units in graphics are the graphic elements and composite layout units serve “a grouping and generalization” role in a layout structure (Bateman, 2008: 116-117).

## (2) Realization information

The second part aims to describe the “realizational” features of the layout units identified in the layout segmentation. Bateman (2008: 117) categorizes the layout units into two kinds of elements: “textual elements and graphical elements”, and further he describes their layout properties for analysis.

In the GeM model, the textual layout elements are mainly analyzed using the following set of “specifications-values” (Figure 4.6):

layout element	layout element
type: textual	type: textual
xref: L1.3	xref: L1.4
font-family: times	font-family: times
font-size: 11	font-size: 10
font-style: normal	font-style: normal
font-weight: normal	font-weight: normal
color: black	color: black
case: mixed	case: mixed
leading: 14	leading: 12

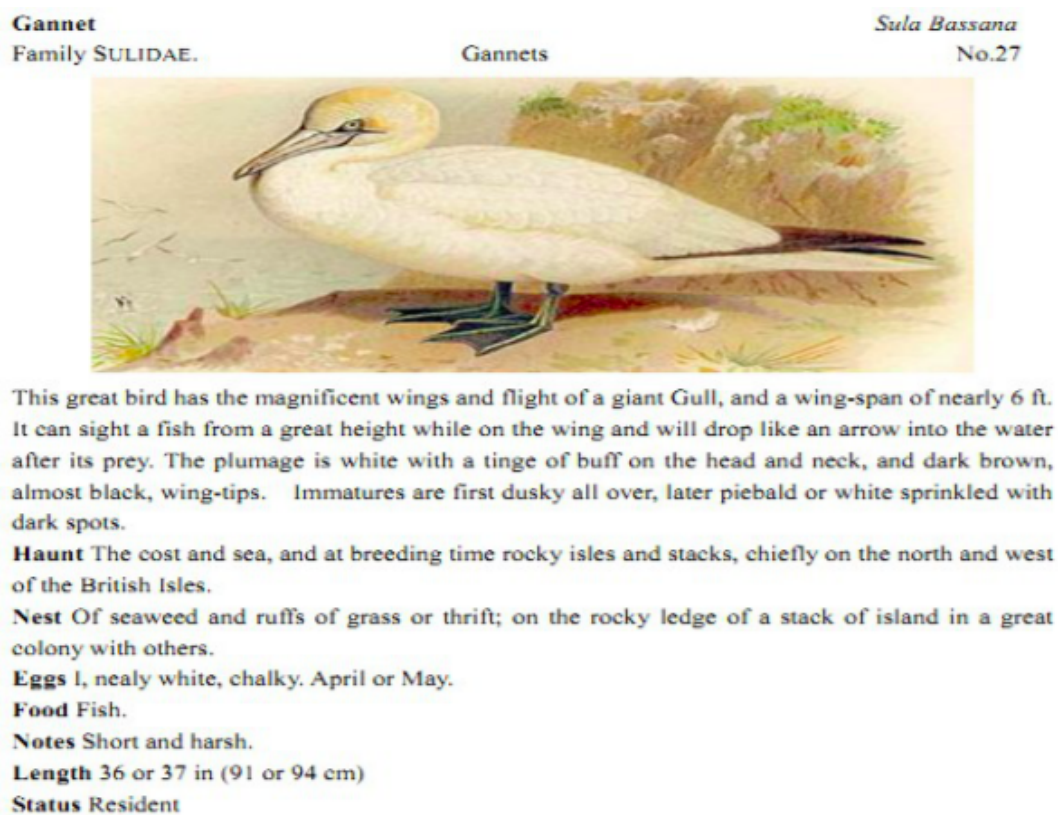
**Figure 4.6** Analytical specifications and values of text elements (Bateman, 2008: 120)

The “xref” attributes of each element concern the position of layout units on the page to be analyzed (see Figure 4.8 below).

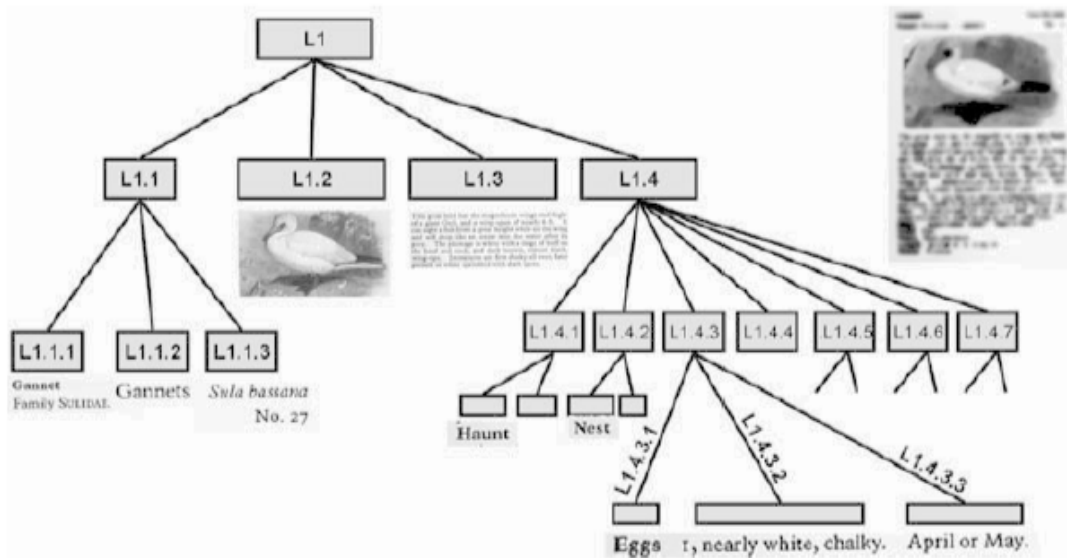
At present, in terms of the analysis of graphical layout elements, there exist some inconsistent proposals, such as the “interactive meanings” of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996: 154), O’Toole’s (1994: 24) “functions and systems in painting”, Lim’s (2004: 236) “system network for graphics”, etc. Bateman (2008: 121) proposes that the visual can be a “photograph, naturalistic drawing, line drawing or diagram”. Further analysis can then be carried out based on different types of genres.

## (3) Layout structure

The third part of the layout base represents a hierarchical relationship between layout units identified in the layout segmentation. Generally, the basic layout units can be progressively grouped into chunks which are then grouped into larger layout chunks, forming a tree-like composition with the entire artefact being the root (e.g. a single page, pages, an entire book) (cf. Bateman, 2008: 122-123). Each node in the tree features is a layout chunk; the terminal nodes are the minimal layout units that are grouped in the layout chunk. For instance, an image and the text labels within the image can be grouped into a layout chunk (e.g. a diagram), and this layout chunk of the diagram and its belonging text can form a larger layout chunk; or the cells of a table form the larger layout unit “table”. It is necessary to note that one chunk can be made up of layout elements of different realizations (text and graphics). Below the layout structure of “the Gannet example page” (Figure 4.7) is given in Figure 4.8.



**Figure 4.7** The Gannet example page (Benson, 1972: 22; cited in Bateman, 2008: 26)



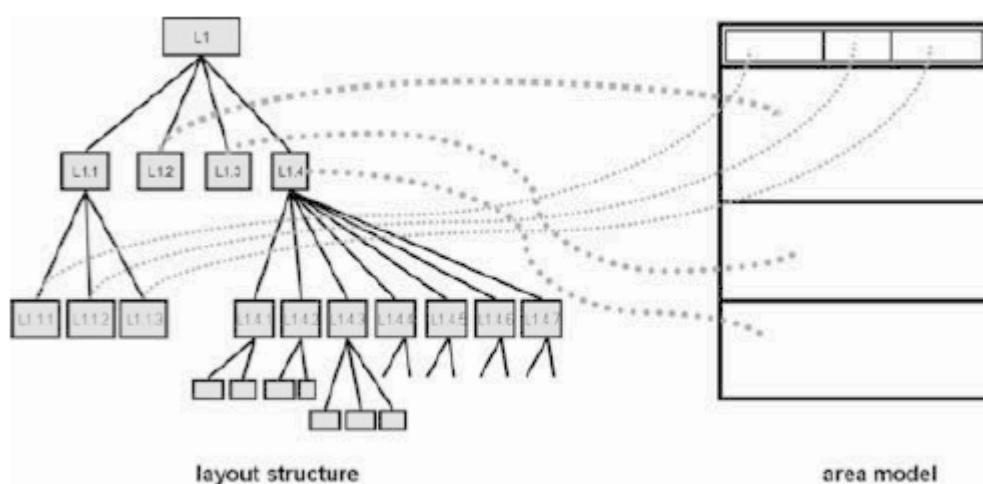
**Figure 4.8** Layout structure for the 1972 Gannet example page according to the GeM model (Bateman, 2008: 123)

In this layout structure, L1 represents the structure of the entire page, including four main components:

- (1) L1.1 is the header, located at the top of the page. It is made up of L1.1.1 (1Gannet, 3Family Sulidae), L1.1.2 (4Gannets), and L1.1.3 (2SulaBasana, 5No.27);
- (2) L1.2 is an image, located under the header;
- (3) L1.3 is a paragraph of text below the image;
- (4) L1.4 consists of 7 sentences or sentence fragments below the paragraph of text, i.e from L1.4.1 to L1.4.7. Among them, L1.4.1, L1.4.2, and L1.4.3 include 2 ~ 3 basic units.

In order to “to determine the position of each layout element in a way that abstracts beyond the specifics of individual documents”, Bateman (2008: 124) introduces the “area model” in the GeM model. The grid-based area model is simple and partitions page space into sub-areas. If a page exhibits grid-like properties, it may be arranged vertically in rows or horizontally in columns. Thus, the entire page or document can be considered as the area root, which can be divided into different

sub-areas. These sub-areas are defined by the area model then add attributes (e.g. rows, cols, location, hspacing, vspacing) to “specify exactly where particular layout elements or groups of layout elements are positioned on the page” (Bateman, 2008: 125). The two spacing attributes – hspacing and vspacing – specify the size of each sub-area as a percentage of the whole area: “hspacing gives the partition of the width of the parent area into the widths of its constituting columns”, while “vspacing gives the partition of the height of the parent area into the heights of its constituting rows” (Henschel, 2003: 11). All of these attributes determine the precise positioning of the layout units identified in the layout base. The relationship between the layout structure of the Gannet page and its area model is shown in figure 4.9.



**Figure 4.9** Correspondence between the layout structure and the area model of the 1972 Gannet page (Bateman, 2008: 128)

### 4.3.2.3 The rhetorical layer

The rhetorical layer is the “meaning-related component of the GeM model” (Bateman, 2008: 143). The task of this layer is to “identify the particular functional contributions made by the elements of a document to the intended communicative purposes of that document as a whole” (Bateman, 2008: 144), which concerns image-text combinations on a whole page. The analysis of the rhetorical structure of multimodal

texts is based on Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST), which is defined as a theory of text organization and coherence by Mann and Thompson (1986, 1987, 1988). Mann et al. (1992: 43) provide the following description about text organization within RST:

Texts consist of functionally significant parts; the parts are elements of patterns in which parts are combined to create larger parts and whole texts.

Thus, RST attempts to hold the relations between sequential parts of a text, which combine into larger parts and entire texts (cf. Taboada and Mann, 2006b: 425). These portions of the text can correspond to individual sentences, units smaller than sentences, larger units, even the entire text (cf. Bateman, 2008: 148). Text cohesion and coherence can be realized through the rhetorical relations between text segments. These relations are thoroughly termed as *classical RST* in Mann & Thompson (1986, 1988) and Mann, Matthiessen & Thompson (1992). In fact, some researchers (cf. André and Rist, 1995; Reichenberger et al., 1996) have adopted RST to explain the structure and coherence in multimodal documents. And except for the GeM model, the application of RST to describe multimodal artefacts has been explored by Taboada and Habel (2013).

However, Bateman (2008: 144-145) argues that some approaches cannot give a listing of image-text relations, making the larger parts of the multimodal artefact work together (cf. Martinec and Salway 2005; Kong 2006). In order to resolve the problem, Bateman proposes an application of RST in the GeM framework.

Considering the work employed in the present study, the following discussion focuses on the RST rhetorical relations and the application of RST in the GeM model.

#### **4.3.2.3.1 The RST rhetorical relations**

According to Mann and Matthiessen (1991: 233), “RST characterizes a text in terms of relations which hold between its parts, which come in various sizes. The parts are called **text spans**, and the minimal spans are called **units**. When two spans are linked

by a relation, then the pair stands as a span which can be linked to another span”. Specifically, classical RST defines two kinds of relations:

- nucleus-satellite relations (also named asymmetric relations) hold between two non-overlapping text spans, called the nucleus and the satellite (Mann & Thompson, 1987: 4). This means that, in a nucleus-satellite relation, the nucleus carries the basic information, whereas the satellite provides additional information (cf. Taboada and Mann 2006b: 426-427);
- multinuclear relations (also termed symmetric relations) hold between, involving, or among two or more text spans. In a multinuclear relation, all text spans may act as the nucleus.

Mann and Thompson (1987) provide definitions for the RST relations adopted in the framework. A nucleus-satellite relation definition is based on four fields: (1) constraints on the nucleus (N); (2) constraints on the satellite (S); (3) constraints on the combination of nucleus and satellite; and (4) the effect (Mann and Thompson, 1987: 4). Significantly, the definition of a multinuclear relation is made up of three fields: (1) constraints on the nucleus; (2) constraints on the combination of nuclei, and (3) the effect. Table 4.6 gives an example of the definition of a rhetorical relation (i.e. for the all definitions, see Appendix 2)

<i>relation name</i>	<b>Elaboration</b>
<i>constraints on N:</i>	None
<i>constraints on S:</i>	None
<i>constraints on the N + S combination:</i>	S presents additional detail about the situation or some element of subject matter which is presented in N or inferentially accessible in N in one or more of the ways listed below. In the list, if N presents the first member of any pair, then S includes the second: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. set: member</li> <li>2. abstract: instance</li> <li>3. whole: part</li> </ul>

	4. process: step
	5. object: attribute
	6. generalization: specific
<i>the effect:</i>	R recognizes the situation presented in S as providing additional detail for N. R identifies the element of subject matter for which detail is provided.
<i>locus of the effect:</i> <i>N and S</i>	N and S

**Table 4.6** Example of the definition of a rhetorical relation: Elaboration (Mann and Thompson, 1987: 52)

The RST relations are an open set, and different lists of relations exist. As discussed by Mann and Thompson (1987: 48), the rhetorical relations are “susceptible to extension and modification for the purposes of particular genres and cultural styles”. The original set defined by Mann & Thompson (1987) includes 24 rhetorical relations (i.e. 21 nucleus-satellite relations and 3 multinuclear relations), which are accompanied by the RST analysis of an example of each relation. Significantly, Mann (2005) later expanded the latter example to 30 relations (.e. List, Means, Preparation, Unconditional, Unless and multinuclear Restatement are added to the basic set). This thesis is based on the definitions of rhetorical relations listed on the RST website (<http://www.sfu.ca/rst/index.html>) created by Bill Mann and maintained by Maite Taboada. Furthermore, the list of RST relations was extended thanks to which Zhang’s (2018: 70-71) addition of extra logical relations from Matthiessen & Teruya (2015). Table 4.7 and Table 4.8 look at the 24 nucleus-satellite relations and 7 multinuclear relations as well as the main messages communicated by the nucleus and satellites of each relation.

Relation	Nucleus	Satellite
Background	text whose understanding is being facilitated	text for facilitating understanding
Antithesis	ideas favored by the author	ideas disfavored by the author
Circumstance	text expressing the events or ideas occurring in the interpretive context	an interpretive context of situation or time
Concession	situation affirmed by author	situation which is apparently



		inconsistent but also affirmed by author
Condition	action or situation whose occurrence results from the occurrence of the conditioning situation	conditioning situation
Elaboration	basic information	additional information
Enablement	an action	information intended to aid the reader in performing an action
Evaluation	a situation	an evaluative comment about the situation
Evidence	a claim	information intended to increase the reader's belief in the claim
Interpretation	a situation	an interpretation of the situation
Justify	Text	information supporting the writer's right to express the text
Motivation	an action	information intended to increase the reader's desire to perform the action
Cause*	a situation	another situation which causes the nuclear situation
Result*	a situation	another situation which is caused by the nuclear situation
Otherwise	action or situation whose occurrence results from the lack of occurrence of the conditioning situation	conditioning situation
Purpose	an intended situation	the intent behind the situation
Restatement	a situation	a re-expression of the situation
Solutionhood	a situation or method supporting full or partial satisfaction of the need	a question, request, problem, or other expressed need
Summary	Text	a short summary of that text
Preparation	text to be presented	text which presents the reader to expect and interpret the text to be presented
Means	an activity	a method or instrument intended to make the realization of the nuclear activity more likely
Manner	an activity	a way in which the nuclear activity is done or happens

Unconditional	action or situation whose occurrence is not subject to the occurrence of any conceivable situation	situation or fact that could affect the realization of the nuclear situation
Unless	action or situation whose occurrence is not affected provided that the satellite is not realized	a claim

\* The volitional/non-volitional distinction is not employed in the present study, because it does not make much difference and it's difficult to identify.

**Table 4.7** Nucleus-satellite relations (cf. <http://www.sfu.ca/rst/01intro/intro.html>; Zhang (2018: 70-71))

Relation	Span	Other Span(s)
Contrast	one alternate	the other alternate
Joint	(unconstrained)	(unconstrained)
List	an item	a next item
Sequence	an item	a next item
Conjunction	an item	an extra item plays a comparable role
Disjunction	an alternative	another alternative (not necessarily exclusive)
Multinuclear restatement	a situation	a re-expression of the situation

**Table 4.8** Multinuclear relations (cf. <http://www.sfu.ca/rst/01intro/intro.html>; Zhang (2018: 70-71))

Considering the relation definitions, it is important to note that with regard to the RST analysis, the analyst should evaluate the communicative purposes of the writer and “the desired effect of the chosen rhetorical relation on the reader” (Hiippala, 2013: 65). Thus, during the analysis, the researcher must make judgments about the writer or readers. However, as Mann and Thompson (1988: 246) discussed, such judgments are uncertain, and the statements regarding rhetorical relations can be *plausibility judgments*.

Although it is plausible to the analyst, RST is a strong theory of text organization and coherence and it has, therefore, been applied in different fields of study (cf. Taboada and Mann, 2006a). Now the question is, how RST can be applied to describe the structural organization in a multimodal page/document? The following

section will delve into the application of RST in the GeM model in greater detail.

#### **4.3.2.3.2 Extended GeM RST**

The GeM rhetorical layer is the extension of classical RST to multimodal documents (cf. Figure 4.6). Bateman (2008: 156-157) considers RST as an appropriate theory that can be applied to multimodal document based on the following points:

1) As discussed above, RST was developed in light of traditional linear text. Thus, if RST is applied when dealing with multimodality, the issues concerning language and visual images manifest explicitly. Kress (2003) describes the differences between two distinct semiotic modes of representation: language and image. It is not easy to place the text-image elements together in terms of rhetorical organization. For the generalization of RST to multimodal presentations, Bateman (2008: 159-162) proposes little changes to the basic framework (see below in this section) and makes it possible. The combination of text and images within the single-page layout is subjected to a distinct semiotic mode which is defined page-flow and which “relies upon the complete two-dimensional space of the ‘canvas’ provided by the physical substrate and uses proximity, grouping of elements, framing and other visual perceptual resources in order to construct patterns of connections, similarity and difference” (Bateman, 2011: 26; cf. also Bateman, 2008: 156-157). The rhetorical relations may realize the combination of text and images through the layout structure.

2) RST “looks at the text as a ‘finished product’ and thus adopts a different approach compared to those relying on a so-called turn by turn development of a text when analyzing a discourse (cf. Martin, 1992; van Leeuwen, 1991). Significantly, because RST considers all the parts of a text as if they were simultaneously available for inspection” (Bateman, 2008: 157), it is considered as a basis for multimodal description.

3) In most cases, classical RST relations can be directly used for multimodal

documents when one constituting partner is accepted as a visual mode.

Although RST is considered applicable to multimodal documents, Bateman (2008:158-159) highlights four problems related to GeM RST:

- (1) the sequentiality assumption;
- (2) image-text nuclearity assignments;
- (3) multiple purposes served by one segment/span;
- (4) identification the minimal RST units on a multimodal page.

The first problem of applying RST to multimodal documents derives from its original use within text analysis. Bateman (2008: 158) points out that “conventional RST builds on the sequentiality of text segments”. However, in multimodal documents, the “spatial logic of simultaneity” between the segments/spans replaces the “temporal logic of sequence” (Bateman, 2008: 158). In order to resolve this problem of the application of RST, the GeM model restricts “RST relations to pairs (sets) of document parts (segments/spans) which are adjacent in any direction”. The adjacency of segments is expressed using the area model (cf. Section 4.3.2.2).

The second problem relates to the image-text nuclearity assignment. RST defines five schema in order to describe relations between text spans (Mann and Thompson, 1988: 247). The two major types which are discussed within the present study are nucleus-satellite and multinuclear. For instance, when a graphical illustration is adopted to rephrase a text passage, or when a text line is explained by a representative figure, it becomes difficult to decide which one is the nuclear and which the satellite in each of the two cases. In this case, the GeM model allows “both assignments of nuclearity as necessary” (Bateman, 2008: 158). Thus, in order to “avoid forcing arbitrary nuclearity assignments” in the image-text relations, the multinuclear restatement relation (cf. Table 4.8) is used in making decisions on nuclearity (Bateman, 2008: 159).

The third problem is related to the cases where the same segment/span can serve simultaneously “more than one purpose in one document” and may therefore be used “at several places in a single RST structure” (Bateman, 2008: 159). For example, in fashion news reports, the same image can serve two purposes: (1) to present a single item of a new collection; (2) to show the identity of a model/star. However, conventional RST does not allow the re-use of a segment/span. In order to deal with this, the GeM model prefers to “maintain a strict tree notion for the rhetorical structure of a document in order to maintain tighter criteria for evaluating whether an analysis may hold or not” (Ibid)

Finally, the fourth problematic area concerns how to combine the image-text elements on a multimodal page in terms of rhetorical relations. Usually, these elements do not follow the criteria of decomposing the minimal units used in classical RST analysis. According to Henschel (2003: 17), in GeM RST, the following base units are segments:

- orthographic sentences
- headings, titles, headlines
- photos, drawings, diagrams, figures (without caption), if they are not part of an identification relation
- captions of photos, drawings, diagrams, tables, if they are not part of an identification relation
- list items, if they are clauses
- footnote without footnote label

GeM RST considers sentences divided into two base units by page/column breaks as only one segment (Ibid).

Bateman (2008: 160-161) provides several examples where the original RST framework cannot support such image-text combinations. Among these cases, the most difficult case deals with instances of existing callouts in a diagram. Bateman (2008: 161) supports his position with this example in which the verbal and graphical fragments are connected by a line, but traditional RST does not recognize such

fragments as rhetorical segments. In order to decompose the minimal units and account for these relations in the analysis, GeM RST adds the following five *intra-clausal* relations based on Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), which “do not hold between a nucleus and a satellite, but between two relation dependent semantic roles” (Bateman, 2008: 161-162; Henschel, 2003: 16-17):

<b>Identification</b>	assertion of identity
<b>Class-ascription</b>	relation between an object and its superclass
<b>Property-ascription</b>	relation between an object and something predicated of that object
<b>Possession</b>	relation between possessor and possessed
<b>Location</b>	relation between an object and its spatial or temporal location

These five intra-clausal relations, which are termed “subnuclear”, are similar to the rhetorical relation “elaboration” (cf. Table 4.7), but are “distinct by virtue of their application to fragments, individual entities and incomplete propositions” (Bateman, 2008: 162). The following section introduces the GeM annotation schema.

### 4.3.3 Applying the GeM model: The GeM Annotation Schema

In order to build the multimodal corpus, XML is applied in the GeM model for corpus annotation. In GeM, XML adopts different tags to annotate each of the layers. This section describes the XML-based GeM annotation schema (Henschel, 2003), which aims to “identify textual, visual (e.g. graphics, diagrams), layout and navigational elements in a multi-layered annotation” (Zhang, 2017: 141) and eventually attempts to analyze their interactions in multimodal artefacts. The following description of corpus annotation will be developed from the three layers: base, layout, and RST.

### 4.3.3.1 GeM base annotation

The annotation of the base layer has a “flat structure” (Henschel, 2003: 2), i.e. it consists of a list of recognized base units (cf. Section 4.3.1.2.1). The tag employed to mark base units is the `<unit>`. Each element marked as the base unit has the attribute `id`, which carries an identifying symbol. If the base unit consists of text, the start and end of this text are marked by the `<unit>` tag. However, if base units contain visual elements (e.g. photographs, illustrations, diagrams), they are actually empty XML elements since the visual elements cannot be copied into the GeM base. In this case, Henschel (Ibid) proposes that these base units “can optionally be equipped with a `src` and/or an `alt` attribute”. The value `alt` designates a name to the visual element, which reminds analysts of its content. The value of `src` corresponds to the source location of the visual element. The following examples illustrate how to annotate the different elements in the base layer:

Sequence of sentences in a text:

```
<unit id="u-1.01">Max Mara Presents a Wardrobe for the Female 007 </unit>  
<unit id="u-1.02">Top models like Kaia Gerber and the Hadid sisters became their own versions  
of James Bond on the Spring 2020 catwalk.</unit>  
<unit id="u-1.03">09.19.2019.</unit>  
<unit id="u-1.04">by Tarcila Bassi (Italy).</unit>
```

Photo:

```
<unit id="u-1.05" alt="Photo: SS2020 Max Mara"/>
```

Horizontal line:

```
<unit id="u-13.02">-----</unit>
```

As discussed in Section 4.3.2.1, the embedded units can also be marked as base units.

This is further illustrated by the following example:

Emphasized text:

**MILANO (Reggio Emilia) – Donne come agenti segreti**, al centro di un avvincente romanzo di spionaggio.

`<unit id="u-25.11">`

`<unit id="u-25.11.1"> MILANO (Reggio Emilia) – Donne come agenti segreti, </unit> al centro di un avvincente romanzo di spionaggio. </unit>`

#### 4.3.3.2 GeM layout annotation

The annotation of the layout base consists of three components – layout segmentation, realization information, and layout structure information (cf. Section 4.3.2.2). The tag employed to mark layout units is the `<layout-unit>`. Each element marked as the layout unit has the attribute `id`, which carries an identifying symbol. The attribute `xref` points to the base units that belong to this particular layout unit. When a set of sentences with the same typographical characteristics which makes up one paragraph is marked as one layout unit, it is “possible, but not necessary to store the corresponding text portions of the original text file between the start and end tag of a layout-unit” (Henschel, 2003: 6). So, the annotation can be simplified in certain cases, for example, when the layout unit is a paragraph:

`<layout-unit id="lay-1.07" xref="u-1.07 u-1.08 u-1.09 u-1.10 u-1.11">`

For Max Mara's Spring 2020 collection, creative director Ian Griffiths crafted the perfect wardrobe for the female 007: confident, classy, and fashionable. The designer presented several variations of the powerful female Bond: pieces that mixed and matched included suit pants and their Bermuda short counterpart, long skirts, duster coats, trench coats, and fluid dresses which slide over the body. The pockets, which come in all sizes, were an unexpected but welcome plus, showing up everywhere on shirts, outerwear, and skirts. I mean, how many times have you noticed the utter dearth of pockets in womenswear, despite clear interest and brands like Valentino showing how chic can they be? Thank you, Max Mara.

`</layout-unit>`



With the purpose of the realization information, the GeM model uses two kinds of elements: textual elements and graphical elements, which are marked with the tags `<text>` and `<graphics>` respectively. The `xref` attribute in both elements is applied for identifying the described layout unit. These two elements adopt different sets of attributes in order to describe their layout properties.

For textual elements, a list of the annotation and attributes of typographic realization is given in Section 4.3.1.2.2 (cf. Bateman, 2008: 120; see also Henschel, 2003: 6). Additionally, embedded textual base units that are typographically emphasized/highlighted against their properties (e.g. bold, italic, colour, size) are marked with the tag `<hi-text>` and are annotated with the same attributes as `<text>` elements, but “they have an extra context attribute, which refers to the id of the embedding `<layout-unit>`” (Henschel, 2003: 7). The annotation of embedded elements in layout layers are as follows:

Text:

**MILANO (Reggio Emilia) – Donne come agenti segreti, al centro di un avvincente romanzo di spionaggio.**

```
<layout-unit id="lay-25.11" xref="u-25.11">  
  <layout-unit id="lay-25.11.1" xref="u-25.11.1">MILANO (Reggio Emilia) – Donne come  
agenti  
  segreti,</layout-unit> al centro di un avvincente romanzo di spionaggio.</layout-unit>
```

```
<hi-text id="lay-25.11.1" xref="u-25.11.1" context="lay-25.11" font-family="inherit"  
font-size="inherit" font-style="inherit" font-weight="extra-bold" case="mixed" colour="black">  
MILANO (Reggio Emilia)–Donne come agenti segreti,</hi-text>
```

For graphical elements, the corresponding attributes are shown in Figure 4.10.

<b>xref</b>	<i>ids of the layout units which are realized with the following values</i>
<b>type</b>	illustration   photo   diagram   two-d-element
<b>color-no*</b>	<i>number of used colors</i>
<b>colors</b>	<i>list of used colors</i>   color   inherit
<b>border*</b>	none   rectangular   circular   lined   underlined   overlined   vertical-lined   speech-bubble

**Figure 4.10** The attributes of graphical elements (Henschel, 2003: 7)

The type “two-d-element” (two-dimensional graphical element) which is applicable for lines, arrows, icons, etc., requires three additional attributes to be annotated on that particular element (Ibid):

<b>two-d-element-type</b>	line   polyline   rect-polyline   arrow   bi-arrow   arc   square-bracket   brace   square   triangle   diamond   icon
<b>element-style</b>	inherit   solid   dashed   dotted   double
<b>element-weight</b>	normal   bold   extra-bold   light   <i>width</i>   inherit

The two examples below present the realization of graphical layout units--a diagram and a vertical line (Henschel, 2003: 8):

```
<graphics xref="lay-2.03a" type="diagram" color-no="2" colors="black white" border="none"/>

<graphics xref="lay-line-2.1" type="two-d-element" two-d-element-type="line" colors="black"
border="none" element-style="solid" element-weight="extra-bold"/>
```

The layout structure plays two distinct roles in the layout base. On one hand, it represents a hierarchical relationship between the layout units while on the other hand, it determines the position of each layout element in the area model. The following will explain how to annotate the layout structure at length. First, three different tags are used for the annotation of the nodes in the layout tree. The tag employed to describe the entire document is the **<layout-root>**. **<layout-chunk>** marks all non-terminal nodes in the layout tree except for the root, and **<layout-leaf>** represents the terminal nodes. The layout structure of PR-En-1 is described by the following XML annotation:

```

<layout-root id="NR-En-1">
  <layout-chunk id="headline">
    <layout-leaf xref="lay-1.01" />
    <layout-leaf xref="lay-1.02"/>
  </layout-chunk>
  <layout-chunk id="data and author">
    <layout-leaf xref="lay-1.03" />
    <layout-leaf xref="lay-1.04" />
  </layout-chunk>
</layout-root>

```

Furthermore, if a page or document exhibits grid-like properties, the entire page or document is considered as the area root, which can be divided into different sub-areas. The tag employed to describe the area root is **<area-root>**, which possesses several obligatory attributes: cols, rows, hspacing, vspacing; and the tag used to represent sub-areas is **<sub-area>**, which has the same attributes in addition to a location attribute (cf. Henschel, 2003: 10). The area model of the example below consists of a specification of the area root (called “PR-frame”), and the specification of one particular sub-area located in row-2 (called “body-frame”):

```

<area-model>
  <area-root id="NR-En-1-frame" cols="1" rows="5" hspacing="100" vspacing="7 5 18 52 18"
height="20" width="14">
    <sub-area id="headline-rows" location="cell-11" cols="1" rows="2" hspacing="100"
vspacing="50 50"/>
    <sub-area id="publication information" location="cell-21" cols="1" rows="2"
hspacing="100" vspacing="50 50"/>
    <sub-area id="text-frame" location="cell-41" cols="1" rows="3" hspacing="100"
vspacing="flexible"/>
  </area-root>
</area-model>

```

Finally, the hierarchical layout structure references the area model in location and area-ref, thus establishing a relationship between the two layers (cf. Bateman, 2008: 126). Location is one of the values defined in area model, and the area-ref refers to “the id of a particular area of the area model with respect to which the location value

has been selected” (Henschel, 2003: 12). Thus, the layout structure can be annotated as follows:

```
<layout-structure>
  <layout-root id="NR-En-1">
    <layout-chunk id="headline" location="cell-11" area-ref="NR-En-1">
      <layout-leaf xref="lay-1.01" location="row-1" area-ref="headline-rows"/>
      <layout-leaf xref="lay-1.02" location="row-2" area-ref="headline-rows"/>
    </layout-chunk>
    <layout-chunk id="data and author" location="cell-21" area-ref="NR-En-1">
      <layout-leaf xref="lay-1.03" location="row-1" area-ref="publication information"/>
      <layout-leaf xref="lay-1.04" location="row-2" area-ref="publication information"/>
    </layout-chunk>
  </layout-root>
</layout-structure>
```

#### 4.3.3.3 GeM RST annotation

As discussed in Section 4.3.2.3, the rhetorical layer of the GeM model applies RST to describe how the “linguistic and graphic elements work together to form a coherent instance” of multimodal artefacts through a set of rhetorical relations, which attempt to capture the communicative purposes of the writer/designer(s) (Hiippala, 2013: 116).

The annotation of the rhetorical layer begins with a process of segmentation of base units (see Section 4.3.2.3.2). The tag employed to mark the basic RST units is **<segment>**. In addition, all the base units between which five intra-clausal relations hold, are marked as **<mini-segment>**. Henschel (2003: 17) provides some typical examples for intra-clausal relation:

- diagram + label
- table cell<sub>i,1</sub> + table cell<sub>i,2</sub> in a two-column table
- list initiating sentence fragment + list items if the list items are NPs

Each segment and mini-segment marked as the RST unit has the attribute **id**, which carries an identifying symbol. The attribute **xref** points to the corresponding base unit-id. The text inside each segment is optional. Although “the completeness of the annotation” may be useful for the analyst, it is not necessary to carry it out each time (Henschel, 2003: 18).

Sequence of sentences:

```
<segment id="s-1.01" xref="u-1.01"> Max Mara Presents a Wardrobe for the Female 007</segment>
<segment id="s-1.02" xref="u-1.02"> Top models like Kaia Gerber and the Hadid sisters became their
    own versions of James Bond on the Spring 2020 catwalk. </segment>
<segment id="s-1.06" xref="u-1.06"> Photo via Instagram/@maxmara</segment>
<segment id="s-1.07" xref="u-1.07"> For Max Mara's Spring 2020 collection, creative director Ian
    Griffiths crafted the perfect wardrobe for the female 007: confident, classy, and fashionable.
</segment>
<segment id="s-1.08" xref="u-1.08"> The designer presented several variations of the powerful
    female Bond: pieces that mixed and matched included suit pants and their Bermuda short
    counterpart, long skirts, duster coats, trench coats, and fluid dresses which slide over the
    body.</segment>
<segment id="s-1.09" xref="u-1.09"> The pockets, which come in all sizes, were an unexpected but
    welcome plus, showing up everywhere on shirts, outerwear, and skirts. </segment>
<segment id="s-1.10" xref="u-1.10"> I mean, how many times have you noticed the utter dearth of
    pockets in womenswear, despite clear interest and brands like Valentino showing how chic
    can they be? </segment>
<segment id="s-1.11" xref="u-1.11"> Thank you, Max Mara. </segment>
```

Photo

```
< segment id="s-1.03" alt="Photo: SS2020 Max Mara top models"/>
```

The RST structure is annotated based on the identified segments, and RST relation definitions which are given in Appendix 2. The nucleus-satellite relations, multinuclear relations, and subnuclear relations are marked as **<spam>**, **<multi-span>** and **<mini-span>** respectively. The differences in attributes among these three types of rhetorical relations can be appreciated by the following examples:

```
<span id="span-1.01" nucleus="s-1.01" satellites="span-1.02" relation="interpretation"/>
```

```

<multi-span id="span-1.02" nuclei="s-1.02 span-1.03" relation="restatement"/>
<mini-span id="span-1.03" attribuend="s-1.03" attribute="s-1.04" relation="location"/>

```

“Spans are defined as daughter nodes of the XML-element `<rst-structure>`”, which has the attribute `root` pointing to `id` of the top span of the entire structure; “mini-spans as daughter nodes of the XML-element `<mini-structure>`” (cf. Henchel, 2003: 19). The following is the XML annotation for a rhetorical structure fragment; the constituting segments are specified in the example above.

```

<rst-structure root="NR-En-1">
  <span id="span-1.01" nucleus="s-1.01" satellites="span-1.02" relation="interpretation"/>
  <multi-span id="span-1.02" nuclei="s-1.02 span-1.03" relation="restatement"/>
  <mini-span id="span-1.03" attribuend="s-1.03" attribute="s-1.04" relation="location"/>
  <span id="span-1.04" nucleus="span-1.05 span-1.09 span-1.12" satellites="span-1.01"
  relation="preparation"/>

  <span id="span-1.05" nucleus="s-1.05" satellites="span-1.06" relation="elaboration"/>
  <span id="span-1.06" nucleus="s-1.06" satellites="span-1.07" relation="elaboration"/>
  <span id="span-1.07" nucleus="s-1.07" satellites="s-1.08" relation="antithesis"/>
  <span id="span-1.08" nucleus="s-1.09" satellites="span-1.07" relation="motivation"/>
</rst-structure>

```

#### 4.3.4 Visualization techniques: The gem-tools

Following the annotation of all analytical layers and the storing the description in a XML files, a set of computational tools – the gem-tools – which was developed by Hiippala (2015a) is employed to showcase the XML data (cf. Figure 4.6). The gem-tools are coded in Python 2, a high-level scripting language based on ABC, which specifically supports structured programming and object-oriented programming. The gem-tools are provided as Jupyter notebooks, a product introduced by the web application Jupyter Notebook dedicated to the sharing of documents that contain programming codes. The gem-tools utilize the software GraphViz for visualizations and work with multimodal corpora annotated using the GeM model (Hiippala, 2015a).

The present gem-tools set comprises of five Jupyter notebooks intended for distinct purposes, those being, (1) visualize rhetorical structures, (2) visualize layout structures, (3) visualize rhetorical and layout structures, (4) describe the content and layout of multimodal documents according to the schema defined in the GeM framework, and (5) extract basic statistics from GeM-annotated corpora (cf. Hiippala, 2015a; see also Zhang, 2017: 144). The hierarchical organizations suited to representation of rhetorical structures and layout structures of multimodal documents are created initially by implementing the first three Jupyter notebooks in the gem-tools kit to parse and transform data from the XML files into a programming language for creating plots, i.e. IPython. The first Jupyter notebook can additionally also highlight a specific rhetorical relation in the visualization facilitating the focus on certain types of relations.

All the XML files must be valid and well formed in order to visualize multimodal corpora. Both base and RST layers XML files are very important to create the graph of the rhetorical structure in the first Jupyter notebook; an XML file is required for the layout layer in order to visualize the layout structure; XML files for base, RST and layout layers should be provided in the third notebook (cf. Hiippala, 2015a; see also Zhang, 2017: 144). The work done by Zhang in 2017 on corpus building supported Hiippala's assertions by improving on and testing some of the scripts. Hiippala also fixed a couple of minor bugs that were hindering gem-tools from handling embedded visual base units and drawing multi-spans and mini-spans, which in turn lead to the improvement in the resolution of resulting graphs. The updated tools support more genres of multimodal artefacts. Furthermore, a Jupyter notebook (first version) to describe GeM annotated corpora has also been developed by Hiippala (2015a). This notebook boasts of all valid XML files compiled in one directory and hence can easily extract basic statistics including the numbers of base units, visual base units, embedded base units, layout units, embedded layout units, RST segments, visual RST segments, unique RST relations and RST structures.

In brief, the gem-tools armory enables instant visualization of XML data and allows for extraction of statistics that support both qualitative and quantitative

analysis of multimodal artefacts. The present study can act as an example where, a basis for in-depth analysis is provided not only by the graphic descriptions of rhetorical structures and layout structures, but also by the basic statistics extracted from the GeM-annotated corpus of news reports and the information gained while investigating the scope of the multimodal corpus. Such an in-depth analysis allows to appreciate how sets of various semiotic resources interact with each other in each of news reports.

### **4.3.5 Building the multimodal corpora**

#### **4.3.5.1 File names**

The GeM model stores the annotation in different files and this implies that the annotation for each analytical layer is stored in its own file. For the present study, the GeM model requires three files for each document, but each file may contain the annotation for a variety of artefacts. This requires that these files can be distinguished from each other. For instance, the English news reports of SS2020 fashion show could be named as following:

Base layer: SS2020-NR-En-base-T1.xml

Layout layer: SS2020-NR-En-lay-T1.xml

Rhetorical layer: SS2020-NR-En-rst-T1.xml

As the list shows, each file name follows a pattern: year, identifier, language, layer name and the number T1. The used identifiers are given in Appendix 1. Number T1 is a legacy element from the initial annotation, which stored the annotation for each artefact in a separate file.

#### **4.3.5.2 Document Type Definition (DTD)**

The Document Type Definition (DTD), which defines the informational elements and attributes for each layer of the GeM model, plays an important role in the XML



annotation process. Thus, the DTDs can be adopted to “validate whether the annotation follows the markup declarations given in the DTDs” (Hiippala, 2013: 119). The DTDs used in the present study were defined applying RELAX NG (Regular Language for XML Next Generation) schema language<sup>20</sup>, compiled and first used by Thomas (2009b). Then Hiippala (2013) made minor changes to the DTDs introducing the map as a graphic element.

However, the DTDs cannot prevent all human errors within the annotation. The next section presents the verification measures in detail.

#### **4.3.6 Verifying multimodal corpus**

The manual annotation of corpora could be accompanied by human errors. For XML-based GeM corpora, the risk of human error “does not refer to analytical errors in applying the GeM model, but mainly to errors in the identifiers responsible for cross-referencing and identifying the analytical units” (Hiippala, 2013: 120; 2015b: 105). In order to prevent possible errors, it is necessary to verify the annotated multimodal corpora. For the present study, the process of verification is divided into three steps:

- Step 1 aims to find any misspelled words of each XML file using the “Check Spelling” option of oXygen XML Editor.
- Step 2 is dedicated to validating all the XML files with DTDs described in Section 4.4.2. However, even though the validation is successful, it does not mean that all the identifiers are accurate.
- Step 3 attempts to locate these errors of identifiers through the visualization of the XML files in the gem-tools (cf. Section 4.3.3.2).

Thomas (2009b: 270) was the first to use visualizations in order to verify the

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.relaxng.org>

GeM-annotated corpus and he captured several annotation errors, for instance, “segments acting as satellites in multiple spans” (2009b: 272) and “residual segments” (2009b: 273), i.e. segments not participating in an RST span. Hiippala (2015b: 105-106) complemented Thomas’ work with two additional annotation errors: an “orphan span” and a “looping relation”. The first error results from “the failure of the annotation to link one or more RST spans together”, which are very similar to the “residual segments” described in Thomas (2009b, p. 273); and the latter occurs “when the annotator inputs the wrong identifier, causing the RST span to refer to itself” (Hiippala, 2015b: 105). In fact, it is difficult to locate all these annotation errors in the valid XML files. The gem tools can facilitate verifying the XML-based GeM corpora.

## **CHAPTER 5 THE FEMALE IMAGE CONVEYED BY MAX MARA: FROM PRESS RELEASES TO ARTICLES ON WECHAT AND NEWS REPORTS**

As discussed in chapter 2 (cf. Section 2.2.2, Section 2.2.3), press releases, as a key genre of corporate communication, aim to public news about the company and communicate, in a standardized textual form, such as through news reports, newsworthy information about themselves or their products. Although media professionals might be their main target, the media itself allows their news to get to the general public as well. (cf. McLaren & Gurău, 2005; Catenaccio, 2008b). Through press releases, companies can construct their own corporate/brand image and communicate it to various stakeholders. Jacobs (1999a: 79) describes the “standard features of press releases”, such as “self-reference”, “self-quotation” and “explicit semi-performatives” (Jacobs, 1999a: 27-30), which have preformulated functions.

Fashion press releases share the descriptive nature of many other product-related press releases, meanwhile they also need to provide details to interpret clothes in accordance to the fashion house’s established style, “including an interpretative component largely absent from more conventional product-related press releases” (Catenaccio, 2008b: 130).

As presented in Section 4.1.1, Max Mara Fashion Group is recognized worldwide as the forerunner of modern ready-to-wear, which is dedicated to producing “haute de gamme” women’s clothing using excellent industrial processes. Thus, fashion press releases related to Max Mara fashion shows not only show its new collections, offering specific information such as colours, shapes, sophisticated materials, fabrics and patterns, but it also communicates a type of female image which is created by the brand itself.

This chapter focuses on the preformulated features of Max Mara’s press releases and the female image conveyed by press releases (Section 5.1), articles on WeChat (Section 5.2) and their subsequent news reports (Section 5.3).

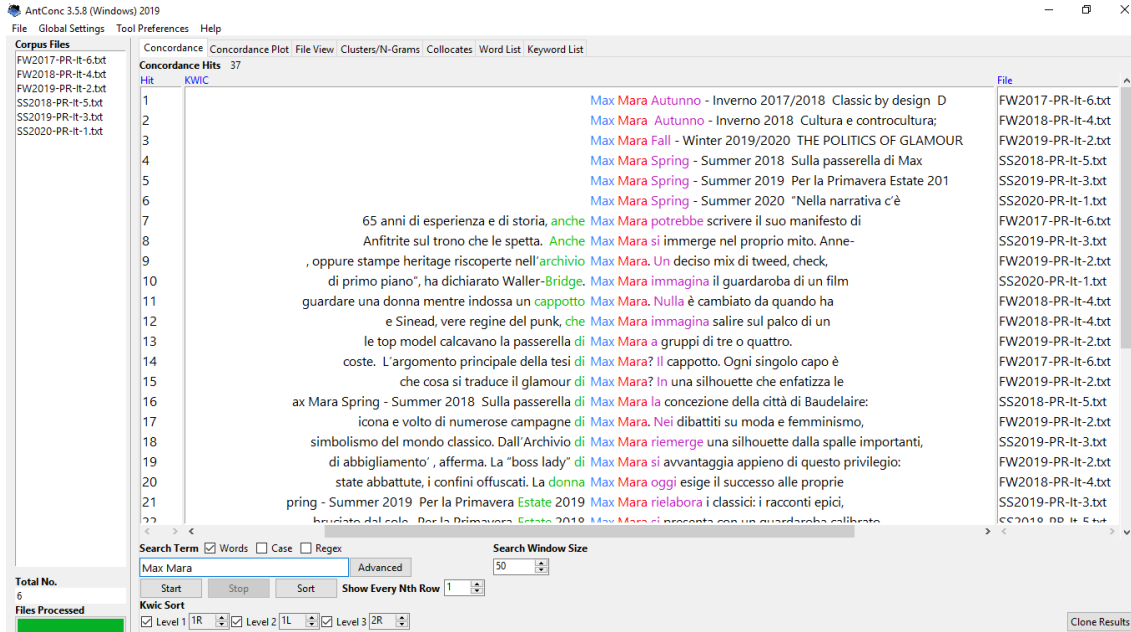
## **5.1 The main features of Max Mara fashion press releases**

This section aims at identifying the characteristics of Max Mara fashion press releases and verifying the presence of Jacobs's preformulating features. As a result, special attention is given to consider possible differences among the Italian and English versions of the press releases in order to explore how preformulating features are structured and/or distributed in the two languages.

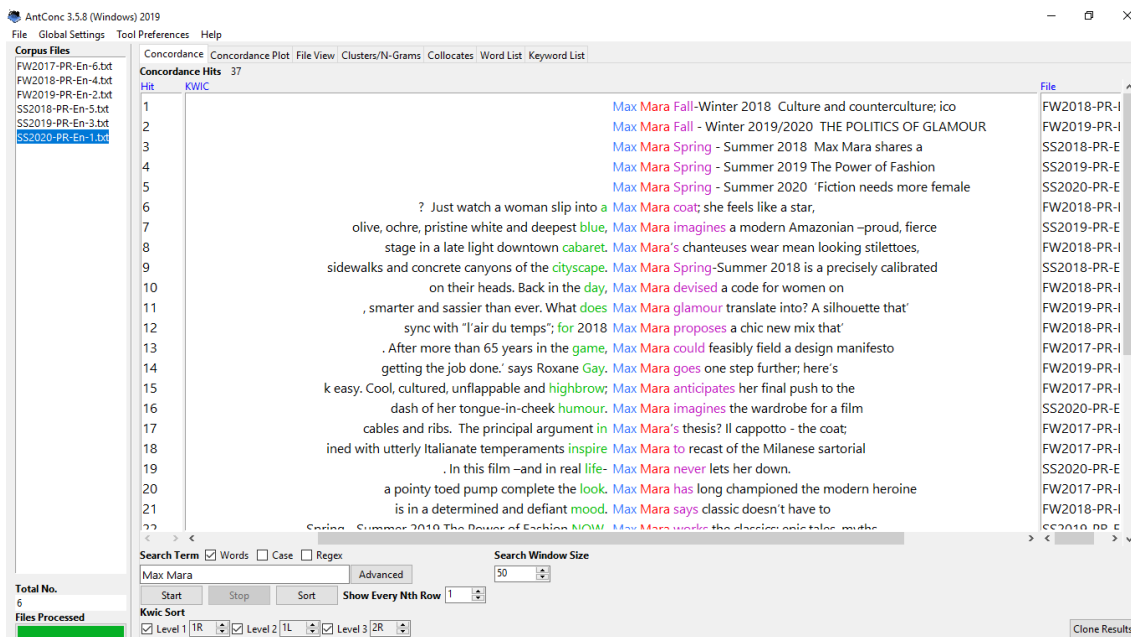
Before conducting an in-depth analysis, it is worth mentioning that the press releases in the corpus lack some additional and core features characterizing the press release genre. In particular, none of them includes a brief description of the company/brand, and they do not offer contact details (although they display the brand's website link and social media as well as providing information related to fashion shows, such as accessories, eyewear, makeup, hair, and music, etc.). This means that this kind of information is not necessary and the journalists seem not to request further information.

### **5.1.1 Preformulation in the corpus of press releases**

In order to investigate the distribution of the preformulating features in the two sub-corpora PR-It and PR-En, the concordance lines are generated by inputting the search term *Max Mara* in the textbox using the *Concordance Tool* of the *AntConc* software. The search results of the two sub-corpora respectively show 37 concordance hits, 6 of them concerning the headline in each sub-corpus. (see Figure 5.1, Figure 5.2).



**Figure 5.1** Search results in a “KWIC” (Key Word In Context) format of PR-It by using the *Concordance Tool*



**Figure 5.2** Search results in a “KWIC” (KeyWord In Context) format of PR-En by using the *Concordance Tool*

The AntConc search results and a preliminary reading of texts in the corpus suggest the presence of Jacobs’s preformulating features in Max Mara’s fashion press releases, and that their distribution is the same in the two different languages. It is worth noting that “self-quotation” occurs only twice, in the PR-It and in the PR-En, as the

following examples show:

‘Mi piace il glamour. Non mi spaventa.’ Questa è una famosa dichiarazione di Linda Evangelista, top model icona e volto di numerose campagne di Max Mara. (PR-It-2)

‘I like glamour. Not afraid of it.’ So declared the iconic supermodel and many times face of Max Mara, Linda Evangelista. (PR-En-2)

The two examples show that “self-quotation” has the same distribution in the two versions of the press releases and is designed to interpret the conception of the new collection: glamour.

Referring to “self-reference”, the analysis focuses on how this feature is realized in these two versions. Specifically, in the 12 press releases the term “Max Mara” with the function “self-reference” is considered as the company or/and the brand, while sometimes the brand’s name is used as a pre-modifier (such as “Max Mara Spring- Summer 2020”, “Max Mara Fall-Winter 2019”). In some instances, the same term with the function “self-reference” before the noun has an adjective/noun purpose (in the case of Italian press releases after the nouns), such as “Max Mara women”, “Max Mara’s boss lady”, “Max Mara glamour”, “Max Mara coat”, “donna Max Mara”, “glamour di Max Mara”, etc. This latter case provides information on the customer’s identity, the product of the brand and the conception of the collection the press releases are focusing on. For further discussion, see the following examples:

La donna Max Mara oggi esige il successo alle proprie condizioni e si veste di conseguenza.  
(PR-It-4)

Now, the Max Mara woman demands success on her own terms and dresses accordingly.  
(PR-En-4)

La “boss lady” di Max Mara si avvantaggia appieno di questo privilegio: è più scaltra, intelligente e alla moda di quanto sia mai stata. (PR-It-2)

Max Mara’s boss lady works that advantage to the full; she is sharper, smarter and sassier than ever. (PR-En-2)

In che cosa si traduce il glamour di Max Mara? (PR-It-2)

What does Max Mara glamour translate into? (PR-En-2)

Basta guardare una donna mentre indossa un cappotto Max Mara. (PR-It-4)

Just watch a woman slip into a Max Mara coat; she feels like a star, she can conquer the world.

(PR-En-4)

All these instances suggest that Max Mara's collections are dedicated to "speaking for themselves" and conveying the type of the female image they want to create through their fashion line.

This impression is confirmed by the use of "semi-performatives" in the corpus:

Max Mara *immagina* il guardaroba di un film ancora da girare. (PR-It-1)

Max Mara *imagines* the wardrobe for a film yet to be made. (PR-En-1)

Max Mara *rimette* Anfitrite sul trono che le spetta. (PR-It-3)

Max Mara *restores* Amphitrite to her throne. (PR-En-3)

Max Mara *immagina* una moderna Amazzone, orgogliosa, fiera e valorosa. (PR-It-3)

Max Mara *imagines* a modern Amazonian –proud, fierce and valiant. (PR-En-3)

Max Mara *propone* una nuova elegante miscela: 1/3 amministratore delegato, 1/3 rock star e 1/3 stella del cinema. (PR-It-4)

Max Mara *proposes* a chic new mix that's one part boardroom exec, one part husky songbird, and one part screen siren. (PR-En-4)

Concentrate, colte, imperturbabili e intellettuali: Max Mara *anticipa* lo sprint finale verso la meta. (PR-It-6)

Cool, cultured, unflappable and highbrow; Max Mara *anticipates* her final push to the summit. (PR-En-6)

This brief analysis based on the preformulating features (Jacobs: 1999a, 1999b) suggests the following main points:

- explicit “self-reference” appears to be a feature of Max Mara fashion press releases. However, third-person reference is not only used to refer to the company/brand issuing the release but also to the collections, such as customer’s identity, the product of the brand and the conception of the collection;
- despite the limited “self-quotations” and “semi-performatives” attributed to the company/brand, together with “self-reference”, they seem to confirm the impression that Max Mara fashion press releases tend to convey a female image created by the brand;
- there are no differences, as far as these pre-formulating features are concerned, between the Italian and the English versions of the press releases.

The typical feature concluded from this brief analysis is the focus on the collections, which shows that Max Mara fashion press releases attempt to shape/convey the female image of the brand through their own collections. Thus, the next subsection discusses in detail the female image conveyed by press releases.

### **5.1.2 Female image conveyed by press releases**

To examine the female image conveyed by Max Mara fashion press releases, a KWIC search was conducted respectively in the two sub-corpora: PR-It, and PR-En using the *Concordance* tool of the *AntConc* software. The search terms, all related to female words, vary in accordance with its corresponding language. For the sub-corpus PR-It, the keywords are: “donna/donne (woman/women)”, “woman/women”, “femminile (female)”, “lady”, “eroina/eroine (heroine/heroines)”, and “regina/regine (queen/queens)” (The inclusion of the English words is accounted for by the use of this language in the Italian press releases); for the sub-corpus PR-En, the keywords are “woman/women”, “female”, “lady”, “girl”, “heroine/heroines”, and “queen/queens”. The present study only took into consideration the female words appeared in press releases for the purpose of the analysis. The results generated in the



*Concordance* tool facilitated a more detailed investigation with the assistance of the *File View* tool to show the text of individual files.

The *Concordance* search results of the corpus PR-It showed 7 concordance hits with the search term “donna”, 7 with “donne”, and in the case of “woman”, “lady”, “femminile” “eroine”, “regina”, and “regine”, the number is 1; as for the corpus PR-En, 11 concordance hits were shown with the search term “woman”, 5 with “women”, 3 with “heroine”, 2 with “queen” and the number for “female”, “lady”, “girl” and “queens”, is 1. These results point to a penchant of adopting the words “woman/women” in reference to the female both in the Italian and English press releases.

The descriptions for women in the press releases were compartmentalized into the following 4 types in the interest of a distinct demonstration of the data collected from the *Concordance* and *File View* searches: adjective, verb form, prepositional phrase, and noun, as shown in Table 5.1, Table 5.2.

SS2020	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
donne (women)	4		sono allenate a mantenere i segreti (are trained to keep secrets)	al centro di un romanzo di spionaggio (at the centre of a novel concerning espionage)	agenti segreti (spies)
FW2019	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
donna (woman)	2		di risplendere (to shine)	all'autoaffermazione (self-affirmation)	opinion leader di domani (tomorrow's opinion leader)
donne (women)	2		essere libere di poter indossare qualsiasi cosa si ritenga appropriato per essere sè stesse (be free to wear whatever you deem appropriate to be yourself)		
woman	1	working			
lady	1	scaltra (clever)		alla moda (fashionable)	boss
		intelligente (smart)			
SS2019	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
donna (woman)	2	forte (strong) brillante (brillant)			
femminile (female)	1				prospettiva (perspective)
regina (queen)	1			di tutti gli oceani (of all the oceans)	
FW2018	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
donna (woman)	3		esige il successo (demands success)	in carriera (career woman)	
donne (women)	1			in carriera (career woman)	
regine (queen)	1	vere (real)		del punk (of punk)	
FW2017	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
eroine (heroines)	1	moderne (modern)			

**Table 5.1** KWIC search results in the sub-corpus PR-It

SS2020	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
woman	2			at the centre of a spy thriller	
women	2		are trained to keep secrets	of the moment	
female	1				spies
heroine	1			to a palm fringed island	
FW2019	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
woman	3	working	deems appropriate and necessary for getting the job done		
women	2		empowers		movers and shakers
lady	1	sharper smarter sassier			boss
SS2019	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
woman	3	strong brillant			perspective
queen	2			of all the oceans	design
FW2018	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
woman	3	working	demands success		
women	1			on the move	
girl	1	working			
heroine	1			in a determined and defiant mood	
queens	1	punk			
FW2017	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
heroine	1	modern			

**Table 5.2** KWIC search results in the sub-corpus PR-En

From Table 5.1 and Table 5.2, a lack of female-related words was observed in both Italian and English press releases for SS2018, which are instead featured with the inspirations and styles of the new collections, whereas the press releases for every other season depicted women in diverse characters – a spy, an opinion leader, a boss or a regular working woman who all share the same disposition in that they strive for success with qualities such as power, strength, wisdom and a sense of fashion. While the Italian press releases show a preference to the female self-affirmation in its construction of Max Mara women, to name one of the differences between them and the English counterparts, they indeed convey the same image of the female. Such a conclusion begs the question: when conveyed by another genre of corporate communication-articles on WeChat, what would the female image then be?

## 5.2 Female image conveyed by articles on WeChat

As discussed in Section 2.3.3, WeChat is one of the most effective Chinese social media platforms for international fashion brands. Serving as a major communicating

window for the corporation, Max Mara's Chinese official account on WeChat keeps a regular update of posts on brands' fashion shows based on the press releases of the group. The question remains: what kind of female image for Max Mara will this corporate communication genre convey?

Before the analyses of the Chinese articles on WeChat, it is necessary to have an antecedent understanding of the differences among Italian, English, and Chinese. The Cambridge Dictionary denotes "morpheme" as "the smallest unit of language that has its own meaning, either a word or a part of a word", and "word" as "a single unit of language that has meaning and can be broken or written"; to wit, a morpheme can be free or bound while a word must be free.

In natural language processing, a word is the smallest meaningful form that can act independently. In the corpora of the present study, Italian and English words can be used free with space between each word. In the case of Italian and English, every word is a separate entity and can be effectively distinguished from each other by the space between, such as "woman", "lady", "girl", etc. As for Chinese, however, a character is the smallest unit of writing and a word can take the form of a character, or a combination of characters (cf. Packard, 2000), such as, "女(female)", "女性(female)", "女人(woman)", etc. Consequently, this lack of space, which otherwise would serve as a distinguishing marker, renders the concordancers unable to recognize Chinese words automatically. Thus, the natural language processing of Chinese dictates a segmentation of words in the text into justifiable sequences in the first place, based on which the following processing can be conducted. For the present study, SegmentAnt (Antony, 2017) is used to segment the Chinese characters into words.

After the segmentation of the Chinese words, I did an advanced search in Word with the keyword - the Chinese character, "女(female)", so as to locate the Chinese words including it, such as "女性(female)", "女神(goddess)", "女郎(young woman)", etc. Table 5.3 shows the search results of the Chinese words related to "female" in the WeChat corpus.

Fashion Show	Words
SS2020	女性 (female), 女间谍 (female spy), 女 邦德 (female Bond)
FW2019	女性 (female), 女星 (female star)
SS2019	女性 (female), 女神 (goddess), 女战士(female warrior)
FW2018	女性 (female), 女神(goddess), 女王 (queen), 女郎(young woman), 女人味 (femininity), 女英雄 (heroine), 歌女 (female singer)
FW2017	女性 (female), 女星 (female star)

**Table 5.3** Words related to “female” found in the articles on WeChat

As shown in Table 5.3, in all the WeChat articles on fashion shows from different seasons except SS2018, words related to “female” have been located with “女性 (female)” being the most frequent. Then I used the *Word List* tool, the *Concordance* tool, and *File View* tool of *AntConc* to explore the corpus. The results of *Word List* search show that the word “女性(female)” ranks second in the ordered list of the words in the corpus with the frequency 41. The words “女(female)”, “女性(female)” and other words presented in Table 5.3 were used to conduct the KWIC search using the *Concordance* Tool, and the results generated in the *Concordance* tool facilitated a more detailed investigation with the assistance of the *File View* tool to show the text of individual files. Table 5.4 provides the concordance hits of the keywords in the corpus WeChat generated by *Concordance* tool.

keywords	concordance hits
女性(female)	41
女神(goddess)	5
女间谍(female spy)/女星(female star)/女王(queen)	2
女(female)/ 女战士(female warrior)/ 女郎(young woman)/ 女人味(femininity)/女英雄(heroine)/歌女(female singer)	1

**Table 5.4** Concordance hits of the keywords in the corpus WeChat

The descriptions for women in the articles on WeChat were compartmentalized into the following 3 types in the interest of a distinct demonstration of the data collected from the *Concordance* and *File View* searches: adjective, verb form, and noun, as shown in Table 5.5. Note that the category of the prepositional phrase is not included for no results under this category were found belated to the search terms in the WeChat corpus.

SS2020	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	noun
女性(female)	6		变成谍战剧的主角 (became the protagonist of spy drama )	谍战 (a type of drama featured with spies)
女间谍(female spy)	2			力量(power)
女(female)	1			007 邦德(Bond)
FW2019	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	noun
女性(female)	16	全新(brand new)		自信(self-confidence)
		当代(contemporary)		力量(power)
		杰出(outstanding)		魅力(charm)
		无与伦比的 (unparalleled)		
时髦智慧的 (fashionable and smart)				
女星(female star)	1			魅力(charm)
SS2019	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	noun
女性(female)	10	摩登(modern)		力量(power)
		干练(capable)		立场(standpoint)
		势不可挡的(unstoppable)		视角(perspective)
		全新(brand new)		魅力(charm)
女神(goddess)	4			秦岚(Qin Lan, the name of a famous Chinese actress)
				海洋(ocean)
女战士 (female warrior)	1	英勇无畏(valiant)		亚马逊(Amazon)
		现代(modern)		
		时髦(fashionable)		
FW2018	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	noun
女性 (female)	8	全新(brand new)		力量(power)
		80年代的(80s')		魅力(charm)
		不同风格的(mixed-style)		经典职业装(classic work outfit )
		职场(professional)		
女王(queen)	2	干练(capable)		
女郎(young female)	1	朋克时代的(punk)		气质(charisma)
女神(goddess)	1	都市(metropolitan)		
女人味(femininity)	1			曼妙的身姿(graceful figure)
女人味(femininity)	1	潇洒 (natural and unrestrained)		
女英雄(heroine)	1	超级 (super)		
歌女(female singer)	1	磁哑(magnetic and husky)		妩媚(enhancement)
FW2017	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	noun
女性(female)	1	现代(modern)		

**Table 5.5** KWIC search results in the corpus WeChat

Table 5.5 shows that the same situation occurred in the corpus WeChat, i.e. a lack of female-related words was observed in Chinese articles on WeChat for SS2018. In general, despite the lack of emphasis on the female role in the modern society,

congruous with the female image conveyed by the corporate press releases, the image of a modern professional female who is self-confident, powerful, smart, and fashionable is constructed by the articles on WeChat. The two sources are further differentiated in that apart from sharing the adoption of female-related words such as “female”, “female spy”, “heroine”, and “queen”, the WeChat articles has a more diverse vocabulary, such as “女星(female star)”, “女神(goddess)”, “女郎(young woman)”, “歌女(female singer)”, and “女人味(femininity)”. Moreover, the appearance of “女星(female star)”, “女神(goddess)”, and the famous Chinese actress Qin Lan in the same context alludes to a model of the Max Mara female image and serves as a promotion means through the star effect; descriptions like “女郎(young woman)” and “歌女(female singer)” facilitate the exploration of the female image from a fashionable and sophisticated working woman to a sensual club frequenter, and “女人味(femininity)” extends the traditional definition of a professionally successful female with a carefree ease of the professional women.

### **5.3 Female image conveyed by news reports**

Although the advanced digital technology has enabled companies to post the press releases directly on their corporate websites or social media platforms and interact directly with the general public, press releases continue to play an important role in the production of news reports. According to Catenaccio (2008b), the writers of press releases provide information for journalists in the hope that it will be turned into actual news reports and passed on to the audience. In this case, companies issue the press release, and journalists adopt it totally or modify it based on their needs (Pander Maat, 2008). In the present study, Max Mara conveys the female image through press releases related to fashion shows. How will the fashion journalists take them? What kind of messages will the fashion news reports, Italian, English, and Chinese, convey to their respective readers?

In order to investigate the corpus NR-ICE, the same approach is adopted to analyze the news reports in these three languages as the press releases and the WeChat

articles. The analytic method has been demonstrated in the previous sections (cf. Section 5.1.2, Section 5.2) and thus will not be repeated for fear of redundancy.

### 5.3.1 Female image conveyed by Italian news reports

For the sub-corpus NR-It, based on the keywords “donna/donne (woman/women)”, “woman/women”, “femminile (female)”, “lady”, “eroina/eroine (heroine/heroines)”, and “regina/regine (queen/queens)” from the Italian press releases, and for the purpose of the analysis, I also used “signora/signore(lady/ladies)”, “ragazza/ragazze(girl/girls)”, and “girl” which are present in the Italian news reports. Table 5.6 provides the concordance hits of the keywords in the sub-corpus NR-It generated by the *Concordance* tool. A relatively high frequency is observed of the three words, “donna”, “donne”, and “femminile”, and 22 of the repeated occurrences of “donna” are accounted for by its inclusion in the name of the event – Milano Moda Donna. The descriptions for women in NR-It are shown in Table 5.7.

keywords	concordance hits
donna	64/22
donne	35
femminile	17
woman/women	6
lady/girl/eroine/signora	3
regine/signore	2
eroina/ragazze	1

**Table 5.6** Concordance hits of keywords in the corpus NR-It



SS2020	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
donna (woman)	11	contemporanea (contemporary)	adora le divise (She adores uniforms) ama l'azione quella immaginata (She loves an imaginary action)	con grande esperienza (with a great experience)	
donne (women)	13	sicure (confident)	sono allenate a mantenere i segreti (They are trained to keep secrets)	al centro di un romanzo di spionaggio (at the centre of a novel concerning espionage)	agenti segreti (spies)
		forti (strong)		in versione 007 (in a 007 version)	
		sicure di sé (self-confident)			
women	1				power
femminile	4			al punto giusto (at the right point)	guardaroba (wardrobe)
girl	3	sensuale (sensual) sexy			Bond
FW2019	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
			lavora (works)	in carriera (career woman)	forza (strength)
donna (woman)	7		che voglia essere sexy ma con estrema eleganza (She wants to be sexy with an accurate elegance)		austerità (austerity)
			non deve temere una gonna corta e uno stivale alto (She doesn't have to be scared of a miniskirt and pair of high boots)		femminismo (feminism)
donne (women)	10	forti (strong)	di risplendere (to shine)		professioniste (professionals)
		eleganti (elegant)	hanno un'immagine sicura di sé (They are confident about themselves)		
		vincenti (winning)			
		sicure di sé (self-confident)			
woman	3	working		del presente (of the present) del futuro (of the future)	business
femminile	1				autoaffermazione (self-affirmation)
lady	3	eroiche (heroic)			boss
ragazze (young woman)	3	preparatissime (the most prepared) vincenti (winning) prossime alla guida della società (close to lead society)			
SS2019	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
		forte (strong)	si veste a strati, senza dimenticare la femminilità (She wears layers without forgetting her femininity)	la sera in albergo (in the evening in a hotel)	temperamento della donna Max Mara (Max Mara woman's temper)
donna (woman)	16	coraggiosa (brave)		di James Bond (James Bond's)	viaggiatrice (traveller)
		elegante (elegant)		di carattere quella presentata da Max mara (the behaviour of that shown by Max Mara)	
		moderna (modern)			
		molto sicura di sé (very confident of herself)			
		energica (enegic)			
donne (women)	6	forti (strong)	si riconoscono con un hijab in testa e i capelli raccolti (They recognize themselves with an hijab or their har up)	in carriera (career woman)	
		sicure (confident)			
		combattenti (combative)			
femminile	3				alter ego
eroina (heroine)	1		pronta a tutto pur di conquistare quello che vuole (She is ready to do anything to get what she wants)		
eroine (heroines)	2	contemporanee (contemporary)			
		moderne (modern)			
regine (queen)	1	moderne (modern)			

FW2018	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
donna (woman)	8		riesce nella sua eccentricità ad essere contemporaneamente sexy, ma raffinata. (In her being eccentric, she manages to be at the same time sexy, but sophisticated)	di successo (of success)	animo cool della donna Max Mara (Max Mara woman's trendy soul)
donne (women)	5	nuove (new)		in carriera (career woman)	posto importante (important position)
				nel mondo di lavoro (in the employment world)	ruolo (role)
				all'interno della società (within society)	
				in molti ambiti di lavoro (in many employment realities)	
woman	2	contemporanea (contemporary)		nella contemporaneità (in the contemporary world)	multitasking
		cosmopolita (cosmopolitan)		di classe (classy)	business
		autoritaria di giorno (authoritarian during the day)		dall'animo rock (with a rocking soul)	rock la sera (rock in the evening)
femminile	5				empowerment
					forza (strength)
					eleganza (elegance)
signora (lady)	3	forte (strong)		in cappotto cammello (in a camel coat)	
		stravagante (extravagant)			
		insolita (unusual)			
signore (ladies)	2	giovani (young)			
ragazze (young woman)	1	cattive (naughty)			
regine (queen)	1	vere (real)		del punk (of punk)	
SS2018	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
donna (woman)	10	dinamica (dynamic)		di città (from the city)	
donne (women)	1	cosmopolita (cosmopolitan)		sempre in movimento (always travelling)	
woman				di oggi (today's)	
femminile	2	contemporanea (contemporary)			business
		severo e femminile insieme (severe and female together)			iper (hyper)
FW2017	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
donna (woman)	12	avezza al lusso (used at luxury)			anni Quaranta (40's)
women	4	femminile (female)			solidità (solidity)
femminile	2	moderna (modern)			vincitrice (winner)
eroine (heroines)	1	elegante (elegant)			donna (woman)
		moderne (modern)			

**Table 5.7** KWIC search results in the sub-corpus NR-It

KWIC search results in Table 5.7 underlines a more diverse vocabulary for women from the Italian news reports on the seasonal fashion shows in the sub-corpus NR-It than from the press releases, with the addition of, such as, “signora/signore”, “ragazza/ragazze”. In general, the fashion journalists retained the successful business

female image conveyed by Max Mara fashion press releases in which they are self-confident, strong, powerful and elegant, stressing their multitasking and important role in the contemporary society. Besides the highly frequent female-related words, “donna” and “donne”, another word, “femminile”, occurred 17 times from the Italian news reports (cf. Table 5.6). In the female portrait, Italian news reports focus on the confidence and sophistication as well as the femininity of women. They are refined, elegant, and sensual, a sophisticated and empowered business woman in suits by day, and a sexy punk queen in miniskirts and high-heel boots by night.

### 5.3.2 Female image conveyed by news reports in English

For the sub-corpus NR-En, the keywords adopted for analysis are “woman/women”, “female”, “lady/ladies”, “girl/girls”, “heroine/heroines”, and “queen/queens”, collected from the English news reports. Table 5.8 provides the concordance hits of the keywords in NR-En generated by the *Concordance* tool. A relatively high frequency is observed of the three words, “woman”, “women”, and “female”. The words of the descriptions for women in NR-En are shown in Table 5.9.

keywords	concordance hits
woman	32
women	43
female	26
heroine	6
lady/ladies/girl /girls/heroines/queen	2
queens	1

**Table 5.8** Concordance hits of keywords in the corpus NR-En

SS2020	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
woman	5		has fewer car chases than the average special agent	at the centre of a spy thriller	
women	7	famous	are trained to keep secrets	of the moment in Hollywood in Film initiative	a more prominent role
female	17	female-led powerful confident classy fashionable			lead spy thriller spy action movie superspy 007 army agent 007 spies James Bond/Bond assasins
girl	1		slinking		Bond
heroine	4	fictional		to a palm-fringed island	
heroines	1			for Max Mara's latest collection	
FW2019	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
woman	13	confident elegant luxurious sharper wiser intriguing	deems appropriate and necessary for getting the job done to shine is announcing is well aware of rules of luxury		sense of power personality
women	12	democratic empowering working	go on to be some of the most powerful women in management, business, politics empowers can use to empower themselves	in the House of Representatives	presidential candidates inner strength
female	2				advantage leaders
lady	2				boss
ladies	1		time to dress for the job you want		
SS2019	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
woman	7		wants from her working wardrobe wearing it as a morden-day Amazonian		
women	3	marginalised maligned			
female	2				authors
queen	1			of the sea	

FW2018	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
woman	5	modern	demands success wants to be taken seriously but retain her femininity at work doesn't want too much fashion all the time		power
women	15	cloaking empowering enabled	to feel strong to go into the workplace are fighting the final pass for today's supermods of yesteryear	all types of on the runway	freedom
female	4				power dressing executive class strength empowerment
ladies	1		take your pick		
girl	1	working			
heroine	1			in a determined and defiant mood	
queens	1			punk	
SS2018	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
woman	1	modern			
women	1	working			
FW2017	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	prepositional phrase	noun
women	5	lucky working			
girls	1	healthy honeyed			
heroine	1	beautiful fine-featured			Halima Aden

**Table 5.9** KWIC search results in the sub-corpus NR-En

Table 5.8 and Table 5.9 manifested the same keywords between the English news reports and the press releases, and in particular, their shared description of the low-frequency words such as “heroine”, “girl”, and “queens”. Meanwhile, the English news reports also share the inclusion of its Italian counterparts of the three highly frequent words, “woman”, “women”, and “female”, conveying to the readers the same successful business female image from the Max Mara fashion press releases. It is worthy to note that English news reports focus more on the female power, strength, and capability in management, business, and politics, in that the female strives to succeed and be acknowledged for her professionalism in the field of employment.

### 5.3.3 Female image conveyed by Chinese news reports

For the sub-corpus NR-Ch, the search terms include keywords from the Chinese

articles on WeChat, such as “女(female)”, “女性(female)”, “女神(goddess)”, “女郎(young woman)”, etc., and “女人(woman)”, “女孩(girl)”, and “少女(teenage girl)” from the Chinese news reports. Table 5.10 provides the concordance hits of the keywords generated in NR-Ch by the *Concordance* tool. A relatively high frequency is observed of the four words, “女性(female)”, “女人(woman)”, “女(female)”, and “女神(goddess)”. The words of the descriptions for women in NR-Ch are shown in Table 5.11.

keywords	concordance hits
女性(female)	145
女人(woman)	26
女(female)	23
女神(goddess)	22
女郎(young woman)	11
女王(queen)	10
少女(teenage girl)/女星(female star)/ 女间谍(female spy)	5
女孩(girl)	4
女人味(femininity)/ 歌手(female singer)	3
女战士(female warrior)	1

**Table 5.10** Concordance hits of keywords in the corpus NR-Ch

SS2020	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	noun
女(female)	19	独当一面的 (professionally independent)		邦德(Bond)
		强悍的(doughty)		特务(secret agent)
				杀手(assassin)
女性(female)	49	城市(metropolitan)	可以被训练出来保守秘密 (can be trained to keep secrets)	间谍(spy)
		智慧(wise)		正装(outfit)
		现代(modern)		柔与甜(tenderness and sweetness)
		优雅从容(elegant and poised)		女性主义(feminism)
		低调的(low-key)		英雄(heroine)
		正富盛名的(prestigious)		优雅(elegance)
		美丽(beautiful)		情报员(informant)
		独立(independent)		气质(temperament)
				魅力(charm)
		英气(handsomeness)		
		谍战 (a type of drama featured with spies)		
女间谍(female spy)	5	可盐可甜(cool and cute)		
		冷战的(cold-war)		
		性感(sexy)		
		冷酷的(callous)		
		美艳的(beautiful and alluring)		
女星(female star)	3	神秘(mysterious)		
		非裔(African)		
女郎(young woman)	8	新时代(new-era)		Bond
				007
				间谍(spy)
女人味(femininity)	2	温婉(gentle)		邦德(Bond)
女人(woman)	1	现代(modern)		
少女(teenage girl)	5	甜美(sweet)		色调(hue)
				粉(pink)
FW2019	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	noun
女性(female)	42	现代(modern)	用优雅的态度坚持自我(assert oneself in elegance)	特质(characteristic)
		战无不胜的(invincible)	用细心的形象表达自我(express oneself under a careful image)	魅力(charm)
		包容性的(inclusive)	散发闪耀魅力(exude shining)	自信(self-confidence)
		通勤(commuting)		力量(power)
		敏锐(keen)		形象(image)
		聪慧(smart)		优雅(elegance)
		时髦(fashionable)		精英(elite)
		自信独立的(confident and independent)		政治家(statesman)
		活跃(lively)		
		积极(active)		
		职业(professional)		
		缙缙馥郁的(fragrant)		
		女人(woman)	7	聪明(clever)
潇洒 (natural and unrestrained)				
独立(independent)				
强势(overpowering)				
性感(sexy)				
		智慧(wise)		
SS2019	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	noun
女性(female)	24	强悍的(doughty)		视角(perspective)
		刚柔并济(strong and supple)		柔美(tenderness)
		现代(modern)		女性主义(feminism)
		摩登(modern)		魅力(charm)
		性感(sexy)		
		优雅(elegant)		
女神(goddess)	20	当代(contemporary)		
		气势十足的(forceful)		战衣(combat suit)
		古典(classical)		海洋(ocean)
		优雅的(elegant)		大地(earth)
		摩登气质的(modern)		希腊(Greece)
				秦岚(Qin Lan, the name of a famous Chinese actress)
				超强气场(super charisma)
女战士 (female warrior)	1	时尚现代的 (modern and fashionable)		亚马逊女战士 (Amazon female warrior)
女王(queen)	1	气势十足(forceful)		

FW2018	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	noun
女性(female)	23	坚定而独立的 (determined and independent)	主张依照个人风格自由穿搭, 以充分展现自我 (advocate personal fashion choice for full expression of oneself)	力量 (power)
		职业 (professional)	打破了更多的藩篱, 通过各种方式展示自己 (shattered more boundaries, expressing oneself in all ways)	霸气 (aggressiveness)
		干练 (capable)		魅力 (charm)
		摩登 (modern)		职场 (workplace)
		时尚 (fashionable)		果敢 (decisiveness)
		成功 (successful)		不羁 (unrestrained freedom)
		寻求突破的 (innovative)		
女人(woman)	6	妩媚诱人的 (enchanted and attractive)		
		力量 (powerful)		
		职业 (professional)		
女神(goddess)	1	强而有力 (strong and powerful)		
		性感 (sexy)		
女王(queen)	9	丰满 (well-shaped)		范儿 (style)
		摇滚 (rock-n-roll)		性感猫步 (sexy catwalk)
女郎(young woman)	2	朋克时代的 (punk)		
		音乐 (musical)		
歌女 (female singer)	3	Diva		派对 (party)
		磁哑 (magnetic and husky)		妩媚 (enchantment)
SS2018	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	noun
女性(female)	2	优雅 (elegant)		梦幻柔情 (fantasy and tenderness)
				高贵体态 (noble posture)
女人(woman)	7	权力 (powerful)	梦想穿上Max Mara的驼色大衣 (dream of wearing a Max Mara camel coat)	柔情 (tenderness)
		都市 (metropolitan)	在城市中漫游 (roam in the city)	
女人味 (femininity)	1	丰富 (rich)		
FW2017	concordance hits	adjective	verb form	noun
女性(female)	5	现代 (modern)		大衣 (coat)
		全新 (brand new)		英雄 (heroine)
女人(woman)	5	当代 (contemporary)	必须要拥有一件Max Mara 经典款驼色大衣 (must have one Max Mara classic camel coat)	自主 (independence)
			有了它, 仿佛就拥有了全世界 (wouldn't trade it for the world)	利落 (conciseness and nimbleness)
女孩(girl)	2	勇敢的 (brave)		
		索马里 (Somalia's)		
女郎(young woman)	1			Max Mara
女神(goddess)	1			刘雯 (Liu Wen, a Chinese model)
女星(female star)	2	传奇 (legendary)		面若冰霜 (an icy expression)
				性情如火 (a fiery temperament)
				英格丽·褒曼 (Ingrid Bergman)
				安妮塔·艾克伯格 (Anita Ekberg)

**Table 5.11** KWIC search results in the sub-corpus NR-Ch

Table 5.10 shows that there are more than ten female-related words that appeared in the Chinese news reports, among which, the word “女性(female)” ranks sixth in the ordered list of the words in the sub-corpus NR-Ch with the frequency 145. From “女人(woman)” to “女郎(young woman)”, “女孩(girl)”, and “少女(teenage girl)”, the female-related words in the Chinese news reports cover women of almost all ages.

The KWIC search results in Table 5.11 show a variety of flattering attributes for women in the Chinese news reports. Despite a lack of emphasis on the essential role



of women in the modern society and workplace, the fashion journalists retained the portrait of the professional female by the press releases in which they are confident, independent, strong, powerful, smart, capable, fashionable, and elegant. In addition, the Chinese news reports share the stress on their femininity with their Italian counterparts with the adjectives such as sexy, plump, enchanting and attractive, etc.; at the same time, the Italian news reports lean towards their sexy quality whereas the Chinese are featured with a balance between being imposing and being caring together with the focus on a quality of sweetness and tenderness. Moreover, as observed in the WeChat articles, the fashion journalists tend to associate words such as “女星(female star)”, “女神(goddess)” with the names of well-known stars out of the same consideration to offer the readers a distinct display of the Max Mara female image model and to serve as a promotion means through the star effect.

In summary, the Max Mara press releases, featured with the Jacobs’s pre-formulation functions, can convey a modern professional female image of power, strength, confidence, independence, and elegance. Max Mara China channel their corporate messages to their Chinese customers via the posts of their official account on the social media platform, WeChat. The news reports in the three languages, Italian, English, and Chinese, all convey to their readers the professional female image by the Max Mara press releases with varied focus respectively on the sexual quality, the power in all fields, especially politics, and a sense of sweetness and tenderness behind the power. Then by what means do the news reports construct such an image? Text? Picture? Audio? Or video? The next chapter will explore this question using the GeM model that has been introduced in Chapter 4.

## CHAPTER 6 EXPLOYING THE MULTIMODAL MEDIA CORPUS

Chapter 4 describes the main steps for building the GeM-annotated corpus by presenting how to identify the base units of the multimodal documents and how to annotate each layer of the GeM model using the XML schema. Specifically, Section 4.3.2.3 introduces the principal RST relations adopted in the GeM modal.

In light of the results obtained from the XML-based annotated corpus NR-ICE-T, this chapter aims to explore the general architecture (i.e. the discourse organization) of the news reports and discusses the interactions between the different semiotic resources on the pages of the news reports.

In order to do so, Section 6.1 presents basic quantitative data extracted from the annotated corpus and discusses some among the most common rhetorical relations identified in discourse organizations. Section 6.2 goes beyond the quantitative patterns to discuss the intersemiotic meaning-making between language and other semiotic resources with examples from the present corpus.

### 6.1 Quantitative data analysis

#### 6.1.1 Basic quantitative data

Table 6.1, Table 6.2 and Table 6.3 illustrate the basic quantitative data concerning the number of base units, visual base units, embedded base units, layout units, RST segments, RST relations, etc. (see Tables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 below).

File name	Base units	Visual base units	Embedded base units	Layout units	RST segments	Visual RST segments	Unique RST relations	All RST relations
SS2020-NR-It-T1	36	9	15	21	20	1	10	16
FW2019-NR-It-T2	42	10	13	31	25	4	13	21
SS2019-NR-It-T3	23	5	13	10	19	2	10	16
FW2018-NR-It-T4	16	4	10	9	12	1	8	9
SS2018-NR-It-T5	34	11	8	29	25	6	7	20
FW2017-NR-It-T6	29	11	5	29	20	6	7	16

**Table 6.1** Basic quantitative data obtained from NR-It-T

File name	Base units	Visual base units	Embedded base units	Layout units	RST segments	Visual RST segments	Unique RST relations	All RST relations
SS2020-NR-Ch-T1	65	20	11	55	58	19	10	42
FW2019-NR-Ch-T2	59	17	10	46	52	16	11	39
SS2019-NR-Ch-T3	47	25	4	45	29	17	6	16
FW2018-NR-Ch-T4	38	22	1	37	22	14	7	11
SS2018-NR-Ch-T5	35	16	10	29	18	7	7	15
FW2017-NR-Ch-T6	31	15	9	28	14	6	8	12

**Table 6.2** Basic quantitative data obtained from NR-Ch-T

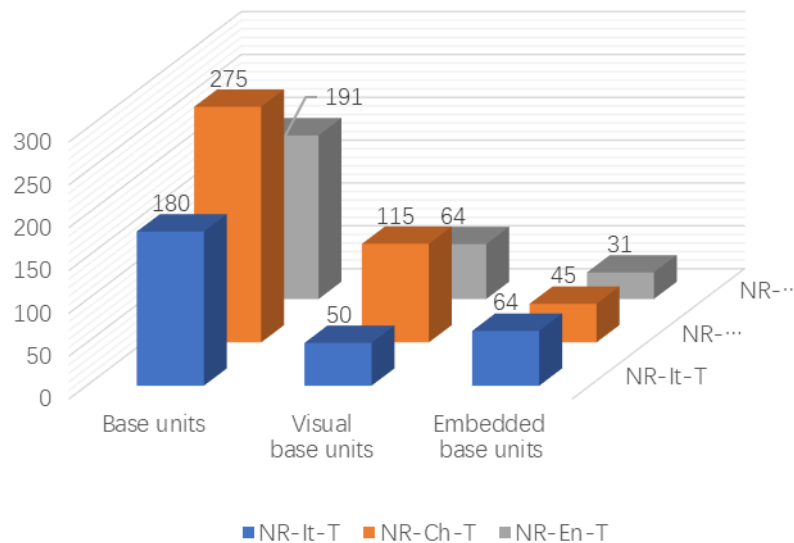
File name	Base units	Visual base units	Embedded base units	Layout units	RST segments	Visual RST segments	Unique RST relations	All RST relations
SS2020-NR-En-T1	32	5	3	16	21	1	13	18
FW2019-NR-En-T2	30	5	2	16	19	1	10	15
SS2019-NR-En-T3	29	9	2	28	17	3	9	16
FW2018-NR-En-T4	39	13	0	37	27	7	9	22
SS2018-NR-En-T5	30	16	12	20	19	3	12	16
FW2017-NR-En-T6	31	16	12	22	20	3	9	16

**Table 6.3** Basic quantitative data obtained from NR-En-T

The tables show that in the news reports there generally are more textual base units than visual base units. By comparing the three columns of “base units”, “visual base units”, and “embedded base units” in Table 6.1, Table 6.2, Table 6.3, and Figure 6.1, it emerges that Chinese news reports usually employ greater basic page elements than Italian and English reports. Furthermore, the visual base units respectively accounted for 28%, 66%, 34% of all the base units presented in the Italian, Chinese and English news reports (see Table 6.4); the Chinese news reports evidently employ more visual elements than those in Italian and English. This is because news reports in Chinese use more images from fashion shows and captions of such images (see below Figure 6.4). Such a reality may also explain the reason for the greater rhetorical relations in Chinese articles since there are lots of elaboration relations, multinuclear restatement relations and sub-nuclear possession relations between texts and images. (cf. Section 6.1.2).

Name corpus Items	Base units	Visual base units	Percentage of visual base units
NR-It-T	180	50	28%
NR-Ch-T	275	115	42%
NR-En-T	191	64	34%

**Table 6.4** Percentage of visual units in all base units



**Figure 6.1** Distribution of basic units, visual base units and embedded units

In addition, around 94% (17) of the news reports present cases among which I mark embedded base units. Figure 6.1 shows that news reports in Italian have fewer base units, but more embedded base units. This is because there are lots of emphasized text portions in the orthographic sentences (for instance, NR-It-T1, NR-It-T2, NR-It-T3, and NR-It-T4). The situation of news reports in Chinese is similar to the ones in Italian, but NR-Ch-T5 and NR-Ch-T6 have a special case - embedded base units on the top of a fashion show video in Figure 6.2(b). However, news reports in English have fewer embedded base units, only NR-En-T5 and NR-En-T6 have some in the figure (see Figure 6.2(c). Some examples of embedded base units described by the XML annotation are presented below in Figure 6.2:

La donna della prossima stagione estiva indossa **impermeabili e tailleur tre pezzi in Principe di Galles** con spalle ben delineate. Per il pranzo indossa **micro stampe foulard in bianco e nero**. Viaggia sempre con una giacca **sahariana**. Una donna che **adora le divise**: bermuda che sfiorano il ginocchio e camice multitasche in rosa conchiglia, blu cipria o eau de Nil. Insomma preparata ad ogni eventualità. Le gonne sono lunghe a stampa dai colori delicati o abiti fluidi color pastello con bretelle. La seta ondeggia sul corpo ma non segna, fluido e seducente. Uno stile Max Mara che rimane sempre fedele a se stesso. Il brand fa il pieno di supermodelle tra cui le sempre presenti **Gigi e Bella Hadid, Vittoria Ceretti e Kaia Gerber**, ma anche alcuni degli **angeli di Victoria's Secret** che hanno sfilato con le **treccine basse** che ricordano quelle della giovanissima ambientalista **Greta Thunberg**.

(a) captured from NR-It-T1

Figure 6.2(a)

<unit id="u-T1.17">La donna della prossima stagione estiva indossa<unit id="u-T1.17.1">impermeabili e tailleur tre pezzi in Principe di Galles </unit>con spalle ben delineate.</unit>

<unit id="u-T1.18">Per il pranzo indossa<unit id="u-T1.18.1">micro stampe foulard in bianco e nero.</unit> </unit>

<unit id="u-T1.19">Viaggia sempre con una giacca <unit id="u-T1.19.1">sahariana.</unit> </unit>

<unit id="u-T1.20">Una donna che<unit id="u-T1.20.1"> adora le divise:</unit> bermuda che sfiorano il ginocchio e camice multitasche in rosa conchiglia, blu cipria o eau de Nil.</unit>

<unit id="u-T1.21">Insomma preparata ad ogni eventualità.</unit>

<unit id="u-T1.22">Le gonne sono lunghe a stampa dai colori delicati o abiti fluidi color pastello con bretelle.</unit>

<unit id="u-T1.23">La seta ondeggia sul corpo ma non segna, fluido e seducente.</unit>

<unit id="u-T1.24">Uno stile Max Mara che rimane sempre fedele a se stesso.</unit>

<unit id="u-T1.25">Il brand fa il pieno di supermodelle tra cui le sempre presenti

<unit id="u-T1.25.1">Gigi e Bella Hadid, Vittoria Ceretti </unit>e

<unit id="u-T1.25.2">Kaia Gerber,</unit>ma anche alcuni degli

<unit id="u-T1.25.3">angeli di Victoria's Secret</unit>che hanno sfilato con le

<unit id="u-T1.25.4">treccine basse</unit>che ricordano quelle della giovanissima ambientalista

<unit id="u-T1.25.5">Greta Thunberg.</unit>

</unit>



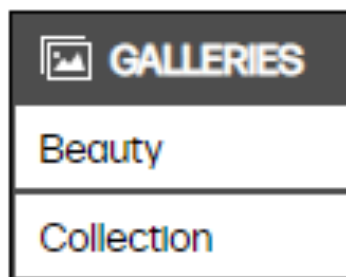
(b) captured from NR-Ch-T5

Figure 6.2(b)

```

<unit id="u-T5.30" alt="Video: SS2018 fashion show">
  <unit id="u-T5.30.1" alt="Logo: Max Mara"/>
  <unit id="u-T5.30.2">Max Mara Spring Summer 2018 Fashion
Show</unit>
  <unit id="u-T5.30.3" alt="Icon of clock"/>
  <unit id="u-T5.30.4">Watch later</unit>
  <unit id="u-T5.30.5" alt="Icon of Share"/>
  <unit id="u-T5.30.6">Share</unit>
</unit>

```



(c) captured from NR-En-T6

Figure 6.2(c)

```

<unit id="u-T6.11" alt="Figure: Hypertext">
  <unit id="u-T6.11.1" alt="Icon of Photo"/>
  <unit id="u-T6.11.2">GALLERIES</unit>

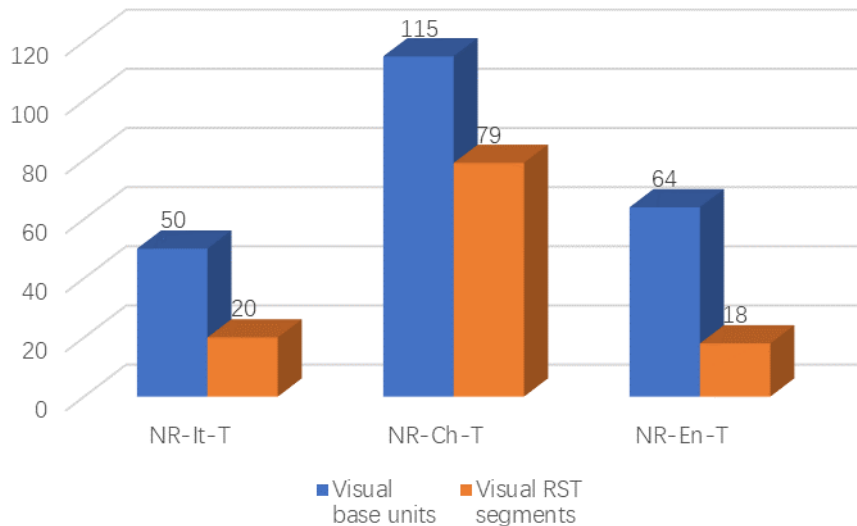
```

```
<unit id="u-T6.11.3" alt="Highlighted marker: Black"/>
<unit id="u-T6.11.4">Beauty</unit>
<unit id="u-T6.11.5">Collection</unit>
</unit>
```

**Figure 6.2** Examples of embedded units in NR-ICE-T

For each article, the number of base units is always greater than the number of layout units. This means that layout units are never smaller than base units, which are meant to verify the multimodal corpus from another aspect, i.e. base units are the smallest units used in the present study. Referring to layout segmentation, Henschel (2013: 5-6) provides the same list which is applied for the identification of the base units, but “with paragraphs instead of orthographic sentences”. Thus, when one article has fewer layout units, there will be more typographical sentences that make up different paragraphs (for example, NR-It-T1, NR-It-T2, NR-En-T1, NR-En-T2). The number of layout units shows that news reports in Italian and English rely on more text paragraphs.

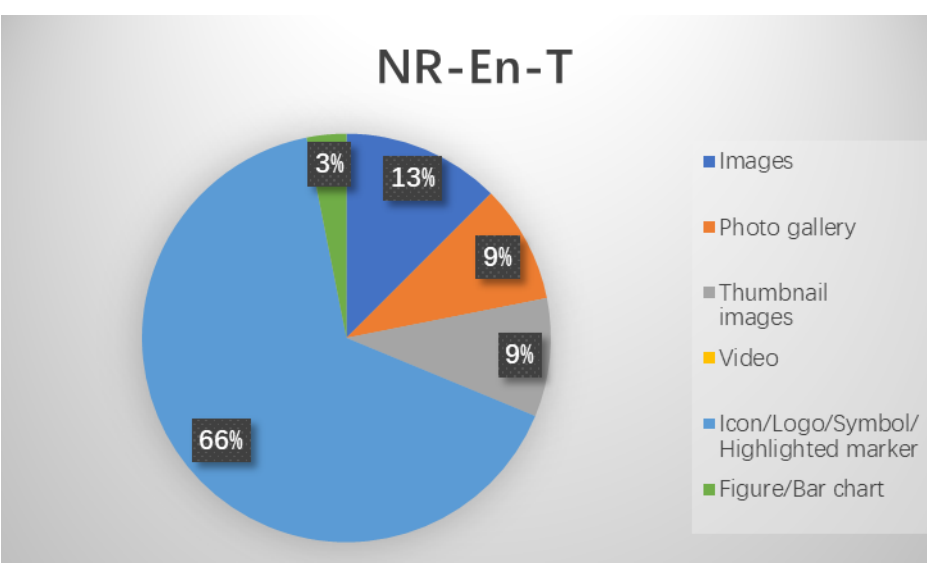
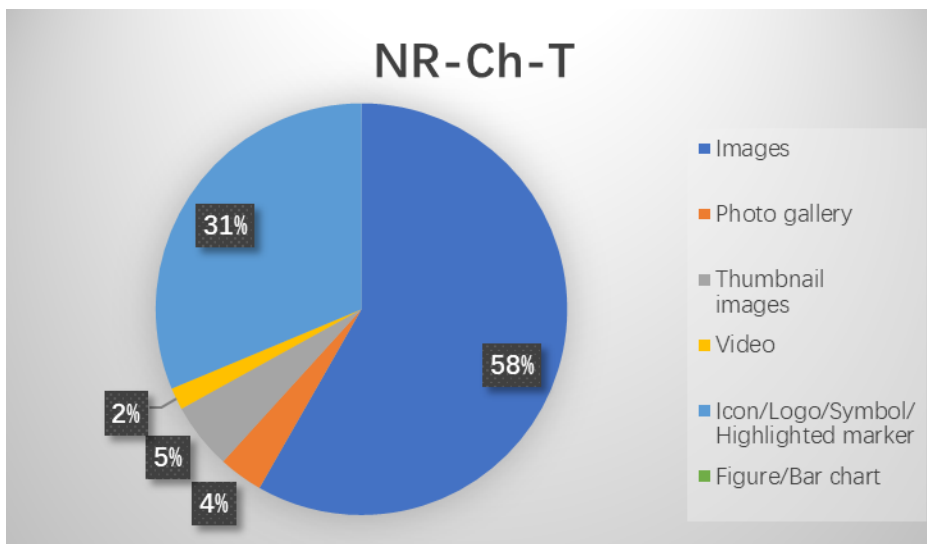
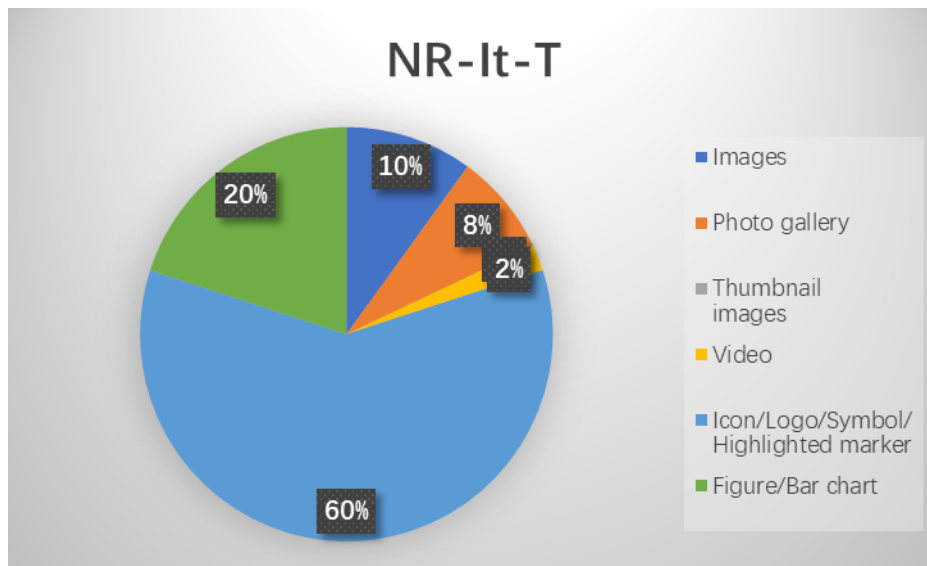
Obviously, there also are more textual segments than visual RST segments in each of the 18 news reports. Specifically, one particular issue is worthy of attention: in the Italian and English news reports, the number of visual RST segments is much less than the number of the visual base units (see Figure 6.3). This implies that a great number of visual base units does not work as rhetorical functions. In such an instance, it is necessary to understand the distribution of visual base units presented in news reports.



**Figure 6.3** Distribution of visual base units and visual RST segments

As discussed in Chapter 4 (cf. Section 4.3), there are different types of visual base units identified in fashion news reports applying the GeM model, which may vary from images, photo gallery, thumbnail images, video and figures to bar charts, icons, logo, symbols, highlighted markers and much more. In this Chapter, in order to simplify the categories, figures and bar charts are classified into the same label-figure/Bar chart, while following the identification of RST segments, icons, logos, symbols, and highlighted markers are also classified in one label because they have no rhetorical functions in the present study. As shown in Figure 6.4, although news reports in Chinese apply more images (58% of all the visual elements), there are nonetheless great portion of icons and logos in Italian and English articles as well (respectively 60% and 66% of all the visual elements). As a result, there are fewer visual RST segments in the latter two kinds of reports.





**Figure 6.4** Distribution of visual base units in NR-ICE-T

### 6.1.2 Quantitative data: RST relations in NR-ICE-T

Following the above section analysis of the basic quantitative data extracted from three sub-corpora of the news reports, the focus now shifts to the rhetorical relations used in the 18 news reports. Table 6.1, Table 6.2, and Table 6.3 show the numbers of the unique and all RST relations, here I provide a detailed discussion concerning RST relations in NR-ICE-T. The types and numbers of nucleus-satellite relations, multinuclear relations, and sub-nuclear relations used in NR-ICE are shown, respectively, in Table 6.5, Table 6.6, and Table 6.7.

Nucleus-satellite relations	NR-It-T	NR-Ch-T	NR-En-T	NR-ICE-T
Elaboration	32	62	24	118
Evaluation	10	6	7	23
Preparation	6	6	6	18
Evidence	6	3	8	17
Motivation	3	3	3	9
Summary	3	3	1	7
Cause	2	2	3	7
Interpretation	2	1	3	6
Circumstance	1	4	0	5
Background	0	2	1	3
Means	4	0	3	7
Result	2	0	1	3
Solutionhood	1	0	2	3
Concession	0	0	5	5
Condition	0	0	3	3
Antithesis	0	0	2	2
Purpose	0	0	2	2

**Table 6.5** Nucleus-satellite relations in NR-ICE-T

Table 6.5 provides a summary of 17 nucleus-satellite relations found in the present corpus of the news reports and the numbers of their occurrences. Rhetorical relations of elaboration, evaluation, preparation and evidence appear frequently in three sub-corpora. As shown in Table 6.5, Chinese news reports used only 10 types of rhetorical relations, but there are 17 different rhetorical relations in English news reports. This phenomenon is due to the use of different verbal and visual elements in the news reports of the three languages. The detailed discussion will be given in Section 6.2.2.

The quantitative data in Table 6.6 shows 7 multinuclear relations found in NR-ICE-T, and the two frequently occurring types of this broad category are multinuclear restatement and joint. In addition, in the present study the restatement occurs between an image and a text and all the restatement relations are considered multinuclear, because it is difficult to distinguish which is the nucleus, and which is the satellite.

Multinuclear relations	NR-It-T	NR-Ch-T	NR-En-T	NR-ICE-T
Restatement	4	8	13	25
Joint	4	6	10	20
Addition	3	2	3	8
List	2	0	0	2
Disjunction	0	0	1	1
Sequence	0	1	0	1
Contrast	0	0	1	1

**Table 6.6** Multinuclear relations in NR-ICE-T

The data about the sub-nuclear relations holding between two relation dependent items are summarized in Table 6.7. There are 2 sub-nuclear relations found within the present corpus NR-ICE-T.

Sub-nuclear relations	NR-It-T	NR-Ch-T	NR-En-T	NR-ICE-T
possession	3	26	1	30
identification	10	0	0	10

**Table 6.7** Multinuclear relations in NR-ICE-T

The relations of possession occur principally in NR-Ch-T1 and NR-Ch-T2, because each of them uses 14 images and the possessors are indicated (see Image 1). The relations of identification are used to identify the value that the horizontal bar describes in NR-It-T5 and NR-It-T6.

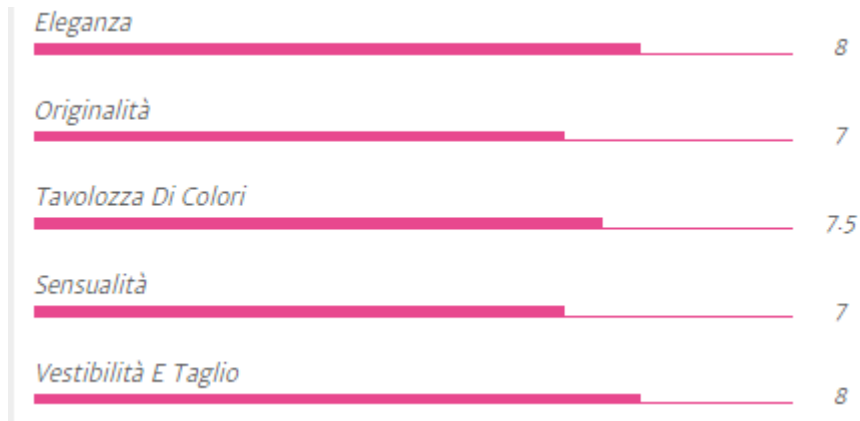


Jacopo Raule + Getty Images

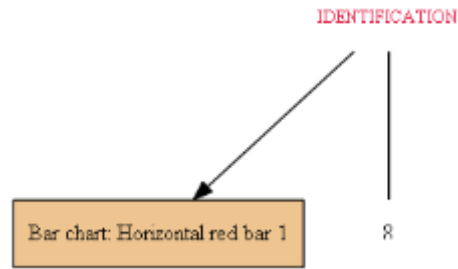
**Image 1** captured from NR-Ch-T1

As shown in the bar chart captured from NR-It-T6 (Figure 6.5(a)), Arabic numbers (i.e. 8, 7, 7.5 ...) are used to indicate the value described by the five red horizontal bars in the bar chart thus, the relation between the identified bar and the identifier number is identification (Figure 6.5(b)). Meanwhile, all these five bars together with

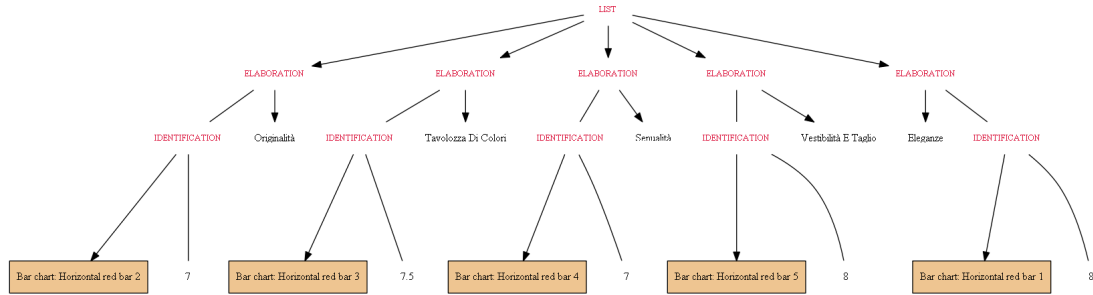
the items elaborated form a relation of list (Figure 6.2(c)).



(a) Bar chart captured from NR-It-T6



(b)

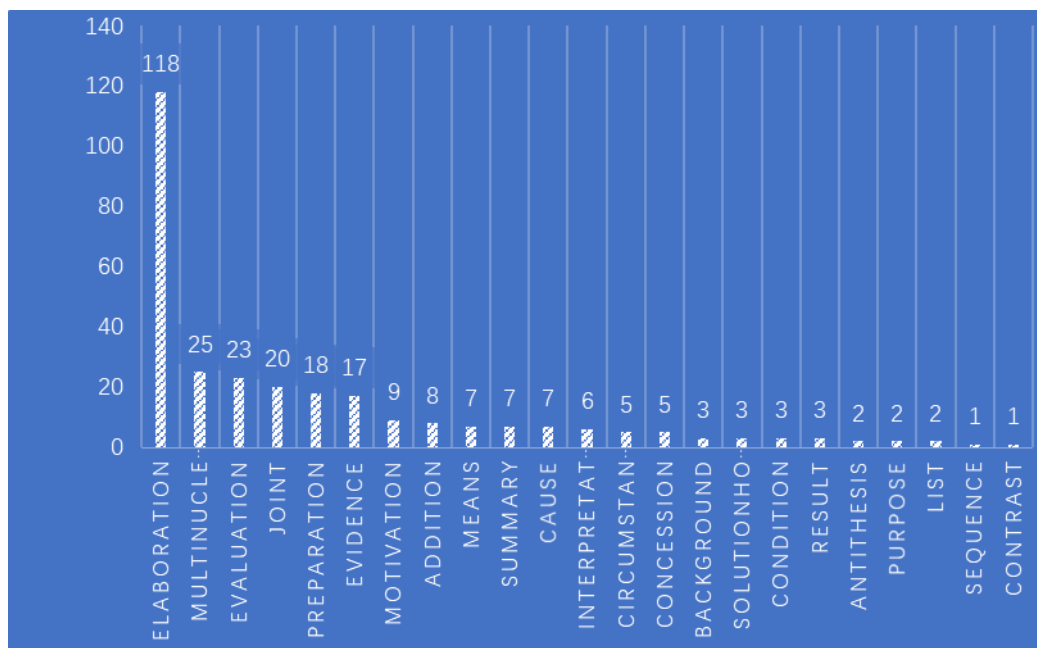


(c)

**Figure 6.5** Example of intra-clausal relation – identification

Table 6.5 and Table 6.6 indicate the different rhetorical relations used in the news reports. Below Figure 6.6 shows all the 24 mononuclear and multinuclear relations and the distribution of their 296 occurrences, where “elaboration” with 118 occurrences is the most frequently occurring rhetorical relation, followed by

multinuclear restatement, evaluation, preparation, etc. The next section provides a close investigation of some mononuclear and multinuclear rhetorical relations with high occurrences in order to demonstrate the semantics behind the collected data presented in this section.



**Figure 6.6** Distribution of nucleus-satellite and multinuclear relations in NR-ICE-T

## 6.2 Corpus-based analysis

### 6.2.1 An overview of rhetorical relations

Rather than analyzing all types of rhetorical relations, this section gives a general discussion of some rhetorical relations with high occurrences in the corpora. As shown in Table 6.8, there are 6 rhetorical relations that have more than ten occurrences in the sub-corpora NR-It-T, NR-Ch-T, and NR-En-T: elaboration, multinuclear restatement, evaluation, joint, preparation, and evidence. Among them, the multinuclear restatement relations in NR-ICE-T hold between one linguistic segment and one visual segment, and they are discussed in the next section 6.2.2. The other rhetorical relations that occur fewer than ten times will not be considered

here except for the addition one.

“Elaboration” is the most frequently occurring relation in the news reports– there are 118 occurrences (32 in NR-It-T, 62 in NR-Ch-T, and 24 in NR-En-T), which account for 40% of the rhetorical relations in the corpora in total. “Elaboration” is, in fact also of the highest frequency in corpora from different multimodal documents, such as within scientific articles by Taboada and Habel (2013), tourist brochures by Hiippala (2015b), and public health posters by Zhang (2018). Such phenomena of the highly frequent occurrence of “elaboration” requires an investigation as to explain its reason. The premise of the investigation is a clear definition of “elaboration”. Mann and Thompson (1987: 52) provide a definition of “elaboration” consisting of four fields (see Table 4.6 in Section 4.3.2.3, cf. also Appendix 2). Stede (2008: 318) indicates that “the definition of elaboration, background and circumstance are so imprecise that they are simultaneously applicable in a great many cases”, thus, “many annotators seem to resort to elaboration as a ‘default’”. According to Hiippala (2015b: 137), the judgment concerning rhetorical relations “must be sufficiently informed by the context in which the relation is considered to hold”. Only by following such principles is it possible to achieve a good result of the rhetorical analysis.

Rhetorical relations	NR-It-T	NR-Ch-T	NR-En-T	NR-ICE-T	
				No	%
Elaboration	32	62	24	118	40%
Multinuclear Restatement	4	8	13	25	8.5%
Evaluation	10	6	7	23	7.7%
Joint	4	6	10	20	6.8%
Preparation	6	6	6	18	6.1%
Evidence	6	3	8	17	5.7%

**Table 6.8** The most occurring rhetorical relations (both mononuclear and multinuclear) in NR-ICE-T (N=296, % of the entire corpus)

In NR-ICE-T, relations of elaboration hold between textual segments or between text-image segments. As shown in Table 6.9, the satellite consists of one segment, several

segments, one span or one span in the large majority of the elaboration spans. Most of them are used to present additional detail, to add specific information, and to show an example about the nuclei.

	one segment	more than one segment	one span	one segment +one span	more than one span
NR-It-T	15	2	13	1	1
NR-Ch-T	26	7	14	0	15
NR-En-T	19	1	4	0	0

**Table 6.9** The satellites in elaboration spans in NR-ICE-T

In all 18 news reports, each of them has one “preparation” relation, and the 18 occurrences account for 6.1% of the total rhetorical relations in the annotated corpus. After the retrieving and characterizing of the satellites participating in the relations of “preparation” presented in the corpus, they can be classified into two general categories (Table 6.10):

- the satellites only make up for textual segments, for example, a headline (NR-It-T2), or a section heading (NR-En-T3, NR-En-T4);
- the satellites consist of a package of both verbal and visual elements, for instance, a headline and an image (NR-Ch-T3, NR-Ch-T4), a headline and a photo gallery/video (NR-Ch-T3, NR-En-T1), or a section heading and an image/ a photo gallery (NR-Ch-T1, NR-It-T3) etc.

corpus name	Verbal	verbal&visual
NR-It-T	1 Headline	5 headline and photo galley headline and video section heading and photo gallery
NR-Ch-T		6 headline and image headline and photo gallery heading section and image
NR-En-T	2	4



section heading	headline and photo gallery heading section and photo galley
-----------------	--

**Table 6.10** The satellites in preparation spans in NR-ICE-T

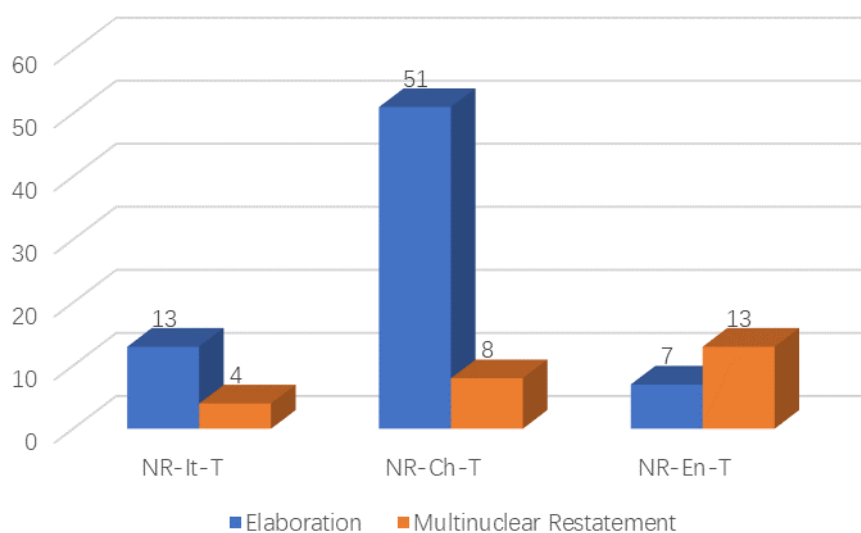
As shown in Table 6.10, there is a pattern allowing all of the aforementioned verbal and visual resources to be used together as leading preparation in most news reports in order to simultaneously facilitate reading, understanding, and remembering. This pattern is likely to cause a trend in the corpus of fashion news reports, although it might not do so in every single instance (e.g. NR-It-T2). Table 6.10 shows also that the news reports in Italian and in English use more photo galleries and video, but there are more images used in the Chinese reports. This could be another reason why the elaboration relation occurs more frequently in the Chinese press.

“Addition”, “disjunction”, “contrast”, and “joint” are multinuclear relations, whereas “antithesis” is a nucleus-satellite relation. Nuclei in the relations of “addition”, “disjunction” and “contrast” are comparable: “addition” holds the relationship between segments and forms an additive combination, “disjunction” marks an alternative relationship. As far as “joint” is concerned, none of the other rhetorical relations is claimed to hold between nuclei. Among the 20 occurrences of joint in NR-ICE-T, there are, for example, cases where the photo gallery and thumbnail images form a joint and they are simply linked as a whole (e.g. NR-Ch-T5, NR-ChT6, NR-En-T3, NR-En-T4, etc.). This subsection focuses on discussing some rhetorical relations with high occurrences in the corpora, the next subsection will shift to the discussion of the rhetorical relations that involve different semiotic systems.

## **6.2.2 Rhetorical Relations Involving Semiotic Systems Other Than Language: Restatement and Elaboration**

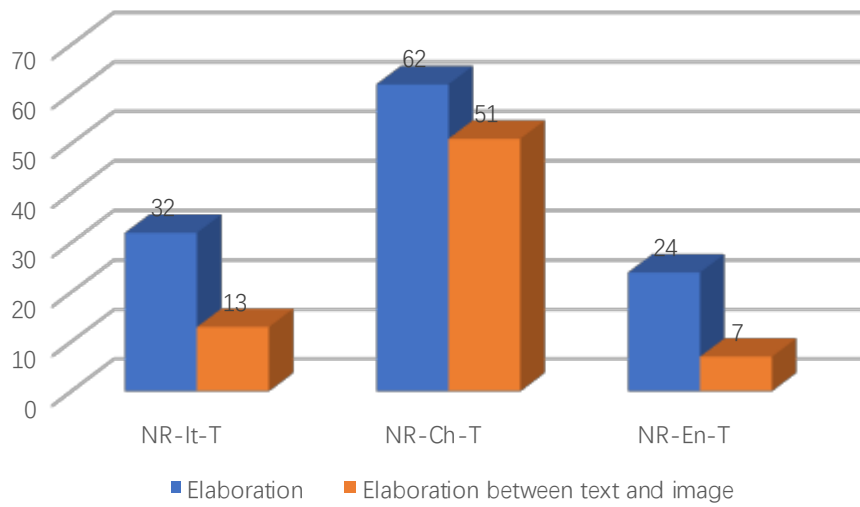
In the present corpus of the news reports, the default inter-semiotic relations holding between text and image are restatement and elaboration. Obviously, Figure 6.7 shows

that elaboration is the most frequently used inter-semiotic relation occurring 71 times in the three sub-corpora, while the less frequent multi-nuclear restatement takes place for a total of 25 times.



**Figure 6.7** Occurrences of elaboration and multinuclear restatement between text and image

As shown in Figure 6.7, 71 occurrences (13 in NR-It-T, 51 in NR-Ch-T, and 7 in NR-En-T) of “elaboration” between text and image are located in the corpus. A vast difference is observable between the frequency of “elaboration” in Chinese news reports and Italian and English ones. And Figure 6.8 (cf. also Table 6.5) shows that the news reports in Chinese use more images to elaborate the texts for message transmission (almost 82% of all elaboration relations); however, those in Italian and in English employ more texts for the communicative purpose. Image 2 is an example of elaboration in Chinese news reports, where the image of the models is an additional information of the female Bond described in text.



**Figure 6.8** Distribution of elaboration in different semiotic modes

沉浸在這樣夢幻的色彩之中，Max Mara 的設計師 Ian Griffiths 卻透露這一季的設計靈感是《007》系列電影中的詹姆斯龐德？原來他是在打造自己心目中的「女龐德」，因為全世界真的都看膩以男性為主角的間諜電影啦！



Alessandro Zeno + Imaxtree

**Image 2** captured from NR-Ch-T1

As shown in Figure 6.7 (cf. also Table 6.8), the 25 occurrences (4 in NR-It-T, 8 in

NR-Ch-T, and 13 in NR-En-T) of multinuclear restatement are located in the corpus. According to Mann and Thompson (1987: 70), when only textual segments are involved, the restatement holds when “the bulk of a satellite is roughly the same as that of the nucleus”. Similarly, in the multimodal documents, mononuclear restatement occurs when one segment re-expresses the other, whereas multinuclear restatement occurs when the two segments form “a paratactic combination of two segments of meaning being given equal semiotic status or weight” (Matthiessen, in prep.). Thus, whether the relation of restatement between text and image is asymmetric or symmetric, it can create a nuclearity cline of restatement.

In the corpus of the news reports, all the restatement relations between image and text are considered multinuclear, because it is difficult to distinguish the nucleus and the satellite from each other. According to Bateman (2008: 169), multinuclear restatement is assigned to “avoid forcing unwarranted nuclearity choices” when analyzing multimodal documents.

For instance, in NR-It-T1 (see Figure 6.9), the rhetorical relation holding between the headline and the video is a multinuclear restatement. Thus, the text and the image in relations of multinuclear restatement have the same meaning, and they work together to convey the fashion messages of the new collections, in particular, sometimes the female image of Max Mara Woman.

## Elegante e sportiva: la proposta Max Mara per la prossima estate. VIDEO

19 settembre 2019 · Cristiana Boni



**Figure 6.9** Example of multinuclear restatement in NR-It-T1

## CHAPTER 7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Up till this chapter, I have analyzed the female image of Max Mara woman conveyed by press releases, articles on WeChat and news reports in Chapter 5; and I have described the multimodal features of the news reports with the results obtained from the GeM-annotated corpus NR-ICE-T in Chapter 6. In this chapter, I will summarize the analysis results to answer all the research questions listed in Section 1.2. Thus, this chapter is dedicated to the conclusion of the methods by which Max Mara carried out corporate communication by conveying the female image created by the brand; to discuss the contribution the present study can make and the research limitations.

### 7.1 In response to the research questions

This section provides a discussion of findings concerning the research questions proposed in Section 1.2.

#### 7.1.1 What are the genre characteristics of Max Mara press releases? Are there any significant differences between the Italian and the English versions?

The analysis of Max Mara fashion press releases conducted in the present study suggests some conclusions. To begin with, like other product-related press releases, Max Mara fashion press releases provide the product-related information about its new collections, offering specific details such as colours, shapes, sophisticated materials, fabrics and patterns. However, the press releases in the corpus PR-IE lack some additional and core features characterizing the press release genre. In particular, none of them includes a brief description of the company/brand nor contact details. This means that this kind of information is not necessary for the fashion journalists and they seem not to request further information.

In addition, the KWIC search results with search term “Max Mara” using the *Concordance* Tool of the *AntConc* software and a preliminary reading of texts in the corpus suggest the presence of Jacobs’s preformulating features in Max Mara’s

fashion press releases. Explicit “self-reference” appears in all the texts in the corpus, but “semi-performatives” are very rare, and “pseudo-quotation” occurs only two times. Despite the limited “self-quotations” and “semi-performatives” attributed to the company/brand, together with “self-reference”, they confirm that Max Mara fashion press releases attempt to shape/convey the female image of the brand through their own collections. There are no differences, as far as these pre-formulating features are concerned, between the Italian and the English versions of the press releases.

### **7.1.2 What are the differences of the female image of Max Mara woman conveyed by press releases and that by articles on WeChat from the perspective of corporate communication?**

The companies can “construct their own image and communicate it to their various stakeholders” through the press release which is one key genre of corporate communication (Catenaccio, 2008b: 7-8). With the development of digital technologies, social media platforms or social networking sites (SNSs) such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Sina Weibo and WeChat are believed to be important corporate communication tools. Max Mara China communicates with the Chinese audience via its official account on WeChat.

In order to examine the female image conveyed by Max Mara fashion press releases, a KWIC search was conducted respectively in the two sub-corpora: PR-It, and PR-En using the *Concordance* tool of the *AntConc* software. The analytical results show that the press releases for every fashion season described women in diverse characters – a spy, an opinion leader, a boss or a regular working woman who all share the same disposition in that they strive for success with qualities such as power, strength, wisdom and a sense of fashion. Moreover, the Italian press releases show a preference to the female self-affirmation in its construction of Max Mara women.

For the articles on WeChat, before doing the KWIC search, SegmentAnt (Antony, 2017) is used to segment the Chinese characters into words, because in Chinese, a

character is the smallest unit of writing and a word can take the form of a character, or a combination of characters (cf. Packard, 2000). The KWIC search results show that despite the lack of emphasis on the female role in the modern society, congruous with the female image conveyed by the corporate press releases, the image of a modern professional female who is self-confident, powerful, smart, and fashionable is constructed by the articles on WeChat. The two sources are further differentiated in that apart from sharing the adoption of female-related words such as “female”, “female spy”, “heroine”, and “queen”, the WeChat articles have a more diverse vocabulary, such as “女星(female star)”, “女神(goddess)”, “女郎(young woman)”, “歌女(female singer)”, and “女人味(femininity)”. Moreover, the appearance of “女星(female star)”, “女神(goddess)”, and the famous Chinese actress Qin Lan in the same context alludes to a model of the Max Mara female image and serves as a promotion means through the star effect; descriptions like “女郎(young woman)” and “歌女(female singer)” facilitate the exploration of the female image from a fashionable and sophisticated working woman to a sensual club frequenter, and “女人味(femininity)” extends the traditional definition of a professionally successful female with a carefree ease of the professional women.

### **7.1.3 How is the female image conveyed by Max Mara press releases and articles on WeChat dealt with by fashion journalists in the three languages, respectively Italian, English and Chinese?**

“The aim of press release writing is to convey to media professionals the information which they can use to produce feature articles about the company, product and institution” (Catenaccio, 2008b: 7-8). However, in the present study, it is difficult to determine based on which version of the press releases the Italian and English fashion journalists to produce the news reports for the target audience, or based on which of the press releases and the WeChat articles the Chinese fashion journalists do the news reports. What can be concluded is that the fashion journalists produce news reports based on the two corporate communication genres and adapt to their needs.



In order to investigate the corpus NR-ICE, the same approach is adopted to analyze the news reports in these three languages as the press releases and the WeChat articles.

For the sub-corpus NR-It, the fashion journalists retained the successful business female image conveyed by Max Mara fashion press releases in which they are self-confident, strong, powerful and elegant, stressing their multitasking and important role in the contemporary society. In the female portrait, Italian news reports focus on the confidence and sophistication as well as the femininity of women.

For the sub-corpus NR-En, English news reports also convey to the readers the same successful business female image from the Max Mara fashion press releases. It is worthy to note that English news reports focus more on the female power, strength, and capability in management, business, and politics, in that the female strives to succeed and be acknowledged for her professionalism in the field of employment.

For the sub-corpus NR-Ch, the KWIC search results show, as occurred in articles on WeChat, despite a lack of emphasis on the essential role of women in the modern society and workplace, the fashion journalists retained the portrait of the professional female by the press releases in which they are confident, independent, strong, powerful, smart, capable, fashionable, and elegant. Moreover, as observed in the WeChat articles, the fashion journalists tend to associate words such as “女星(female star)”, “女神(goddess)” with the names of well-known stars out of the same consideration to offer the readers a distinct display of the Max Mara female image model and to serve as a promotion means through the star effect.

#### **7.1.4 What are the similarities and differences of the female image of Max Mara woman conveyed by news reports in three different languages, Italian, English, and Chinese?**

The news reports in the three languages, Italian, English, and Chinese, all convey to their readers the professional female image constructed by the Max Mara press releases.

Compared to the Italian and English news reports, the Chinese news reports show a variety of flattering attributes for women and the female-related words in the Chinese news reports cover women of almost all ages.

In addition, the Chinese news reports share the stress on their femininity with their Italian counterparts with the adjectives such as sexy, plump, enchanting and attractive, etc.; at the same time, the Italian news reports lean towards their sexy quality whereas the Chinese are featured with a balance between being imposing and being caring together with the focus on a quality of sweetness and tenderness. However, English news reports focus more on the female power, strength, and capability in management, business, and politics.

What are the reasons for the discrepancy among the Max Mara female images by the three languages from each other?

1. Max Mara targets at mature women, whereas in the Chinese news reports all age is covered on the account of a younger tendency in the age of the professional females and those working at the middle and high level in government and corporates.
2. The Italian and English news reports share the focus on the character in the female portrait underlining the professional capacity, whereas in the Chinese society, the descriptions also include their character such as professionalism, independence and wisdom while excluding words of a somewhat aggressive nature, such as confidence, preparedness, leadership or competitiveness, adding some physical ones such as sweet, pretty and sensual. The main reason for this discrepancy is the varied aesthetic views of the professional female. In the Western eye, personal capacity yields more weight for the professional female who is independent, capable, tough and challenging, and meanwhile the Asian society demands a manifest of tenderness and sweetness. The varied aesthetics are a result of the influence of different cultures where the western advocates self-fulfillment and China does reservation and moderation under the Confucius influence.

### **7.1.5 How do the female images conveyed by news reports in three languages manifest themselves in multimodality?**

The basic quantitative data obtained from NR-ICE-T show that in the news reports there generally are more textual base units than visual base units. Comparing the basic data of the news reports in the three languages, the Chinese news reports evidently employ more visual elements than their Italian and English counterparts, because they use more images of models from fashion shows (cf. Figure 6.4); the Italian news reports have fewer base units, but more embedded base units, because there are lots of emphasized text portions in the orthographic sentences (for instance, NR-It-T1, NR-It-T2, NR-It-T3, and NR-It-T4); and the number of layout units shows that news reports in Italian and English rely more on text paragraphs. It can be concluded that the Chinese news reports use more images to convey the fashion messages, whereas the Italian and English news report exhibit a penchant to do so via texts, which is supported by the investigation into the rhetoric relations.

First of all, there are more visual RST segments in the sub-corpora NR-Ch-T. Figure 6.4 shows that in NR-Ch-T, cons, logos, symbols, and highlighted markers which have no rhetorical functions occupy 31% of all visual elements, but this number in NR-It-T and NR-En-T is respectively 60% and 66% of all the visual elements. As a result, there are fewer visual RST segments in the latter two kinds of reports.

Such a result also spells the reason for the greater rhetorical relations in Chinese articles since there are lots of elaboration relations, multinuclear restatement relations and sub-nuclear possession relations between texts and images. As shown in Figure 6.7, 71 occurrences (13 in NR-It-T, 51 in NR-Ch-T, and 7 in NR-En-T) of elaboration between text and image are located in the corpus. A vast difference is observable between the frequency of “elaboration” in Chinese news reports and Italian and English ones. And Figure 6.8 (cf. also Table 6.5) shows that the news reports in Chinese use more images to elaborate the texts for message transmission (almost 82% of all elaboration relations); however, those in Italian and in English employ more

texts for the communicative purpose.

## **7.2 Implications for multimodality: a corpus-based approach**

In this study, the GeM-annotated corpus of 18 news reports is developed to examine the manner in which various semiotic resources work together to promote the new collections and on top of it convey a positive female image of Max Mara woman. Thus, the implicit demand of present study is the need for more empirical studies on multimodality, especially the research methodology, i.e., the corpus-based approach (cf. Chapter 4). The examination of different types of multimodal artefacts is universally carried out through the corpus-based approach; and this study uses this specific approach to examine the news reports based on fashion press releases and articles on WeChat.

With the explicit goal to carry out an empirical analysis of the news reports, the GeM model is applied to annotate these news reports and build the XML-annotated multimodal corpus. In addition, the computational gem-tools are employed for the visualization of the annotated corpus allowing the analyst to explore the features across the different analytical layers in the multimodal corpus. The corpus-based analysis can examine the composition of basic elements and the structures of the annotated multimodal documents i.e., rhetorical structure and layout structure. Therefore, the empirical corpus-based method can be applied to investigate various multimodal documents, and in turn support the multimodal genre analysis.

## Appendix 1 Primary data—News Reports

News reports selected for the media corpus can be accessed on the following websites.

SS2020

<https://www.reggionline.com/elegante-al-tempo-sportiva-la-proposta-max-mara-la-primavera-estate-video/>

<https://www.iodonna.it/moda/news/2019/09/19/sfilata-max-mara-primavera-estate-2020/>

<https://www.fashionblog.it/post/587891/max-mara-milano-moda-donna-collezione-primavera-estate-2020>

<https://www.elle.com/it/moda/tendenze/a29118149/camicia-moda-primavera-estate-2020-max-mara/>

<https://www.mam-e.it/moda/la-sexy-bond-girl-di-max-mara-alla-mfw/>

<https://www.lofficielitalia.com/fashion-week/max-mara-spring-summer-2020#image%2083307>

<https://www.globestyles.com/max-mara-primavera-estate-2020-i-nuovi-agenti-segreti-la-sfilata-a-milano-moda-donna/>

<https://www.invogamagazine.it/sfilata-max-mara-per-la-presentazione-della-collezione-primavera-estate-2020/>

FW2019

<https://www.reggionline.com/fall-winter-2019-2020-futuro-secondo-max-mara/>

<https://www.diredonna.it/max-mara-collezione-autunno-inverno-2019-2020-3261449.html>

<https://www.iodonna.it/moda/news/2019/02/21/la-sfilata-autunno-inverno-2019-2020-di-max-mara/>

<https://www.fashionblog.it/post/582455/milano-fashion-week-max-mara-collezione-autunno-inverno-2019-2020>

<https://www.elle.com/it/moda/g26455331/max-mara-autunno-inverno-2019-2020/#>

<https://www.mam-e.it/moda/max-mara-fall-winter-2019/>

<https://www.grazia.it/moda/tendenze-modamax-mara-sfilata-cappotti-teddy-bear-autunno-inverno-2019-2020>

SS2019

<https://www.diredonna.it/max-mara-primavera-estate-2019-3245414.html>

<https://www.iodonna.it/personaggi/interviste-gallery/2018/09/20/milanofashionweekp19max-mara-sfilata-di-top-con-lhijab-in-testa/>

<https://www.fashionblog.it/post/563507/max-mara-sfilata-milano-moda-donna-primavera-estate-2019>

<https://www.modadivasmagazine.com/it/2018/10/18/max-mara-primavera-estate-2019/>

<https://www.amica.it/2019/03/08/max-mara-la-collezione-primavera-estate-2019/>

FW2018

<https://www.reggionline.com/max-mara-sfilata-dagli-schemi-milano-foto-video/>

<https://www.iodonna.it/moda/news/2018/02/22/max-mara-sfilata-giusi-ferre-commento/>

<https://www.modadivasmagazine.com/it/2018/03/05/max-mara-autunno-inverno-2018-19-donna/>

<https://modauomo-modadonna.it/max-mara-inverno-2018-2019-cappotti-vestiti/>

<https://www.fashiontimes.it/2018/02/max-mara-sfilata-autunno-inverno-2018-2019/>

[https://d.repubblica.it/moda/2018/02/22/news/sfilata\\_max\\_mara\\_cappotti\\_vestiti\\_autunno\\_inverno\\_2018\\_2019\\_tendenza\\_marilyn\\_monroe\\_sinead\\_o\\_connor-3873416/](https://d.repubblica.it/moda/2018/02/22/news/sfilata_max_mara_cappotti_vestiti_autunno_inverno_2018_2019_tendenza_marilyn_monroe_sinead_o_connor-3873416/)

<https://thenoir.it/max-mara-fall-winter-2018-2019/>

SS2018

<https://www.reggionline.com/max-mara-evidenza-alla-settimana-della-moda-foto/>

<https://www.diredonna.it/max-mara-primavera-estate-2018-3183137.html>

<https://www.fashionblog.it/post/541456/max-mara-collezione-primavera-estate-2018-la-nouvelle-vague-il-video>

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## Appendix 2 The rhetorical relations used in GeM model

Tables A, B and C list the definitions of rhetorical relations used in the GeM annotation schema. The following abbreviations are used in the tables: N (nucleus), S (satellite), R (reader), W (writer). The RST column gives the relation name; the second defines the constraints on either nucleus or satellite. The third column gives constraints that affect the combination of nucleus and satellite. The fourth column describes the intention of the rhetorical relation from the writer's perspective.

Table A Definitions of nucleus-satellite RST relations (cf. <http://www.sfu.ca/rst/01intro/definitions.html>)

Definitions of Presentational Relations			
Relation Name	Constraints on either S or N individually	Constraints on N + S	Intention of W
<u>Antithesis</u>	on N: W has positive regard for N	N and S are in contrast (see the Contrast relation); because of the incompatibility that arises from the contrast, one cannot have positive regard for both of those situations; comprehending S and the incompatibility between the situations increases R's positive regard for N	R's positive regard for N is increased
<u>Background</u>	on N: R won't comprehend N sufficiently before reading text of S	S increases the ability of R to comprehend an element in N	R's ability to comprehend N increases
<u>Concession</u>	on N: W has positive regard for N on S: W is not claiming that S does not hold;	W acknowledges a potential or apparent incompatibility between N and S; recognizing the compatibility between N and S increases R's positive regard for N	R's positive regard for N is increased
<u>Enablement</u>	on N: presents an action by R (including	R comprehending S increases R's potential ability to perform the action in N	R's potential ability to perform the action in N increases

	accepting an offer), unrealized with respect to the context of N		
<u>Evidence</u>	on N: R might not believe N to a degree satisfactory to W on S: R believes S or will find it credible	R's comprehending S increases R's belief of N	R's belief of N is increased
<u>Justify</u>	none	R's comprehending S increases R's readiness to accept W's right to present N	R's readiness to accept W's right to present N is increased
<u>Motivation</u>	on N: N is an action in which R is the actor (including accepting an offer), unrealized with respect to the context of N	Comprehending S increases R's desire to perform action in N	R's desire to perform action in N is increased
<u>Preparation</u>	none	S precedes N in the text; S tends to make R more ready, interested or oriented for reading N	R is more ready, interested or oriented for reading N
<u>Restatement</u>	none	on N + S: S restates N, where S and N are of comparable bulk; N is more central to W's purposes than S is.	R recognizes S as a restatement of N
<u>Summary</u>	on N: N must be more than one unit	S presents a restatement of the content of N, that is shorter in bulk	R recognizes S as a shorter restatement of N

#### Definitions of Subject Matter Relations

<b>Relation Name</b>	<b>Constraints on either S or N individually</b>	<b>Constraints on N + S</b>	<b>Intention of W</b>
<u>Circumstance</u>	on S: S is not unrealized	S sets a framework in the subject matter within which R is intended to interpret N	R recognizes that S provides the framework for interpreting N
<u>Condition</u>	on S: S presents a hypothetical, future, or	Realization of N depends on realization of S	R recognizes how the realization of N depends on the

	otherwise unrealized situation (relative to the situational context of S)		realization of S
<u>Elaboration</u>	none	S presents additional detail about the situation or some element of subject matter which is presented in N or inferentially accessible in N in one or more of the ways listed below. In the list, if N presents the first member of any pair, then S includes the second: <input type="checkbox"/> set: member <input type="checkbox"/> abstraction: instance <input type="checkbox"/> whole: part <input type="checkbox"/> process: step <input type="checkbox"/> object: attribute <input type="checkbox"/> generalization: specific	R recognizes S as providing additional detail for N. R identifies the element of subject matter for which detail is provided.
<u>Evaluation</u>	none	on N + S: S relates N to degree of W's positive regard toward N.	R recognizes that S assesses N and recognizes the value it assigns
<u>Interpretation</u>	none	on N + S: S relates N to a framework of ideas not involved in N itself and not concerned with W's positive regard	R recognizes that S relates N to a framework of ideas not involved in the knowledge presented in N itself
<u>Means</u>	on N: an activity	S presents a method or instrument which tends to make realization of N more likely	R recognizes that the method or instrument in S tends to make realization of N more likely
<u>Non-volitional Cause</u>	on N: N is not a volitional action	S, by means other than motivating a volitional action, caused N; without the presentation of S, R might not know the particular cause of the situation; a presentation of N is more central than S to W's purposes in putting forth the N-S combination.	R recognizes S as a cause of N
<u>Non-volitional</u>	on S: S is not a	N caused S; presentation of N is more	R recognizes that N



<u>Result</u>	volitional action	central to W's purposes in putting forth the N-S combination than is the presentation of S.	could have caused the situation in S
<u>Otherwise</u>	on N: N is an unrealized situation on S: S is an unrealized situation	realization of N prevents realization of S	R recognizes the dependency relation of prevention between the realization of N and the realization of S
<u>Purpose</u>	on N: N is an activity; on S: S is a situation that is unrealized	S is to be realized through the activity in N	R recognizes that the activity in N is initiated in order to realize S
<u>Solutionhood</u>	on S: S presents a problem	N is a solution to the problem presented in S;	R recognizes N as a solution to the problem presented in S
<u>Unconditional</u>	on S: S conceivably could affect the realization of N	N does not depend on S	R recognizes that N does not depend on S
<u>Unless</u>	none	S affects the realization of N; N is realized provided that S is not realized	R recognizes that N is realized provided that S is not realized
<u>Volitional Cause</u>	on N: N is a volitional action or else a situation that could have arisen from a volitional action	S could have caused the agent of the volitional action in N to perform that action; without the presentation of S, R might not regard the action as motivated or know the particular motivation; N is more central to W's purposes in putting forth the N-S combination than S is.	R recognizes S as a cause for the volitional action in N
<u>Volitional Result</u>	on S: S is a volitional action or a situation that could have arisen from a volitional action	N could have caused S; presentation of N is more central to W's purposes than is presentation of S;	R recognizes that N could be a cause for the action or situation in S

Table B Definitions of multinuclear RST relations (cf. <http://www.sfu.ca/rst/01intro/definitions.html>)

Definitions of Multinuclear Relations		
Relation Name	Constraints on each pair of N	Intention of W
<u>Conjunction</u>	The items are conjoined to form a unit in which each item plays a comparable role	R recognizes that the linked items are conjoined
<u>Contrast</u>	No more than two nuclei; the situations in these two nuclei are (a) comprehended as the same in many respects (b) comprehended as differing in a few respects and (c) compared with respect to one or more of these differences	R recognizes the comparability and the difference(s) yielded by the comparison is being made
<u>Disjunction</u>	An item presents a (not necessarily exclusive) alternative for the other(s)	R recognizes that the linked items are alternatives
<u>Joint</u>	None	none
<u>List</u>	An item comparable to others linked to it by the List relation	R recognizes the comparability of linked items
<u>Multinuclear Restatement</u>	An item is primarily a re-expression of one linked to it; the items are of comparable importance to the purposes of W	R recognizes the re-expression by the linked items
<u>Sequence</u>	There is a succession relationship between the situations in the nuclei	R recognizes the succession relationships among the nuclei.

Table C Definitions of sub-nuclear RST relations (cf. Bateman, 2008: 162)

Definitions of Sub-nuclear Relations	
Relation Name	Relation Description
<u>identification</u>	Assertion of identity
<u>class-ascription</u>	Relation between an object and its superclass.
<u>property-ascription</u>	Relation between an object and something predicated of that object.
<u>possession</u>	Relation between possessor and possessed.
<u>location</u>	Relation between an object and its spatial or temporal location.

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