Promotional Language in Stakeholder Magazines – Two Case Companies

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Tiivistelmä

Tässä tutkielmassa tarkastellaan kahden suomalaisen globaalin yrityksen sidosryhmälehtiä ja niissä käytettyä, yrityksiä positiivisessa valossa esittävää kieltä. Tarkoitus on selvittää, kuinka paljon yrityksiä markkinoivaa kieltä lehtien tekstit sisältävät, sekä minkä aiheiden käsittelyssä on käytetty eniten markkinoivaa kieltä ja miksi. Lingvistisen tutkimuksen lisäksi tarkoituksena on siis tarkastella aihetta myös yritystalouden näkökulmasta. Tätä monitieteistä lähestymistapaa pidetään erityisen tärkeänä tutkimustulosten kokonaisvaltaisen tulkinnan mahdollistamiseksi.

Tutkielman teoreettinen viitekehys koostuu lingvistiikan osalta genreteoriasta ja mainonnan teoriasta. Näihin teorioihin ja etenkin Bhatian genreteoriaan tukeutuen päätellään, että sidosryhmälehtien tekstit muodostavat oman genrensä samankaltaisten tekstien genreryppäässä. Sidosryhmälehdet ja tätä kautta moderni yritysviestintä esitellään myös taloustieteiden, etenkin markkinoinnin näkökulmasta.

Tutkielman empiirisen osan mallina toimii Henk Pander Maatin tutkimus, jossa tarkastellaan yrityksiä markkinoivaa kieltä lehdistötiedotteissa. Pander Maatin mallin mukaan markkinointi kyseisissä yritysjulkaisuissa ilmenee sanoina/sanaryhminä, jotka on mahdollista joko poistaa tekstistä tai muuttaa lievemmiksi ilmaisuiksi ymmärrettävyyttä ja asiasisältöä muuttamatta. Nämä sanat/sanaryhmät jaetaan seuraaviin pääkategorioihin: määritteet, adjektiivit, adverbit, sidesanat, muut.

Tuloksissa selvisi, että toisen tutkimuksessa tarkasteltavan lehden tekstit sisältävät markkinoivaa kieltä keskimäärin toista lehteä enemmän. Joka tapauksessa kummankaan lehden osalta tulokset eivät ole odotettua tasoa, joten Pander Maatin tutkimukseen ja lehdistötiedotteisiin pohjautuvat hypoteesit osoittautuivat osittain vääriksi. Tämä osaltaan osoittaa, että sidosryhmälehdet ja lehdistötiedotteet voidaan laskea erillisiksi genreiksi.

Tämä sidosryhmälehtiä tarkasteleva tutkielma on tiettävästi ainoa kyseisiin teksteihin keskittyvä tutkimus ja jatkotutkimuksessa on hyvin paljon mahdollisuuksia. Päällimmäisenä esille nousivat perehtyminen yksittäisiin artikkelityyppeihin sekä se, vaikuttaako kirjoittajan sukupuoli käytetyn markkinoivan kielen määrään. Vastaava tutkimus olisi syytä toteuttaa myös aikana, jolloin yritysten taloudellinen tilanne poikkeaa huomattavasti nykyisestä. Tämä osoittaisi sen, vaikuttavatko talouden heilahtelut julkaisuissa käytettyyn kieleen. Lisäksi ehdotetaan, että käsitys yrityksiä markkinoivasta kielestä sanoina/sanaryhminä täytyy laajentaa ulottumaan myös muihin tekstin dimensioihin.

Avainsanat: markkinointi, yritysviestintä, sidosryhmälehti, kielellinen vaikuttaminen

Contents

1. Introduction

No text is neutral. It is typical of people to try to persuade other people to believe in what we communicate to them. Even the news texts that we often perceive as mirrors simply reflecting daily events are always biased: writers of news articles try to persuade us to believe in their point of view. Persuasion in news texts, however, is more implicit than in, for instance, advertisements that often use explicit persuasion. Therefore, there are different linguistic devices that may be used to make up a persuasive text, but the purpose of persuasion is always the same. Persuaders want to cause an effect.

In addition to advertisements, companies produce a range of other texts that have the same function as advertisements – persuasion. However, in corporate communications, when the purpose of persuasion is to give a positive image of the company with commercial interests in mind, it is more common to talk about promotional language than persuasive language. It is this aspect of language produced by companies – promotion – that I will focus on in this study.

Today, companies publish a number of texts ranging from often informal advertisements and Web pages to formal reports, presentations and announcements. For some of the more formal texts, such as annual reports, there exist very strict guidelines as regards their style, form and content. Therefore, one would expect a very high level of “neutrality” and “formality” of these texts just as one would expect news texts to objectively present the facts. However, previous studies have shown that in spite of the restrictions and requirements, all company communication can be and has been used for “propagandistic” purposes by companies. For example, Rutherford (2005, 372) found that corporate annual reports are used promotionally, even though we expect a high degree of neutrality from such texts that are produced according to strict guidelines. This simply means that companies can and will use language – no matter what the situation or channel - to promote the company as well as its products and services. Thus, just as all communication can be seen persuasive, all corporate communication can be promotional.

My study is a part qualitative part quantitative study on a small corpus of promotional material. However, my aim is to reach beyond a purely linguistic point of view and analyze the texts from a business point of view as well: what is the role of promotional elements for a marketer, for example? The importance of combining linguistic and business perspective is not a new idea. In her study on business negotiations, Charles (1996, 19) emphasizes the need to focus on the important connection between a text and the "business context" where it is produced:

> Much of the ongoing research on negotiations attempts to explain individual, local level negotiating sequences in terms of moves, or functions, with the situation in which those sequences were produced referred to as context. Frequently, strict adherence to the linguistic perspective leads to the negotiation text being viewed as self-sufficient: the discourse itself is taken to contain everything necessary for its interpretation. As a result, the business reality within which – and in terms of which – the discourse is produced, tends to become separated from the discourse.

Charles's (1996, 20) aim was "to partly fill the gap between a contextual, business approach and a linguistic text-based approach." Furthermore, as Nickerson (2005, 369) writes in her editorial for Business English special issue of *English for Specific Purposes*, "[m]ore recent work on negotiations shows a continued interest in their strategic nature". As examples, Nickerson (2005, 369) mentions Vuorela's (2005) and Spencer-Oatey's (2000) studies on intercultural business negotiations. The aim of my study is to contribute to this Business English research that pays attention to the intricate connections of linguistic level of texts and the business contexts where they are produced. Unlike in the earlier studies mentioned, the material for this study is written rather than spoken texts. Nevertheless, the importance of the connections between business context and linguistic features stays the same. In fact, it is very important to realize the strategic nature of written texts that a company publishes since the texts are designed and produced by professionals rather than spoken spontaneously by just any employee.

The material for my study comes from two stakeholder magazines published on the Internet. I will focus on promotional language, and more precisely, on promotional elements used in the stakeholder magazine articles. The aim is to find out how extensively promotional elements are used in different articles and what the possible links of this usage are to the business context where the usage originates from. Therefore, the research questions for my study are as follows:

- To what extent are promotional elements used in the two stakeholder magazines?
- What are the themes/articles, if any, that include most promotion (and why)?
- Is there a relationship to be seen between promotional language and the business environment of the two companies?

In addition to this, I will compare and contrast the results of the two companies to find any major differences between them.

Before going through the material and aiming to answer the study questions above, I sketch in chapter 2 the nature and distinct features of stakeholder magazine texts in general. The texts are examined from linguistic and business point of view and, therefore, genre theory as well as different organizational theories will be shortly presented. In chapter 3 I will move on to discuss previous research on similar subjects and state the hypotheses for the study. Finally, before the empirical part, the two companies, the data and the method will be introduced.

In the empirical part of the study, I first analyze which elements (words or phrases) can be considered promotional. The analysis will be done based on Pander Maat's (2007, 69) method, which is presented in section 4.3. Pander Maat studied promotional elements in press releases and categorized the promotional elements, PEs, according to their grammatical functions. Using Pander Maat's method and categories as a model helps me identify the elements that have a promotional function. After the PEs are counted, the frequencies and possible patterning of PEs are analyzed and any plausible connections between company values and strategies and promotional language are discussed.

2. Defining stakeholder magazines

Before analysing stakeholder magazines in more detail, let us take a brief look at the meaning of the term *stakeholder*. According to De Pelsmacker et al. (2001, 5) stakeholders are audiences, or more precisely, “groups of individuals or organizations with whom the company wants to create goodwill”. This goodwill between the company and its stakeholders is essential because stakeholders provide – as Golob and Bartlett (2007, 2) put it – “a licence to operate” for the company. This is due to the fact that stakeholders “provide organizations with a range of resources they require to conduct their business such as capital, customers, employees, materials and legitimacy”, Golob and Bartlett (2007, 2) argue.

In theory, anyone who affects a company’s operations or is affected by these operations can be viewed as a stakeholder (De Pelsmacker et al. 2001, 112). Who in practice these groups or organizations are is, on the other hand, slightly more difficult to decide. Clearly, shareholders, investors and employees are all stakeholders following the definition above, but why not include customers and even individual consumers as well? After all, there hardly exists a group with whom a company would not want to create goodwill. Freeman (1984, 25) exemplifies the issue with an illustration and he, indeed, includes customers in his presentation:

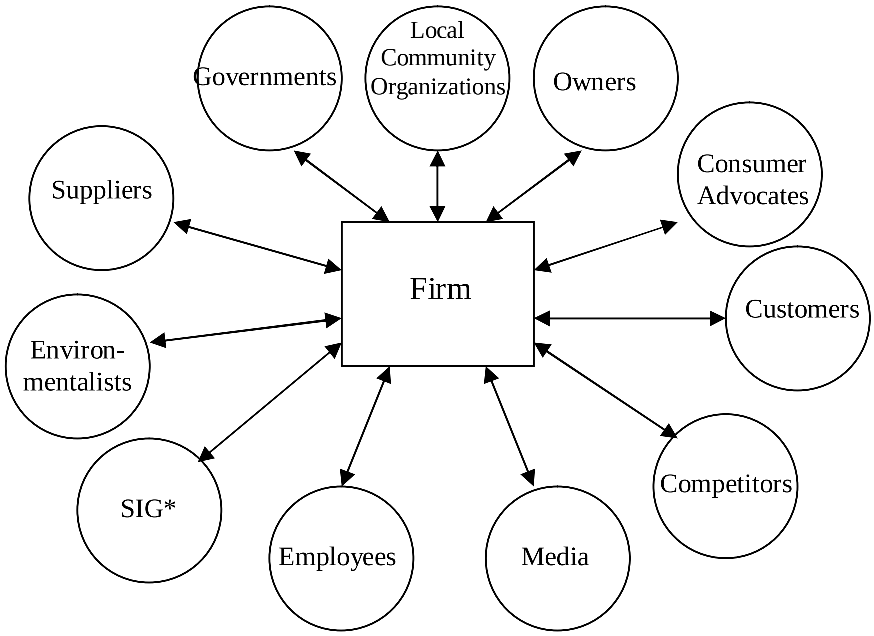

Figure 1. Freeman's (1984, 25) "*Stakeholder View of Firm*"
*SIG = Special interest groups

Freeman emphasizes that his illustration is a simplification and that all of the groups presented can actually be broken down into smaller groups since no people, governments, media etc. are alike. As regards customers, for example, it is important to make a distinction between business customers and individual consumers. This is a useful fact to point out, although for today's business people it is self evident that smaller segments or even individuals have a more and more important role in the minds of marketers. This fragmentation of the traditional groups, however, doesn't undermine the usefulness of Freeman's "simplified" illustration here.

One has to admit that among these heterogeneous groups there are individuals and segments that are more important to companies than some others, and no company has the resources to *actively* promote itself to everybody. On the other hand, we as customers cannot be aware of all existing companies. Or, perhaps, we are not touched by the existence of some of them in any way because we do not need their services. Therefore, it is not wise for a company to try to create a relationship with just anybody. All in all, it depends on the company and the situation who can be considered a stakeholder. However, for the purposes of this study, the definition and illustration above give a precise enough picture of who stakeholders are or, indeed, could be.

Based on the definition above, a stakeholder magazine, then, can be defined as a vehicle with which a company aims at creating goodwill in its multiple audiences or stakeholders. However, even with the rather simplified view of stakeholders presented, we most likely have discussed audiences that are not part of the readership of the stakeholder magazines examined in this study. Again, as an outsider, it is difficult to state who it is exactly that reads stakeholder magazines, in this case, *Refine* and *Kemira News*. And, maybe even more importantly, who are the groups that the two companies would want to read the magazines? Of course, the companies would hardly mind if everyone read the magazines, but there must exist an ideal readership that the companies have in mind.

The first page of *Refine* informs us that the magazine is targeted at "investors, customers and other stakeholders". The first two groups are clear: with the texts that positively portray the industries and the companies in question, Kemira and Neste Oil want to reassure those whose money is involved that they are dealing with the right partner. So now we are left to ponder who the "other stakeholders" ideally are. Considering Freeman's (1984) discussion of corporate social responsibility literature gives a possible solution. Freeman (1984, 38) argues that:

> The distinguishing feature of the literature on corporate social responsibility is that it can be viewed as applying the stakeholder concept to non-traditional stakeholder groups who are usually thought of as having adversarial relationships with the firm. In particular, less emphasis is put on satisfying owners and comparatively more emphasis is put on the public or the community or the employees.

It can be argued that in addition to the more traditional group of stakeholders, such as investors, stakeholder magazines are targeted at those audiences that Freeman considers "non-traditional" or even "having adversarial relationships with the firm". This is only natural, since it is especially with these groups that companies need to create goodwill. There is no point using all energy convincing and persuading those groups who already have a positive attitude towards the company. Instead, adversarial relationships need to be changed into at least neutral relationships, if such exist. In today's business world, there are no segments that companies can completely ignore or, indeed, whose values it can ignore. There exists an ever growing demand for companies to be socially responsible. Stakeholder magazines form one way of showing how a company lives up to its social responsibilities. This aspect of stakeholder magazines will be further discussed in section 2.4.

To further examine the nature of stakeholder magazines, not so much from the audience's point of view, let us consider another – maybe a more common term – to be used here. A more commonly known and appropriate term for stakeholder magazine is *newsletter*, a widely used term in business contexts. It is essential to introduce this term here, since a large part of relevant literature as regards this study discusses newsletters instead of stakeholder magazines or stakeholder publications. Newsletter, however, is a term with a very broad meaning and it encompasses a wide range of different types of texts. The term *stakeholder magazine* was chosen to be used in this study since it describes the material studied very well, and of course, one of the companies in question – Kemira – uses the very term on the cover page of their publication. Whereas stakeholder magazines are simply magazines targeted at different stakeholders, a newsletter is not necessarily a magazine. In its barest form, a newsletter is a sheet of paper containing company related information left on an employee's table, for example. However, the purpose of both newsletters and stakeholder magazines is to inform people who the company regards as somehow important. In fact, one could say that a stakeholder magazine is a specialized newsletter, which means that stakeholder magazine is a hyponym of newsletter.

In the following three sections, the nature of stakeholder magazines, is further examined with references to relevant theories. Although the theories presented in the three subsections move from a linguistic perspective to a business perspective, my aim is not to separate the different points of view too strictly. As regards section 2.2, On advertising, this approach should not be difficult since advertisements are an ever-popular research subject in different fields of study. Therefore, as was emphasized in the introduction, it is important to discuss the role of stakeholder magazines in their business context to enable a more fruitful analysis of the study results.

2.1 On persuasion and promotional language

Promotion, the focus of this study, is a form of persuasion. A brief description of persuasion, therefore, is in order.

In the introduction I already stated that there do not exist texts that could be described as "neutral". What is meant by this is that all texts can be considered persuasive to a certain degree (see, for example, Miller 1980, Virtanen & Halmari 2005). However, if all texts can be regarded persuasive, the definition of persuasion is very broad. Halmari and Virtanen (2005, 5) also recognise this problem and define persuasion as "those linguistic choices that aim at changing or affecting the behavior of others or strengthening the existing beliefs and behaviors of those who already agree, the beliefs and behaviors of persuaders included". This definition is apt for my study as well. The words *changing*, *effecting* and *strengthening* are of key importance here. One might also state that persuasive texts such as those examined in this study are about *convincing* others.

In their discussion of persuasion, Virtanen and Halmari (2005, 6-9) stress the importance of audience for persuasive communication: it is the reactions in the audience that determine whether a text is persuasive or not. This being the case, the identification of persuasion becomes difficult. Halmari and Virtanen write: "If texts are identified as persuasive, depending on their effects on the audience, persuasion becomes […] an unresearchable target, unless, of course audience reactions are simultaneously subjected to explicit and, preferably, quantifiable scrutiny." Does this mean then, that studying persuasion in stakeholder magazines becomes impossible without contact to audience reactions? To tackle this problem, I agree with Jucker (1997, 123) and Virtanen and Halmari in that (2005, 7) if there exists a clear intention to persuade in a text, then it should be regarded as persuasive. Indeed, Jucker (1997, 123) writes that in a persuasive text, "persuasive intention can be taken for granted".

Persuasion in corporate communications, especially in advertisements, is a widely studied subject because persuasion in this field is a pervasive trait in texts. Indeed, many corporate publications belong to genres that Halmari and Virtanen (2005) label as "inherently persuasive". The large number of persuasive texts in business communications is only natural, for few of today's companies would exist without efficient persuasion: most things people buy are what they want, not what they need. The wants, on the other hand, are created through persuasion. However, even in corporate communications the degree and manifestation of persuasion varies because of the wide range of text genres in the field. The text genre of this study is not widely discussed, which makes this study even more meaningful and interesting.

In business contexts a persuasive text is typically described as *promotional*: business practitioners want to affect people in ways that have a positive impact on sales and financial performance in general. According to *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (Sinclair, 2001), the word *promotional* is defined as follows:

> **promotional** /prəməʊʃənᵊl/ Promotional material, events, or ideas are designed to increase the sales of a product or service. □ 'Jeans,' according to one company's promotional material, 'are designed and made to be worn hard'.

The terms *persuasiv*e and *promotional* were already introduced in the introduction, and it was stated that *promotional* is a better term to be used in a business context and, therefore, in this study. From the definition above, one notices that the term *promotional* is typically connected with financial performance. It is essential in any study to pay attention to the selection of the most relevant and precise terms to be used, and this is simply the reason why *promotional* is preferred instead of any other term. Just as stakeholder magazine was considered a hyponym of newsletter, *promotional* is a hyponym of *persuasive*. If we add Leech's (1966) term "loaded language" to our small group of related terms, it is possible to present the terms in question in the following hierarchical order, where loaded language is the most general term:

loaded language
|
persuasive language
|
promotional language

Of course, preferring some terms over others does not mean that previous studies using different terms would be totally irrelevant to us. Conversely, many studies conducted on different kinds of loaded language, and persuasive language in particular, should be taken into account when examining the nature of promotional language more closely.

What is meant by promotional language in this study is those linguistic items that make the text present the company in question in an especially positive light. The linguistic items, or more precisely promotional elements, can be deleted from the text without making it ungrammatical. This means that promotional language is seen as something extra, something one is able to add to a more neutral text material. What is interesting about these elements is that when they appear out of the text, many of them cannot be labelled as promotional anymore. Promotion, then, arises from word combinations and the co-text, and the journalist does not have to rely solely on overtly eulogistic words to make his/her text promotional (Leech 1966, 65). Just as writers of soft news articles try to present their texts as hard news (Bell 1991, 14), writers of essentially promotional texts try to present the promotional context as news-like. Therefore, promotional language is not the most distinct feature of texts in stakeholder magazines, at least at first glance. Stakeholder magazines include vivid colours and pictures, but the articles simply seem to provide us with the facts. Like external newsletters in general, they are very news-like (Treadwell & Treadwell 2005, 273). In fact, there are sections in both of the magazines called “news”. Traditional advertisements, on the other hand, are well known for employing promotional elements. As Bhatia (2005, 214) states: “The most traditional form of promotional discourse is found in advertisements, which is often viewed as a form of discourse intended to inform and promote in order to sell ideas, goods, or services to a selected group of people." There are no advertisements in the stakeholder magazines studied except for the back cover of each issue of *Kemira News* and *Refine*. The texts in these advertisements were not included in the study.

2.2 On advertising

Advertisements and texts in stakeholder magazines, however different they may seem, have many things in common and these text genres are indeed related. Therefore, it is important to briefly discuss advertising. The most important common feature between advertisements and stakeholder magazine texts is of course the fact that both texts are meant to persuade. Furthermore, advertisements can also be highly informative just as magazine articles. But advertisements we see every day, on the other hand, are also very different from the texts in stakeholder magazines, and it is at least as easy to find differences as similarities between them. One of the most perceptible differences is probably the amount of text used: a valued feature in most advertisements is brevity, whereas in order to be informational and news-like, articles in stakeholder magazines are inherently longer. The strict spatial constraints within which writers of advertisements typically operate (Bruthiaux 2005, 125) are absent from writing articles in a magazine. Furthermore, a cosmetics advertisement on a street, for example, is informative in different ways than an article in a magazine.

Due to the differences of the two types of texts, it is useful to make a distinction between *consumer advertising* and *prestige advertising*, a division used by Leech (1966) and Vestergaard & Schrøder (1985), for example. "Whereas in consumer advertising a firm advertises what it makes, in prestige advertising it advertises itself", Leech (1966, 64-5) writes. In addition to the term prestige advertising, Vestergaard & Schrøder use the term *goodwill advertising*, which is also a good term for the phenomenon in question. Texts whose purpose is to create goodwill clearly belong to goodwill advertising. To rank stakeholder magazines as part of prestige advertising is an excellent way of showing that there is a strong connection between these texts and more traditional advertisements. Furthermore, one should keep in mind that both prestige advertising and consumer advertising are forms of commercial advertising, which means that the underlying interest behind both forms of advertising is the company's commercial interests (Vestergaard & Schrøder 1985, 1-2). But rather than trying to increase sales immediately companies use prestige advertising to create long-term goodwill amongst stakeholders or public in general (see, for example, Vestergaard & Schrøder 1985, 1; Leech 1966, 64-65). This goodwill may, of course, increase sales in the long run but its effects are more difficult to measure than is the case with consumer advertising.

In practice, prestige advertising resembles news writing more than consumer advertising. Leech (1966, 65) further comments that in prestige advertising

> [t]he accent is on the informative aspect of advertising: reporting the firm's achievements. The tone is less urgent than in consumer advertising; imperatives are infrequent, and the more brazen forms of eulogy are absent. Average prestige copy is especially complex, not only because it is directed at an educated and well-informed public, but because it has an involved story to tell […] In prestige advertising, self-eulogy is often hidden in board-room clichés which imply the dynamism, success and health of the firm's activities.

As a concrete example Leech presents an article from "a Times special supplement" that has "a style of objective reporting". From the article he highlights the following phrases: "'unprecedented success', 'constant research', 'solid proof', 'continual growth'". According to Leech, the adjectives in the examples are not what one would expect to find from an every-day consumer advertisement, such as: "*good, lovely, wonderful*". Leech argues that in the former phrases, "the adjective is not eulogistic in itself, but has that connotation in conjunction with the following abstract noun". It is exactly elements like these that I expect to find in the two stakeholder magazines in this study. Promotional elements are further discussed in section 4.3, where I present the grammatical categories of promotional elements found in this study.

2.3 On genre theory

According to Bell (1991, 13): “Two genres are common to all the primary media of mass communication – news and advertising.” However, according to the description of prestige advertising, stakeholder magazines do not seem to fall into either of these categories, but somewhere in between. Together with discussion on the quality and quantity of promotional elements in a text, it is necessary to discuss the notion of genre, for different genres utilize different kinds of textual elements. The sections above present some specific features of stakeholder magazine articles – they are both news-like and form part of advertising – but is it possible to say that texts in stakeholder magazines form a genre of their own? Do they clearly distinguish themselves from other types of promotional or organisational discourse?

Yates and Orlikowski (1992, 299) consider “*genres of organizational communication* as a concept useful for studying communication as embedded in social process rather than as the result of isolated rational actions”. Similarly, stakeholder magazines are essentially a product of the changing business environment: as organisational communications evolve, genres evolve and also new genres emerge. Therefore, it is possible to say that the number of genres of organisational communication is huge and that, for example, stakeholder magazines form a subgenre that has evolved from the genre of newsletters. However, it is this dynamism and productivity of genres that makes the study of genres complicated, for we have to be able to draw lines somewhere to be able to talk about the notion of genre. Yates and Orlikowski (1992, 305) also remind us that “undue proliferation of genres may also weaken the usefulness of the concept”.

To tackle the difficulty of making clear-cut distinctions between different genres, Bhatia (2004, 57) introduces the notion of genre colonies. In fact, Rutherford writes that “most theorists accept that genres can be identified at different levels of abstraction”. As regards promotional genres, Bhatia (2004, 62) presents the following figure:

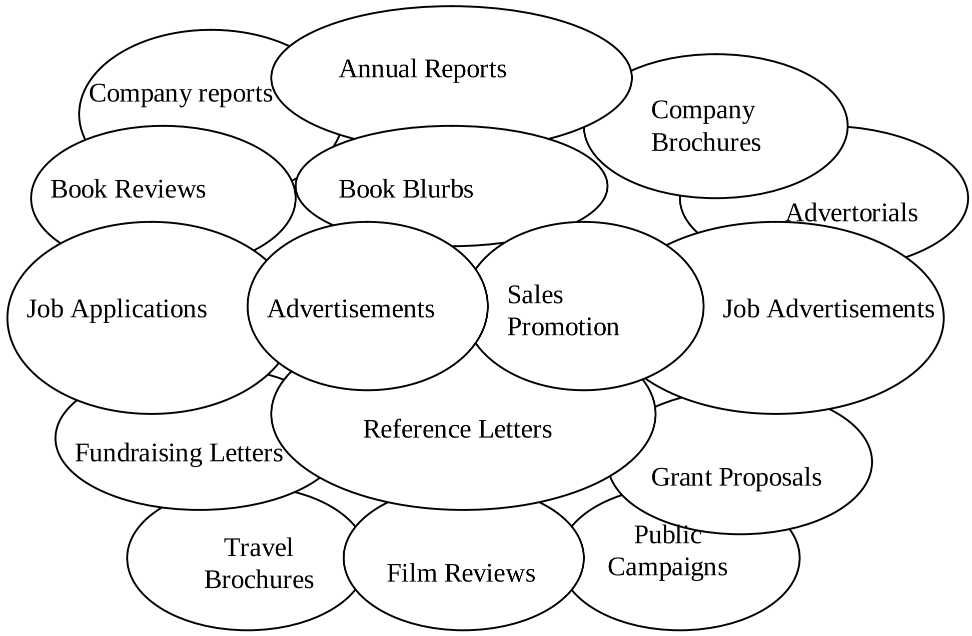

Figure 2. Bhatia's (2004, 62) "Colony of promotional genres"

The figure illustrates well that we often have a genre/genres that can be viewed as more prototypical, and several related genres that resemble the prototype. In Figure 2, the most prototypical members of promotional genre are at the centre, whereas the other genres are "secondary". This is due to the fact that "the degree and nature of appropriation of promotional elements" differs between the genres, which means that the members of the colony could also be presented in a hierarchical order (Bhatia 2004, 62). Bhatia (2004, 62) argues that mixed genres such as annual and company reports are "partly promotional, partly information-giving", which makes them secondary or "peripheral" members of the promotional colony. Taking the partly promotional and partly information-giving nature of stakeholder magazines, stakeholder magazines are also a peripheral member of the colony. However, one should keep in mind that genres are constantly changing and their statuses in the colony may change as well (Bhatia 2004, 62).

Furthermore, the overlap of the circles in Figure 2 illustrates the fact that genres can be combinations of other genres. Virtanen and Halmari (2005, 10) state that "most texts are, in fact, *multitype* – or *multigenre* – in character". A crucial factor in identification of different genres is to recognise their communicative purposes (Bhatia 2005, 217). The genres in Figure 2 share the common purpose of promotion and, to go even further, that of financial profit. According to Bhatia (2005, 217), "instances of this kind have a large degree of overlap in the communicative purposes they tend to serve, and that is the main reason why they are seen as forming a closely related discourse colony".

It is arguable that stakeholder magazines can be viewed as part of a colony of promotional genres or, on the other hand, a colony of genres of organisational communication. Although it was shown that stakeholder magazines are actually newsletters, they are specialized and distinct enough to be able to state that they form a separate genre in a colony of related genres. But why include all the texts in a stakeholder magazine in the same genre? It is true that that there are varying types of articles in stakeholder magazines and we should not confuse the concepts *medium* and *genre*. However, the communicative purpose of the articles in these magazines is more or less the same: promotion and creation of goodwill. In a "normal" magazine aimed at consumer one is able to find pure advertisements as well as more informative texts. In the case of stakeholder magazines, the difference between the texts is not as distinct and dividing the text into different genres would most likely be an example of "undue proliferation of genres".

The texts in stakeholder magazines can be roughly categorised into what Bell (1991, 14) calls "hard news" and "feature articles". The hard news texts are probably not as "hard" as those one can find in newspapers because of the underlying promotional purposes. In any case, they are mainly reports of immediate events, announcements, discoveries and the like. Features, in Bell's (1991, 14) words, "are the most obvious case of soft news. These are longer 'articles' rather than 'stories' covering immediate events. They provide background, sometimes 'editorialize' […], and are usually bylined with the writer's name." Nevertheless, even though there are different text categories in the magazines, it is the common communicative purpose that blurs the traditional distinction between hard and soft news to some extent and sets them under the same genre.

2.4 Stakeholder magazine in the business world

The purpose of this section is to theorize not so much in terms of the language, but in terms of the magazine content and the overall role of the magazines in the two companies. This information is important, for my aim is to analyze the results of the linguistic study from a business perspective. Firstly, based on relevant organizational theories, I will discuss the role of stakeholder magazines in business communications and the ideal content of the magazines. Secondly, I will discuss the complex environment of modern businesses and how change and new demands are reflected in business communications. Thirdly, I will discuss the weakness of stakeholder magazines as communications tool. This section will be linked to the empirical part in which, after the linguistic analysis, I will analyze the content of *Refine* and *Kemira News* in the light of the theories presented here.

In section 2.2 it was argued that publishing a stakeholder magazine is part of a company's prestige advertising, which can be viewed as less aggressive than traditional consumer advertising. The purpose of this type of advertising for a company is well summed up in the following description of external newsletters from Treadwell and Treadwell (2005, 274):

> External newsletters, directed at customers, clients, government, suppliers, retailers, and indeed the general public usually take a "news" approach.[…]They aim to make the target audience feel good about an organization so that they want to buy its products, use its services, or contribute funds.

Leech (1966, 64-65) as well as Vestergaard & Schrøder (1985, 1) share this view of "feel[ing] good about an organization" and write that the purpose of such texts is to create goodwill towards the company, as was seen in section 2.2. However, although Leech (1966, 65) writes that the purpose of prestige advertising "is to inspire not action, but good will", it seems that Treadwell & Treadwell link audience goodwill to action: buying and contributing funds. In fact, it is arguable that the final goal of prestige advertising is, in the end, to increase sales. This does not mean that the goal is immediate or even marked improvement in sales, but something that takes place in the long run. Stakeholder magazine, among other prestige advertising, is therefore also a means to prepare for the future. Precisely because the effects of prestige advertising are difficult to measure, many scholars underrate the link between goodwill and financial performance. In fact, if these two dimensions were not linked together, it would be useless for any company to use energy in creating goodwill.

To take the discussion on the purposes of publishing a stakeholder magazine further, let us discuss the unique nature of stakeholder magazine writing. Treadwell & Treadwell (2005, 273) point out that "public relations writers regard newsletters as an opportunity to flex their creative muscles, combining news, feature and […] persuasive writing and design in a format that provides much scope for creativity and approach". Persuasion and promotional language play a key role in the creation of goodwill, but the most important thing is to see the multi-dimensional nature of such writing. Maybe because of this multi-dimensional nature, newsletters are seen as less biased than advertising although the sender of the texts has improved financial performance in mind (Treadwell & Treadwell 2005, 272-273). This less suspicious and more open audience is something that offers communications opportunities and should definitely not be ignored.

Considering the fact that the purpose of prestige advertising is to increase sales, even if it is in the long run, prestige advertising in a company would clearly seem to be a part of the company's marketing function. As De Pelsmacker et al. (2001, 3) put it, advertising in general is part of the promotion instrument of the marketing mix. However, taking into account the informative side of prestige advertising and stakeholder magazines, one will easily place such communication alternatively inside a company's PR function. PR, after all, is very often about giving information (De Pelsmacker et al. 2001, 253). Leech (1966, 25) takes into account some connection between the two and states that: "'Prestige advertising is on the borders of advertising and public relations".

However, it could be argued that Leech's view is too tentative at least for a modern reader. In fact, public relations today is not only about 'press relations', but has become a much more complex task of creating goodwill between the company and different kinds of audiences (De Pelsmacker et al., 247). Indeed, Jobber and Lancaster (2006, 270) state that prestige advertising is "[t]he main medium for corporate PR". Therefore, it is plausible to claim that prestige advertising is PR and not just something on the borders of it.

To avoid placing the different types of advertising (prestige and consumer) under different corporate functions some scholars simply consider PR as part of marketing. Indeed, since stakeholder magazines seem to represent both functions, this is arguable. However, despite this seeming overlap of marketing and public relations as regards stakeholder magazines, or prestige advertising in general, several scholars are very strict about keeping these two functions separate. For example, Ehling et al. (1992) argue strongly against the placement of PR function under marketing, something that they state is done by Kotler "in his various writings". Indeed, this is not only true as regards Kotler's oldest publications, for as recently as 2004, Kotler and Armstrong (2004, 482) place PR under the promotion tool of the marketing mix. Ehling et al. (1992, 357), on the other hand, argue that distinction between PR activities and marketing activities "can be made on organizational, operational, practical, and theoretical grounds". Jobber & Lancaster (2006, 267) go as far as stating that "[p]ublic relations covers a broader spectrum than selling or indeed marketing".

But do these scholars themselves undermine the scope of marketing? In this dispute of the role and scope of marketing and PR, no one hardly denies the common function present in both PR and marketing – promotion. Therefore, just as different closely related genres overlap in a colony of genres, marketing communications and PR can be viewed as separate but overlapping functions in a colony of business functions (Figure 3). This means that distinction between the two can be made without completely refuting Kotler's view of placing PR under marketing.

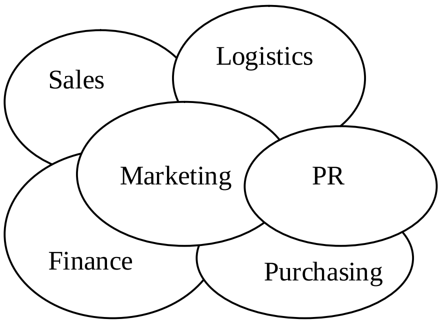

Figure 3. A colony of business functions

In fact, Ehling et al.'s (1992) view of building separate "camps" inside a company seems old fashioned in today's business world that emphasized unity. It seems that for Ehling et al. (1992, 378) the underlying reason for such strong refusal of common goals and missions is a power struggle between different organisational functions. They criticize Kotler for considering marketing more important than PR, which, according to them, is given a minor role in organizations, if even that. However, ranking PR under marketing does not necessarily mean that it is considered less valuable. In practice, the marketing function in companies may be clearly defined and there are separate marketing departments set to handle everything related to marketing. However, this is a very simplistic view and in theory, marketing is clearly more difficult to define: we should not define marketing as one function or department, but as ideas, attitudes and that exist all over the company. Thus, marketing is part of PR and PR is part of marketing. In his more recent writings, Kotler has acknowledged the criticism and the overlap of marketing and PR and discusses *marketing public relations* (Kotler & Keller 2006, 594).

All in all, this power struggle between marketing and PR is futile in today's environment that requires unity of employees to be successful. This unity is simply about having a common mission, which means execution of the company's overall strategy or "visualisation of corporate identity" as De Pelsmacker et al. (2001, 11) put it. They explain that: "A corporate identity that is communicated convincingly creates confidence and goodwill with external target groups of stakeholders." (De Pelsmacker et al. 2001, 11) It is essential to see stakeholder magazines and corporate communications as products of this modern business environment. Even though stakeholder magazines form only a fraction of a company's stakeholder communication, their role as part of the mission should not be underestimated. As all other texts produced in a company, stakeholder magazines should be in line with the corporate identity, for texts with haphazard messages do not have a place in successful businesses. Even if companies have separate departments for separate communications functions, these departments have to work together and, most importantly, understand their common mission and communicate well. De Pelsmacker et al. (2001, 2) use the term *integrated marketing communications* to describe this "new basic trend" in the business world. However, one may also use the term *integrated corporate communications* to avoid the debate on the scope of marketing. Whatever the most appropriate term, I argue that stakeholder magazines are ideally a tool of this integrated communications: they should form a unified voice of the different sectors in companies. In section 5.2, I will examine whether *Kemira News* and *Refine* reflect this aspect of unity.

Another topical issue that one may find reflected in corporate communications is the demand for corporate social responsibility, CSR. The reasons underlying the demand to be socially responsible are numerous and a new study would be required to deal with the issue more thoroughly. Therefore, in Freeman's (1984, 38) words: "Suffice it to say that the social movements of the sixties and the seventies in civil rights, anti-war, consumerism, environmentalism and women's rights served as a catalyst for rethinking the role of the business enterprise in society." As a result of these social movements corporations today have to operate in an environment full of what Ehling et al. (1992, 364) call "single-issue factions", and as examples they mention "antiabortion and proabortion groups, Earth First!, Greenpeace, Friends of Animals, and the like". Drucker (1980, 215-6) sees these groups as follows:

> Where parties, by definition, try to create consensus for action, factions try to block action through confrontation…They exercise their power not by the support they can muster but by the actions they can block. Their power is not that of assent but that of veto.

Above, I already argued that stakeholder magazines are also targeted at more difficult, even adversarial audiences. Especially because the magazines are also published on the Internet, the claim that single-issue factions are possible readers and targets becomes more plausible: the internet means easy access and the single-issue groups are often active in search for information. I argue that among other new genres of corporate communications, stakeholder magazines are indeed *a result* of this new demand to be socially responsible.

Yet another important aspect of today's business world is the emphasis of long-term relationships. As Zeithaml and Bitner (2003, 157-158) put it, marketers have realized that it is cheaper to keep old customers than to continually attract new ones, and customers also prefer long-term relationships. Indeed, Kotler and Armstrong (2004, 20-21) write that companies today want to "own" their customers for life and that they aim to produce "high customer equity":

> Customer equity is the total combined customer lifetime values of all of the company's customers. Clearly, the more loyal the firm's customers, the higher the firm's customer equity. Customer equity may be a better measure of a firm's performance than current sales or market share. Whereas sales and market share reflect the past, customer equity suggests the future.

Again, effective communication is an essential tool in building the valuable long-term relationships. As part of integrated communications, stakeholder magazines function as one vehicle in building and sustaining these relationships. Being a non-aggressive communications tool, the main purpose of stakeholder magazines is most likely in strengthening already existing relationships, although they function as a good source of information for new customers and other stakeholders as well. Moreover, besides reporting about the past, stakeholder magazines help build relationships and positive attitudes for the future.

The discussion above has dealt with corporate communications as taking place between a company and its external audiences. One should also notice that integrated communications is important as regards communication with internal stakeholders as well. Employees are an important group of internal stakeholders, and they form one of the target groups of company PR. Similarly, it is arguable to claim that with their stakeholder magazines, Neste Oil and Kemira address the companies' employees and other internal stakeholders in addition to external stakeholders. Addressing employees with this type of communication has to do to a large extent with motivation: there is a clear purpose of stakeholder magazines to motivate employees to work with best interests of the firm. Besides motivation, other important purposes of internal public relations are to inform, to train, and to help build corporate identity among employees (De Pelsmacker et al. 2001, 253). According to Yates (2004, 8), there is "a strong connection between effective [organizational] communication and superior financial performance". A Communication ROI study by Watson Wyatt "shows that companies with the most effective employee communication programs provided a 26 percent total return to shareholders (TRS) from 1998 to 2002 compared to a -15 percent TRS experienced by firms that communicate least effectively", Yates (2004, 8) writes. Therefore, again stakeholder magazines can be linked to financial performance.

Finally, it is necessary to make a few notes on the weaknesses of stakeholder magazines as communications tools. The greatest weaknesses of stakeholder magazines are simply that they are uni-directional, untargetable and their effects are hard to measure.

Because of the uni-directional mode of communication, the company may be able to get the message through to the stakeholders, but it is not able to receive important information from the stakeholders. It may be that the company is in fact addressing completely wrong issues and what is really important to the stakeholders is left without discussion. This aspect is related to the fact that the magazines are untargetable. Since this is the case, the right people do not necessarily receive the right messages. Because of this deficiency that the texts have, it was only possible to hypothesize the exact readership of the magazines above. Last but not least, even if publishing stakeholder magazines has a positive impact on financial performance, the connection between the two is extremely difficult to measure. Consumer advertising, on the other hand, is usually realized as short-term campaigns whose effects one may be able to perceive as peaks in sales volume. Precisely because the same is not true as regards prestige advertising many fail to see the importance of such advertising.

3. Previous research and hypotheses

Stakeholder communication in general has inspired many researchers in the past few decades, but stakeholder magazines seem to be a less researched source of material. Perhaps this is because a magazine as a communication tool is, undeniably, rather old fashioned. In fact, numerous researchers today emphasize the fact that the Internet has revolutionized stakeholder communication. For example, van der Merwe et al. (2005) argue that "uni-directional" communication has become "multi-directional" thanks to the Internet. Kotler and Keller (2006, 612), on the other hand, state that "[t]he Internet provides marketers and consumers with opportunities for much greater *interaction* and *individualization*." This multi-directional, individualized communication is certainly a new area of interest for researchers of business communication. (The stakeholder magazines studied are, of course, also published on the Internet, but this does not make them different from the print versions. The Internet enables more people to access the magazines, but the PDF format does not make the texts any more multi-directional or individualized than is the case with the print versions.) Furthermore, publishing a stakeholder magazine can be seen as "something extra" a company can do, while many other corporate publications are either obligatory or simply seen as more important. Maybe this certain level of "seriousness" of these other texts is what attracts the researchers' interest.

Although this study is of exploratory nature, some hypotheses can be made based on previous studies on other corporate publications and Pander Maat's (2007) study on promotional language in press releases. Because Pander Maat's study gives the methodological frame for my study, I will shortly present it in the following.

3.1 Pander Maat's study

As is stated in the introduction, this study uses Pander Maat's (2007) study on press releases as a starting point. In his study, Pander Maat (2007, 65) aimed to answer two research questions, which are as follows:

- Do corporate press releases contain promotional language of any sort?
- If yes, how is this kind of language dealt with in journalistic reworkings of these particular press releases?

Pander Maat divided his study into three sub-studies. In the first of these studies, Pander Maat answered research question 1 and research question 2 was answered in the second and third studies. It is especially the first research question and the first part of Pander Maat's study that are of interest here, for my first research question is practically identical with the first question above, except for the different material studied.

Pander Maat compiled two corpora in his study. Corpus 1 contained 39 press releases and 62 news reports that were based on the press releases. The news reports appeared in "specialized magazines on airline travel" and "the travel section of newspapers". In this corpus, Pander Maat chose press releases that contained at least one PE. The second corpus, on the other hand, consisted of 50 press releases and 92 corresponding news reports. The news releases in this corpus had appeared in magazines and were of the "hard news" type. However, as regards the press releases in this corpus, Pander Maat chose to study all texts and not only those texts that included at least one PE.

In the first of his studies, Pander Maat found that the average number of PEs in the press releases of his first corpus was 0.66 PEs/sentence. According to Pander Maat (2007, 72), this means that promotion is "a pervasive feature" in these texts. The number of PEs in the press releases in Corpus 2 was lower, 0.42 PEs/sentence, but one should not directly compare these results. This is because the texts in the two corpora were compiled according to different requirements. Furthermore, all sentences in Corpus 1 were analyzed, but as regards Corpus 2 Pander Maat only analyzed those sentences that were used in the corresponding news reports. The first of Pander Maat's studies also showed that the average number of PEs varied according to the press release topic and that, on average, quotes included more promotion than other sentences. All these results are interesting as regards my study.

In the second and third part of his study, Pander Maat examined how PEs in press releases are handled by journalists when the texts become republished. In the second study, Pander Maat concluded that PEs are a pervasive feature in the press releases issued by airline companies and in the corresponding news reports that appeared in special interest magazines. The third study, on the other hand, revealed that hard news journalists were sensitive of promotional language and typically eliminated the PEs encountered.

Since the method used in this study is the same as Pander Maat's method, I have not presented it here. The method will be discussed in section 4.3.

3.2 The hypotheses

One of the reasons why I base my hypotheses on press releases is that newsletters (stakeholder magazines) often use press releases as news content (Treadwell & Treadwell 2005, 275). Furthermore, the two types of texts have the same communicative purpose: promotion. This means that the text genres are very closely related, which may be reflected in the number of PEs used. Therefore, my initial hypothesis is that the number of PEs in *Refine* and *Kemira News* is roughly at the same level as in the unmodified press releases studied by Pander Maat (2007). That is, an average of 0.66 PEs in Pander Maat's Corpus 1. Pander Maat compiled two corpora for his study: Corpus 1 consists of press releases unmodified by company external journalists whereas Corpus 2 consists of republished press releases that were modified by news journalists. The frequency of PEs in Pander Maat's Corpus 2 was 0.38 PEs/sentence (all sentences included). The reason why I think my results will be closer to what Pander Maat found in his Corpus 1 is that the articles in stakeholder magazines are not modified by external parties as is the case with the texts in Corpus 1. This means that the journalist responsible for the use of PEs in these texts is a company representative, which implies more free and more frequent use of PEs.

In any case, the hypothesis above is only tentative since press releases are, after all, only *possible* sources for stakeholder magazine articles. This means that they may not be used in certain publications at all. Furthermore, even if stakeholder magazines include articles based on press releases, they also include articles that differ significantly from press release news articles. Just as in any magazine, one is able to find a range of different types of texts in *Kemira News* and *Refine*. Due to this, when comparing the number of PEs in press releases to the number of PEs in all stakeholder magazine articles, the results may also be very different. If this is the case, I expect to find more PEs used in stakeholder magazines. This is simply because press releases are, after all, news texts, and if these news texts already include frequent promotion, one might expect the “non-news texts” in stakeholder magazines to include even more promotion.

Of course, one does not need to rely on press releases only to make hypotheses on the number of PEs in stakeholder magazines. We might as well base our hypotheses on what is already known about newsletters. Treadwell&Treadwell (2005, 273) state the following on newsletters and promotion:

> Newsletters that are free generally promote relationships between the organization and its reading (or web-viewing) publics. Such publics implicitly accept a certain degree of promotion for the sponsoring organization. On the other hand, if readers must subscribe or pay for a newsletter […], the readers expect either unbiased advice or advice that identifies its biases.
>
> There is always a level beyond which too much or too obvious promotion will hurt a newsletter’s credibility, but this varies by organization, by newsletter, and by public.

Based on this citation, it is possible to argue that one might expect “a certain degree of promotion” in *Kemira News* and *Refine* since these magazines are free. Furthermore, the use of PEs in stakeholder magazines is not constrained by scarcity of space either, as often is the case with other types of advertising (see, for example, Bruthiaux 2005). This, as well as the quote above, supports my hypothesis that PEs are used frequently in the texts of the two magazines studied. However, keeping in mind the credibility of the magazines, the use of PEs is hardly at the same level as what could be expected in the case of consumer advertising. All in all, in this study, I expect to find at least the same frequency of PEs as Pander Maat (2007) found in Corpus 1 in his study.

As regards further analysis of the PEs, the patterning of the elements hopefully reflects interesting details about the business contexts in which the companies operate. Since the two companies, Kemira and Neste Oil, are large international companies and their communication is in the hands of experts, I expect that the use of PEs as well as the texts in general are very much in line with the identities and values of the companies. In his study on news releases (press releases), Gilpin (2007, 9) suggests that "[t]he news release may […] be seen as an autobiographical narrative through which the organization seeks to express and negotiate aspects of its identity". The same can be expected from stakeholder magazines because the genres are so closely related.

One of the major values of large, and why not also smaller companies today, is environmental responsibility. This is a value that companies bring forth in all their communications because of ever rising environmental awareness, and emphasizing this aspect of doing business is probably more present in stakeholder communications today than any other value. McKie and Galloway (2007, 1) write: "Climate change, with potentially catastrophic social impacts, has passed a tipping point in public awareness." Therefore, one can arguably expect that the analysis of the texts reveals that the companies emphasize environmental responsibility in their stakeholder communications. The values and some aspects of identities of the two companies (as to how they want stakeholders to perceive them) are presented in the following chapter.

4. The two companies, data and method

In the following subsections, in addition to data and method, I will briefly introduce the two companies and their values. This information, again, is crucial for chapter 6, where the aim is to link the study results (i.e. linguistic material) to the business context of the two companies. The information on the companies is taken from their Web sites and the stakeholder magazines studied.

Considering my aim to look at linguistic text material from a business perspective, it was essential to find enough information about the companies I would include in the study. In more detail, the purpose was to find companies who take a stand as regards the ethics of the company's business and openly state what the strategy/-ies, values, or perhaps, the codes of conduct[1] of the company are. Luckily, today almost all larger companies publish this information, for in today's business world one has to be transparent and think about the consequences of their business to survive. What is more, this information can often be found on the Internet, which means easy access, as in this case. In fact, it has to be pointed out that all information as regards the two companies is public and the two companies are presented in this study purely based on these "facts". Therefore, this text should not be regarded as representing the companies from the inside, but as an interpretation of an outsider.

Furthermore, it was considered best to choose two companies from the same field of industry (chemicals industry). This makes possible comparisons between the companies and their publications more plausible. It was decided that companies that deal in products (especially) harmful for the environment are the best choice, since it is these companies that certainly have to take into account the ethics of their business, for example, protecting the environment. It was found that two Finnish companies that make these "harmful" products, Neste Oil and Kemira, have very

[1] According to the International Labour Organization (2008), corporate codes of conduct refer to "companies' policy statements that define ethical standards for their conduct". The codes of conduct are voluntary and there do not exist any rules as to what issues the codes should cover.

informative Web sites and publish their stakeholder magazines on the Internet. This made the two companies best candidates for my study.

Compared to modern computerized corpora, the material for this study is small. However, since this study focuses on a specific text type and elements that are expected to appear rather frequently, a million-word-corpus is not needed here. In fact, the magazines studied were very uniform as regards text content from issue to issue and it was decided that issues covering one year give a good picture of level of promotion of the two stakeholder magazines. Furthermore, compared to the 5357 sentences analysed in this study, Pander Maat (2007) studied 1025 sentences, which already yielded interesting results. Having had more material would have made the manual task too difficult and this would only have affected the results negatively. In the following, I will discuss the material as well as Kemira and Neste Oil in more detail.

4.1 Kemira and *Kemira News*

> Kemira is a chemicals group made up of four business areas: Kemira Pulp&Paper, Kemira Water, Kemira Specialty and Kemira Coatings. Kemira is a global group of leading chemical businesses with a unique competitive position and a high degree of mutual synergy.

This is “Kemira in Brief” on the opening page of *Kemira* magazine. In addition to being highly promotional, this small excerpt only gives us very rudimentary information about Kemira. Therefore, let us browse Kemira’s web pages to find more information about the company’s current situation and its values.

Looking at Kemira’s web pages, it is obvious that the company has understood its responsibilities and, on the other hand, it knows how to use the responsibilities as a promotional and strategic tool. “Responsibility is an integral part of good business”, the company states and it divides its responsibilities into three sub-categories: economic, social and environmental responsibility. In addition, it is stated that Kemira conducts its business ethically, conforming to “applicable laws” and it adheres to the company’s Code of Conduct in all activities. As stated on the web pages, the Code of Conduct addresses the following issues:

- Financial reporting
- Environment, health and safety (EHS)
- Business partners
- Fair competition
- Conflicts of interest and bribery
- Support for human rights
- Insider information and investor relations
- Company assets
- Confidentiality and privacy
- Reporting procedures

It was stated above that the companies for this study were chosen because of the toxic nature of their products. It is clear that not all Kemira’s products are toxic or harmful for humans or nature, but it is enough that some of them are. The fact that Kemira deals in at least some toxic products means that the company has to acknowledge its responsibilities and justify its actions in today’s alert and green-minded world.

Kemira News is Kemira’s stakeholder magazine published in English. It is a quarterly magazine and contains 31 pages of news and articles that relate to the company or its business area. The shortest texts in the magazine are “short news” or “news in brief” that contain only a couple of sentences, whereas the longest, feature articles, are several pages long.

4.2 Neste Oil and *Refine*

Neste Oil is comprised of five business areas, namely Oil Refining, Biodiesel, Specialty Products, Oil Retail and Shipping. As well as Kemira, Neste Oil informs that it has economic, social and environmental responsibilities. As regards environmental responsibility, the company mainly discusses combating the climate change and the role of NExBLT renewable diesel in this combat is emphasized. In addition, Neste Oil states it has responsibilities as regards the following: production, products, safety, as well as communication and reports.

What makes Neste Oil an especially interesting company to study is its current biodiesel businesses that have aroused plenty of controversy among researchers and the general public. Although Neste Oil (Refine 3/2007, 6) states that their second generation biodiesel will produce 40-60% less greenhouse gas emissions than fossil diesel fuels, there are many people who do not accept this seemingly revolutionary product. Those who are more cynical about the benefits of biofuels claim that the emissions caused by producing the plant-based fuels override the benefits gained in the use of the product. In her article “Biofuels Deemed a Greenhouse Threat” Elisabeth Rosenthal (2008) writes:

> Almost all biofuels used today cause more greenhouse gas emissions than conventional fuels if the full emissions costs of producing these “green” fuels are taken into account, two studies being published Thursday have concluded.
> […]
> Together the two studies offer sweeping conclusions: It does not matter if it is rain forest or scrubland that is cleared, the greenhouse gas contribution is significant. More important, they discovered that, taken globally, the production of almost all biofuels resulted, directly or indirectly, intentionally or not, in new lands being cleared, either for food or fuel.

Furthermore, in her article “Biofuel suddenly changed from a good guy to a bad guy” Terhi Reskola (2008) writes that biofuels are responsible for rising oil and food prices. Neste Oil is aware of these problems and states that it wants to find alternative feedstock to palm oil “as soon as possible”. However, production is still mainly based on vegetable oil and animal fat. As a result, biodiesel is definitely something to be promoted in the often extremely adversarial public. One can justifiably expect to find a number of promotional elements in articles discussing this issue.

Like Kemira, Neste Oil also uses its business ethics for promotional purposes. In fact, at the same time as this study was being conducted, Neste Oil had an advertising campaign for renewable diesel in television and newspapers. In the advertisements, the company’s view is that using renewable diesel unquestionably makes the world a cleaner place to live in. An excellent example of using business ethics as a promotional tool is an advertisement in the Finnish newspaper

Aamulehti that appeared Apr 7th, 2008. The following is my translation of the advertisement in question:

> **We were not going to invest €800 million in environmental responsibility just because it happens to be fashionable.**
>
> We have so far been committed to using €800 million to factories producing high quality renewable diesel. It is a lot of money. We have not done it because it is fashionable to care for nature. Nor because we had that much extra. We did it because producing eco-friendly fuels is our business.
>
> The need for biofuels is based on the fact that when using them it is possible to cut greenhouse emissions. We produce biofuels, and we are one of the world's best in it. It sounds like good business.
>
> We are going to retain our leading position in this business. It is only going to work by doing things as we have done so far: by searching for more and more eco-friendly raw materials and by using them to create better and better fuels. Read more in www.nesteoil.fi.

Last but not least, Neste Oil's slogan "refining the future", which is an integral part of its communications strategy, is shown in both television and print advertisements.

Neste Oil's stakeholder magazine for other than Finnish-speaking audiences is called *Refine* and like *Kemira News*, it is a quarterly magazine. Each issue consists of 37 pages of news excerpts and other articles. On average, the texts in *Refine* are not as long as in *Kemira News*. Nevertheless, the layout of the magazines is very similar: they consist of vivid pictures and texts from a couple of sentences to almost a hundred sentences long.

4.3 The method

As was mentioned earlier, identification of promotional elements in the material will be done based on Pander Maat's (2007) model. What is more, using the same method enables me to compare the results of the two studies. Therefore, the following presents Pander Maat's method in his first study, slightly modified for the purposes of my study.

In Pander Maat's analysis, a language item had to fulfil two requirements in order to be considered promotional. The requirements are the following:

> First, a PE needed to intensify a statement in a direction favorable to the sender.
>
> The second requirement for PEs is that either they can be left out without affecting the grammaticality and the interpretation of the sentence or they can easily be replaced by a weaker element.

Pander Maat (2007, 68) further comments on the identification of promotional elements that a PE does not have to refer to the company in question, as long as it "support[s] certain conclusions that are positive for the company." Complying with this guideline was particularly tricky and I had to be careful not to go too far with the "certain conclusions". Therefore, for example, PEs that promote subsidiaries or partners were counted, but positive statements about individuals that are linked to the two companies only vaguely were not considered PEs. For example, an article in *Refine* 1/2007 features Elina Vähälä, a violinist, and the article includes promotional elements such as *already* in: "By the age of 12, Elina Vähälä was already playing as a soloist". However, even though the article states that Neste Oil is one of the sponsors of Naantali Music Festival where Elina Vähälä performed in 2007, the word *already* is not considered promotional. If the word had promoted the music festival and not a visiting artist, the promotional link to Neste Oil would have been more plausible. Additionally, it should be noted that PEs usually strengthen positive statements, but they can also be used to mitigate negative statements. These mitigators can often be found in texts that present, perhaps, disappointing financial results.

After the identification of PEs, Pander Maat grouped his findings into four categories and several subcategories. The same was done in this study, although due to the larger and different type of text material it was considered necessary to add categories to those that Pander Maat presents. Furthermore, the examples of each category are taken from the material in this study and therefore Table1 represents Pander Maat's Table 1 (2007, 69) modified for the purposes of this study. The added categories are *property specifying adverbs*, *mitigating adverbs*, *mitigating adjectives* and *other*.

Table 1. Kinds of promotional elements

Category	Subcategory	
Premodifiers		Amplifying prefixes indicating extreme degrees of positively evaluated properties, such as *brand new* and nominal premodifiers indicating exceptional quality, such as *cutting-edge* innovation and *high-quality* capacity
Adjectives	Intensifying adjectives	Adjectives intensifying the interpretation of the noun, such as *important*, *large* and *true*
	Mitigating adjectives	Adjectives "softening" the interpretation of a negative phenomenon such as *slight drop*
	Evaluative adjectives	These adjectives refer to positive evaluations without specifying the property giving rise to this evaluation. Examples are *good*, *groundbreaking*, *significant*
	Property specifying adjectives	Some of these adjectives evoke a positive attitude in general, such as *efficient*. Others refer to properties that are not necessarily positively evaluated but are definitely so in the present context, such as *continuous*, *long-term*
	Intensifying quantifiers	This category includes -quantifiers preceding plural noun phrases such as *all, various, several hundreds, many* -elements indicating quantities beyond some expectation, primarily *extra* -intensifying elements referring to proportions, such as *entire*
	Comparative and superlative degrees	Superlatives were counted as promotional when they could easily be replaced by a weaker alternative expression. For instance, the superlative in "Neste Oil was the first oil company to join the Roundtable" was not counted as a promotional element, as it constitutes the core information of the sentence. By contrast, *the fastest* in the following sentence was counted as promotional: "Tailpipe emissions are one of the factors contributing to global warming, and diesel vehicles are the fastest way of reducing the latter." In this sentence, *the fastest* can easily be replaced by *a fast*.
Adverb elements	Intensifying adverbs	This category includes items such as *significantly*, *very*, *strongly* and *easily*
	Mitigating adverbs	Adverbs "softening" the interpretation of a negative phenomenon such as *slightly* in *slightly below expectations*
	Property specifying adverbs	This category includes items such as *comprehensively*, *quickly*, *successfully* and *best* in *best known*
	Time adjuncts	This category includes items such as *already*, which in this corpus is used to suggest that a positively evaluated situation starts to hold earlier than was expected or has been holding longer than was expected. Other items include *often*, *simultaneously* and *never* in: "We were never in no doubt."
	Place	This category includes items such as *worldwide* and *throughout the world*

Table 1. (continued)

Category	Subcategory	
	Quantity intensifiers	Intensifiers of numerals were counted when indicating positively evaluated quantities. This includes items such as *almost*, *over* and *more than*. Similarly, *only* in "*only* four other Finnish companies are included" emphasizes the uniqueness of the company for it belongs to such small group
	Quantity mitigators	Mitigators of numerals were counted when referring to negatively evaluated quantities. This includes items such as *only*, *less than* and *under*. Example sentence: "The plant was closed in 1992, after which only limited amounts of chemical waste have been transported to the landfill."
	Modal intensifiers	This includes items such as *of course*, *simply* and *naturally*. Example sentence: "If our customers in the USA or Asia have some problem, naturally our experts of course fly there too."
Connectives	-	This category does not include items such as *and* but only includes those connectives that emphasize the length of the list in one way or another. Examples are *moreover*, *besides*, *X and not just Y* and *both X and Y*
Other	-	This category includes items that could not be placed in any other group. Examples: -the pronouns *all* and *both* in "we can all make a contribution" and "Neste Oil's retail and shipping segments both had consistent quarters" -the determiners *whatever* and *such an* in "whatever information they need" and "such an important part of modern life"

Pander Maat's model of grouping the PEs was followed simply to further help me in the analysis: studying Pander Maat's groups and example words made it easier for me to decide which textual elements could be counted as promotional in my material. Therefore, the number of words in the different subcategories is not as important as is the total number of PEs in the magazines. However, in chapter 5 I will present the results so that the grammatical categories of the different PEs are shown.

Finally, it is important to note that the analysis of the material is done manually because of the stylistic nature of the analysis. It is probable that if compiled by another researcher, the results of this study would be slightly different because of the large size of the material and, most importantly, the qualitative nature of the analysis. Although the coding of PEs might seem straightforward after what is presented above, there were instances in the course of the study where it was impossible to state for certain whether an element was used promotionally or not. Pander Maat (2007, 71) also remarks this difficulty and writes that his two coders initially “agreed on 71% of all items that were considered”. However, this difficulty was taken into consideration and erroneous results were minimized by careful analysis and re-analysis of the material. In the end, most PEs found were very clearly promotional following the requirements above and, indeed, the exact same words (translated from Dutch) were presented in Pander Maat’s study as well. Therefore, the following section presents numbers that can be regarded as precise enough for the purposes of this study.

5. Results

5.1 Promotional elements

Table 2 presents the overall distribution of PEs in the eight issues studied. The most important thing that emerges from the results is that the number of PEs is not even close to what was hypothesized; that is, the mean number of 0.66 PEs/sentence. In fact, the amount of promotion in the two magazines is more close to what Pander Maat (2007) found in his Corpus 2 (0.38), which included published press releases modified by journalists. It was thought that promotion in the two stakeholder magazines would exceed the average of 0.38 PEs/sentence because the texts in the magazines are not modified by external parties sensitive of excessive promotion. It seems as if journalists, whether company external or internal, were sensitive of abundant use of PEs.

Table 2. The frequencies of PEs in the two magazines

	Sentences studied	PEs	PEs/sentence
Kemira News 1/2007	618	261	0.42
Kemira News 2/2007	754	263	0.35
Kemira News 3/2007	760	249	0.33
Kemira News 4/2007	722	259	0.36
Kemira News total	*2854*	*1032*	*0.36*
Refine 1/2007	665	233	0.35
Refine 2/2007	615	160	0.26
Refine 3/2007	578	177	0.31
Refine 4/2007	645	134	0.21
Refine total	*2503*	*704*	*0.28*

According to table 2, the mean number of PEs is quite markedly higher in *Kemira News* than in *Refine*. In fact, the issues of *Kemira News* not only include more PEs, but the number of PEs is also more uniform from issue to issue. The difference between the least and most promoted issues is 0.09 as regards *Kemira News* and 0.14 as regards *Refine*. This suggests that the style of writing in *Kemira News* in general is more uniform.

Does the lower number of PEs in *Refine*, then, suggest that the magazine is more factual and formal in style? This could well be the case, since more factual texts typically allow less promotion. However, in the case of the two stakeholder magazines, this is hardly true for there were no other elements indicating that *Refine* is more factual than *Kemira News*. The most probable explanation for the lower frequency of PEs in *Refine* can be found in the wide array of article topics and in the informal style that articles in *Refine* often employ. Many of the articles in *Refine* include prose-like text that does not promote the company but surely stirs the reader's interest and makes the text more readable. Furthermore, the issues discussed in the articles go beyond the company's products, important customers, financial results or personnel changes. When the link between the company and the topic becomes more obscure, clear instances of PEs become harder to find. The articles do include promotion, but the link between the promotion and the company in question often turned out to be very vague and no PEs could be counted. The effect of article topic on the number of PEs is discussed further below.

Table 2 also shows that the average number of sentences in *Refine* is lower than the number of sentences in *Kemira News*. In sections 4.1 and 4.2 I stated that the number of pages in the issues of *Kemira News* is 31, whereas each issue of *Refine* consists of 37 pages. Thus, even though *Refine* consists of more pages, it contains less text on average. This is due to the fact that the texts are very fragmented in *Refine* and large, vivid pictures occupy a large part of the printing space. Of course, the best way to compare the amount of text between the magazines would be to count the number of words used, but this was too enormous a task to be carried out manually.

Table 3. Frequencies of PEs in the17 categories

Category	Subcategory	Frequency in Kemira News	Frequency in Refine	Example
Premodifiers	-	21(2%)	35(5%)	*premium-quality*
Adjectives	Intensifying adjectives	115	55	*extensive*
	Mitigating adjectives	3	0	*slight*
	Evaluative adjectives	102	55	*good*
	Property specifying adjectives	138	57	*continuous*
	Intensifying quantifiers	108	98	*many*
	Comparative and superlative degrees	55	22	*one of the best*
	Total adjectives	*521(50%)*	*287(41%)*	
Adverb elements	Intensifying adverbs	223	181	*significantly*
	Mitigating adverbs	1	5	*slightly*
	Property specifying adverbs	28	33	*actively*
	Time adjuncts	75	56	*already*
	Place	13	8	*worldwide*
	Quantity intensifiers	54	43	*almost*
	Quantity mitigators	6	4	*under*
	Modal intensifiers	23	12	*of course*
	Total adverbials	*423(41%)*	*342(49%)*	
Connectives	-	60(6%)	35(5%)	*in addition to X, also Y*
Other	-	7	5	*such an*
Total		1032(100%)	704(100%)	

The PEs were next divided into groups according to their grammatical categories as was shown in section 4.3, The Method. Table 3 presents the number of PEs in the different categories as well as an example of each category. The number of PEs as regards premodifiers, total adjectives, total adverbials and connectives are also given in percentages. Because the example elements in Table 3 are out of context, their promotional nature may be difficult to interpret. Therefore, a few example sentences are in order. The following examples include a PE from one of the five main categories:

> The relationship between Huber and Kemira is a *schoolbook* (=premodifier) example of plus-plus symbiosis. (Kemira News 4/2007, 15)
>
> Vegetable oil and surplus fats represent *important* (=intensifying adjective) future raw material inputs for our renewable diesel plants […] (Refine 1/2007, 17)
>
> Now Kemira *already* (=time adjunct) has three production plants in the country. (Kemira News 4/2007, 22)
>
> The development has been rapid especially during the last two years, and it has resulted *both* in new innovations *and* (=connective) in applications offered to customers. (Kemira News 4/2007, 21)

> Caught in this type of traffic, it is easy to understand the need to reduce vehicle emissions, especially as cars and trucks are *such an* (= other: predeterminer) important part of modern life. (Refine 3/2007, 20)

Initially, it was thought that categorizing the PEs is important only because it helps in the process of selecting PEs. However, this information proved to be very interesting when comparing the two magazines. Figure 4 shows that the distribution of PEs is very similar in the two magazines. It is only three categories - intensifying adjectives, evaluative adjectives and property specifying adjectives - that make the curves differ slightly. However, one should also mention the group premodifiers, although there does not seem to be a marked difference in the curves as regards this group. When examining the figures in Table 3, one notices that the frequency of premodifiers in *Refine* is almost twice of that in *Kemira News*. It is due to the rather small number of premodifiers in both magazines that this difference is not clearly visible in Figure 4. Nevertheless, the curves for the two magazines are surprisingly identical in terms of their shape. This is, of course, an indication of the fact that the texts studied are very similar – so similar, in fact, that they belong to the same genre. However, one should also study promotional texts in different genres to be able to state for certain whether the distribution of PEs shown in Figure 4 is a genre-specific quality.

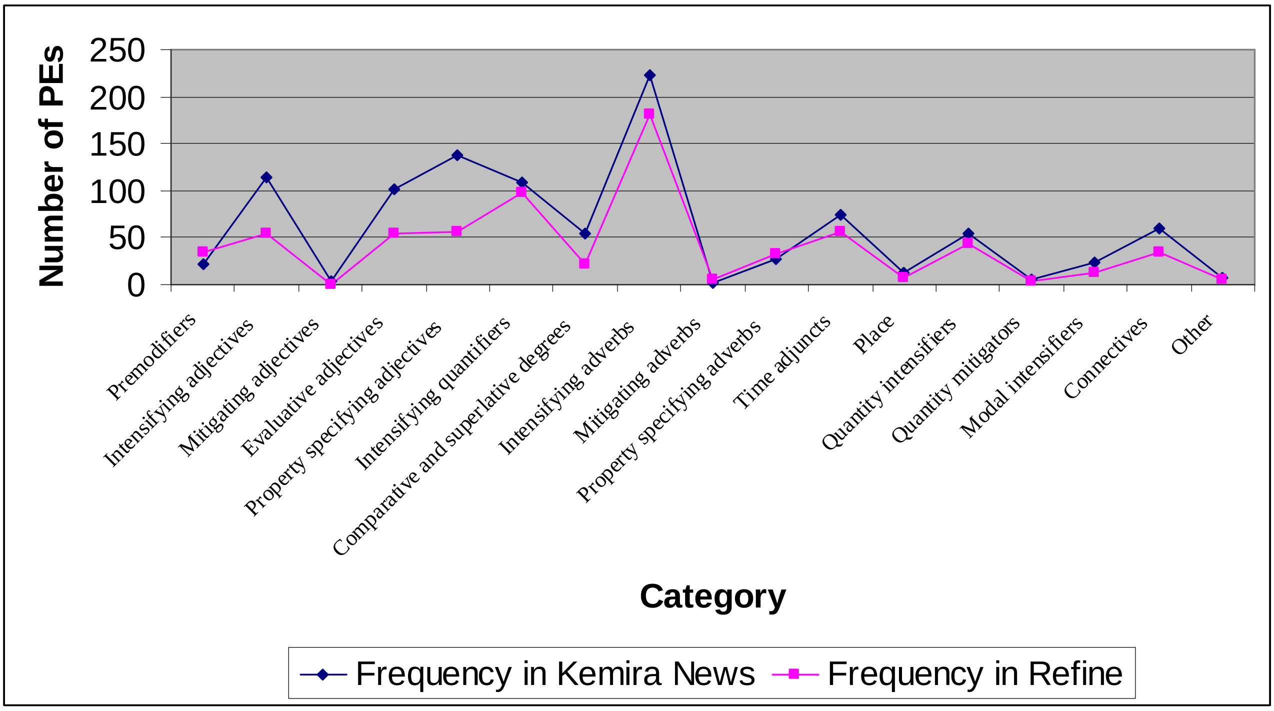

Figure 4. The number of PEs in different categories

The final step in the linguistic analysis was to examine the distribution of PEs in different text topics. In his article on persuasion in advertising, Bruthiaux (2005, 137) states that content is one of the most important things that affect the syntax of a text. Therefore, it can be expected that the use of PEs is not uniform in different text topics. The results for the two magazines are shown in different tables because the texts in them could not be imposed under the same categories. However, there are similarities in the categories and as regards some of the themes, comparisons between the magazines can be made.

The results as regards *Kemira News* are shown in Table 4. The texts in *Kemira News* were divided into 15 groups. The following gives a short description of the texts in the different categories:

Editorial	Editorials written by an employee in managerial position, four different authors.
News: Short news	News texts that the magazine labels as “short news” or “news in brief”. The texts are typically a couple of sentences long and address various topics.
News: Executing the strategy	News about acquisitions, mergers, expanding business and other similar strategic moves.
News: Personnel changes	News about personnel changes, nominations and re-elections.
News: Active in society	News that show Kemira is an active and responsible player in surrounding society. For example, news on Kemira’s CSR activity, received awards and sponsorship issues.
Financial results & stockmarket	Financial results, economic outlook of the industry and stockmarket.
Agenda	Management interviews on an important topic. The topic relates to the manager’s position in the company.
New service	Articles introducing a new service enabled by advanced technology.
Industry	Articles presenting current affairs that relate to the whole chemicals industry or global business environment.
Cooperation	Presentations of successful cooperation.
Product	Articles presenting (new) products and their special characteristics.
R&D & innovation	R&D & innovation in Kemira.

Emerging markets	Articles presenting emerging markets, such as China as regards paper production and Russia as regards paints.
CSR	Articles addressing social responsibility.
Extra info	Short texts giving extra/background information to the longer articles. These texts are provided in separate "boxes" in connection with the articles.

Besides editorials, news texts, financial results and extra info texts, the texts in the magazines are longer articles. It was decided that the news titled *Short News* should be given a separate category even if the texts address issues with varying topics. This was done because these texts are distinctly shorter than other news texts, and the length itself can be reflected in the number of PEs employed. The magazine also presents these news texts in separate sections. The main idea behind Short news is "writing as briefly as possible", which also means that they hardly focus on the most important issues to be discussed. The same categorisation principle was used as regards *Extra info* texts: they form a category not so much in terms of a uniform text topic, but in terms of formal properties. Dividing both Short news and Extra info texts into subcategories would have resulted in too many categories that would have complicated the analysis too much. Besides, it is not wise to put too much effort on analysing texts that have a minor role in the magazines.

Table 4: Frequencies in different text topics – Kemira News

Text topic	Number of texts	Sentences analyzed	Number of PEs	PEs/sentence
Editorial	4	73	50	0.68
News: Short news	38	91	22	0.24
News: Executing the strategy	17	231	84	0.36
News: Personnel changes	3	49	19	0.39
News: Active in society	6	47	10	0.21
Financial results & stockmarket	11	260	58	0.22
Agenda	5	314	97	0.31
New service	3	179	87	0.49
Industry	6	274	58	0.21
Cooperation	3	117	45	0.38
Product	4	175	70	0.40
R&D and innovation	9	437	165	0.38
Emerging markets	4	314	149	0.47
CSR	2	88	22	0.25
Extra info	12	205	96	0.47
Total	127	2854	1032	0.36

The mean numbers of PEs in different text categories vary from 0.21 to 0.68. Quite expectedly, editorials include the most PEs. It can be stated that in editorials, a key employee (even the CEO himself) has an opportunity to speak about and promote an important current affair. In fact, this is the case as regards the four issues of *Kemira News* where an employee in managerial position addresses a current topic that is further discussed in one of the other articles. To persuade the readers to think that the issue is important, PEs come in handy. Further, PEs also make the text more vivid and thus entice the reader to read more. In *Kemira News*, there was one editorial that included clearly more PEs than the other three texts: the mean number of PEs for this text is as high as 1.38. Interestingly enough, this was the only editorial that was written by a male writer, which leads to think that, perhaps, men use promotional language more easily. However, to prove this assumption right, one would need more material from both male and female writers.

On the other hand, the smallest figure 0.21 as regards industry related issues is also quite expected. These texts tend to be more factual addressing issues that are not so strongly connected with Kemira's financial performance. Further, low mean numbers 0.22 as regards financial results and stockmarket and 0.24 as regards short news also comply with expectations. Although other researchers have also found promotion in financial reports, the number of PEs cannot be very high in these "more serious" texts to retain credibility. The brief form of Short news texts, on the other hand, seems to have an effect on the number of PEs as was expected: the shorter the text, the more factual it tends to be because there simply is not room for many PEs, if any.

Other topics that are of interest are *New service*, *Emerging markets* and *Extra info*. The three articles discussing a new service presented the service as a rather revolutionary one, which explains the higher-than-average use of promotion. Ample use of PEs as regards emerging markets is also not a surprise. Making inroads into new markets is always risky and the company will naturally want to present its new moves in a positive light. Using PEs may help to justify the expensive strategic move to the critical reader. The promotion used as regards Extra info texts, on the other hand, is slightly surprising. One might expect to find most of the promotion in the main article, whereas the extra information is just a subsidiary text to make the reader more familiar with the issue. Indeed, it is true that some of these texts included very few PEs, if any, but some were highly promotional which made the mean figure jump high. It is because the subject matter of these texts varied considerably that this category includes texts with vary different numbers of PEs. In a more lengthy study, then, one might consider categorising these texts according to their subject matter.

Next, I will present the 19 text topics found in *Refine*. The results, then, are shown in Table 5.

Editorial	Editorials written by the senior vice president or the CEO.
News: Executing the strategy	News about acquisitions, mergers, expanding business and other similar strategic moves.
News: Industry	Industry-related news such as information on crude prices.
News: Active in society	News that show Neste Oil is an active and responsible player in surrounding society. For example, news on Neste Oil's CSR activity, received awards and sponsorship issues.
News: Biofuels and NExBTL	News texts on third generation biofuels and Neste Oil's renewable diesel NExBTL in particular.
News: Products	News texts on Neste Oil's products other than NExBTL.
Financial results	Neste oil's quarterly results and an analyst's comment on the results.
Products[2]	*Information, comparisons and test results*.
Biodiesel	*A series of articles on the birth of a new fuel*.
Agenda	Management interviews on an important topic. The topic relates to the manager's position in the company.
Interview: biofuels	Asking experts and consumers about their expectations on third generation biofuels and NExBTL in particular.
Products in use	Articles taking a closer look into the customers' operations.
Expert column	Columns with varying topics written by an expert

[2] The italicised parts are quoted from Refine.

Shipping and storing	Articles introducing Neste Oil's shipping operations with special emphasis on marine shipments.
Q&A	The readers' questions about Neste Oil, its products and services answered by a relevant expert.
Future trends	A series of articles addressing future trends in the oil industry.
Sponsorship	Articles introducing sponsored events or people participating in the events.
Services	*This series of articles will profile the various services Neste Oil offers its customers.*
Extra info	Short texts giving extra/background information to the longer articles.

The categories as regards *Refine* show very many similarities to those found in *Kemira News*. As regards both of the magazines, it is possible to make a basic division between short news texts and longer articles.

Table 5. Frequencies in different text topics – Refine

Text topic	Number of texts	Sentences analyzed	Number of PEs	PEs/sentence
Editorial	4	62	55	0.89
News: Executing the strategy	11	34	6	0.18
News: Industry	5	32	4	0.13
News: Active in society	15	61	8	0.13
News: Biofuels & NExBTL	16	51	17	0.33
News: Products	4	26	6	0.23
Quarterly & comment	8	113	33	0.29
Products	26	190	45	0.24
Biodiesel	9	323	116	0.36
Agenda	4	248	128	0.52
Interview:biofuels	3	67	18	0.27
Products in use	4	167	35	0.21
Expert column	4	74	16	0.22
On board and on land	6	283	65	0.23
Q&A	4	99	14	0.14
Future trends	6	221	57	0.26
Sponsorship	4	168	11	0.07
Services	4	83	37	0.45
Extra info	19	201	33	0.16
Total	156	2503	704	0.28

The mean numbers of PEs as regards *Refine* vary from 0.07 in articles discussing sponsorship to 0.89 in editorials. The difference between the most and least promoted articles is greater than was found in *Kemira News*. Again, it is editorials that include most promotion, and what is especially interesting here is that editorials in *Refine* contain more PEs than *Kemira News* even though, on average, the magazine includes less promotion. Three of the editorials are written by the same employee (the senior vice president) and one by the CEO (chief executive officer), which suggests that Neste Oil truly wants to bring forth its "top people". Furthermore, all of the editorials are written by a male author, which again suggests that men use more PEs than women, at least if comparing to the editorials in *Kemira News*. However, it is impossible to state whether the high promotion in editorials in *Refine* is due to the sex of the authors or the style of the magazine since there were no editorials written by a female employee in this magazine.

In addition to editorials, the topics including most promotion are *Agenda* and *Services*. The more interesting topic here is, perhaps, *Agenda* with the mean number of 0.52 PEs/sentence. As regards *Kemira News*, this topic included less promotion than the texts on average, whereas here the case is the opposite. It is plausible to compare this topic between the two magazines because the text content is very similar (which, of course, explains the use of the same title). In fact, I expected to find more PEs as regards this topic in *Kemira News*, whereas the figure as regards refine is more in line with my expectations. In his study, Pander Maat (2007, 73-4) found that quotes contained more promotion than nonquote sentences, which made me expect more PEs in quote-heavy texts like those under the title *Agenda*. As regards the text content, Agenda texts are in fact very similar to editorials that contain most promotion in both of the magazines. The difference between the magazines can be explained by the fact that depending on the employee and the subject matter, the use of PEs varies. However, another possible explanation is yet again the connection between sex and number of PEs employed. As regards Agenda and *Kemira News*, the number of PEs found is 0.17 where women are interviewed and 0.41 in articles with male interviewees. The corresponding figures for Refine are 0.22 for women and as much as 0.61 for men. There seems to be a clear pattern here, although one should study more writings/interviews by both men and women inside the same company to gain more reliable results.

The topic containing least promotion in *Refine,* indeed, employs very little PEs. This appears normal since the articles under the title *Sponsorship* become absorbed in events/people that have no or very little “real” connection between them and Neste Oil. Presenting a musician or a group of schoolchildren in a positive light is hardly a clear enough promotional act. Other topics containing little promotion are also very much in line with my expectations, for they are mainly news texts that one expects to find as more neutral. The mean figure 0.16 as regards *Extra info* is again a good example of a figure that one might expect, as opposed to 0.47 for the same topic in *Kemira News*. Finding the reason for the difference would require more thorough investigation and therefore, suffice it to say that *Refine* is again more in line with expectations.

Finally, the fact that there were more text topics in *Refine* than in *Kemira News* may also have an effect on the lower number of PEs. Some of the topics discussed in *Refine* are very far from the core businesses of the company, as was the case with *Sponsorship* articles. This in part explains the lower amount of promotion. However, let us remind us again that as regards the total numbers of PEs, the differences between the two magazines are not exceptionally large and in this sense, the magazines are very uniform.

5.2 Further analysis

A problematic issue in the analysis of PEs according to text topic is that many of the articles studied introduce several important issues. The categorization of the articles is done according to what appeared to be the main topics discussed. Therefore, even though there were not many articles discussing environmental issues only, environmental matters are referred to in many other articles. For example, the articles on NExBTL are not only texts about products, but also about the environment. The very reason for developing this product (besides economical benefit) is slowing down the greenhouse effect. It is especially with some of the longer articles that clear-cut categorization is difficult to make.

However, let us focus on the different text categories in one more analysis: a final thing that is worth paying attention to is the number of sentences under the different text categories. This information may not tell us much about promotion, but analysing which texts take most of the space in the magazines certainly gives us interesting points to discuss. In more detail, if there is a large amount of text discussing one topic in a magazine, this topic must be important to the company. It is obvious that every journalist has to face the fact that there is a limited amount of space available in a magazine or newspaper and that this space should be used wisely. The distribution of sentences according to text topic is shown in figures 5 and 6 for *Kemira News* and *Refine* respectively. The same information can be found in tables 4 and 5. The figures, however, make the analysis easier.

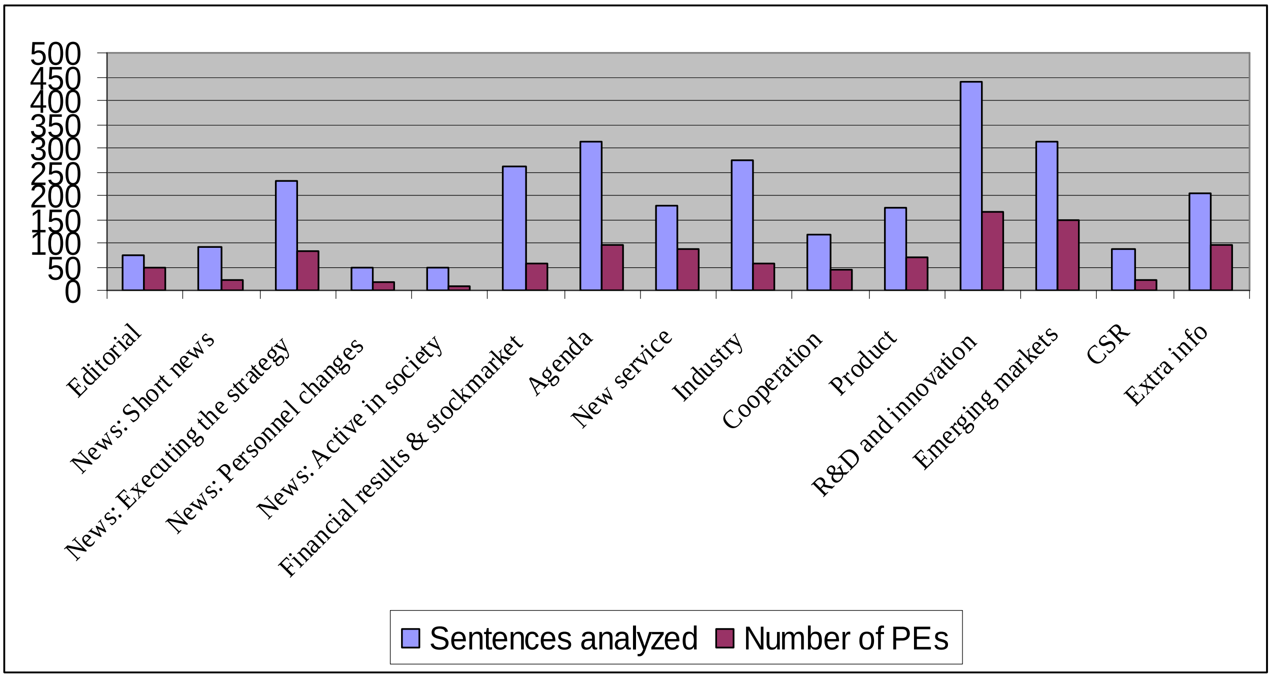

Figure 5. Sentences and PEs in different text topics – Kemira News

As regards the topics in *Kemira News*, the most discussed are *R&D and innovation*, *emerging markets*, *agenda*, *industry* and *financial results and stockmarket*. One should also mention the largest news category, *executing the strategy*, for it clearly stands out from the other news categories. Interestingly enough, the articles discuss Kemira's products fairly little. However, Kemira does not sell only products but services and technology as well, which partly explains the scarcity of product-related articles. In fact, there is a clear emphasis of service-oriented thinking instead of focusing on products in *Kemira News* and in Kemira's business strategy in general. Nevertheless, what the company seems to want to bring forward in its stakeholder magazine is mainly its strategic moves: expanding into new markets, acquisitions, selling of businesses and the like. These issues as well as the wide discussion of R&D and innovation make Kemira seem like a strong player in the market who invests in its future. These topics reflect the fact that Kemira is healthy and expanding. From today's readers' point of view this is interesting, for, according to the Finnish newspaper *Tekniikka&Talous* (Piiroinen, 2008), Kemira may let go as many as 300 employees in Finland. Of course, this particular strategic move does not mean that Kemira is not a healthy business. However, what Kemira communicates in its stakeholder magazine is more likely to evoke a sense of security in employees than fear of losing a job, for strong expansion typically means that there is work to be done tomorrow as well. Therefore, the selection of text topics in *Kemira News* is a promotional act in itself. In any case, the issues emphasized in *Kemira News* are very much in line with what Kemira communicates in its web pages: expanding business, concentrating on customized services and continuous innovation.

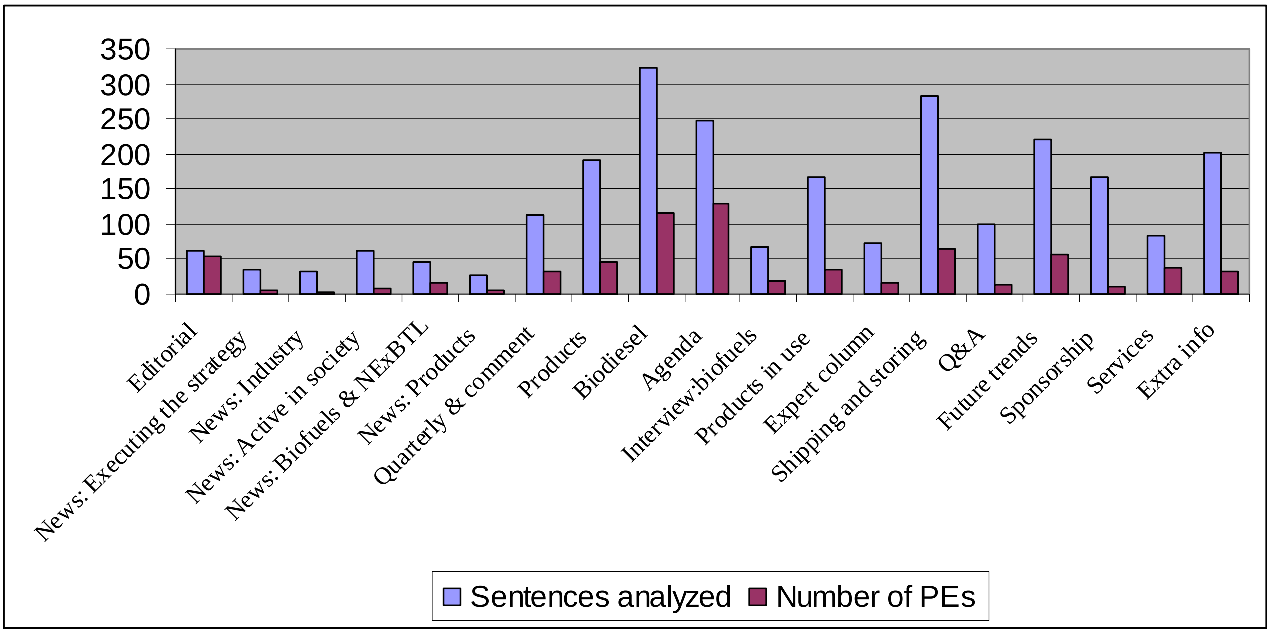

Figure 6. Sentences and PEs in different text topics – Refine

Let us, then, examine the most important text topics in *Refine*. Section 5.1 above states that in *Refine*, many of the texts including little PEs are news texts. However, there is one news category where this is not the case: the category *News: Biofuels and NExBTL* includes more promotion than the texts on average in the magazine. That is, 0.33 PEs/sentence. Figure 6 reveals that this topic is not only promoted when it appears in news, but biofuels and NExBTL in particular are very widely discussed throughout the magazine. In fact, three of the 19 categories in *Refine* discuss Neste Oil's third generation biodiesels only. That is, 441 from the total of 2503 sentences. Furthermore, many of the other articles also address this product. Considering the number of sentences that discuss this issue, it is obvious that Neste Oil's current success is largely due to one product and the technology and knowhow that has led to the development of this product. In addition, *Refine* includes a large amount of discussion on Neste Oil's other products as well.

These results, then, are largely in line with how Neste Oil presents itself and its values on the Internet and in advertisements where the main focus is in combating the climate change with new products. It is important to emphasize the connection between Neste Oil's biofuels and climate change since it is not simply the physical product that the company brings forth but the *benefits* it offers to us. In fact, it would be old fashioned in marketing to emphasize product attributes instead of *meaning* and *experiences* it creates (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 6-7). In the case of biofuels, then, what is important for most stakeholders is how these products can make the world a better place to live in. Communicating detailed technical information about NExBTL, for example, may interest some people, but this information will clearly not create a want to buy in consumers. Therefore, Neste Oil not only communicates well one of its values but it also executes modern marketing strategies.

Comparing the two companies, therefore, it is possible to state that Kemira's stakeholder communication mainly emphasizes innovation and strategic moves, whereas Neste Oil emphasizes its most important product(s) and technology. Interestingly enough, Pander Maat (2007, 72) found that press releases dealing with new products and reorganizations had the most promotional style in his Corpus 2. That is, the very same topics that were most discussed in *Kemira News* and *Refine*, although these topics were not the most promotional in the stakeholder magazines. Nevertheless, it seems that there are some prevailing issues that companies in general want to bring forward in their communication – either by extra promotion or by extra page coverage, depending on the communications channel.

Both of the companies discussed in this study clearly understand the importance of integrated marketing communications and all the texts discussed in this study have been very unified. The issues that the companies emphasize differ slightly, and they both faithfully adhere to their own communications model. As regards the main responsibilities of the companies (economical, social and environmental), the stakeholder magazines do reflect these aspects of doing business. There were articles in both of the magazines dealing with these issues, although they did not necessarily constitute the main topic of the articles. I expected to find special emphasis on environmental awareness because of the current concern for the environment, and texts in *Refine,* indeed emphasized Neste Oil's care for the environment. In *Kemira News,* on the other hand, environmentally friendly way of doing business was discussed as well, but emphasized slightly less than in *Refine*. This is simply due to the fact that a large number of texts in *Refine* discussed the company's environmentally friendly biofuels, whereas the main focus in *Kemira News* was on business strategies. Furthermore, one has to remember that the companies are not identical: they operate in different environments and deal in different products. It can be stated that Neste Oil only deals in products harmful for the environment (even if they're less harmful than some equivalents). Therefore, it is only natural that environmental friendliness is emphasized in the company's publications since people cannot take this aspect of their business for granted.

Above I have discussed the values of Kemira and Neste Oil in connection with the identities of the companies. However, identities do not solely consist of values. What is meant here with the term *identity* is how the companies want others to see them, although an identity is typically a construct of other dimensions as well (Gilpin 2007, 10). What truly reflects the identities of the companies is not necessarily simply the values they state they have. If we consider the topics that were most promotional and most discussed in the two magazines (see the results above), we are beginning to see the true identities of the companies. It seems that in 2007, Kemira wanted to be perceived as a stronger player in the field than it perhaps was, emphasizing successful strategic moves such as expanding business in its stakeholder magazine. The need for extensive lay-offs in Finland, after all, came as a surprise. Neste Oil, on the other hand, put its efforts in emphasizing its controversial products, especially NExBTL. Both of the companies, therefore, discussed what were the most critical issues in their business at the time. It seems that the way Kemira wanted to be perceived was more or less in line with how it truly was perceived by the public because its difficulties later came as a surprise. As regards Neste Oil, on the other hand, what was communicated in stakeholder magazines was not how publics saw the company: the company and its most important products were not regarded as helping the environment by all which is shown in the heavy scepticism towards biofuels. In any case, more thorough discussion on how the identities of the companies are reflected in their publications would require deeper understanding of the two companies and their publics.

6. Discussion

6.1 On results

The most surprising result in this study was the fact that the total number of PEs was only about half of what was expected. Above it was suggested that this scarcity of PEs in some texts may be due to the fact that the link between the text topic and the company in question is not very obvious. Therefore, the fact that there are texts of varying topics affects the total number of PEs as well. However, there are other possible explanations for the rather small number of PEs in the stakeholder magazines.

So far, when discussing the amount of promotion in stakeholder magazines, I have mainly taken the company's point of view: what the company wants to communicate and what it thinks will work. However, the explanation for the low number of PEs may become clear when one is able to step into the audience's shoes. As Virtanen and Halmari (2005, 8-9) write: "It is the audience that will determine what kind of persuasion will work and, therefore, what kind of form a maximally persuasive text in any given situation should take." Therefore, maybe because there are so many different audiences for stakeholder magazines, the companies have to be careful not to use too many PEs and act according to the most critical stakeholders. Especially with adversarial audiences, too ample use of promotion might make the audiences even more adversarial and negative towards the company. Therefore, it is better to "play it safe" than to exaggerate. Furthermore, the careful use of PEs may also be explained by cultural matters. Different cultures often do not share the same language, but even if they do, there may also be differences in the way they use the language. It is a well-known fact that Finnish people tend to be modest, which is also reflected in the way we speak. Carbaugh (1995) has studied the use of "superlative statements", which can be seen as the promotional elements of everyday speech. Carbaugh (1995, 56) argues that Finnish people use clearly less superlative statements than, for example, Americans. For a Finn, such words sound “presumptuous” because of our different cultural meaning system. Similarly, as the writers of *Kemira News* and *Refine* are Finns, abundant use of PEs may sound like too much for them.

As regards the patterning of PEs in the different text topics, most of the results complied with expectations. However, considering the hypotheses set in section 3, one would expect to find more promotion in articles concerning the values of the companies. Besides, there were not many articles that dealt with, for example, environmental issues only. It seems now that most of the promotion was found in the interviews of the executives and articles presenting the companies’ products and services, which sounds like we were truly dealing with advertisements. Furthermore, the news articles titled “Active in Society” (which show social responsibility) as regards both of the magazines and the CSR articles as regards *Kemira News* included fairly little promotion. However, as was discovered, the values of the companies were brought up in many different articles although they did not constitute the main topic of the articles. Also, my underlying assumption that the issues the companies think are most important include most promotion may be wrong here: It is simply easier to add promotion to some issues than others and retain credibility. For example, the article “The Baltic Needs Help” in *Kemira News* (3/2007) addresses a serious environmental issue and includes very little promotion. This is because the article is very informative and PEs are only used in the short section where Kemira’s role in protecting the sea is discussed. Heavy promotion is such article would very likely minimize the company’s credibility on the issue and make the readers suspect the company’s objectives. Treadwell & Treadwell (2005, 273) argue that: “There is always a level beyond which too much or too obvious promotion will hurt a newsletter’s credibility, but this varies by organization, by newsletter, and by public.” However, based on what was discussed above, one should modify the quote to read as follows: There is always a level beyond which too much or too obvious promotion will hurt a newsletter’s credibility, but this varies by organization, by newsletter, *by subject-matter* and by public.

Therefore, besides analyzing the number of PEs in the different text topics, it was thought necessary to pay attention to the number of sentences used in the different articles to be able to discuss the identities of the companies more thoroughly. I argued that paying attention to which text topics take most space in the magazines also reflects company identities and values. Combining the results (the number of PEs and the number of sentences in each text topic), it was concluded that stakeholder magazines are in line with how the companies present themselves on the Internet and the surrounding media, which implies that their communication is integrated and well-planned.

6.2 On methodology

Besides pondering on the meaning of the results, it is important to comment on the methodology of the study. Pander Maat (2007, 93) states in the concluding chapter of his analysis that the coding schema of PEs could be further analyzed. This is true, since there were difficulties at times to decide whether a certain element was promoting the company in question or not. Pander Maat (2007, 93) suggests that “lay readers could be asked to assess the degree of subjectivity/evaluative import associated with the various types of elements”. This procedure might indeed yield interesting results. However, as regards further research, it would probably be most fruitful to go beyond the notion of promotional *elements* and study all those aspects that make a text promotional. Clearly, it is not only some particular easily deleted elements that a writer can use to present a company in especially positive light. This is especially true as regards stakeholder magazines, since the journalists are not constrained by strict news writing conventions. In the course of the study, I found a number of instances where I thought the text content was promotional, but I could not count any words or phrases as promotional complying with the requirements presented in section 4.3. For example, the editorial in *Kemira News* 1/2007 states the following:

> Kemira is unique.

> …our customers experience how our actions reflect our brand promises: Kemira – reliable, cooperative, responsible and proactive.

The words *unique*, *reliable*, *cooperative*, *responsible* and *proactive* could be marked as promotional in some other instances but not those presented above. This is because the words cannot be left out "without affecting the grammaticality and the interpretation of the sentence" and they cannot "easily be replaced by a weaker element". The same is true for the following examples taken from *Kemira News* and *Refine*:

> Kemira's results belonged to the best. (Kemira News 2/2007, 10)
>
> I believe that Kemira's R&D is among the best in the world. (Kemira News 3/2007, 27)
>
> Neste Oil was the first oil company to join the Roundtable. [The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil] (Refine 4/2007, 11)

The superlatives in the first two examples and the ordinal number *first* in the last example constitute the main information of the sentences and, thus, cannot be left out. The second example is a quotation, and one might argue that *in the world* is a place adverbial that works as a PE. However, it was decided that omitting this item would change the content of what the speaker had in mind too much.

The following example, on the other hand, presents two sentences that are "neutral" statements and do not include any promotional elements. However, with the collocation of these sentences there is no doubt that Kemira is, once again, promoted:

> Without it [water], there is no life. Kemira Water provides water treatment products, technology, and knowhow. (Kemira News 3/2007, 25)

One can argue that with this collocation, where the existence of life is connected with Kemira's businesses, one may easily make such interpretation that without Kemira, there is no life, or at least that Kemira brings life to regions where there is a scarcity of clean water. The use of collocation, then, is used for promotional purposes.

Furthermore, one might argue that the style of writing affects the degree of promotion in any given text. In speech as in writing, it is a fact that we use a more colloquial style when we want to appear more close and friendly towards people. The writing in stakeholder magazines is more colloquial than, for example, in hard news writing, which might be a deliberate decision towards promotional effects: we are your friends, we cannot be that bad, can we? An article (Refine 1/2007, 16) featuring Pekka Tuovinen, Neste Oil's Vice President, presents Tuovinen's advice on the fight against climate change to the Finnish Government. The advice includes the following sentences:

> Let's make it [diesel] more popular.
>
> Let's ensure that there's a market for it in Finland.
>
> Let's continue to foster a solid base for technological research and development, as know-how and innovations are critical to success in today's rapidly changing world.

Each of these sentences begin with informal *let's* instead of, for example, the passive construction. The passive "Diesel should be made more popular" is definitely more formal and news-like than any of the examples above. Similarly, some of the articles may address the reader directly, which is another example of the informal style employed in *Refine*:

> Imagine for a moment that you are a fly on the wall when a busload of small investors arrives at Neste Oil to meet Juha-Pekka Kekäläinen. (Refine 2/2007, 15)

What is more, the longer articles in *Refine* often begin with a description that one would normally expect to find in prose rather than in news writing:

> The sun has almost a spring feeling to it as it shines through the windows of the office of Neste Oil's Vice President, HSE Pekka Tuovinen. It is so bright, in fact, that Tuovinen has to get up and adjust the blinds… (Refine 1/2007, 15)
>
> A heat shimmer can be seen above the train standing at St Petersburg's Finland Station, where passengers are waiting for it to depart, surrounded by their luggage and the bustle of the station. (Refine 2/2007, 19)

The prose-like text as well as the direct address and the informal style all serve the same function: to bring the company closer to its readers, to appear friendly and to evoke positive feelings in the readership. Behind these things there exists the underlying aspiration to create goodwill towards the company and to build and sustain long-term, profitable relationships.

However, even though there were several instances in the texts studied I thought were promotional but where no PEs could be found, this does not mean that the idea of promotional elements as is presented in this and Pander Maat's study should be completely discarded. A major part of promotional language, in the end, does appear in the form of "deleteable" elements, which means that this study is a good starting point to the study of promotional language in stakeholder magazines. In any case, the notion of *promotional elements* in the sense that Pander Maat presents it is best suited to studying press releases. Press releases are news texts and because of the formal restrictions of news texts, many of the "additional" ways of making the text promotional are very unlikely. For example, using informal language and direct reference such as "let's" would make the news text less plausible. Deletable lexical items, then, are probably the easiest way of adding promotion to news texts. Stakeholder magazine journalists, on the other hand, are free to use more diverse methods to make their text promotional and vivid.

7. Conclusion

Today's businesses are in constant change: new businesses emerge, old operations become outdated and every business has to be able to evolve to survive. It is clear that as businesses evolve, corporate communication has to change as well. Because of this fast changing environment, business texts serve as fruitful material for linguistic analysis and stakeholder magazines do not make an exception to this.

Stakeholder magazines are, in fact, a fairly recent product of the changing field of corporate communications. Since this is the case, stakeholder magazines have not yet aroused the interest of many linguists. Furthermore, linguists may prefer to study the more "serious" publications that companies send or publications that have a clearer impact on financial performance. In any case, I argue that the texts used in this study are well worth examining more closely. What makes stakeholder magazines an especially interesting research material is that texts in these magazines are combinations of two quite distant genres - news and advertising. In this study, I argued, however, that stakeholder magazines form a genre of their own in a colony of business genres. The main reason for categorizing the texts under one genre is their common communicative purpose: promotion. Presenting this particular genre as part of other overlapping genres is an excellent way of showing the multi-dimensional nature of the genre in question.

As regards the overall number of PEs, the results of the study were surprising: the number of PEs was roughly half of what was expected. Three possible explanations for the rather low frequency were introduced. Firstly, because of the fact that the texts in the stakeholder magazines discussed various different topics, the promotional link between some superlative statements and the company was far-fetched, which means that these words were not considered PEs. This was especially the case with *Refine* in which the range of text topics was more diverse than in *Kemira News*. Secondly, the fact that stakeholder magazines are targeted at multiple audiences means that the companies should use promotion according to the most sensitive audiences. These are the possible adversarial audiences that I argued stakeholder magazines have. Thirdly, it was argued that the cultural background of the stakeholder magazine journalists has an effect on the amount of promotion used. Avoiding the use of excessive superlatives is a pervasive feature of Finnish communication, which may partly explain the careful use of PEs in *Kemira News* and *Refine*.

In addition to the overall number of PEs, I studied the patterning of PEs and the number of sentences according to text topic. These results were examined from both linguistic and business point of view. This means that, in addition to linguistic theories, the business environments of Kemira and Neste Oil were briefly presented and relevant business theories were discussed. This approach can be justified from both practical and theoretical grounds. Today, an increasing number of language professionals are in charge of corporate communications, and to succeed in their work, deep understanding of the two fields is crucial. On the other hand, referring to mere linguistic theories would only enable us to pick out eulogistic words from the text but analyzing the meaning of these words in the business context would be impossible. The results of further research showed that, all in all, the stakeholder magazines of the two companies are very much in line with other messages that the companies send. It was concluded, however, that in order to reach more plausible links between the study results and the business context, more thorough understanding of the business contexts of the two companies would have been necessary.

This study hopefully functions as a starting point for a number of similar studies on the subject. Advertisements, forming the most prototypical genre of promotional genres, are widely studied, but more research on the less prototypical promotional texts is needed. Stakeholder magazines are not among the most serious or important publications of companies, but there is no question that studying these texts will lead to interesting results.

Taking into consideration the difficulties of this study, the first step in future research would be to further define the study questions. Stakeholder magazines include different types of texts, and even though all of these texts include promotion, it is best to focus on a specific text type.

Conversely, one may compare the different texts but focus on fewer magazines to avoid making the study overwhelming. What emerged from the results of this study is that PEs might be used more readily by male writers/speakers. The effect of sex on the use of promotional language would, therefore, be an excellent subject for future research. Similarly, it would be interesting to study whether there is a reduction of PEs when a press release is reused in a stakeholder magazine. Furthermore, I suggest that similar study be carried out during a different economic situation to see whether economic fluctuation has an effect on the amount of promotional language used. In any case, the possibilities for future research as regards stakeholder magazines are numerous.

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