

# LINGUISTIC REPRESENTATION OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN STUDENT-WRITTEN BIOGRAPHIES OF MICE INDUSTRY FIGURE

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores how professional identity is constructed linguistically in biographies written by MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition) students within an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) context. Using a descriptive qualitative design, the study analyzed twenty-five biographies of MICE industry figures written by first-year students. A thematic linguistic analysis identified recurring words, phrases, and evaluative expressions used to represent professional identity. Novelty lies in using student-authored biographical writing to connect ESP genre learning with professional identity construction in a vocational MICE setting. The findings show that students predominantly use evaluative and action-oriented language, with professionalism and leadership emerging as the most salient themes. Additional themes include collaboration, hospitality orientation, innovation, and achievement. These identities are mainly realized through positive adjectives, action verbs, and role-based noun phrases, resulting in idealized portrayals of MICE professionals. The study highlights the pedagogical value of biographical writing as a genre that supports language development and professional socialization in vocational ESP settings. It contributes to discussions of professional literacy by showing how students interpret and express industry values through language, offering insights for improving ESP instruction in MICE education.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Biography is a descriptive writing genre that develops students' writing skills while requiring sufficient linguistic, grammatical, and vocabulary knowledge to convey meaning effectively (Zahran, 2024). However, in professional contexts, biography performs a more strategic and representational function. Narrative research underscores that personal stories and life histories are not merely records of events but are central to *identity construction*, as narratives allow individuals and audiences to make sense of experiences, roles, and values in context (Hnit & Almanna, 2025). Methods such as biographic narrative interpretive analysis

further show that narrative choices reflect not only factual details but also the meanings and identities that subjects and authors attribute to career and personal qualities (Kutsyuruba & Mendes, 2023). This study aims to examine how MICE students linguistically construct professional identity through the biographical genre in an ESP context.

In contemporary professional environments, identity is increasingly mediated through written discourse, with corporate websites, organizational publications, and other professional texts functioning as strategic tools for constructing professional identity. This shift highlights a key feature of academic and professional literacy: the ability to

control a range of genres across contexts and to manage the meanings and identities that these genres evoke (Hyland, 2025). Professional identity work, therefore, involves interpretive and language-centered meaning making rather than the simple reflection of occupational roles. As demonstrated in Reissner and Armitage-Chan's integrative review, professional identity is actively constructed through discourse and narrative processes across professional settings, underscoring the central role of language in shaping professional self-understanding and credibility (2024). Studies in corporate communication further show that organizations and professionals strategically deploy linguistic resources such as evaluative language and self-referential expressions to position themselves as authoritative, reliable, and reputable actors. Similarly, analyses of online corporate texts reveal that professional profiles and websites foreground roles, responsibilities, and evaluative attributes to establish trust and professional legitimacy.

The construction of professional identity through writing is particularly significant in industries that are service-oriented, project-based, and highly relational, such as the Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition (MICE) sector. Research shows that the MICE industry has grown into a complex segment of business and event tourism that involves coordinating meetings, exhibitions, and conferences and engages multiple stakeholders in collaborative planning and service delivery roles (Martín-Rojo & Gaspar-González, 2025). Wee et al.(2022) further describe the MICE industry as comprising organizers and suppliers who plan and facilitate large-scale professional events for business, cultural, or academic purposes, requiring intensive coordination, relational engagement, and service competency. Academic overviews of MICE tourism emphasize its central role in business tourism and professional networking, reflecting the inherently relational and service-oriented nature of the industry and supporting the view that professional identity in such contexts is constructed through discourse and representation within written and mediated professional texts (Lee & Chon, 2024).

Narratives describing MICE professionals frequently emphasize qualities such as professionalism, leadership, collaboration, hospitality, and creativity, reflecting shared industry values that define professional competence in the field. Event studies research consistently positions planned events and event management as a professional domain that is operationally complex and reliant on coordination, stakeholder engagement, service delivery, and professional competence, conditions that make such values salient in how practitioners are represented and evaluated (Getz & Page, 2016). Research on professional identity formation further conceptualizes professional identity as a socially recognized combination of roles,

competencies, ethics, and reputational attributes that develops through education and professional experience and becomes meaningful within professional communities (Reissner & Armitage-Chan, 2024). Such professional identity is not only enacted through professional practice but also communicated and reinforced through discourse, including narrative and biographical writing, which functions as a strategic genre for projecting credibility and professional legitimacy (Liu, 2025).

In vocational higher education, the formation of professional identity is recognized as an important educational objective alongside the development of technical competence. In MICE study programs, ESP courses are designed to prepare students for professional communication in international and multicultural settings, where effective participation depends on familiarity with industry-specific ways of using language. Writing activities in these courses frequently draw on professional genres to simulate real-world communication practices, allowing students to engage with authentic forms of professional discourse. Research on genre knowledge further indicates that understanding how genres function is beneficial across a wide range of disciplinary and professional domains, as genre awareness enables learners to recognize communicative purposes, audience expectations, and conventional patterns of meaning-making (Kuzman & Ljubešić, 2025). As such, genre-based writing activities in ESP not only develop linguistic competence but also contribute to students' understanding of how professional identity is constructed and communicated through discourse.

One genre commonly used in ESP MICE courses is biographical writing, in which students are required to write biographies of prominent or successful figures in the MICE industry as part of their coursework. Through this activity, students engage with authentic industry contexts while practicing writing skills in English, as they are encouraged to research industry figures, trace career trajectories, and identify qualities associated with professional success. This pedagogical use of biography responds to growing recognition that ESP education in vocational settings must move beyond traditional text-based learning resources to better prepare students for real-world professional environments (Putu Tika Virginiya & Lastari, 2025). Biographical writing addresses this challenge by functioning not only as a language-learning activity but also as a means of introducing students to professional role models, industry values, and realistic representations of professional identity in the MICE sector.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) education aims to enhance students' language proficiency within their specialized fields, and writing plays a central role in this process (Nabijanovna, 2025). Although writing is widely regarded as one of the

most demanding tasks for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) because it requires the integration of linguistic knowledge, discourse awareness, and coherent organization of ideas (Mah et al., 2021), it also supports the development of descriptive and narrative skills, vocabulary expansion, and discourse organization when embedded in discipline-specific learning contexts.

Writing is an essential but complex skill, and profession-related writing activities help students connect language learning with future professional practice (Graham & Alves, 2021). In vocational education contexts, biographical writing serves as a particularly valuable medium through which students encounter representations of professionalism and success within their chosen field. By writing about industry professionals, students are not only practicing language skills but also implicitly constructing their own understanding of what constitutes professional identity and achievement, thereby linking linguistic development with professional socialization.

Professional identity in writing refers to the values, qualities, roles, work ethics, and reputational characteristics associated with a profession, which are commonly expressed through descriptions of professional behavior and accomplishments. In written discourse, evaluative language functions to clarify the writer's viewpoint and assessment for readers (Sarikon & Abdullah, 2024) by emphasizing competence, dedication, leadership, and credibility. Biographical texts therefore motivate students by presenting successful figures as role models (Hatta et al., 2024) while simultaneously providing a valuable context for examining how professional identity is linguistically constructed through the combination of factual narration and evaluative language.

Research on vocational English has largely emphasized general writing skills, paying limited attention to how students linguistically construct professional identity, particularly in the MICE context. Addressing this gap, the present study examines the linguistic representation of professional identity in MICE students' biographical writing through a descriptive qualitative analysis.

## 2. METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design (Villamin et al., 2025) aimed at exploring how professional identity is represented linguistically in student-written biographies. Rather than focusing on language accuracy or applying formal linguistic theories, the analysis concentrated on identifying and classifying observable linguistic elements that convey professional meanings. A thematic linguistic analysis approach (Cutting, 2020) was adopted to allow patterns of representation to emerge from the data through systematic examination of words and phrases used by the students. The data were drawn from a first-year English 1 for MICE

study program at Politeknik Negeri Jakarta, where students completed a biographical writing assignment as part of a unit on workplace communication. In this task, they selected three MICE industry figures and produced a short biography.

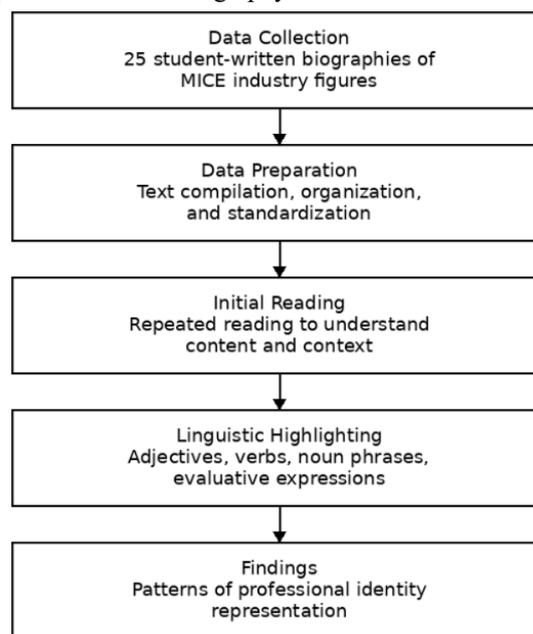


Figure 1. Research Design and Analysis

The data consisted of twenty-five biographies of MICE industry figures written by first-year students in a MICE study program as part of an English for Specific Purposes course, reflecting the need for writing instruction to address students' specialized professional needs beyond general writing skills (Burnazyan et al., 2024); each biography ranged from approximately 100 to 200 words and described the figure's educational background, career development, professional roles, achievements, and personal qualities.

Data collection involved compiling all student biographies in text format and organizing them to ensure consistency and readability. Each text was reviewed to identify segments that represented professional identity, including descriptions of skills, roles, actions, and evaluative judgments. Relevant words and phrases were then extracted and documented as linguistic data for analysis.

The analysis began with repeated readings of the biographies to gain an overall understanding of the content and context of each text. During this process, linguistic elements related to professional identity were highlighted, particularly adjectives describing personal qualities, verbs indicating professional actions, noun phrases defining roles or positions, and evaluative expressions signaling professional value. These elements were then grouped into thematic categories representing recurring aspects of professional identity. The identified themes were interpreted to reveal dominant patterns in how students conceptualized professionalism in the MICE industry. Finally, the

findings were organized and reported in thematic descriptions supported by representative linguistic examples from the data.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Consistent with prior ESP writing studies, genre-based tasks that require learners to represent disciplinary roles tend to elicit strategic lexical and evaluative choices, as students draw on available professional discourse to project credibility and align with field-specific values. Across the data, students consistently employed evaluative and action-oriented language to construct professional identity. The biographies foreground professionalism, leadership, collaboration, hospitality orientation, innovation, and achievement as defining characteristics of MICE professionals. These characteristics are not presented through detailed accounts of operational challenges or contextual constraints but are instead communicated through concise linguistic markers that signal credibility and competence. This pattern aligns with the representational function of biography described in the Introduction, where language plays a central role in shaping professional image and reputation.

Table 1. Linguistic Features and Thematic Representation

| Linguistic Features           | Theme of Professional Identity | Representative Examples                                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Positive adjectives           | Professionalism                | professional, dedicated, responsible, experienced, skilled |
| Action verbs                  | Professionalism                | manages events, ensures quality, handles responsibilities  |
| Action verbs                  | Leadership                     | leads teams, coordinates divisions, oversees operations    |
| Role-based noun phrases       | Leadership                     | event coordinator, production manager, venue director      |
| Collaborative verbs           | Collaboration                  | works with vendors, collaborates with stakeholders         |
| Service-oriented adjectives   | Hospitality                    | friendly, responsive, service-oriented                     |
| Creativity-related adjectives | Innovation                     | creative, innovative, solution-oriented                    |
| Achievement-related phrases   | Achievement                    | years of experience, national events, awards               |

Table 1 summarizes the linguistic features identified in the student-written biographies and their corresponding thematic representations of professional identity. It shows that professional identity is primarily constructed through evaluative and action-oriented language, with specific linguistic features consistently associated with particular identity themes. Positive adjectives such as professional, dedicated, responsible, experienced, and skilled are predominantly linked to the theme of professionalism, indicating that students rely on evaluative descriptors to portray competence and work ethic. This theme is further reinforced through action verbs related to professional practice, including expressions such as manages events,

ensures quality, and handles responsibilities, which emphasize reliability and task-oriented performance.

Leadership is represented mainly through action verbs and role-based noun phrases. Verbs such as *leads*, *coordinates*, and *oversees* depict professionals as active agents responsible for directing people and processes, while role-based noun phrases like *event coordinator*, *production manager*, and *venue director* explicitly position individuals within organizational hierarchies. The theme of collaboration emerges through collaborative verbs such as *works with vendors* and *collaborates with stakeholders*, reflecting students' awareness of the relational and multi-stakeholder nature of the MICE industry. Hospitality is constructed through service-oriented adjectives, including *friendly*, *responsive*, and *service-oriented*, which highlight interpersonal qualities and customer-focused values. Innovation is represented through creativity-related adjectives such as *creative*, *innovative*, and *solution-oriented*, suggesting that students associate professional success with adaptability and idea generation. Finally, achievement-oriented phrases such as *years of experience*, *national events*, and *awards* function as markers of credibility and professional recognition.

#### Interpretation of Linguistic Patterns in The MICE Industry

The prominence of positive adjectives in the table suggests that professionalism is understood as a foundational value in the MICE industry. Adjectives such as professional, dedicated, responsible, and experienced function as shorthand indicators of reliability and readiness to operate in complex event environments. These descriptors align with industry expectations that emphasize accountability, consistency, and the ability to perform under pressure. By foregrounding these qualities, students position MICE professionals as dependable actors capable of delivering successful events.

Action verbs associated with leadership and coordination further reinforce this representation. Verbs such as manages, leads, coordinates, and oversees depict professionals as active decision-makers who direct people, resources, and event workflows. The frequent overlap between verbs used to represent professionalism and those used to represent leadership suggests that students perceive leadership as an integral component of professional identity in the MICE sector. This perception reflects the project-based nature of MICE operations, where effective leadership and coordination are critical to managing time-sensitive and resource-intensive events.

Role-based noun phrases play a significant role in legitimizing professional identity. Titles such as event coordinator, production manager, and venue director explicitly position individuals within recognized organizational structures. These labels function as markers of authority and expertise,

signaling that the individual holds a legitimate and responsible position within the industry. The prominence of such noun phrases indicates that students associate professional identity strongly with formal roles and hierarchical status, reinforcing a structured view of professional life in the MICE industry.

Collaboration-related language reflects students' awareness of the multi-stakeholder environment characteristic of MICE work. Verbs such as works with and collaborates with highlight coordination with vendors, partners, and internal teams. However, collaboration is primarily framed in operational terms, emphasizing coordination efficiency and task completion rather than negotiation, relationship-building, or conflict management. This suggests that students conceptualize collaboration mainly as a functional requirement necessary for smooth event execution.

#### **Patterns of Professional Identity Representation in The MICE Industry**

When examined collectively, the linguistic patterns identified in the analysis reveal several consistent characteristics of professional identity representation. First, professional identity is constructed predominantly through positive and evaluative language, resulting in representations that emphasize normative industry ideals. MICE professionals are portrayed as competent, responsible, and proactive individuals who fulfill clearly defined roles within event organizations.

Second, leadership and responsibility are foregrounded as central indicators of professional success. The frequent use of leadership-related verbs and role titles suggests that students view professional identity as closely tied to managerial authority and operational control. This reflects a hierarchical understanding of professional practice that aligns with common organizational structures in the MICE industry.

Third, collaboration and hospitality are acknowledged as essential but are framed mainly in functional terms. Collaboration is presented as coordination among stakeholders, while hospitality is framed as consistent service delivery. These representations reflect industry expectations but remain standardized and idealized, emphasizing efficiency and positivity over complexity and negotiation.

#### **Implications for Professional Preparation in The MICE Education**

From an industry perspective, the findings suggest that biographical writing is an effective tool for familiarizing students with professional representation practices commonly used in the MICE sector. By producing biographies that resemble industry profiles, students practice articulating professional roles, responsibilities, and values in ways that align with industry norms. This activity supports the development of professional awareness

and prepares students for industry-facing communication.

The findings also indicate opportunities to strengthen professional preparation. The reliance on generalized evaluative language suggests that students would benefit from greater exposure to role-specific and context-sensitive professional discourse. Educational programs can encourage students to incorporate more detailed operational descriptions, such as decision-making processes, coordination challenges, and event-specific responsibilities, into professional writing. This would help bridge the gap between idealized professional images and the realities of MICE operations.

Incorporating industry-authentic materials, such as professional profiles from event organizations and conference programs, can further enhance students' understanding of how professional identity is constructed in practice. By comparing their own writing with industry examples, students can develop greater awareness of effective professional representation. Through such approaches, biographical writing can function not only as a language-learning activity but also as a meaningful component of professional preparation in MICE education.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

This study examined how professional identity is linguistically represented in student-written biographies of MICE industry figures and found that students mainly construct identity through evaluative, action-oriented language, especially positive adjectives, action verbs, and role-based noun phrases. Professionalism and leadership were the most salient markers, alongside collaboration, hospitality orientation, innovation, and achievement, suggesting that students treat biography as a strategic genre for communicating industry values and credibility rather than a purely descriptive text. Theoretically, the study contributes to professional identity and ESP research by showing how vocational learners enact identity through recurring evaluative and role-based resources in a discipline-specific genre; practically, it supports the use of biographical writing in vocational and MICE education to integrate language learning with professional socialization and strengthen students' industry-relevant discourse and professional self/other-representation skills.

This study is limited by its focus on biographies written by first-year students within a single institutional context and on a single professional genre, resulting in representations of professional identity that are early-stage and largely idealized. Future research could examine texts produced by students at different academic levels or by industry practitioners and explore a wider range of MICE-related genres, such as professional profiles, event proposals, or digital media, to gain a more

comprehensive understanding of professional identity construction in the MICE industry.

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