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## LANGUAGE AND CORPORATE MANAGEMENT: A COMPARISON OF MISSION STATEMENTS OF POLISH AND US UNIVERSITIES

### Abstract

Mission statements are connected with the managerial concept of grouping the employees together around corporate objectives and values. They are supposed to be guidelines of behaviour and tools of persuasion. They should contain a number of elements of the corporate mission, moreover they should be short and easy to remember. The aim of the research is to compare mission statements of Polish and US universities in order to determine whether they include the same components and share generic and stylistic features. This will lead to the conclusion whether and in what way the genre has been adopted and adapted by the managers in Polish academic community.

### 1. Introduction

The research on mission statements from the point of view of management theory and practice is well developed and space limitations make it impossible to present it in more detail. The studies by J.A. Pearce II<sup>1</sup>, T.A. Falsey<sup>2</sup>, F.R. David<sup>3</sup>, A. Camp-

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<sup>1</sup> Pearce II, Jack A.: 'The Company Mission As a Strategic Tool'. In: Sloan Management Review, vol. 23, no 3 (1982), pp. 15–24; Pearce II, Jack A. and David, Fred R.: 'The Bottom-Line on Corporate Mission Statements'. In: Academy of Management Executive, vol. 1 (1987), pp. 109–116.

<sup>2</sup> Falsey, Thomas A.: Corporate Philosophies and Mission Statements. A survey and guide for corporate communicators and management. New York: Quorum Books 1989.

<sup>3</sup> David, Fred R.: 'How companies define their mission'. In: Campbell Andrew, Tawadey Kiran: Mission and Business Philosophy. Oxford: Heinemann 1990. Pp. 288–304.

bell and S. Yeung<sup>4</sup>, W. Graham and W.C. Havlick<sup>5</sup>, B. Wiernek<sup>6</sup> and J. Supernat<sup>7</sup> may be indicated as good examples of this kind of study.

Linguists seem to show much less interest in this genre. The only linguistic research on mission statements as mentioned by F. Bargiela-Ciappini et. al.<sup>8</sup> is that of P. Rogers and J. Swales<sup>9</sup> and J. Swales and P. Rogers<sup>10</sup>. In Poland, mission statements have been analysed from the linguistic point of view by P. Mamet<sup>11</sup>, P. Mamet and B. Mierzyńska<sup>12</sup> and M. Wolny-Peirs<sup>13</sup>.

The analysis presented below compares 35 mission statements of US universities with mission statements of Polish universities with the aim to identify the major stylistic and generic features that they may share. This may allow us to draw a conclusion whether and how the genre developed in the Anglo-Saxon managerial environment has been assimilated in Poland.

## 2. Mission statement – its origin, definition and components

*Longman Dictionary of Business English* defines mission statement as “...a brief statement of the main purpose of an organisation...”.<sup>14</sup> According to J.A. Pearce II it is “... a broadly defined but enduring statement of purpose that distinguishes a business from other firms of its type and identifies the scope of its operations in product and market terms...”.<sup>15</sup> One should not ignore the opinion “... there are probably as many definitions as there are companies...”.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Campbell, Andrew and Yeung, Sally: *Do You Need a Mission Statement?* London: The Economist Publications 1990.

<sup>5</sup> Graham, John W. and Havlick, Wendy C.: *Mission Statements. A Guide to the Corporate and Nonprofit Sectors.* New York: Garland 1994.

<sup>6</sup> Wiernek, Bogusław: ‘Misja firmy’. In: *Businessman Magazine*, no. 5 (1994), pp. 62–63.

<sup>7</sup> Supernat, Jerzy: *Zarządzanie strategiczne. Pojęcia i koncepcje.* Wrocław: Kolonia 1998; Supernat, Jerzy: *Management. Tezaurus Kierownictwa.* Wrocław: Kolonia 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Bargiela-Ciappini, Francesca, Nickerson, Catherine and Planken Brigitte: *Business Discourse.* Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan Houndmills 2007. Pp. 62 – 63, 161 – 165.

<sup>9</sup> Rogers, Priscilla S., Swales, John M.: ‘We the People? An analysis of the Dana Corporation Policies Document’. In: *Journal of Business Communication*, vol. 27 (1990), pp. 293 – 313.

<sup>10</sup> Swales, John M., Rogers Priscilla S.: ‘Discourse and the projection of corporate culture: the Mission Statement’. In: *Discourse and Society*, vol. 6, no. 2 (1995), pp. 223 – 242.

<sup>11</sup> Mamet, Piotr: *Język w służbie menedżerów – deklaracja misji przedsiębiorstwa.* Katowice: Wydaw. Uniwersytetu Śląskiego 2005.

<sup>12</sup> Mamet, Piotr, Mierzyńska, Barbara: ‘Mission Statement – A Corporate Persuasive Genre’. In: *Metody a Prostředky Přesvědčování v Masových Médíích. Sbornik textů z mezinárodní konference.* Hana Srpova, ed. Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita v Ostrave. Filozofická fakulta 2005. Pp. 125 – 130.

<sup>13</sup> Wolny-Peirs, Maja: *Język sukcesu we współczesnej polskiej komunikacji publicznej.* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Trio 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Adam, J.H.: *Dictionary of Business English.* Harlow: Longman Brigitte 1989. P. 347.

<sup>15</sup> Pearce II, J.A.: *The Company Mission.* P. 15.

<sup>16</sup> Falsey, T.A.: *Corporate Philosophies.* P. 3.

The three definitions quoted above, although selected from a plethora of other ones, seem sufficient to indicate some of the features of the genre and problems that a researcher studying them should be familiar with.

The first of them is the enduring character of a corporate mission which goes hand in hand with the development employee management concept. According to J. Galbraith<sup>17</sup>, this concept started with compulsion then moved to financial reward and finally to identification.

It should be complemented with what P. Mamet<sup>18</sup> points out, namely that apart from the organization itself, it is the environment of the organization which is to be affected by the mission statement and its content. Therefore mission statements persuade not only corporate employees to work better but also people in the company environment such as local communities, shareholders, partners or suppliers to co-operate with it as stakeholders.

The enduring character and the need of identification may be expected to influence the language of mission statements. The outcome of the linguistic analysis in this field will be presented below both in the theoretical part and the analytical part.

Both J. H. Adam<sup>19</sup> and J. A. Pearce II<sup>20</sup> indicate the purpose of an organisation as the component of a mission statement. This brings about the problem of the structural elements that the analysed genre should contain. P. Mamet<sup>21</sup> notes that as far as the number, type and content of components of mission statements there is a considerable disagreement in the research on the subject. On the basis of the research mentioned in the Introduction the author tries to elicit the following list of components of the mission statement:

- product / service and type of activity,
- philosophy,
- self-concept,
- clients,
- market,
- public image,
- technology,
- employees,
- stakeholders,
- strategy,
- local community<sup>22</sup>.

All the three definitions quoted at the beginning of the section show another problem, i.e. the preciseness of the genre. While J. H. Adam<sup>23</sup> and J. A. Pearce II<sup>24</sup> point

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<sup>17</sup> Galbraith, John Kenneth: *The New Industrial State*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1985.

<sup>18</sup> Mamet, P.: *Język w służbie menedżerów*. Pp. 33–34.

<sup>19</sup> Adam, J.H.: *Dictionary of Business English*.

<sup>20</sup> Pearce II, J.A.: *The Company Mission*.

<sup>21</sup> Mamet, P.: *Język w służbie menedżerów*. Pp. 26–30.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*. P. 29

out the general character of mission statements T. A. Falsey<sup>25</sup> seems to indicate the total instability and lack of any schemes in mission statements. This issue may also have its linguistic dimension in terms of contents of the texts of missions, their structure and preciseness of the language.

### 3. Mission statement – the linguistic point of view

As mentioned above, a major linguistic research into the genre of mission statement has been made by J. Swales and P. Rogers<sup>26</sup>, who analyse the register features of mission statements and indicate the different generic forms they take. In another article the authors give a case study of *The Philosophy and Policies of Dana* and indicate the role of collective *we* in such a type of text<sup>27</sup>.

Some research on the genre has been made in Poland. Thus M. Wolny Peirs analyses mission statement as a genre of „the language of success”<sup>28</sup>. P. Mamet<sup>29</sup> as well as P. Mamet and B. Mierzyńska<sup>30</sup> conduct considerable research into generic and register features of missions.

As far as the generic features of mission statements one may refer to the findings of J. Swales and P. Rogers<sup>31</sup> and they may be summarized as follows:

- there are different generic titles, e.g. Mission Statement, Our Commitment, Fundamental Values, Vision;
- there is a variety of generic forms, e.g. catch-phrase, slogan, motto, one page document, folded flyer or a booklet<sup>32</sup>;
- the similarities are sufficient to refer to mission statements as a single genre.

The research made by P. Mamet<sup>33</sup> confirms those findings. The author also concentrates on the occurrence or non-occurrence of the components prescribed by management theory and practice mentioned in the previous section. Mamet also focuses on text organization (e.g. slogan, one or more paragraph texts, the use of points) of missions. Mamet’s research also indicates that mission statements often follow the structure of *discourse colony*<sup>34</sup>. According to M. Hoey<sup>35</sup>, discourse colony, e.g. an en-

<sup>23</sup> Adam, J.H.: Dictionary of Business English.

<sup>24</sup> Pearce II, J.A.: The Company Mission.

<sup>25</sup> Falsey, T.A.: Corporate Philosophies.

<sup>26</sup> Swales, J.M., Rogers P.S.: Discourse and the projection.

<sup>27</sup> Rogers, P.S., Swales, J.M.: We the People?

<sup>28</sup> Wolny-Peirs, M.: Język sukcesu.

<sup>29</sup> Mamet, P.: Język w służbie menedżerów.

<sup>30</sup> Mamet, P., Mierzyńska, B.: Mission Statement.

<sup>31</sup> Swales, J.M., Rogers P.S.: Discourse and the projection. Pp. 225–226.

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>33</sup> Mamet, P.: Język w służbie menedżerów.

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem. Pp. 166–177.

cyclopaedia or a shopping list, is a text type the components of which serve the same function, may function independently and which are not based on a sequence but are held together by a framing context.

In terms of register the findings of Swales and Rogers may be summarized as follows:

- "... using language creatively to appeal to the self- and collective identities of individuals..."<sup>36</sup>;
- pithy and up-beat style<sup>37</sup>;
- the use of *we / our* forms as a tool to motivate all the employees through inclusion and identification<sup>38</sup>;
- verb forms: the present and the imperative<sup>39</sup>;
- the activities of the organisation presented in a positive way by using nouns like *goals, principles, or values* and adjectives, e.g. *competent, leading, profitable*<sup>40</sup>;
- modals in un-hedged forms, e.g. *will* or *must*<sup>41</sup>.

These findings may again be complemented with the research by M. Wolny-Peirs, who points to the presences of official, utilitarian, technical, professional styles as well as complex syntax and nominalization<sup>42</sup>. Piotr Mamet also indicates the variety of registers or styles, e.g. business, science and technology or formal style<sup>43</sup> as well as the fact that the formal style may also be a very lofty one by using marked lexemes, e.g. *aspire, pledge* or *strive*<sup>44</sup>.

Both M. Wolny-Peirs and P. Mamet indicate that the readability of mission statements may be limited. Taking into consideration that both authors conducted their research independently and used different corpora the coincidence of some of their findings is considerable.

The linguistic analysis that will follow will concentrate on the major selected generic and stylistic features of mission statements in the following areas:

- text structure;
- the occurrence of the components of mission statements as prescribed by the management theory;

<sup>35</sup> Hoey, Michael: 'The Discourse Colony. A preliminary study of a neglected discourse type'. In: Talking about Text. Studies presented to David Brazil on his retirement. David Brazil, Malcolm Coulthard, eds. Birmingham: English Language Research 1986. Pp. 1–26.

<sup>36</sup> Eccles, Robert G., Nohria, Nitin, Berkley, James D.: Beyond the Hype. Rediscovering the Essence of Management. Boston: Harvard Business School Press 1992. P. 37 after: Swales, J.M., Rogers P.S.: Discourse and the projection. P. 224.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>38</sup> Rogers, P. S., Swales, J. M.: We the People?

<sup>39</sup> Swales, J. M., Rogers P. S.: Discourse and the projection. Pp. 226–227.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>42</sup> Wolny-Peirs, M.: Język sukcesu. P. 137.

<sup>43</sup> Mamet, P.: Język w służbie menedżerów. Pp. 148–150.

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem. P. 116.

— stylistic features as identified by P. Rogers and J. Swales<sup>45</sup>, J. Swales and P. Rogers<sup>46</sup>, P. Mamet<sup>47</sup> and M. Wolny-Peirs<sup>48</sup>.

One should also note that the research on mission statements is basically related to business units. The following analysis, using the methodology mentioned above, will endeavour to answer two questions, i.e.

1. How is the genre of mission statement adopted and adapted by Universities?
2. What are the differences between missions drafted by US and Polish universities?

## 4. The analysis

### 4.1. Corpus description

Mission statements of 35 US and 35 Polish universities were randomly selected for the analysis. Any references to or examples quoted from the corpus are marked, e.g. [A1] or [P1] with letters A and P referring to US and Polish universities respectively. The following numbers in brackets refer to the text number in the US and Polish corpus. Appendixes 1 and 2 contain the list of both US and Polish universities, with the symbols used and Internet addresses.

The Polish corpus includes a mission statement of a university [P17] (the Mikolaj Kopernik University) and a mission statement of one of its departments [P18] (Faculty of Mathematics and Information Technology) analysed as two different texts.

All the quotations from the Polish mission statements were translated into English by the author of this research paper.

Table 1 includes basic statistical data relating to the corpus which were obtained with the use of MS Microsoft software.

**Table 1.** Major statistical figures related to the corpus

	US universities	Polish universities
No. of missions	35	35
Words total	9725	12487
Average	277.9	356.8
Shortest	34	53
Longest	641	1535
Texts below 100 words	5 (14.3%)	9 (25.7%)

<sup>45</sup> Rogers, P.S., Swales, J.M.: *We the People?*

<sup>46</sup> Swales, J.M., Rogers P.S.: *Discourse and the projection.*

<sup>47</sup> Mamet, P.: *Język w służbie menedżerów.*

<sup>48</sup> Wolny-Peirs, M.: *Język sukcesu.*

One may see that mission statements of US universities tend to be shorter in terms of the total number of words and the number of relatively short missions. This coincides with the requirement of brevity mentioned by J.H. Adam<sup>49</sup>. It contributes to improved readability and makes them easy to remember.

In general brevity fails to be a distinctive feature of missions in the analysed corpus. This may also be confirmed by the occurrence of long sentences in both sub-corpora, e.g.

- (1) INDIANA UNIVERSITY is a major multi-campus public research institution, grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, and a world leader in professional, medical, and technological education. Indiana University's mission is to provide broad access to undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education for students throughout Indiana, the United States, and the world, as well as outstanding academic and cultural programs and student services. [A11].
- (2) Misją Akademii Medycznej im. prof. Feliksa Skubiszewskiego jest prowadzenie badań naukowych i stale podnoszenie jakości kształcenia studentów oraz absolwentów tak, aby wyróżniali się głęboką wiedzą oraz umiejętnościami praktycznymi i byli ukierunkowani na samodzielne uczenie się, a także postępowanie zgodne z zasadami etyki i deontologii zawodowej – The mission of Prof. Feliks Skubiszewski Academy is the performance of the research as well as continuous increase in the quality of teaching of both students and graduates so that they possess deep knowledge together with practical skills, they should be self-study oriented, and moreover, act in accordance with the rules of ethics and deontology [P2].

#### 4.2. Components of missions statements

Neither Swales and Rogers<sup>50</sup> nor Mamet<sup>51</sup> use the move-step concept developed by Swales<sup>52</sup> and also applied by Bhatia to business texts<sup>53</sup>. Instead the occurrence or non-occurrence of the components of the mission, as presented above was used to indicate their generic features in terms of text content.

One should add that the generic form of slogan is totally absent in the analysed corpus, although it is used by businesses writing their missions, as indicated by J. Swales and P. Rogers<sup>54</sup> and P. Mamet<sup>55</sup>.

Two problems had to be overcome while analysing the components of mission statements. The first problem is connected with the fact that components were originally designed for business units and therefore had to be tailored to the specific features of academic organisations. This was solved by comparing the components

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<sup>49</sup> Adam, J.H.: Dictionary of Business English. P. 347.

<sup>50</sup> Swales, J.M., Rogers P.S.: Discourse and the projection.

<sup>51</sup> Mamet, P.: Język w służbie menedżerów.

<sup>52</sup> Swales, John M.: Genre Analysis. English in academic and research settings. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press 1990.

<sup>53</sup> Bhatia, Vijay Kumar: Analysing Genre. London: Longman 1993.

<sup>54</sup> Swales, J.M., Rogers P.S.: Discourse and the projection.

<sup>55</sup> Mamet, P.: Język w służbie menedżerów.

compiled after the analysis of university missions with the list presented in Point 2 above. This made it possible to tailor some of the identified components to the ones provided by the management theory. Thus *education* and/or *research* was treated as *product, service, type of activity* and *technology*. *Clients* were replaced by *students* and *market* was perceived as the area where a given university operates. *Scientific* and *teaching staff* was classified in as *employees*. Other components were left unchanged. Table 2 presents the analysed components and their equivalents (in brackets) as listed in Point 2.

Another problem is connected with the interpretation and classification of particular parts of the analysed texts into the prescribed set of components. The analysed missions do not necessarily indicate the components in terms of headings or sub-headings and the generality of the language used makes it difficult to apply any clear-cut criteria. Common sense and some degree of the researcher's arbitrariness were therefore necessary to classify many of the items. Major specific criteria are mentioned in the discussion below.

**Table 2.** Components of mission statements in the analysed texts

Mission component	US universities	Polish universities
Teaching / education (Product / service, type of activity, technology)	34 (97.14%)	35 (100%)
Research (Product / service, type of activity, technology)	24 (68.57%)	32 (91.43%)
Students (Clients)	35 (100%)	27 (77.14%)
Scientific and teaching staff (Employees)	20 (57.14%)	25 (74.12%)
Strategy	35 (100%)	33 (94.29%)
Philosophy & values	35 (100%)	25 (74.12%)
Market	27 (77.14%)	21 (60%)
Stakeholders	27 (77.14%)	24 (68.57%)

The first four components were identified basically on the basis of the occurrence of relevant lexemes in the text of the mission. It seems obvious that a mission statement that just mentions students, research and / or researchers, teaching staff and or teaching activity treats them as elements that have to be included in the realization (or just drafting) of the mission.

Strategies were proved to be more difficult to assess. The following elements were considered as typical strategies of universities (exemplary missions indicated in square brackets): *continuation of tradition* [P1, P3] [A12, 14], *improvement of standards of teaching* [P4], *high performance* [A34] or even *passion for teaching and learning* [A1], *reaching and / or maintaining the leading position* [P24] [A3, A4], *high standards represented by graduates* [P26], [A23].

For the sake of analysis philosophy was treated as an organisation self concept and included values to be observed by lecturers and students. These include *justice, honesty, rightness, truth*, [P1, P12], [A28] and *independence of academic research, freedom of thought and word* [P3, P7], [A17, 18] *Christian values* [P5] [A8] *social responsibility* [P10], *tolerance* [P11], [A33], *respect for the dignity of a human being* [P13, P29], *equal rights of people* [P26], [A33].

Markets cover not only the area where and for which the university operates, including *the region, the whole country* [P4, P6, P24, P32] or [A5, A26]. It also stands for the *labour market* [P11]. The markets, in case of universities may also be treated as stakeholders. For example, regions have a stake in the university because they benefit from well educated graduates and they may be interested in high academic standards. Stakeholders, in this analysis also include other *regional, national or foreign universities* [P8, P19, P26] as well as *business or region's community* [A9, A34, A11, A12].

Generally speaking, the components prescribed by the theory of management for mission statements of businesses have their equivalents in mission statements of US and Polish Universities. They are also well represented in both analysed parts of the corpus. With one exception all elements are present in not less than 60% of the analysed texts. Only two components, i.e. *research* (68.57%) and *research / teaching staff* (57.14%) are (rather surprisingly) present in less than 70% of the texts of the US universities. The “weakest” components of missions of Polish universities are market (60%) and stakeholders (68.57%).

There is, however, another component of mission statements in the analysed corpus, which has not been identified by any of the above mentioned authors. This component may be labelled as history and tradition and it refers to the history of the university and / or to the intellectual, cultural or philosophical tradition it continues.

Polish universities seem to be more history / tradition oriented since this component occurs in 15 texts (42.86%), i.e. almost twice as much as in the missions of their US counterparts (8, i.e. 22.86). Thus Table 2 above should be complemented with the following item:

**Table 3.** History and tradition as a components of mission statements in the analysed texts

Mission component	US universities	Polish universities
History, tradition	8 (22.86%)	14 (40%)

The best examples of this component include:

- (3) Harvard College adheres to the purposes for which the Charter of 1850 was granted [A10],
- (4) The mission of Lynn University today is the same mission that has defined the institution through its first 46 years [A14],
- (5) As a Catholic, Jesuit university, this pursuit is motivated by the inspiration and values of the Judeo-Christian tradition and is guided by the spiritual and intellectual ideals of the Society of Jesus [A31],

(6) Politechnika Warszawska, działając pod swą obecną nazwą od 1915 roku, przejęła dziedzictwo Szkoły Przygotowawczej do Instytutu Politechnicznego, utworzonej w roku 1826 w Warszawie staraniem Stanisława Staszica i kontynuuje jej tradycje – Warsaw Technical University operating under its present name since 1915 continues the heritage of The Preparatory School to Polytechnic Institute founded in 1826 [P8],

(7) W tradycję tę wpisany jest dorobek uniwersytetów polskich, poczynając od krakowskiego Studium Generale z 1364/1400 roku – this tradition includes the heritage of Polish universities starting with Cracow Studium Generale in 1364/1400 [P17].

### 4.3. Text structure

The instability of mission statements is confirmed in terms of their text structure. Table 4 below presents findings in this area.

**Table 4.** Text structure of mission statements

Text structure	US universities	Polish universities
Paragraphs and lists and (usually) sub-titles	16	15
Unbroken text – several paragraphs	6	9
One paragraph	7	4
List only	6	4
Paragraphs with sub-titles	—	3

One may notice that only 7 (20%) and 4 (11.43%) missions of US and Polish universities respectively represent the shortest and easy to read format of one-paragraph text. Fortunately the other extreme – several paragraph, essay like texts with no sub-sections are also quite rare: 6 texts (17.14%) and 9 texts (25.71%) of US and Polish universities respectively. 22 texts in each part of the corpus (62.86%) make reading easier since they use lists, section titles etc. This format follows to a bigger or lesser extent the concept of discourse colony mentioned above and allows readers to find components that are relevant from their point of view. One may say that in the text of this type the generic form corresponds with the character of a mission statement, which is composed of different elements and addressed to different groups of people inside and outside the organisation.

### 4.4. Stylistic features of mission statements

#### 4.4.1. Formal, lofty and official style

The use of lofty, marked lexemes to show the importance of the mission and the dedication to implement it is clearly seen in both sub-corpora. Thus missions of US universities include lexemes like:

(8) aspires to [A7],

(9) committed to [A5, A16, A19],

- (10) dedicated to [A3, A15, A18, A28],
- (11) excel [A30],
- (12) strive [A11/ A22],
- (13) thrive [A28].

Missions of Polish universities are quite similar in this respect although the very choice of lexemes may be different, e.g.

- (14) czerpie z dziedzictwa – benefits from the heritage [P13].
- (15) pielęgnując najlepsze tradycje – nurturing the best traditions [P15]
- (16) służyć Mądrości – serve Wisdom [P15].

The lofty style borders with the official, or managerial style of many texts and seems to indicate that managers drafting the document see the world in clerical terms. Thus the official style in missions of US universities is exemplified by the following examples:

- (17) the university will adopt the following priorities [A4],
- (18) coeducational institution of higher learning [A8],
- (19) dissemination and application of knowledge [A13],
- (20) people are ...most valuable asset [A33].

Similar observations refer to the texts of Polish universities, e.g.

- (21) oferta dydaktyczna – the educational offer [P4],
- (22) rozwój wertykalny – vertical development [P6],
- (23) transfer wiedzy do praktyki – transfer of knowledge to practice [P32],
- (24) jakość jest priorytetem – quality is a priority [P33].

#### 4.4.2. *The use of we / our forms*

A study of any text of a mission statement must focus on the use of *we / our* forms. The concept is well highlighted by K. Burke<sup>56</sup>, who perceives it as a major tool of the rhetoric of identification that replaced the rhetoric of persuasion. In a similar way G. Cheney<sup>57</sup> claims that *we* forms are used when it is taken for granted that both the corporation and its employees have common interests. The importance of the concept in mission statements is carefully analysed by Rogers and Swales<sup>58</sup>, who claim that *we* forms "... may relegate the inherent status differences in superior – subordinate relationships..."<sup>59</sup>.

<sup>56</sup> Burke, Kenneth: *A Rhetoric of Motives*. Berkeley: University of California Press 1974.

<sup>57</sup> Cheney, George: The rhetoric of identification and the study of organizational communication. In: *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, vol. 69 (1983), pp. 143–158.

<sup>58</sup> Rogers, P.S., Swales, J.M.: *We the People?*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*. P. 301

**Table 5.** The occurrence of *we/our* and 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular forms in mission statements

	US universities	Polish universities
<i>we / our</i> forms Missions	21 (60%)	9 (25. 71%)
3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular	32 (91.47%)	32 (91.47%)

Note that due to the simultaneous occurrence of the analysed form in texts of mission statements the figures do not add.

The analysis indicates that the concept of the rhetoric of identification is known and used by both US and Polish universities, e.g.

- (25) **we** develop professional competence [A1],
- (26) **Our** mission is to provide the education [A14],
- (27) swoją działalność **prowadzimy** – **we** run **our** activity [P13].

The difference between US and Polish universities drafting their missions may be found in the degree to which the collective forms are used. Table 4 indicates that only 9 Polish universities (25.71%) uses *we / our* forms as compared with 21 (60%) of US universities.

One must add that the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular forms appear in the analysed missions, sometimes simultaneously with the collective forms, e.g.

- (28) **INDIANA UNIVERSITY** is a major ... public research institution [A 10],
- (29) **University of Phoenix** provides access to [A24],
- (30) **Uniwersytet Wrocławski** chroni –... **Uniwersytet Wrocławski** protects [P23],
- (31) **Akademia Rolnicza im. H. Kołłątaja w Krakowie** czerpie z dziedzictwa – **Akademia Rolnicza im. H. Kołłątaja** benefits from the heritage [P3].

The data presented in Table 4 indicate that US universities use the rhetoric of identification much more often than their Polish counterparts (60% versus 25. 71% respectively). However, this rhetoric is mixed with the predominant use of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person forms (91. 47%). Polish universities seem to be more consistent when drafting their missions but they are not very much attached to the rhetoric of identification (9 texts only, i.e. 25. 71%) preferring the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular forms.

#### 4.4.3. Present tense and un-hedged forms

Universities draft their mission in a way that is supposed to persuade the reader that the mission will certainly be achieved. This involves the use of future tenses, e.g.

- (32) Maryville University **will** be one of the outstanding private universities [A16],
- (33) Northern Michigan University **will** become the university of choice [A22],
- (34) Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Poznaniu **będzie** instytucją sprawnie zarządzaną – University of Economy in Poznań **will** be an efficiently managed institution [P12].

Another way is to present the mission as an activity performed on a day-to-day basis, which involves present tenses:

- (35) where we **harness** the power of ideas [A21],
- (36) Uniwersytet **realizuje** zadania – University **realises** tasks [P19],
- (37) Uniwersytet Wrocławski **chroni i rozpowszechnia** dorobek – Wrocław University **protects and spreads** the achievements [P23],
- (38) Politechnika Warszawska ... **przygotowuje** przyszłe elity – Warsaw Technical University **prepares** future elites [P8].

Certainly, there is no place for tentativeness since the organization is dedicated to performing its mission. This is best proved in the following examples:

- (39) Northern Michigan University **challenges** its students and employees to think independently and critically [A22],
- (40) Uczelnia Łazarskiego **zapewnia** najwyższy poziom kształcenia akademickiego – Łazarski University **renders** the highest quality of academic teaching [P11].

The observations made by Swales and Rogers<sup>60</sup> related to the use of present, imperative and un-hedged verb forms in mission statements are confirmed in the analysed corpus.

#### 4.4.4. Positive nouns and adjectives

As mentioned above, missions present the organisation in a positive way by means of positive nouns and adjectives.<sup>61</sup> The same may be said about the analysed corpus with one additional remark, i.e. adjectives give positive value both to positive nouns, such as *excellence* and to neutral ones, such as *university*, *program*, or *tradition*. This observation may be illustrated by the following examples taken from both sub-corpora:

- (41) academically rigorous programs [A13],
- (42) comprehensive programs [A16],
- (43) a leading public research university [A19],
- (44) academic excellence [A23],
- (45) szeroką współpracę – wide co-operation [P23],
- (46) najlepsze tradycje – best traditions [P15].

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<sup>60</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>61</sup> Ibidem.

## 5. Conclusions

Polish and US universities adopt mission statements as a genre used in the management of an organisation. The analysed missions follow the distinctive stylistic, generic features of the missions drafted by businesses. In terms of style they use lofty, up beat and positive language as well as the official style. They also exhibit the generic regularities and irregularities of the “business” mission statements, i.e. they do not follow a well prescribed structure and they use a variety of text layouts such as one or several paragraph missions, and chunks of texts using section headlines or lists. While discourse colony is a significant generic structure that links both types of organisations drafting their missions, the generic form of a slogan so often used by businesses, does not occur at all.

University mission statements include the same components as those of business units. This may involve some adaptation such as replacing *clients* with *students* or treating the *education* and *research* as the line of business but the componential structure of firms’ missions and university missions is basically similar. The latter ones also include an element which is not indicated by the researchers focusing on missions of businesses from the point of view of corporate management, i.e. reference to tradition.

In terms of differences between US and Polish universities one may observe some. Thus Polish universities tend to draft longer missions statements and use the rhetoric of identification less often than their US counterparts. The former ones seldom refer to their tradition.

Those differences may be said to fit within the framework of a loosely structured genre and therefore one may conclude that US and Polish universities use mission statements in a manner similar to businesses.

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**Sources:****List of US universities included in the analysis**

No.	University	www address	accessed
1	Argosy University	<a href="http://www.argosy.edu/about-us/mission-statement.aspx">http://www.argosy.edu/about-us/mission-statement.aspx</a>	2010-02-03
2	Bentley ~	<a href="http://about.bentley.edu/mission-statement">http://about.bentley.edu/mission-statement</a>	2010-04-01
3	Central Connecticut State University	<a href="http://www.ccsu.edu/page.cfm?p=10">http://www.ccsu.edu/page.cfm?p=10</a>	2010-02-19
4	California State ~ Fresno	<a href="http://www.csufresno.edu/President/mission_vision/index.shtml">http://www.csufresno.edu/President/mission_vision/index.shtml</a>	2010-03-25
5	Central Washington ~	<a href="http://www.cwu.edu/~pres/mission.html">http://www.cwu.edu/~pres/mission.html</a>	2010-03-04
6	Clark Atlanta ~ The Dept of English	<a href="http://www.cau.edu/Academics_English_Mission.aspx">http://www.cau.edu/Academics_English_Mission.aspx</a>	2010-04-01
7	Cornell University	<a href="http://www.cornell.edu/about/mission/">http://www.cornell.edu/about/mission/</a>	2010-02-16
8	Fontbonne University	<a href="http://www.fontbonne.edu/about/mission/">http://www.fontbonne.edu/about/mission/</a>	2010-02-19
9	The ~ of Georgia	<a href="http://www.uga.edu/profile/mission.html">http://www.uga.edu/profile/mission.html</a>	2010-03-04
10	Harvard College	<a href="http://www.harvard.edu/siteguide/faqs/faq110.php">http://www.harvard.edu/siteguide/faqs/faq110.php</a>	2010-01-26
11	Indiana ~	<a href="http://www.indiana.edu/about/mission.shtml">http://www.indiana.edu/about/mission.shtml</a>	2010-03-04
12	Kettering ~	<a href="http://www.kettering.edu/visitors/about/">http://www.kettering.edu/visitors/about/</a>	2010-03-26
13	Lake Superior ~	<a href="http://www.lssu.edu/about/mission.php">http://www.lssu.edu/about/mission.php</a>	2010-03-29
14	Lynn ~	<a href="http://www.lynn.edu/about-lynn/mission-and-vision">http://www.lynn.edu/about-lynn/mission-and-vision</a>	2010-04-01
15	Mansfield ~	<a href="http://www1.mansfield.edu/mission-statement/">http://www1.mansfield.edu/mission-statement/</a>	2010-03-10
16	Maryville ~	<a href="http://www.maryville.edu/about-president-mission.htm">http://www.maryville.edu/about-president-mission.htm</a>	2010-03-31
17	~ of Miami	<a href="http://www.miami.edu/index.php/about_us/leadership/mission_statement/">http://www.miami.edu/index.php/about_us/leadership/mission_statement/</a>	2010-03-29
18	~ of Minnesota	<a href="http://www1.umn.edu/twincities/hist.php">http://www1.umn.edu/twincities/hist.php</a>	2010-02-26
19	Mississippi State ~	<a href="http://www.msstate.edu/web/mission.html">http://www.msstate.edu/web/mission.html</a>	2010-03-15
20	North Carolina Central University	<a href="http://www.nccu.edu/aboutnccu/mission.cfm">http://www.nccu.edu/aboutnccu/mission.cfm</a>	2010-02-19
21	~ of North Texas	<a href="http://www.unt.edu/mission.html">http://www.unt.edu/mission.html</a>	2010-03-01
22	Northern Michigan University	<a href="http://webb.nmu.edu/SiteSections/AboutUs/MissionVision.shtml">http://webb.nmu.edu/SiteSections/AboutUs/MissionVision.shtml</a>	2010-02-16
23	Ohio State University	<a href="http://www.osu.edu/academicplan/vision.php">http://www.osu.edu/academicplan/vision.php</a>	2010-02-17
24	~ of Phoenix	<a href="http://www.phoenix.edu/about_us/about_university_of_phoenix/mission_and_purpose.html">http://www.phoenix.edu/about_us/about_university_of_phoenix/mission_and_purpose.html</a>	2010-03-02
25	~ of Redlands	<a href="http://www.redlands.edu/x100.asp">http://www.redlands.edu/x100.asp</a>	2010-02-19

No.	University	www address	accessed
26	Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey	<a href="http://www.rutgers.edu/about-rutgers/university-mission">http://www.rutgers.edu/about-rutgers/university-mission</a>	2010-02-15
27	Santa Clara University	<a href="http://www.scu.edu/jesuit/University-Mission.cfm">http://www.scu.edu/jesuit/University-Mission.cfm</a>	2010-02-03
28	Seattle University	<a href="http://www.seattleu.edu/about_seattle_university/mission/">http://www.seattleu.edu/about_seattle_university/mission/</a>	2010-01-29
29	Seton Hall University	<a href="http://www.shu.edu/about/mission.cfm">http://www.shu.edu/about/mission.cfm</a>	2010-02-15
30	Slippery Rock ~	<a href="http://www.sru.edu/print/112.asp">http://www.sru.edu/print/112.asp</a>	2010-04-01
31	ST. Louis University	<a href="http://www.slu.edu/x5021.xml">http://www.slu.edu/x5021.xml</a>	2010-01-28
32	~Tennessee	<a href="http://www.utk.edu/mission">www.utk.edu/mission</a>	2010-02-03
33	Texas A&M University	<a href="http://www.tamu.edu/home/statements/mission.html">http://www.tamu.edu/home/statements/mission.html</a>	2010-02-01
34	Western Carolina	<a href="http://cit.wcu.edu/2558.asp">http://cit.wcu.edu/2558.asp</a>	2010-02-01
35	Xavier	<a href="http://www.xavier.edu/about/University-Mission-Statement.cfm">http://www.xavier.edu/about/University-Mission-Statement.cfm</a>	2010-01-26

#### List of Polish universities included in the analysis

No.	University	www address	accessed
1	Akademia Górniczo-Hutnicza im. Stanisława Staszica w Krakowie	<a href="http://www.agh.edu.pl/pl/uczelnia/o-uczelni/misja-uczelni.html">http://www.agh.edu.pl/pl/uczelnia/o-uczelni/misja-uczelni.html</a>	2010-02-19
2	Akademia Medycznej im. prof. Feliksa Skubiszewskiego	<a href="http://www.umlub.pl/misja,_historia,_poczet_rektorow_id_1073.html">http://www.umlub.pl/misja,_historia,_poczet_rektorow_id_1073.html</a>	2010-02-19
3	Akademia Rolnicza im. Hugona Kollątaja w Krakowie	<a href="http://www.ar.krakow.pl/arkr/wladz/misja.htm">http://www.ar.krakow.pl/arkr/wladz/misja.htm</a>	2010-03-01
4	Bielska Wyższa Szkoła im Tyszkiewiczza	<a href="http://www.tyszkiewicz.edu.pl/studia.php?fr=article&amp;lg=pl&amp;art=110">http://www.tyszkiewicz.edu.pl/studia.php?fr=article&amp;lg=pl&amp;art=110</a>	2010-02-19
5	Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski	<a href="http://www.kul.pl/art_2611.html">http://www.kul.pl/art_2611.html</a>	2010-02-19
6	Krakowska Akademia im Andrzeja Frycza Modrzewskiego	<a href="http://www.uni.opole.pl/show.php?id=271&amp;lang=pl&amp;m=24">http://www.uni.opole.pl/show.php?id=271&amp;lang=pl&amp;m=24</a>	2010-02-19
7	Politechnika Świętokrzyska	<a href="http://www.tu.kielce.pl/ouczeni/misja_PSk.mhtml">http://www.tu.kielce.pl/ouczeni/misja_PSk.mhtml</a>	2010-02-19

No.	University	www address	accessed
8	Politechnika Warszawska	<a href="http://www.pw.edu.pl/Uczelnia/Misja">http://www.pw.edu.pl/Uczelnia/Misja</a>	2010-03-08
9	Prywatna Wyższa Szkoła Businessu, Administracji i Technik Komputerowych	<a href="http://www.pwsbia.edu.pl/misja-uczelni/">http://www.pwsbia.edu.pl/misja-uczelni/</a>	2010-02-19
10	Spoleczna Wyższa Szkoła Przedsiębiorczości i Zarządzania	<a href="http://www.swspiz.pl/index.php?gid=1&amp;id=6">http://www.swspiz.pl/index.php?gid=1&amp;id=6</a>	2010-02-19
11	Uczelnia Łazarskiego	<a href="http://www.lazarski.pl/o-uczelni/misja/">http://www.lazarski.pl/o-uczelni/misja/</a>	2010-02-19
12	Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Poznaniu	<a href="http://www.ue.poznan.pl/pag/i/1501.php">http://www.ue.poznan.pl/pag/i/1501.php</a>	2010-02-19
13	Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny we Wrocławiu	<a href="http://www.ue.wroc.pl/uczelnia/20/misja_uniwersytetu_ekonomicznego_we_wroclawiu.htm">http://www.ue.wroc.pl/uczelnia/20/misja_uniwersytetu_ekonomicznego_we_wroclawiu.htm</a>	2010-02-19
14	Uniwersytet Humanistyczno-Przyrodniczy Jana Kochanowskiego w Kielcach	<a href="http://www.ujk.edu.pl/site/706">http://www.ujk.edu.pl/site/706</a>	2010-02-19
15	Uniwersytet Kazimierza Wielkiego	<a href="http://www.ukw.edu.pl/pokazStrone.php?idPoz=49034485661750546d61&amp;idMenu=52e108aceae11eae5e68">http://www.ukw.edu.pl/pokazStrone.php?idPoz=49034485661750546d61&amp;idMenu=52e108aceae11eae5e68</a>	2010-02-19
16	Uniwersytet Łódzki	<a href="http://www.uni.lodz.pl/ouni/misja">http://www.uni.lodz.pl/ouni/misja</a>	2010-02-19
17	Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika	<a href="http://www.umk.pl/uczelnia/misja/">http://www.umk.pl/uczelnia/misja/</a>	2010-02-19
18	Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika Wydział Matematyki i Fizyki	<a href="http://www.mat.uni.torun.pl/web/guest/info/misja">http://www.mat.uni.torun.pl/web/guest/info/misja</a>	2010-02-19
19	Uniwersytet Opolski	<a href="http://www.uni.opole.pl/show.php?id=271&amp;lang=pl&amp;m=24">http://www.uni.opole.pl/show.php?id=271&amp;lang=pl&amp;m=24</a>	2010-02-19
20	Uniwersytet Przyrodniczy we Wrocławiu	<a href="http://www.up.wroc.pl/uczelnia/359/misja_uczelni.html">http://www.up.wroc.pl/uczelnia/359/misja_uczelni.html</a>	2010-02-19
21	Uniwersytet w Białymstoku	<a href="http://www.uwb.edu.pl/universytet.php?p=667">http://www.uwb.edu.pl/universytet.php?p=667</a>	2010-02-19
22	Uniwersytet Warszawski	<a href="http://www.uw.edu.pl/o_uw/dok/misja/misja.html">http://www.uw.edu.pl/o_uw/dok/misja/misja.html</a>	2010-02-19
23	Uniwersytet Wrocławski	<a href="http://www.uni.wroc.pl/o-nas/misja-uczelni">http://www.uni.wroc.pl/o-nas/misja-uczelni</a>	2010-02-19

No.	University	www address	accessed
24	Uniwersytet Szczeciński	usfiles.us.szc.pl/getfile.php?pid=6968	2010-02-19
25	Warszawska Wyższa Szkoła Informatyki	http://www.wysi.edu.pl/pg.php/arth/30	2010-02-19
26	Warszawski Uniwersytet Medyczny	http://www.wum.edu.pl/uczelnia/misja.html	2010-02-19
27	Wyższa Szkoła Ekonomii i Administracji z siedzibą w Bytomiu.	http://www.wsea.edu.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=41&Itemid=32	2010-02-19
28	Wyższa Szkoła Ekonomii i Informatyki w Krakowie	http://www.wsei.edu.pl/index.php/mkContent/Misja_i_cele_uczelni,80/,226/	2010-03-01
29	Wyższa Szkoła Gospodarki	http://www.wsg.byd.pl/id_151,Misja-uczelni.html	2010-02-19
30	Wyższa Szkoła Handlu i Usług w Poznaniu	http://www.wshiu.poznan.pl/go.live.php/PL-H19/uczelnia/uczelnia/misja-uczelni.html 2010	2010-02-19
31	Wyższa Szkoła Informatyki i Zarządzania w Rzeszowie	http://www.wsiz.rzeszow.pl/pl/Uczelnia/jakosc_ksztalcenia/misja/Strony/misja.aspx	2010-02-19
32	Wyższa Szkoła Inżynieryjno-Ekonomiczna w Ropczycach	http://www.wsie.edu.pl/pl/?cPath=1/166/4	2010-02-19
33	Wyższa Szkoła Zarządzania	http://www.wsz.pl/?page_id=63	2010-02-19
34	Wyższa Szkoła Zarządzania i Administracji z siedzibą w Zamościu	http://www.wszia.edu.pl/index.php?p=misja-uczelni	2010-02-19
35	Zachodniopomorski Uniwersytet Technologiczny	http://zut.edu.pl/index.php?id=76	2010-02-19