

**A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE MISSION STATEMENTS  
OF SELECTED**

**STATE-OWNED ENTREPRISES IN NAMIBIA**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT**

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**DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, declare that “A critical discourse analysis of the mission statements of selected state-owned enterprises in Namibia” is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other University, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is a critical discourse analysis of the mission statements of state-owned enterprises. The purpose of the study was to investigate the English language employed in the mission statements of state-owned enterprises. The study also explored the various linguistic components of mission statements, as well as the way they employ the English language to relate to stakeholders and convey meaning. This research was qualitative in nature and was a desktop study which employed discourse and content analysis, as well as critical discourse analysis, as methods of data collection. Data collected were critically examined and analysed according to the English language employed in the mission statements of state-owned enterprises. The study was informed by the critical discourse analysis theory, and discloses all levels of grammar, syntax, semantics and pragmatics relative to the research problem. Noticeably, the logic behind the framework was exposed, interpreted, understood; it reveals hidden meanings and unpacks social, economic and political issues through discourse. In this research, critical discourse analysis explored systematically the linguistic constructs and their subsequent social implications for readers. The thesis reveals the following findings: firstly, the use of various linguistic components in the mission statements, such as noun phrases (goals, customers, stakeholders, employees, principles and values), just to illustrate the enterprises' identity and uniqueness; verb phrases for expressing dedication and action, infinitives for assurance and persuasion for long-lasting relationships between these enterprises and stakeholders; prepositional phrases for relationships and standing points of objects in the mission statement. Secondly, the linguistic constructs of the mission statements were formulated both paradigmatically and syntagmatically to relate to stakeholders. Possessive pronouns were utilised to depict unity, solidarity and harmony. Adjectives were utilised for emphasis on the degree of performance indicated in the mission statements. Present participles

were utilised to express the continuation of the services to be rendered and modal verbs were utilised to express positive promises. Thirdly, the mission statements were short and brief, and are displayable documents to carry the culture, ethos and ideology of the state-owned enterprises. The meaning of these mission statements differs as it depends on the purpose, goals and objectives of the enterprise. The meaning of the mission statement is solely reader-oriented and experienced-based; however, they also reveal social, economic and political issues. Implications regarding the meaning of mission statements are brought about by the ambiguity of words used. Finally, the study contributes to the body of knowledge in the linguistic field.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Today, almost every organisation exhibits mission statements on their walls, websites, newspapers and pamphlets to reveal their founding purposes and their major commitments. According to Mullane (2002), a mission statement is a linguistic construct that provides a precise definition of what an enterprise does on a daily basis. Mission statements vary in length, word choice and targeted audiences. They project what the enterprises aspire to accomplish, identify key stakeholders and state the enterprises' commitment to satisfy stakeholders' needs.

State-owned enterprises in Namibia have been in existence since 1990, when the country gained its independence from the South African regime. State-owned enterprises are Namibian enterprises, established to implement the goals and objectives of the government. They are found all over the country. State-owned enterprises are run by managing directors and other board members, operating from a buzz document called the strategic document. The goals and objectives of state-owned enterprises are incorporated into a discourse called a mission statement to acquire market value and to gain good reputation in the industry (Gath, 2006).

In the same vein, Pennycook (1994) articulates that "linguistic elements in mission statements are subject declaratives, of rhetorical significance, frequent use of nouns, modals, adjectives, metaphors, creative language, passive voice and predominantly verb forms" (p. 23).

A study conducted by Salomo (2015) accentuates that "mission statements are ideal sources of organizational and corporate image for the public". In support of the foregoing, mission statements

comprise linguistic components that spell out specific products and services. Linguistic constructs in all mission statements are testimonies of self-evaluation and accreditation of the state-owned enterprises themselves. The reflection is transpired to mission readers with an assumption that they would buy into the meaning and as such assimilate it positively. Disagreement exists that it is not always the mission content that matters, but rather the language use, perceptions of the audience and expectations that count to the highest degree. Salomo (2015) articulates that “through employing specific linguistic features, mission statements can exaggerate on products and services benefits, in an attempt to draw truth and attention.”

Mission statements can be intentionally or unintentionally ambiguous (Langer, 1991). According to Chomsky (2000), “natural languages are massively ambiguous, words have multiple meanings”. A word, phrase or sentence is ambiguous if it has more than one meaning. Ambiguity occurs where there is a lack of intelligibility or when there is uncertainty about the application of a term. Arguably, there is no uniform linguistic standard for writing. When reading mission statements, one would question why specific words were chosen, for example, “we” and “deliver”, and not others. Mission statements are not always innocent, but sometimes ambiguous (Langer, 1994).

In the same vein, while mission statement writers achieve their goal of attracting readers, they spontaneously introduce ambiguity. As enterprises display mission statements, they are also advertising them. Andrew (2004, as cited in Salomo, 2015) posits that “rhetorical features, namely ethos, pathos and logos, posit vast majorities of advertising modes. Ethos makes an appeal of characters, pathos appeals to emotions and logos appeals to logic or reasons” (p. 11). Language is a communicative tool, where speakers and hearers transmit messages. State-owned enterprises use mission statements to appeal, persuade and convince stakeholders of their accountability. In fact, this arouses stakeholders’ interest and attract mission readers’ interest to the products and services

offered by state-owned enterprises. In a dynamic world, competition is at the order of the day; therefore, state-owned enterprises use linguistic constructs creatively to portray their uniqueness. Consequently, creative and truthful mission statements have the ability to win the hearts of the readers who eventually are likely to believe them.

The study employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Ever since the work of Ran and Duimering (2007), Critical Discourse Analysis has been used extensively in analysing modern day mission statements. Critical Discourse Analysis is an interdisciplinary technique that researchers use to study discourse in written and spoken texts (Van Dijk, 1988). Critical Discourse Analysis is defined as the study of ways in which language is used in text and context (Gee, 2010, as cited in Salomo, 2015). Historically, CDA has been documented in the late 70s and is concerned with the language used in discourse, such as mission statements. It involves the interaction between writers and readers or auditors in a specific situation, context and within frameworks of cultural and social conventions (Gee, 2010, as cited in Salomo, 2015).

In this research, Critical Discourse Analysis will be used to analyse grammar, syntax, semantics, rhetoric and pragmatics in selected mission statements. Furthermore, CDA will be employed to reveal how meaning can be interpreted and understood. It will also be used to unpack hidden social issues, as well as issues related to power and opinions in mission statements. Therefore, Critical Discourse Analysis will guide the analyses of mission statements selected for this study.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

A critical discourse analysis of mission statements is a largely uninvestigated area in the field of linguistics in Namibia. In, Namibia mission statement of State Owned Enterprises, are mostly underestimated, misinterpreted, miscommunicated and exaggerated. In Namibia, there is a limited number of studies that employed Critical Discourse Analysis to analyse mission statements. For

example, Hangura (2013) focused on corporate governance through mission statements and Nekomba (2016) focused on the clarity in Namibian mission statements. Noticeably, none of these studies performed a Critical Discourse Analysis of mission statements of state-owned enterprises in Namibia. There is thus a scarcity of linguistic studies on mission statements of state-owned enterprises in Namibia; therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap in the literature. The study seeks to provide a better understanding of how mission statements convey meaning to stakeholders. It is, therefore, the purpose of this study to use Critical Discourse Analysis to determine linguistic components, which are embedded in mission statements, to explore and discuss how meaning in mission statements can be interpreted, as well as to examine critically how state-owned enterprises use linguistic constructs to relate to their stakeholders and members of the public.

## **1.2. Research objectives**

The objectives of the study were to determine the linguistic components used in mission statements of state-owned enterprises; to explore and discuss how meaning can be interpreted in the mission statements of state-owned enterprises, and examine how state-owned enterprises use linguistic constructs to relate to their stakeholders.

## **1.3. Significance of the study**

It is envisaged that the findings of this research will help to fill the existing knowledge gap of how mission statements convey meaning to stakeholders. This study will also offer insight into how mission statement writers use English to make dissimilar one state-owned enterprises from other enterprises. Thereafter, the research will act as a basis on which future researchers could build

#### **1.4. Limitations of the study**

The study was limited in scope as it was only focused on a Critical Discourse Analysis of mission statements displayed on state-owned enterprises' websites. This study only analysed 14 mission statements to allow the researcher to conduct an in-depth study. Therefore, findings from this study cannot be generalised to other enterprises in Namibia.

#### **1.5. Delimitation of the study**

This study was only analyse mission statements of state-owned enterprises which are displayed on state-owned enterprises' websites. This is due to the accessibility of such data and a limited time available for this study.

#### **1.6. Summary**

This chapter has discussed the orientation of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, significance, limitations and the delimitation of the study. The next chapter will discuss the literature reviewed.

## **2 CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1.Introduction**

This chapter discussed mission statements in context, as well as the linguistic components in mission statements. The chapter also reviewed how CDA used to analyse mission statements, language for audiences, linguistic constructs, as well as how mission statements relate to stakeholders and how the meaning of mission statements can be interpreted.

### **2.2.The Critical Discourse Analysis theory**

Discourse is an open-ended term that goes beyond the structure of words and sentences. In linguistics, a discourse refers to a unit of language longer than a sentence, such as a dialogue, conversation, conference and discussion, just to mention but a few. A discourse takes place in a physical setting, such as a workplace, home or public place (Salomo, 2015). Mission statements of state-owned enterprises are part of workplace and public place discourse, which engages management's thoughts and public members.

Discourse Analysis (DA) is defined as the analysis of language beyond the structures of words in sentences; it studies large portions of language as they flow together (Van Dijk, 1988). Through DA, the study will analyse mission statements as texts, taking into account the linguistic components, linguistic constructs and the meaning conveyed. CDA was developed back in the 1970s by Roger Fowler, with the idea of how language shapes our experiences in the world around us. CDA pays attention to all levels and dimensions of discourse, such as grammar, syntax, semantics, rhetoric, pragmatics and means of interaction. Furthermore, Ran and Duimering (2007) opine that the main role of CDA is to understand social problems, ideologies and power relationships perpetuated by the use of text. CDA will unpack ideologies in mission statements by

asserting how linguistic components in the mission statements of state-owned enterprises relate to stakeholders. Additionally, the study will unload how mission statements construct language to convey their thoughts into goals and objectives. On a parallel view, the study will establish how mission statement readers can perceive, judge and interpret ideology as meaning in mission statements.

CDA aims to explore systematically the dense relationship between discursive texts, events and processes (Fairclough, 2002). Likewise, mission statements are texts whose aims are to establish relationships between stakeholders, members of the public and state-owned enterprises themselves. The study will uncover how linguistic constructs used, emphasise, maintain and establish relations between state-owned enterprises and stakeholders.

According to Fairclough (2002), CDA looks at social relations, identity, as well as knowledge and power constructions, through written and spoken text in various communities, schools, enterprises and political events. The study will analyse mission statements by pointing out how language components are used to identify themselves. By identification, the study will find out how linguistic components, such as nouns, adjectives and adverbs, are used to distinguish from other enterprises.

Hasemi (2011) explains that one word can also convey strong meaning or connotation. For example, the word “bank” can convey a particular meaning, namely as an institution where money is being kept, but also as a place where sand is being deposited. The study will then explain why meaning in state-owned enterprises’ mission statements can be comprehended differently.

### **2.3.Mission statement defined**

Mission statements are visible in public organisations (Desmidt, 2015). Mission statements are mirrors that reflect an organisation's realities. Mission statements are carriers of the culture, ethos and ideologies of state-owned enterprises. Mission statements often displayed as short and precise statements on a single page. Mission statements are defined differently by various scholars. Some definitions focus on their purpose, others on components and scope of operations (Alawneh, 2018). A mission statement is a formal, written document, short to capture an organisation's unique and durable purpose and practice (Alawneh, 2018). "Mission statements tell two certainties about a company: who it is and what it does" (Fasly, 1989, p. 3). Mission statements "are declarations of an organization's businesses or reason for being" (p. 27). "Mission statements reveal what an organization wants to be and whom it wants to serve" (Fasly, 1989, p. 59). Mission statements can be defined as statements that validate and stipulate reasons for an organisation's existence.

Mission statements express the scope of operations and activities, such as customers, products or services, location, values and philosophy. In short, according to Palmer and Short (2008), these aspects of mission statements reflect "how firms see themselves and how they want others to view them" (p. 454).

DuFour, et al., (2008) explains that mission statements are, most simply, statements of why an organisation exists and its fundamental purpose. DuFour and Eaker (1998) articulate that mission statements are about "stating the business of our business" and answering the question "Why do we exist?" (p. 58). Even if many definitions claim the purpose of existence of mission statements, some mission statements might lack clarity.

The products and services rendered by the organisation influence the content of mission statements. Nouns for products and services lay the foundation of mission content. Additionally, nouns pronounce the organisation and stakeholders' identities. In the same vein, adjectives and

adverbs complement the meanings of mission statements. Furthermore, adjectives and adverbs in a mission statement influence comprehension. Besides, they extend the meaning of a mission statement in depth. Debatably, they might convey literal but also ambiguous meaning. Thus, the entire content of the mission statement contributes to its overall meaning.

Ketterer (2015) views mission statements as roads to organisations' success. This means that mission statements pave and direct the organisations' footsteps. The linguistic constructs used in mission statements are motivational and inclusive in order to suggest a spirit of togetherness. Therefore, a mission statement warrants that the stakeholders are considered and that the values and standards of an organisation are being broadcasted for leaders, employees and customers alike (Bart, 1997).

#### **2.4.Importance of a mission statement**

Linguistic constructs are means of conveying meaning to people. Mission statements consist of coherent words and phrases merged into sentences and paragraphs to convey the voice of the organisation. State-owned enterprises craft mission statements to sell and market the products and services they offer. According to the literature (Karami, 2001; Bartkus, 2004), mission statements are strategic tools that are meant to communicate continually desirable attitudes, work ethics, cultures and values that people can operationalise in their choice of actions and inactions.

Humans have concepts in their minds that they convey to other people through linguistic constructs. The view taken in this research is that all meaning whether conventional or associated with linguistic expression or that arise from pragmatics is conceptual in nature.

The strategic management planning process begins with the environment and resource analysis, and proceeds with defining the organisation's mission. The statements of the organisation are set drawing onto these two elements and they direct the organisation's action.

Organisations can create their own definitions for mission statements, without a pattern to define it or a regulatory system for unification; consequently, a large number of diverse statements are presented, peculiar in length, focus, style of writing and, generally, importance on creating mission statements.

Importantly, Ketterer (2015) states that the public image of how the institution wants its customers to view its products or services should be clearly defined in mission statements. This public image defines the unique and lasting reason that the stakeholders continue to be a part of the institution (Analoui & Karami, 2002). Mission statements act as the public platform, or first communication, where a company shares the "priorities, strategies, plans, and work assignments" (Pearce & David, 1989). Though often discredited for being indistinct, the vagueness of mission statements is actually vital in order to allow institutional missions to span generations, ideologies, and to leave room for creative growth (David, 1989, p. 94).

Mission statements incorporate specifics about the organisation that make it unique and describes "the organization's achievements and hopes, such as the size of the organization, the scope of endeavour and the number and diversity of the organization's businesses, markets and customers" (Swales, 2010). Mission statements usually reflect values and priorities of strategic decisions and outline the vision and future of the organisation's direction.

Mission statements' goals ensure the planned behaviour by following the missions' guidelines, as well as explaining the purpose of the business as a whole to internal and external stakeholders. According to Lynch (2006), mission statements should be market-oriented, real, clear, enforceable,

motivating, specific and flexible enough, as well as environment adaptable. From the customer's point of view, mission statements ensure the frame of expectations. For the employee, they are the impulses to understand that the decisions the management makes are good.

Speakers can construct a unique organisational identity by using multiple words that collectively identify the organisation with a unique combination of several conventional categories. Thus an identity claim that defines an organisation neutrally may construct an identity that audiences consider more trustworthy. But, some may argue that the very mention of any conceptual category in an identity claim implies the author's rhetorical intent to define the organisation either positively or negatively.

According to Ketterer (2015), first and foremost, mission statements are tools to communicate the identity of state-owned enterprises to stakeholders and members of the public (Bartkus, 2008). Morphew and Hartley (2006) outline two major benefits of having mission statements as either instructional, which "helps distinguish between activities that conform to institutional imperatives and those that do not" (p. 457), those that are inspirational, which "communicate its characteristics, values, and history to key external constituents" (2006, p. 457). Thus the linguistic constructs used are appealing adjectives and adverbs to market the organisation better.

Mission statements are also touted for being the cornerstones of developing and carrying out strategic decisions (Analoui & Karami, 2002, p. 19; Pearce & David, 1987).

From a strategic planning standpoint, mission statements should include the values and philosophy by which unified decisions can be made (Camiré, Werthner, & Trudel, 2009). Mission statements provide a guide to what needs to be done to progress as an institution (Meacham, 2008; Fugazzotto,

2009). Thus, the focus of the members of the institutions would be channelled into selected areas by mission statements, to ensure such progress (Bart, 1997).

According to Verna (2010), the content of these statements is important because of its influence on people's behaviour and resource allocation. Literature on mission statements (Mullane, 2002; Morphey & Hartley, 2006; Fox, 2006) demonstrate the value of mission statements as guiding principles which help to form employees' relationships with one another from the inside, the public and the stakeholders, especially with the customers.

According to Ketterer (2015), some researchers have questioned the true benefits of mission statements. Whether or not the words in the mission statements are a true testament of the beliefs of the institutions or merely another recruiting device is often questioned (Taylor & Morpew, 2010; Bartkus, McAfee, 2000). Moreover, the fact that accreditation agencies require mission statements from state-owned enterprises allows for speculation whether they are so important or necessary to the existence of the institution or just a box that needs to be checked (Morpew & Hartley, 2006 as cited in Ketterer, 2015).

According to Darbi (2012), the length and content of mission statements may vary. Some are broad and others narrow. Mullane (2002) alludes that "a typical mission statement identifies key stakeholders and states the organizations' commitment to meet these stakeholders 'needs'". He, furthermore, suggests that the concept of "measurable" is key to the practical application of the mission. These "measurables" are a hybrid of goals and objectives" (Ketter, 2015). The use of future tense verbs and the present tense speaks out what the organisation articulates in its objectives and goals.

Ketterer (2015) points out that from a strategic planning standpoint, mission statements should include the values and philosophies by which unified decisions can be made. The mission

statement provides a guide to what needs to be done to progress as an institution (Meacham, 2008; Fugazzotto, as cited in Kotter, 1997). Thus, the focus of the members of the institutions would be channelled into selected areas by the mission to ensure such progress (Bart, 1997).

## **2.5.Linguistic components of mission a statement**

Mission statements' components provide a road map for the organisations' activities. Linguistically, customers and stakeholders, command, imperatives, directives are parts of mission statements' components.

The literature on the components of mission statements is clear and unambiguous about the most frequent attributes used universally. However, Sufi and Lyons (2003), in a study that included some of the largest global hospitality enterprises, introduced an industry context – appreciating the peculiarities of different industries.

Each of these components should always be subject to change as the institution and organisation grows (David, 1989, p. 95). In fact, many mission statements originate in order to deal with change, set goals to guide through change and provide reasons to pursue the set goals (Kotter, 1997). Goals are often indicated by the organisations' long-term “ability to satisfy principle claims and desires of employees and stakeholders” (Pearce, 1982, p. 17). By communicating, the goals are used to clarify the general direction of the organisation (Kotter, 1997). The goals are backed by the company's philosophy, which includes how the institution will go about attaining its goals. Company philosophy should drive the stakeholders in the right direction in the right manner (Kotter, 1997).

## **2.6. The target addressees**

A mission statement addressees assign meaning to words, phrases and sentences which construct mission statements, thus their interpretation is always different. Mission statement writers have to consider the emotive power of the words they use, the choice of linguistic components, what meaning to convey and what to withhold. (Gath, 2006, cited in Salomo, 2015) claims that persuasion in any advertisement is the shifting of people's minds, beliefs and attitudes, causing them to react differently to the adverts. Mission statements of state-owned enterprises are marketing tools meant to sell enterprises.

Moreover, Gath (2006) illuminates that, being one single individual or being a single voice in a text, encoding messages to a number of various groups as addressees do not hinder message decoding. In fact, mission statements are estimated to spill over to ten sentences and 198 words, yet incorporate the ideas and images of enterprises. In simplicity, mission statements are mirrors, whose reflections shine to the addressees. Arguably, the idea that mission statements exist as simple texts has been challenged, because readers struggle to decode messages, and have a better comprehension of mission statements (Maryr, 2010). Another parallel view is that the main idea for mission statements' writers is to let addressees register the meaning being conveyed to them. It is also hoped that the voice in mission statements will be translated into meaning, which appeals, and speaks personally to readers (Camino, 2012).

## **2.7. Language of a mission statement**

Namibia chose English as an official language, immediately after its independence. Mission statements are official documents, and goals and objectives are conveyed to the audience in English. English is a global language and all literate people comprehend it. According to Radlinska

(2000, referred to in Simpson 2010), the language of mission statements needs to be highly impressive in order to fulfil the purpose of transmitting and conveying meaning. It also seeks potential readers. Mention should be made that the English language persists to enhance closer relationships and portrays semantic appeal in order to put the message across.

## **2.8. Adjectives in a mission statement**

Simpson (2010) states that adjectives help writers to convey both positive and negative meaning, but, also, meaning displays writers' points of view. From the above quote, it seems that mission statement writers employ adjectives to provide more information about products and services. Different mission statements use different adjectives. Some of the common adjectives used are longer-lasting, quality, good, best, improved, new and others.

Salomo (2015) finds that new and improved adjectives emphasise products and services that are not only up-to-date, but better than prior services. Good and best are famous adjectives in recent times, where good suggests that brands offer effective benefits expected by users, while better and best are competitive adjectives that suggest that writers' products and services are better than those available in the market. However, the over-use or general use of such adjectives may limit the impact of the message. Equivalently, Radlinska (2000, as cited in Simpson, 2010) notes that positive adjectives emphasise why products stand out in comparison to others. Simpson (2010) disputes that adjectives may not always be used in the normal sense; writers coin them for that specific purpose.

## **2.9. Linguistic constructs that relate to stakeholders**

According to Ketterer (2015), stakeholders are supportive wings of state-owned enterprises. The mission statements mention organisational outputs relatively more frequently than inputs, most likely because mission statements are constructed primarily to influence external stakeholders who

receive various organisational outputs (Ketteerer, 2015). Generally, mission statements use linguistic constructs positively, to highlight harmonious relationship. The inspirational part of the mission also plays a key role in the ultimate buy-in from stakeholders. This one statement has the ability to provide meaning to daily work and bring to light the broader purpose of the duties of each person (Bartkus, & McAfee, 2000 as cited in Ketterer, 2015). It is meant to unify the behaviours.

Friedman and Miles (2002) argue from the perspective of the realist theory that the customer/client relationship views the public as external to the organisation, bound to it possibly by contractual obligations, and the relationship is, therefore, potentially more problematic, subject to negotiation, arbitration, and so on.

First, there is the concept of the stakeholder that is potentially problematic to the organisation, and who needs to be mapped, managed and controlled (Bart, 1997). Second, there is the concept of the stakeholder as an entity recognised in the discourse as a being with needs, rights and a voice, within an organization, re-conceptualised as an entity with responsibilities, a sense of ethics and inclusiveness (Darbi, 2012).

It is reasonable to assume, despite the monologist voice, that stakeholders and organisations can in fact share many goals and interests. The study adopted this theory to explain how mission statements of state-owned enterprises contextualise stakeholders in their mission statements. It will also act as a pillar to point out how various linguistic constructs relate to stakeholders. Finally, the theory will provide room for meaning relations and effects between stakeholders and state-owned enterprises.

## **2.10. Enterprises' identity by nouns**

Nouns devote differentiated from the institutional objectives while pronouns reveal textual construction of power (Sufi & Lyons, 2003).

Most mission statements use nouns frequently, for example, goals, principle and values, just to state the true identity of the state-owned enterprise but also to specify the root foundation on which it leans. Swales (2014) enlightens that pronoun use shows how people are thinking about group members, whether individuals, or emphasise a collective (e.g. 'we', 'our', 'us') or individual (e.g. 'me', 'my', 'I'), indicates actions and outcomes. Additionally, 'we', 'our', 'their' are used for inclusiveness, thereby highlighting a common goal and equal commitment between stakeholders and state-owned enterprises.

On the contrary, mission statements may reflect differences in the balance of status. Higher status individuals tend to use more first person plurals and fewer first person singulars. Arguably, there is a relationship between the use of the first pronoun plural and message readers, as message readers tend to pay more attention to content and meaning of the mission statements of state-owned enterprises (Kotter, 1997). It is believed that pronouns are collective words which render readers' responsibility of implementing goals and objectives of mission statements into practice. A classic adoption of rhetoric devices is the first person plural pronoun.

The assumed "we" is both a subtle and powerful identification strategy as it often goes unnoticed. Uses of this strategy allow a corporation to present similarities and commonalties among organisational members as taken for granted assumptions. The extent to which employer and public members except these assumptions and corollaries unquestioningly, indicate that they identify with their corporate organisations (Round, 1987, p. 154)

A study by Halliday (1985) discovered that, “sentences in mission statements consist of the following subject’s infinitive declarative, employee, customer economy and environment denoting subjects”. The study, furthermore, reveals that employees are, in terms of functional linguistics, the unmarked themes in traditional formulation, as the point of departure for the statements syntactically, mission statements are about employees”. The latter could also be true, namely that it would not make sense if mission statements failed to articulate the quality of service provided by the employees. In any state-owned enterprise the objectives and goals of the organisation would be delivered and implemented by the employees

### **2.11. Enterprises’ identity by verbs**

Mission statements speak loudly by action. This guarantees, safeguards and promises state-owned enterprises’ hold on stakeholders. According to Darbi (2012), modality makes prominent encoding of an author’s perspective. Mission statements incorporate verbs to emphasise service delivery. Modal verbs, such as must, should, may, will and shall, are considered in the encoding of enterprises’ regulations and their semantic power in relation to each other (McAfee, 2000). In this light, state-owned enterprises impact power relations confidently on their stakeholders. Downing and Locke posit that “often in an agent, it may be, deliberately silenced, in-order to avoid giving or taking blame to maintain privacy, when present, it is often in a power relation, stakeholders cast as beneficially”.

At times, mission statement writers establish power relations with stakeholders, which is an advantage to both. Although less light is shed on the importance of verbs in mission statements, it is still not clear what other linguistic factors are encoded in mission statements to enhance the mutual relationship between stakeholders and state-owned enterprises. A study done by Eggins

(2004, as cited in Darbi, 2012) reveals that the strength of verbs differs as some modal verbs are more forceful than others, and they are used to encode institutional power strongly. However, what is not known is how to formulate semantically actionable but also goal-oriented mission statements.

Values	Probability	Obligation
High	Must	Must/ required
Medium	Will	Should/supposed
Low	May	Can/ allowed

Modal verbs are deployable to express different meanings, relationships and functions. According to Camino (2012), it seems potentially more complex in its range of interpersonal and other meanings than the next highest ranking. Even though mission statements are linguistically complex, “will” simplify action and, optimistically, relations between stakeholders and state-owned enterprises. While this could be the case, it remains a concern how mission statements use modals to state impressive actions and strategies to achieve a long term goal for the state-owned enterprises which they claim in mission statements.

There are many verbs in the English language; however, mission statements often use verbs such as consider, determine, provide, ensure, attend, and others. A study done by Camino (2012) overshadows that “consider reinforces institutional dominance, which might be offensive to stakeholders but direct or indirect beneficial to them. Determine co-occur with strong modal verbs like shall and will to encode institutional authority”. Mission statements incorporate modal verbs to show their ability for deliverance and their promise for outstanding performance (Swales, 2014).

Downing and Locke (2006) articulate that “make” and “take” have little value as material verbs in the ideational construction of an institutional process and are likely to be used as noun phrases. Mission statements may choose the passive voice to relate to their stakeholders rather than only

being vocal regarding their verbs. Likewise, Swales (2014) points out that “the verb form is predominantly the present, imperative and the purposive imperative example, to provide, to be the fastest carrier, while modals are the most unhedged example we will be a globally competitive company”. Linguistically, what is preached, reflects what is meant; however, it remains a concern whether mission statements do really establish speaker-hearer relationship problems.

### **2.12. Modals (will)**

Current studies on modals have discovered that “will” is used in relation to connected offer of goods and services but also a command and has more authoritative form of encoding”. For example, mission statements use will to ensure commitment to action. This strengthens a good relationship between state-owned enterprises and stakeholders. Arguably, Locke (2006, cited in Round, 1987) emphasises that will of intention can have the force of either promise or threat, whether the intended action is beneficial to the addressee or otherwise. Similarly, will expresses a confident assumption by the speaker, based on experience, known facts or what is usually the case (Locke, p. 382).

State-owned enterprises come a long way. They have improved their service delivery, so they can relate to using will with their stakeholders to stress good relationships. Besides, ‘will’ is also used to express the future. Stakeholder relations should at least be long-lasting and thus mission statements use ‘will’ to guarantee a comprehensive future relationship with their stakeholders. Furthermore, ‘will’ is also used to adhere to, confirm and also to mitigate a proposal” (Swales, 2010). In a parallel view, ‘will’ encodes the degree of willingness to act or not, in providing freedom and rewards for stakeholder relationships.

According to Downing and Locke (2006), “when “will” correlates with not, as negation such relation might affect the relation between state-owned enterprises and stakeholders. ‘Will’ also comes along with, lexical verbs, such as ensure, provide, seek undertake and inform, just to show, how that organisation provides goods and services, and it will also ensure that expectations are met by the stakeholders.

### **2.13. Shall**

Sometimes mission statements make use of “shall” for explicit power authority, as directional that tells how the organisation should proceed (Locke, 2006).

According to Downing and Locke (2006), shall shows the right to act as it sees fit in the circumstances. It shows freedom to offer or refuse goods and services in certain hypothetical situation, whereas ‘may’ extends freedom to stakeholders, stating what they may do. It is clear that ‘may’ regards or disregards the concession. On the other hand, ‘may’ speculates the degree of probability and allows negotiations and permits potential dialogue, by encoding the admission that it has incomplete knowledge of what is true. Additionally, ‘shall’ allows knowledge of a scope of supplemental information to be addressed. In some instances, stakeholders may be favoured or challenged when ‘shall’ is used in mission statements.

Downing and Locke (2006) claim that a medium degree of conviction is expressed by ‘should’ and less common ought. These modals are used instead of ‘must’ when the speaker lacks authority to impose the obligations to improve. Distinctively, ‘should’ is also used in mission statements to separate state-owned enterprises from their stakeholders if they fail to accord to agreements. For example, mission statements are written that stakeholders should ensure that they honour agreements; if not, then another decision will be taken. Together, ‘should’ and ‘must’ co-exist, and for doubt option, because state-owned enterprises, may abuse power relations. Previous studies by

Downing and Locke (2000) and Swales (2010) attempt to explain how modal verbs are used to highlight the relationships between stakeholders and state-owned enterprises, but yet reasons why mission statement actions remain autocratic are of greater concern. Correspondingly, ‘must’ is a modal verb that is used by the speaker to show authority over the addressee and to ensure loss of difference in illocutionary force in context (Swales, 2010). The encoding of what is known and what is not known is permitted and thus affects stakeholders.

Strumpf (1933) “defines infinitives as verbs that can function as nominal as an adjective or as an adverbial that usually begins with its maker “to” and also make use of the present perfect tense”. Furthermore, Strumpf (1933) articulates that infinitives bear resemblance to a prepositional phrase, but there is a clear distinction that the infinitive has “to” and a verb, but a prepositional phrase; no true verb exists in the prepositional phrase. Yet, alone it is sometimes possible to omit “to” in the infinitive phrase for the sake of a harmonious-sounding construction. The opposite could be true, namely that a mission aims to capture readers’ attention though formally there is a need to be pleasant-sounding. “The English language used in mission as a monological declaration of enterprise five year mission to be” (Strumpf, 1933.175) that can sometimes be omitted. Debate exists that, unlike verbals’ counterparts, infinitives fill almost any role that a standard noun would as subjects, objects and subject complements

#### **2.14. Meaning interpretation**

“A world without effects would be pallid and meaningless, we would not know whether things happened, neither could we care whether they did or not” (Tomkins, 1995, p. 88, as cited in Tyler 2012). Meaning is instinctively given. According to Tomkins (1995), “From the ancient times, to contemporary times, mission statement readers intentionally read to capture meaning. From Middle English, meaning origin originated from the word, menyng, equivalent to mean + -ing.

Cognate with Scots *mening* (“intent, purpose, sense, meaning”), West Frisian *miening* (“opinion, mind”), Dutch *mening* (“view, opinion, judgement”), German *Meinung* (“opinion, view, mind, idea”), Danish and Swedish *mening* (“meaning sense, sentence”). These definitions might be orthographically different. In the African perspective and in the Namibia context, meaning, refers to an idea or opinions.

“In meaning, sense, significance, purport denote that which is expressed or indicated by language or action. Meaning is general, describing that which is intended to be, or actually is, expressed: the meaning of a statement, sense often refers to a particular meaning of a word or phrase: The word “run” has many senses general meaning means” it is of no doubt that both message writers and message readers have knowledge of the general meaning of the term meaning, but their level of linguistic knowledge might modify this understanding (Laughin, 2001, p. 45, as cited in Cameron, 2009).

“The more responsibility the reader/hearer is given for the interpretation process, the greater the sense of intimacy that is communicated between communicator and audience (Blakemore, 2009, p. 23, as cited in Tyler, 2012).

Although, it looks as if mission statements belong to writers, they are more attached to the readers, since they are disposed and excessed and no direct cost; so whoever wants to interpret them is voluntarily responsible.

Linguistically, the term meaning “is what the source or sender expresses, communicates, or conveys in their message to the observer or receiver, and what the receiver infers from the current context” (Tyler, 2012). In this research, this definition of what state-owned enterprises wish to convey in mission statements and what message readers can learn from them.

Though, mission statements of state-owned enterprises intend to convey messages, sometimes they may fail because words might be ambiguous. According to Tyler (2012), ambiguous means confusion about what is conveyed, since the current context may lead to different interpretations of meaning. Many words in many languages have multiple definitions and this renders dissimilar perceptions.

“Ambiguity is an effect of a rupture of the rule of identity in the context of the exchange of information. Particularly the sender may be physically absent, and the contexts explicitly divergent, such will be the case when the receptor is a reader and the sender was a writer” (Kasper, 1997). Ultimately, the individuality of mission statement writers and readers determine whether meaning is magnificently conveyed. Furthermore, meaning of state-owned enterprises is entirely affected by context.

The study of contextual meaning is called pragmatics. While pragmatics has been consistently defined as the study of language in its sociocultural context (Crystal, 1985, 1997; Kasper, 1997), it is unclear what an individual needs to know in order to be pragmatically competent and communicate appropriately and effectively in a given situation. The interpretations of meaning are affected by linguistic and situational context.

Linguistic context is how meaning is understood without relying on intent and assumptions. In applied pragmatics, meaning is formed through sensory experiences, even though sensory stimulus cannot be easily articulated in language or signs. Pragmatics, then, reveal that meaning is both something affected by and affecting the world. Meaning is something contextual with respect to language and the world, and is also something active to other meanings and the world. The linguistic context becomes important when looking at particular linguistic problems, such as that

of pronouns. Situation context refers to every non-linguistic factor that affects the meaning of a phrase (William, 2014, as cited in Searle, 1992).

It is not easy to understand how context renders meaning to readers but it is easy to experience and portray meaning within the context (Searle, 1992). Languages allow information to be conveyed even when specific words used are not known by readers or listeners. People connect words with meanings and use words to refer to concepts.

Meaning is interpreted in relation to various branches such as lexical semantics, grammatical semantics and linguistic pragmatics. Lexical semantics focuses on the study of words, words on the content. Ideas are linked with words". Grammatical semantics is studied in relation to direct relevance to syntax.

Doubtfully, meaning is studied in relation to different fields, such as philosophically, psychologically, linguistically, neurologically and sociologically. Firstly, philosophically, linguists take the existence of meaning for granted and accept it as of an intuitively accessible, natural kind (Tyler, 2012). Considering mission statements of state-owned enterprises, there could be a gap to grasp what meaning is sealed off and why specific words are used as they relate to X and Y words. Conversely, this could leave many scholars in a dilemma, as they seek deeper understanding of meaning in mission statements at a philosophically level.

Secondly, psychologically, meaning is retrievable faster from words with concrete meanings, frequency and shorter length than from words with longer length and abstract meanings (Tyler, 2012). This implies that the comprehension of the mission statements of state-owned enterprises depends on the length and types of words used. Critically, it is worth the worry whether mission writers are aware of mission length, since mission length and the nature of words fluctuate

frequently. Thirdly, neurologists and psychologists take a mental view of states and processes; meaning, like anything else in life, must boil down ultimately to connection between neurons (Tyler, 2012). It is not tranquil to forecast meaning perception of the mission statements of state-owned enterprises.

The natural uniqueness and innateness of humanity have limited the analysis of how meaning of state-owned enterprises could be possibly interpreted. Ambiguously, the brain's word retrieval is hardly controllable and unpredictable. Interpreters' interpretations cannot be anticipated, as they may criticise, agree and disagree with mission statements' meanings. Notably, it takes linguistic knowledge to translate thoughts and ideas into meaning and to extract meaning from the mission statements of state-owned enterprises.

This doubt is supported by Corley (2004, as cited in Desmith), namely that "mission statements are often characterized by a high level of interpretive leeway. For example, a mission statement can focus on 'delivering the highest possible quality', but the labels 'quality' can have different meanings at different times or different places".

Different people use different words or expressions, descriptions and preferences to associate content words in mission statements. Therefore, these words are interpreted differently, although meant for common meaning to the audiences. Further differences in comprehension contribute to differences in perceptions and interpretations. Debatably, audiences may have doubts regarding the final meaning of mission statements, does it mean this or that? Consequently, meaning ambiguities are mentally and personally oriented.

This notion is disputed by Chun and Rainey (2005) that mission statements are inherently a collection of ambitious, abstract labels with a high level of interpretive leeway.

Mission statements' language is appealing, convincing and persuasive. The choice of words used in mission statements has primarily the function of attracting the audience's attention. However, "If message recipients perceive inconsistencies between the content of persuasive messages and the actions of the message senders, the projected message will evoke feelings of disbelief (Narayanan, Zane & Kemmerer, 2011, as cited in Desmith). If the meaning of a message is negatively perceived, criticism and lack of legitimacy arise. As such, the audience may question the validity of the mission statement by questioning the mission statement's content. For example does this mission statement implement practically what the message transpires?

Fourthly, sociologists and psycholinguists believe that language and meaning play a role in the society and create social relations (Pandey, 2012). Message readers interpret the mission statement's meaning in relation to societal issues because they are part and parcel of the society. At times, message interpreters expect mission statements to dance to their tunes. The use of subject declaratives and frequent nouns delights mission statement interpreters. Holistically, these linguistic constructs transpire pathos and the ethos of state-owned enterprises that can be positively or negatively assimilated by mission statement readers. In the same vein, the interpreters bring a mind-set of economic issues which hamper society. These thoughts are incorporated in mission statements' meanings as readers read them. This enhances mission statements' ambiguities.

Likewise, a factor that influences positive interpretation is self-efficacy. According to Pandey (2012), "Self-efficacy, is one's beliefs regarding one's capabilities to perform a particular task or endeavour, is deemed to have a positive effect on the attitudinal and behavioural outcomes".

Cameron (2009) argues that persuasive messages have generally three possible goals: response shaping (i.e. creating a response to a new stimulus when an attitude towards the stimulus did not yet exist), response reinforcing (i.e. strengthening an attitude or behaviour that is advocated by the

persuader but already enacted by the receiver), and response changing (i.e. the persuasive message is targeted at changing values, beliefs, attitudes, intentions or behaviour).

Message readers' interpretations are influenced by their prior attitudes, vocabulary and the linguistic comprehension of linguistic constructs used, for example syntax, semantics, subject declaratives, rhetorical significance, frequent use of nouns, modals, adjectives, metaphors, creative language and, predominantly, verb forms. Message readers' level of interpretation is based on what they know and their linguistic relativity.

People's attitudes determine their message interpretation. Positive attitudes yield positive interpretations of the messages. Even though mission statement readers are physically isolated from state-owned enterprises, they are psychologically aligned. Pandey (2012) uses the theory of person-organisation fit (POF) to claim that people's attitudes towards an organisation's mission are influenced by the level of perceived alignment between the organisation and personal value expectations. It often happens that linguistic constructs, such as possessive pronouns and plural nouns, are used for solidarity, common goals and the objectives of state-owned enterprises. If the audience has such congruence with the content of the mission statement, their level of interpretation is often positive.

While pragmatics has been consistently defined as the study of language in its socio-cultural context (Crystal, 1985, 1997; Kasper, 1997), it is unclear what an individual needs to know in order to be pragmatically competent and communicate appropriately and effectively in a given situation.

### **2.15 Summary**

This chapter has looked at the Critical Discourse Analysis theory, mission statements in context, the importance of the mission statement, linguistic components of a mission statement, the target

addressees, language of mission statements, adjectives used in a mission statement, linguistic constructs that relate to stakeholders, enterprise identity and the meaning of interpretation of mission statements. The next chapter will look at the research methodology.

## CHAPTER 3 RESEACH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1.INTRODUCTION

The study conducted a critical discourse analysis of the mission statements of state-owned enterprises in Namibia. This chapter will provide a description of the methods and procedures used to collect data. This research was a desktop study and conducted by using existing mission statements of state-owned enterprises.

### 3.2.Research design

A research design is a master plan of the direction of the research. According to Mouton (1996, as cited in Creswell, 2015), “the research design serves to plan, structure and execute the research to maximize the validity of the findings. It gives directions from the underlying philosophical assumptions to research design, and data collection. Furthermore, colloquially a research design is an action plan for getting from here to there, where ‘here’ may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered and ‘there’ is some set of (conclusions) answers” (p. 19).

The research is qualitative, and data collected were critically examined and analysed. Qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter; it attempts to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). According to Domegan and Fleming (2007, as cited, Creswell, 2015), “Qualitative research aims to explore and to discover issues about the problem on hand, because very little is known about the problem. There is usually uncertainty about the dimensions and characteristics of problem. It uses ‘soft’ data and gets ‘rich’ data” (p. 24). Therefore, an in-depth study to determine the linguistic components used in mission statements was done. The study explored how meaning in mission statements can be interpreted. Critically, the study examined how linguistic constructs of mission statements related to stakeholders.

When the understanding of an event is a function of personal interaction and perception of those in that event, and the description of the processes that characterise the event necessary to understand the participants' role in the event, and their perceptions of the experience, a qualitative approach is suitable. Qualitative approaches are becoming more widely used as analysis methods as people improve and search for better ways of gathering data about a problem (Price, 2002, as cited in Creswell, 2015 ). The study aims to understand the views of mission statement writers, as they reveal their voices in the mission statements and also to analyse the perceptions of stakeholders about the meaning of mission statements.

According to Creswell (2015), qualitative research methods give an in-depth study of scenarios in search of a meaningful understanding of issues being investigated. This finding is also supported by Creswell (2015), namely that qualitative provides an overall lens for the study. It also provides a call for action to change by guiding the researcher as to what issues are important to examine.

Twenty prints of mission statements of state-owned enterprises were selected to analyse the linguistic components, linguistic construct relations to stakeholders and meaning interpretations of mission statements. Meaning is always social, arising in and out of interaction with a human community and, therefore, qualitatively generate meaning from the collected data (Creswell, 2015). Furthermore, Creswell (2015) asserts that we are born in a world of meaning bestowed upon us by our culture; hence, the study seeks to analyse mission statements of state-owned enterprises. In this light, the researcher analysed the entire content of mission statements of state-owned enterprises, interpreted meaning of the content, where such meaning was shaped by the researcher's own experiences.

### **3.3.Population**

The population of the study comprised 98 mission statements from all state-owned enterprises in Namibia.

### **3.4.Sample**

The sample is a subset of the population selected to participate in a research study. It defines the selected groups, that is, individuals, groups or organisations. The sample is chosen from the study population that is commonly referred to as the ‘target population or accessible population’ (Burns & Grove, 2003 as cited in Creswell, 2015). The sample consisted of 14 mission statements from state-owned enterprises which were displayed on the websites of the enterprises, for easier accessibility, convenience and time saving. The study used judgemental sampling to allow the researcher to use knowledge of the subject to select the mission statements. Judgemental sampling involves choice of subjects with desired, accurate and information relevant to the researcher’s focus.

The research questions below were employed for the analysis of the linguistic components used in mission statements of state-owned enterprises. In the end, the researcher discovered how linguistic constructs used in mission statements related to stakeholders and how meaning could be interpreted.

### **3.5.Research objectives**

This research was guided by the following objectives:

Determine the linguistic components used in mission statements of state-owned enterprises.

Explore and discuss how meaning can be interpreted in the mission statements of state-owned enterprises.

Critically examine how state-owned enterprises use linguistic constructs to relate to their stakeholders.

### **3.6.Procedure**

The study was a desktop study. The researcher used printed mission statements from enterprises' websites. Firstly, the researcher visited the websites of 14 state-owned enterprises and downloaded their mission statements. The researcher printed the download in hard copy for better focus and advanced analysis. The researcher used content analysis to analyse the mission statements. Linguistic constructs were determined into categories as major and minor themes. Themes were explored and examined in detail. Finally, the mission statements were critically analysed to reveal hidden meanings and unpack social and political issues.

### **3.7.Data analysis**

Data analysis is a mechanism for reducing and organising data to produce findings that require interpretation by the researcher. Data analysis is a challenging and a creative process characterised by an intimate relationship of the researcher with the participants and the data generated (Burns & Grove, 2003 as cited in Creswell, 2015).

Critical Discourse Analysis and content analysis were used to analyse the selected mission statements. The analysis aimed to categorise the linguistic components used in the mission statements of state-owned enterprises and explore how they conveyed meaning to stakeholders and the public, and then present them as emerging themes.

According to Marshall and Rossaman (2011), qualitative studies emphasise that the actions of humans that cannot be understood unless the thoughts, values, feelings and assumptions that preceded those actions are understood. The qualitative researcher collects data and analyses themes; however, currently qualitative research has gone beyond this generic analysis and it adds the procedure and selection of categories (Creswell, 2015).

Firstly, the study analysed mission statements of state-owned enterprises by organising raw data into meaningful data. This was done for credibility and relevance of data. Data which were not in

soft copy were coded, then organised into themes. Coding is defined as the process of organising material into chunks or segments of a text before bringing meaningful information (Ralls, 1998, as cited in Creswell, p. 171, 2015). This process involves dividing data gathered during data collection into segments of sentences or paragraphs, putting them into categories and labelling them with a term.

Secondly, the analysis scrutinised how state-owned enterprises constructed mission statements to relate to their stakeholders, then sorted them into categories. The categories were analysed based on the researcher's own experience and knowledge regarding the literature discussed in Chapter Two of the study. In each category, linguistic components used in the mission statements were determined and discussed. Furthermore, an in-depth analysis of themes and categories was conducted. The mission statements of state-owned enterprises were thoroughly read and questions such as what is this about, what is the underlying meaning, were examined.

All common themes were put into one category and language components were arranged as major and minor themes, unique and left-overs. All categories were checked and compared against the raw data to see whether new linguistic categories emerged; then they were renamed and checked how they were related. Codes that were unusual and those that were surprising were analysed separately (Creswell, 2015). In this study, mission statements were described to build up an additional layer of complex analysis.

### **3.8. Research ethics**

Ethical clearance was sought from the University of Namibia's ethics committee. The researcher strove to maintain objectivity and the integrity of the study by reporting the findings in full. Denzin Lincoln (2003) reminds researchers that they should always remember that while they are doing their research, they are in actual fact entering the private spaces of their participants and, therefore,

understandably, ethical issues should be addressed during and after the research has been conducted. Creswell (2003) states that the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informants. Hence, the study adhered to all ethical issues, so that it may not interfere with state-owned enterprises' rights and privacy.

### **3.9. Summary**

This chapter presented the research design, study population, sample of the study, research objectives, procedures on how to conduct the research, data analysis on how to scrutinise the data and research ethics, which exposed the best means of conducting the research.

## CHAPTER 4 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of 14 mission statements of state owned enterprises in Namibia. The mission statements were analysed using, the content analysis and critical discourse analysis. The research objectives of the study were: to determine the linguistic components used in mission statements of state owned enterprises, explore and discuss how meanings can be interpreted in mission statement of state owned enterprise. Data collected were critically analysed, discloses all levels of grammar, syntax, semantics and pragmatics towards the research problem. Data were organised into themes based on the English language used in a mission statement.

### 4.2. The mission statement of Transnamib

*The mission statement of TransNamib: Investing, recruiting, developing and retaining our human capital and will reward people of excellent performance. Being the leader in the provision of transport solutions in rail and road through a passion for excellence with regard to these two specific area and striving for integration within Southern Africa. Offering fair return to our shareholder by reducing operating costs whilst increasing our revenue. Creating a sage working environment for all our stakeholders; and continually driving our customer's perception for value.*

### **4.2.1 Linguistic components in this mission statement**

The length of the TransNamib mission statement enhances the element of quality, as it comprises one paragraph. This enhances time efficiency for both readers and writers. It is also very informative as a few words convey a comprehensive meaning, after which more words were added. A mission statement is a formal, written document which aims to capture an organization's unique and durable purpose and practice (Alawneh, 2018). The TransNamib mission statement spells out the products and services they offer, as is stated in the mission statement: "Being the leader in the provision of transport solutions in rail and road". Elements of who they are and what they do are well foregrounded as linguistic components which complement one another. The mission statement expresses the scope of operations and activities, such as customers, products or services, location, values and philosophy.

According to Palmer and Short (2008), these aspects of mission statements reflect "how firms see themselves and how they want others to view them" (p. 454). Although mission statements tend to stipulate certain linguistic components as backbone, the uniqueness of state-owned enterprises determines what is to be included in their mission statements.

TransNamib's mission statement is composed of nouns. Ideally nouns lay a concrete foundation for the mission statement. They tell readers about the distinctiveness of the state-owned enterprise and its identity. Besides, the mission statements of state-owned enterprises also state other common nouns which support the aims and objective of these enterprises. Common nouns, such as "Southern Africa, Shareholder, customers and Stakeholders" form part of the TransNamib mission statement. These nouns highlight the partnership in delivering excellent goods and services.

It has been discovered that this mission statement comprises stakeholders and shareholders as main components of the linguistic aspects. Bart (1997) asserts that “mission statements warrant that stakeholders are considered and that the values and standards of an organization are being broadcasted for leaders, employees and customers alike”. Without considering main nouns, such as customers, employees and shareholder, this mission statement would lack directives and would have impeded vision.

Debatably, Ketterer (2015) views mission statements as roads to organizations’ success, paving and directing the organizations’ footsteps. The latter is true since, when readers read mission statements, it is imperative for them to know who drives the mission, the passengers, the road map and the destiny.

This mission statement employs prepositions to relate to other linguistic components and to show positions. In the mission statement, the propositional phrase “in the provision of transport solutions in rail and road” is linked to the noun phrase. It cements and adds essence to the noun, but also shows the mutual relationship between a noun and preposition. The relationship between nouns and prepositions strengthens, attracts and sustains the core goal of the state-owned enterprises. The linguistic components link and reinforce the positivity and their positive contributions to the mission goals of the state-owned enterprise. Stakeholders are interested in knowing how the state-owned enterprise values them and how they are prepared to work with them as a team where possible.

The matter of how they relate to each other and support each other for the core benefits, encourage stakeholders and make them feel counted. In this light, TransNamib’s mission statement reinstates

“of excellent performance, in the provision of transport solution and in rail and road, and to our shareholders”.

The prepositional phrase is likely to be perceived positively. This positive statement sends positive impulses, influences positive interpretation and yields meaning that invites positive contributions. Likewise, a factor that influences positive interpretation is self-efficacy. According to Bandura (2012), self-efficacy is one’s beliefs regarding one’s capabilities to perform a particular task or endeavour, and is deemed to have a positive effect on attitudinal and behavioural outcomes.

Many people world-wide are disturbed by transport problems. Staying true to this statement, “of transport in the solution rail and road”, will have a positive meaning for them. In fact, language exists to solve the needs of its users; therefore, many are likely to be inspired. Correspondingly, business people dream about an efficient and effective transport system for their goods to reach their destiny safely and timely. To them this will be a solution to their problems.

TransNamib’s mission statement employs a modal verb “will reward people of excellent performance”. The use of modal verbs expresses the future and forecasts action for those for whom it is reserved. It also attracts and encourages readers of the mission statement to affiliate with the TransNamib enterprise. The messenger’s readers and stakeholders may be intelligently intrigued by the use of the modal verb ‘will’, because it warrants and assures hope to attain the promises in the mission statement.

Conversely, the idea of faith in TransNamib’s mission statement is dangerous. Perhaps what one is optimistic about may actually not be real. TransNamib’s mission statement calculates some

reward for “excellent performance”; yet nothing is suggested for those who may participate in the mission goal of TransNamib; it demonstrates neither average nor below average performances. What will happen to them remains a question. Arguably, Locke (2006 cited in Sheenhan, 2010) emphasizes that “will” of intention can have the force of either a promise or threat, whether the intended action is beneficial to the addressee or otherwise. Equally, “will” expresses a confident assumption by the speaker, based on experience, known facts or what is usually the case (Locke, 2006).

On parallel view, ‘will’ is also used to adhere to, confirm and also mitigate a proposal; however, ‘will’ furthermore encodes the degree of willingness to act or not, in providing freedom and rewards for stakeholders’ relationships (Swales 2010).

Present participles, for example “investing, recruiting, developing and retaining our human capital”, dictate how TransNamib as state-owned enterprise continues to look after its people and develop its human capital even though no time frame is indicated. This makes sense because the foundation of a state-owned enterprise comprises the belief that the operation of the enterprise continues until the end of time. The present participles highlight the ongoing process and not the end.

#### **4.2.2 Meaning interpretation of the mission statement**

The meaning of any mission statement is uniquely derived and is contextually based. Different readers perceive mission statements differently, based on their experience, thoughts and expectations. Similarly, the TransNamib mission writer, whose thoughts and ambitions transpires in the mission, wrote the mission statement of the enterprise from a specific perspective and, consequently, it constitutes the complete mission statement of TransNamib. A study by Gath (2006) posits that being one single individual or being a single voice in a text, encoding messages

to a number of various groups as addressees does not hinder message decoding. Therefore, the meaning that could be deduced from this mission statement is that “of excellence in transportation”. Readers can conclude that TransNamib exists to render solutions for the transportation of goods “within South Africa”. Simply stated, mission statements are mirrors, whose reflections shine to the addressees (Maryr, 2010).

Even though the mission statement stipulates clearly that it aims to be “the leader in the provision of transport solutions in rail and road through a passion for excellence”, this may invite doubts in some readers. In fairness, no enterprise would expose any negative trait, but it rather presents a positive image or else it overcomes evil with good. The extended meaning of the TransNamib mission statement is interconnected with its historical performance and the misconception aspects of the enterprise.

Still, whoever is a stakeholder of TransNamib may attach a high degree of positive meaning to this mission statement. The participles in “investing, recruiting, developing, and retaining our human capital and reward people of excellent performance”, are very impressive, motivating and can install positive thoughts in readers’ minds. The positive connotation of words invites positive thought acceptations and positive perceptions. However, this phrase presents some controversies as stated “will reward of people of excellent performance”. The modal verb “will” promises good intentions, and the main verb “reward” emphasizes the proposed action for the future. Nevertheless, chances are so high that it could be perceived as negative by some readers. For example, no guarantee is given to those who could not attain positive performance.

The participial phrase, “offering fair return to our stakeholder by reducing operating costs whilst increasing our revenue”, implies a balanced income between TransNamib and its stakeholders. This means that while the costs of TransNamib are reduced, the benefits of high income would be fairly shared with the stakeholders. However, the reverse meaning may arise for shareholders as at the point of dividends, doubts may flash in the shareholders’ minds whether this promise could be true. Conversely, some adjectives of persuasion could have been used in this mission statement to express and convince readers much more successfully than what is currently promised. One may conclude that the actual meaning regarding revenue would be more in the hand of the future, than on the literal meaning.

Moreover, TransNamib may express positive meaning to both customers and all stakeholders. The participial phrase “creating a sage working environment for all our stakeholders, and continually driving our customers’ perception of value”, reconsiders and accounts for both customers, stakeholders and all general readers. Furthermore, enterprise, success and implementation of its goals and objectives are affected by the stakeholders and customers.

Kotter (1997) argues that missions originated in order to deal with change, set goals to guide through change, and provide reasons to pursue the set goals. Goals are often indicated by the organizations’ long-term “ability to satisfy principle claims and desires of employees and stockholders” (Pearce, 1982, p. 17). By communicating, the goals are used to clarify the general direction of the organization (Kotter, 1997). The TransNamib mission statement is meant to consider stakeholders and customers, and articulate how it will satisfy them. The participial phrase “driving our customer and creating a sage working environment for all our stakeholders” adds to

the meaning of the mission statement. It warrants hope and could persuade more customers and stakeholders to participate in the enterprise.

Although speculation regarding this meaning is very positive, it is still questionable. There is no evidence that the noun phrase “our customer’s perception of value” will exist forever and to which degree it will continue to hold value. Yet, a mission statement may declare a perception value while in the implementation phase but exhibit the opposite.

### **4.2.3 Linguistic constructs and stakeholders’ relations**

The construction of the TransNamib mission statement is initiated by syntagmatic and paradigmatic words. For instance, in any syntactic environment, the TransNamib mission writer arranged words in harmonious ways to relate to, and determine, the nature of the relationship it has with its stakeholders. A “sage environment working for our all our stakeholders” points out a positive relationship between TransNamib and its stakeholders. The order of an indefinite article followed by an adjective, a noun, an infinitive, a prepositional phrase, a possessive pronoun, a quantifier and noun phrase linguistically expresses the way in which TransNamib views, accepts and relates to its stakeholders. Correspondingly, this linguistic construction also shows which words can be placed in the mission statement without changing the meaning of the relationship. It also only shows any ordinary relationship between the enterprise and its stakeholders.

According to Ketterer (2015), stakeholders are supportive wings of state-owned enterprises but, also, mission statements mention organizational outputs relatively more frequently than inputs, most likely because mission statements are constructed primarily to influence external

stakeholders who receive various organizational outputs. Mission statements employ linguistic constructs positively, to highlight harmonious relationships (Ketteerer, 2015). TransNamib utilises a similar way to relate to stakeholders as “our all stakeholders”.

The noun phrase “all our stakeholders” is very inclusive and emphasizes that whoever is a stakeholder of TransNamib belongs to them. The possessive pronoun “our” highlights that stakeholders are part and parcel of the enterprise. This positive association could promote the core responsibility between the enterprise and the stakeholders. Swales (2014) explains that the use of pronouns shows how people are thinking about group members whether individuals or emphasizes a collective (e.g. ‘we’, ‘our’, ‘us’) or individual (e.g. ‘me’, ‘my’, ‘I’). This indicates actions and outcomes. Besides the noun phrase, customers as stakeholders are post-modified by a personal pronoun “our”. The idea is to link the enterprise positively to the customer and perhaps to avoid a conflict of interest. Friedman and Miles (2002) argue from the perspective of the realist theory that a customer/client relationship views the public as external to the organization, bound to it possibly by contractual obligations, and the relationship is, therefore, potentially more problematic, subject to negotiation, arbitration and the like. It could be argued that perhaps the TransNamib mission statement writer has taken this fact into consideration and thus turned this threat into an opportunity by using the possessive pronoun “our” to modify the noun phrase “customer”.

### **4.3. The mission statement of the Roads Authority**

*To manage the national Road network and support our stakeholders in road-sector related matters in accordance with our distinctive legislation and agreed upon standards and principles. This is done with a view to achieving a safe and efficient road sector thereby promoting economic growth.*

#### **4.3.1 Linguistic components in the mission statement**

“One way in which the advertiser adapts language to his/her own use is to use adverbs, adjectives or superlatives. Adverbs, adjectives and superlatives lead to a clear and precise interpretation of meaning and indicate the greatest degree of a particular quality” (Salomo, 2015).

The Roads Authority mission statement employs linguistic components, such as nouns, infinitives verbs and prepositional phrases. Nouns, such as “Road network and support our stakeholders” are the key identifications of components that make the entire mission statement stand out. Additionally, nouns are employed to define the mission statement of this state-owned enterprise and also point out the Roads Authority’s management of the road network system. Mission statements "are declarations of an organization's businesses or reason for being" and “mission statements reveal what an organization wants to be and whom it wants to serve" (Fred, 2003, p. 59).

The prepositional phrase “with Road Authority, and the stakeholder” identifies the relationship between two nouns and the preposition “with”. This means that the business is to manage the road network. Furthermore, the mission statement states that the road work management is performed in Namibia, not solely by the Roads Authority but also by stakeholders. Mission statements indicate certainties about a company: who it serves and what it does” (Fasly, 1989, p. 3). Hence, the components of this mission statement comply with the entities found in the mission statement.

Verbs are utilized to indicate what action the Roads Authority is able to take, “to manage the national Road network and support our stakeholders and to achieving a safe, efficient road sector and promoting economic growth”. This is not only the main component that state-owned enterprises would like to craft correctly, but also the most important part that the mission reader would like to know. Mission statements should articulate what they do, while readers should capture what is the business of the state-owned enterprise and what service is rendered. This agrees with what was found by Alawneh (2018), namely that mission statements "are declarations of an organization's businesses or reason for being" (p. 27).

Critically, it would not make any sense if the reason for existence is omitted; rather it would persuade the readers and emphasize the meaning of the state-owned enterprise. “Promoting economic growth” as a participial phrase that attracts readers; however, the degree to which economic growth is promoted is not known. There are many ways in which the economy could be promoted and not only through the road sector. Some mission readers may not care about promoting the economy, and they may think that it is the government’s responsibility or that of other sectors or individuals, as such.

#### **4.3.2 Meaning interpretation of the mission statement**

“One way in which the advertiser adapts language to his/her own use is to use adverbs, adjectives or superlatives. Adverbs, adjectives and superlatives lead to a clear and precise interpretation of meaning and indicate the greatest degree of a particular quality” (Salomo, 2015). The verb phrase “manage the road network within the entire Namibia” is structured to convey a comprehensive meaning to the readers by highlighting the core responsibility of the entire state-owned enterprise. The compound noun phrase “a safe and efficient road sector” may concern many readers, with an apprehension of the meaning. It adds a greater essence to the meaning of this mission statement.

Disputably, everyone wants to be safe, but the maintenance of safety on Namibian roads is a worrying factor these days. Analytically one could question the meaning of this mission statement, because it is less practical and devaluates the validity of the mission statement.

According to Magyar (2010, cited in Salomo, 2010), what makes advertising exciting and fascinating is the question of how readers settle on words and images that are used in advertisements. Besides, stakeholders' relationship with state-owned enterprises is highlighted, but the strength of this relationship could be speculated as being weak from the perspective of stakeholders, while from that of the Roads Authority it is quite resilient.

Firstly, stakeholders may be worried about the high rate of road accidents that could imply a lack of safety. Yet, those who adhere to the rules and regulations set for road users enjoy the service declared in the mission statement. The noun phrase "our stakeholders" enhances the positive relationship between stakeholders and the Roads Authority.

### **4.3.3 Linguistic constructs and stakeholders' relations**

Yet again, stakeholders could also interpret the message positively, because it links positively to the Roads Authority. In the first instance, the possessive pronoun, post-modifier "our" is modifying the headword of the noun phrase "Stakeholders", and depicts unity, solidarity and harmony. The use of "our" is clearly chosen to reinforce that these two parts belong to one common goal. The linguistic constructs employed to relate to stakeholders may pose many questions to readers. Firstly, they do not indicate how they can support their stakeholders. Secondly, it fails to articulate the road-related matters and distinctive legislation on which it operates. It sounds a bit confusing, because a mission statement cannot provide any answer to any question that may arise on some definite issues, because they are just statements on walls.

#### **4.4. The mission statement of the Motor Vehicle Accident Fund**

*To provide world class, innovative, sustainable, and accessible support to motor vehicle accident victims, and to contribute to accident prevention with passionate employees, business partners and enabling technologies.*

##### **4.4.1 Linguistic components in this mission statement**

The mission statement of the Motor Vehicle Accident Fund is composed of nouns, infinitives, prepositional phrases and verbs just to convey the voice of the enterprise. Sufi and Lyons (2003) posit that, linguistically, customers and stakeholders command imperatives; directives are namely parts of the components of mission statements. The components of the mission statement of the Motor Vehicle Accident differ from what previous studies revealed. Perhaps one could speculate that some of the reasons for those variations are due to the nature of the services render, the strategic means of rendering such services and the mode of service delivery. When composing a mission statement of an enterprise, linguistic components used depend on how to express the enterprise uniqueness and who are the core components to attain the goals of the enterprise.

The mission statement of the Motor Vehicle Accident Funds does not comprise imperatives, commands and directives, but rather “customers, employees, business partners and motor vehicle accident victims”. Although all these are nouns, the main reasons for their use are different. For example, employees are the agents who execute the duties; verbs show actions and dedication performed in the mission. They all glue the mission statement together. Similarly, adjectives employed show the degree of performance of the action “to contribute to accident prevention with passionate employees”. The infinitive phrase consists of a prepositional phrase linking the noun to the adjective. The prepositional phrase expresses that the goal of the mission statement is a common goal task and it interests the benefits of many noun phrases.

#### **4.4.2 Meaning interpretation of the mission statement**

Meaning is context oriented, thus is given by the readers and not necessarily by the writers. A study done by Tyler (2012) states that “linguistically, the term meaning is what the source or sender expresses, communicates, or conveys in their message to the observer or receiver, and what the receiver infers from the current context”. The meaning of the MVA mission statement is that the enterprise aims to provide support to all motor vehicle accident victims. However, it may also leave foreign readers with questions about the kinds of support that the enterprise provides.

Namibians may infer the meaning more easily since they know that the enterprise wholeheartedly assists road victims. However, it is questionable whether the rest of the world is equipped with similar information regarding the way in which Namibia helps road victims. The infinitive “to provide the world class, innovative, sustainable and accessible support to motor vehicle accident victims” fosters positive meaning, because the infinitive phrase, by nature, does not show an endpoint. Even though this may be the case, at the moment Namibia is ranked as number country This does not make sense in road accidents worldwide. Such bad news may be transpired by readers through readers’ experiences. This does not make sense. Meaning is not only about what is written at a certain time, but also what is known and what is experienced. Questionably, some Namibians still today do not know the regulations, support and benefits of the Motor Accident Fund enterprise. It is not clear what meaning they gain from the MVA mission statement.

Moreover, the key meaning of this mission statement is also “to contribute to accident prevention”. The implied meaning in this infinitive phrase can be understood literally and not figurative. The choice of words is simple, and that means it is easy for everyone to understand. Secondly, the meaning is more about the writer’s responsibility than that of the readers and more about the readers’ benefits than the writer’s. From the readers’ perspectives, the task of the MVA is to ensure

that Namibians are protected from accidents. Direct or indirect as partners, this responsibility is for all nations, since loss of life due to accidents affects all people.

#### **4.4.3 Linguistic constructs and stakeholders' relations**

MVA did not relate directly to its stakeholders, because it's obvious that the enterprise exists to serve Namibians. Similarly, Namibians are aware that they MVA takes care for them.

#### **4.5. The mission statement of Nampower**

*To provide of the energy needs of our customers, fulfil the aspiration of our staff and satisfy the expectation of our stakeholders.*

##### **4.5.1 Linguistic components in the mission statement**

The Nampower mission statement is brief. According to Desmidt (2015), mission statements are carriers of the cultures, ethos and ideologies of state-owned enterprises. They are displayable documents on a single page, in a smaller booklet or else a folder flyer. The short length means few language components, and this saves time for readers and captures the interest simply to read; they are direct and to the point. Furthermore, Nampower's mission statement incorporates linguistic components, such as "customers, staff and stakeholders.

Customers are the main language component that adds value to the Nampower mission statement. Nampower's mission statement states that "to provide of the energy needs of our customers". The infinitive phrase has a noun phrase "our customer". The possessive pronoun suggests that "energy needs" is a service rendered by Nampower and the word, customers, is the object of the preposition who receive the benefit. The infinitive phrase "to provide of the energy needs of our customers", shows a symbiotic relationship. It is the customers who receive energy, while Nampower fulfils its obligation of energy supply to its customers. Similarly, the noun phrase "staffs" and "our

stakeholder” are important language components, because they show the key players targeted by the mission statement.

Nampower, like any other enterprise, values stakeholders that with whom they work hand-in-hand to achieve their goal. Furthermore, the mission statement employs preposition and verbs. Prepositions are used to emphasise the relationship and show the standing point of objects in the mission statement. The Nampower mission statement comprises about four prepositions: “for our customers, of our staff, and of our stakeholders”.

In all cases, the prepositional phrase comes along with the possessive pronoun. The main reason is to show that noun phrases are part and parcel of Nampower. It could also for adhesion purposes that noun phrases are related to and interdependent of the possessive pronoun. This means they are not used because the writer knows that they make the language components of mission statement, but to promote collaboration and ownership of the mission statement.

#### **4.5.2 Meaning interpretation of mission statement**

Ideally, readers’ intention is to read mission statements and capture meaning of mission statements.

Nampower is long serving enterprise, and many readers hope to find meaning aligning with their hopes and aspirations of powering the nation. The noun phrase “energy needs for our customers” could drive customers’ perceptions positively.

This meaning is crucial to the customers. Some may think that Nampower exists to solve their energy problems. Some may have a negative perception, especially those who reside in areas where there is no electricity. The meaning of the mission statement is influenced by the experience and background of the reader, as well as the desired goal. Some readers hope that Nampower’s mission

statement would turn their desired dreams to goals. As such, their thoughts are assimilated into the mission statement and thus assigns meaning.

Moreover, the mission statement addresses staff members: “Fulfil the aspiration of our staff”. It is quite rare to find mission statements that care directly about staff members. Some mission enterprises care indirectly about staff members. The verb phrase “fulfil the aspiration of our staff” suggests that employees are the heart and the soul of the enterprise and that their presence and their contributions matter to Nampower. Easier said than done, although this sounds promising. The verb phrase may be implemented somehow. In fact, it is the verb phrase; it is about how the action is done and to what extent it is being done.

However, stakeholders may perceive meaning: “satisfying the expectations of our stakeholders”. The infinitive phrase is persuading and attracting more stakeholders to the enterprise. Firstly, the meaning is subject to judgment, because it fails to state how and to what extent stakeholders can be satisfied. Truly, the infinitive does not indicate a definite time. This may mean that as long as Nampower’s mission statement is in use, the satisfying of stakeholders will continue. Secondly, stakeholders may have the right to know when satisfaction will happen. Thirdly, stakeholders’ expectations vary and may not be consistent with the goals of the enterprise.

### **4.5.3 Linguistic constructs and stakeholders’ relations**

The Nampower mission statement is both paradigmatic and syntagmatic. The order of the linguistic construction starts with the infinitive, “satisfying” followed by the article “the”, noun phrase “expectations” and the prepositional phrase, made up of a preposition and noun phrase. Linguistically, the order of words obeys the rules of structural grammar, which accentuates that verbs follow nouns to express the action by nouns.

Similarly, if the Nampower mission statement is syntagmatically scrutinized, key nouns such as ‘stakeholders’ are replaced by plural pronouns like ‘they’. The entire construction of the infinitive phrase “satisfying the expectations of our stakeholders” back-awake stakeholder reinforces relationship. It is not clear what you mean here.

#### **4.6. The mission statement of the Namibia College of Open Learning**

*We are committed to providing wider access to quality educational services for our learners and other customers, using a variety of open learning methods*

##### **4.6.1 Linguistic components in the mission statement**

The Namibia College of Open Learning utilizes language components in their mission statement.

The mission statement is short and thus minimizes the language components but increases quality.

The mission statement employs simple English, and this makes the language components simple.

In simplicity, it encourages all literate people to read the mission statement and also to identify with all its components. Noun phrases, infinitives, verb phrases and prepositional phrases are utilized in the Namcol mission statement. “Our learners, customers” and the plural pronoun “we”, are noun phrases used in the mission statement. Namcol, as an enterprise, includes learners in its mission statement, because the learners are its customers and thus the education service declared in the mission statement belongs to the learners. Other customers are also considered but they are not acknowledged in the mission statement.

Furthermore, the mission statement starts very inclusively with “we are”. The plural pronoun at the beginning of the mission statement signifies the overall responsibility and ownership of the mission statement. This means that all parties included in the mission statement can conclude that they are esteemed bodies and their contribution to the mission will not go unnoticed. Besides, the

pronoun “we” indicates that the mission statement is literally for Namcol, but figuratively it is for all customers and learners.

Disputably, the assumed “we” is both a subtle and powerful identification strategy as it often goes unnoticed. Uses of this strategy allow a corporation to present similarities and commonalties among organizational members as taken for granted assumptions. The extent to which employers and public members accept these assumptions and corollaries unquestioningly will show that they identify with their corporate organizations (Round, 1987, p. 154).

Strategically, the mission adjectives give value to the mission: “quality educational services”. Every student wants quality education whereas poor education services scare away students. On the contrary, the value of the service should equate the likely outcome so that customers would be attracted to the services rendered. Additionally, the use of the verb “committed” in the noun phrase “we are committed” emphasise excellence. Stakeholders and shareholders want to associate themselves with a committed enterprise. Commitment as a verb forecasts success rather than failure.

#### **4.6.2 Meaning interpretation of the mission statement**

Semantically the word learner may be questionable to readers. Someone could be a learner only when doing the secondary level phase. Debatably, readers could question whether it is only for learners. If it is not so, the question can be asked why the organisation offers some courses which are beyond secondary education, mainly for students. As part-time instruction, it also admits other customers who are not learners. Thus it states “access quality educational services for other customers”. This meaning is positive, as it welcomes all customers without discrimination. Additionally, the possessive pronoun “our” post modifying the noun phrase “learners”, is used to attract and market the education service offered, as well as uphold unit and unanimity.

Although some Namcol learners, who have failed, become disappointed by their previous results, they can be motivated and counselled by the possessive pronoun “our learners”. This may mean that Namcol is playing a parental role by owning the learners, and thus they feel cared for and loved. However, the mission writer did not associate other customers with Namcol. Even though the verb phrase, “access quality education services for other customers is national goal”, it could have multiple meanings. Readers can speculate that all of them are welcome.

Namcol students are interested to know the learning methods; however, the meaning in the mission statement is divergent and the infinitive phrase “using a variety of open learning methods” does not state exactly which methods. Perhaps some students may need to know the method first before they register.

#### **4.6.3 Linguistic constructs and stakeholders’ relations**

Namcol does not relate to stakeholders directly. Namcol is a public enterprise and they render education services to the nation. Namcol’s stakeholders are the government and the National Institute of Education. NIED provides guidance regarding the running of the curriculum while the government provides funds in order for Namcol to provide quality education.

The infinitive phrase “to providing wider access to quality educational services” implies that the government is a stakeholder. “Access” to education in Namibia is one of the four goals of education set by the government upon Independence, and Namcol implements the curriculum to attain access as a goal. The infinitive “to providing wider excess to quality education” indicates a long term relationship. Education is an ongoing process but, still, there needs to be a time specification for when the goal of access will be reached, which the infinitive does not provide such a time frame.

#### **4.7. The mission statement of the University of Namibia (UNAM)**

*To provide quality higher education through education teaching, research and advisory services to our customers with the view to produce productive and competitive human resources capable of driving public and private institutions towards knowledge-based economy, economic growth and improved quality of life.*

##### **4.7.1 Linguistic components in the mission statement**

The mission statement conveys its voice through different components. According to Palmer and Short (2008), mission statements express the scope of operations and activities, such as customers, products or services, location, values and philosophy. These aspects of mission statements reflect “how firms see themselves and how they want others to view them” (p. 454). The University of Namibia’s mission statement speaks loudly about the service rendered, mode of delivery and main reasons for its existence.

UNAM’s mission statement starts with an infinite “to provide quality education” just to show education is a process and has no limits. Besides, the education process offered is pre-modified by the adjective “quality” to emphasize that it is not just any ordinary education, but one that can transform and change the livelihood of people. The noun compound phrases employed in the mission statement “research and advisory service” add value to the mission statement.

The custodians of education are interested in research; hence knowledge and new skills are generated. Additionally, “advisory services” strengthen the quality of education offered by UNAM. Two persons are better than one, thus the advice from the advisory service adds extra value to education. Correspondingly, the infinitive “to produce productive and competitive human

resource” makes the mission statement significant. Human resources are agents of change in any environment, preferably an informed one.

The noun phrase “production” recognizes UNAM as a factory of competitive human resources. Arguably, knowledgeable products, though described competitively, differ in competency. Besides, UNAM’s mission statement emphasizes that the knowledge is for “our customer”, a possessive pronoun, which signposts ownership. Swales (2014) posits that pronoun use indicates the way that people are thinking about group members, even individuals, and emphasizes that the collective ‘we’, ‘our’, ‘us’ or individual ‘me’, ‘my’, ‘I’ indicate actions and outcomes.

In Namibia, some public and private institutions fail to deliver, yet UNAM produces competitive human resources. It is still a question why well-equipped products fail some enterprises. The adjective phrase “knowledge-based economy, economic growth and improved quality of life”, increases a desire to hire UNAM students. Currently the economy is a threatening factor; therefore, this adjective “knowledge-based economy”, convinces and captures readers’ attention as it suggests that UNAM provides economic solutions to the public, private sector and individuals.

Simpson (2010) states that adjectives aid writers in conveying both positive and negative meaning but, also, meaning displays writers’ points of view, namely the uniqueness, experiences and expectations of human influence on the perception of a mission statement’s meaning. UNAM’s mission statement utilizes “improved” as an adjective, post-modifying “quality of life” as noun phrase. Education is being revised to address the needs of its users; therefore, “improved quality” advocates better service than offered before.

### **4.7.2 Meaning interpretation of this mission statement**

UNAM's mission statement sends a clear message about the service they render and the purpose of their business, namely "to provide quality higher education through education teaching, research and advisory service". DuFour and Eaker (1998) articulate that mission statements are about "stating the business of our business" and answering the question, "Why do we exist?" (p. 58). The mission statement articulates "to produce productive and competitive human resource capable of driving private and public institutions." The infinite phrase propels the sound meaning to readers that UNAM produces a productive workforce. The verb phrase "produce" emphasizes what the enterprise exists to do. Crystal (1985, 1997) and Kasper (1997) state that it is unclear what an individual needs to know in order to be pragmatically competent and communicate appropriately and effectively in a given situation. UNAM's mission statement pronounces its action, but can be pragmatically doubted by readers.

### **4.7.3 Linguistic constructs and stakeholders' relations**

UNAM's mission statement side-lines stakeholders. Perhaps it hopes that stakeholders will take it as an indirect relationship. The knowledge and skills offered by UNAM are universal responsibilities. In this light, whether the stakeholders are mentioned or not does not matter. Even though the word "stakeholder" does not appear in the mission statement, it does not change the relationship.

#### **4.8. The mission statement of the Namibia Student Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF)**

*We provide financial assistance enabling Namibian citizen to access tertiary education at approved educational institutions.*

##### **4.8.1 Linguistic components of the mission statement**

The NSFAF mission statement outlines its purpose for existence by nouns, verbs and prepositional phrases. The plural pronoun “we provide financial assistance” gives the impression to readers of a joint venture. Equally, it identifies the state-owned enterprise as unity. It suggests that NSFAF is not alone, even though it may stand as a single voice in the mission statement.

Moreover, the verb provides promise hope and dedication of service to the students. Students are desperate about financial assistance. Therefore, the verb “provide” is both any obligation for NSFAF and a reassurance to students to look forward to their studies being paid for. The NSFAF mission statement identifies itself with common nouns “Namibia citizen”. Proper nouns refer to place names or else people’s name, and are capitalized. The capitalization makes the proper noun profound and easy to notice.

Similarly, the writer identifies NSFAF with Namibia, just to highlight locality and togetherness. The identity extensive symbolizes that the reason for the existence of NSFAF is a core responsibility of both Namibia and NSFAF. Most mission statements use nouns frequently, for example, goals, principle and values, just to state the true identity of the state-owned enterprises but also to specify the root foundation which State-owned Enterprises lean on (Swales, 2014). Finally, the NSFAF mission statement associates itself with the noun phrase “tertiary education”. The identity of the financial service and education services enterprise promotes national growth, because education is a tool to change and transform the lives of Namibian citizens.

#### **4.8.2 Meaning interpretation of this mission statement**

The NSFAF mission statement is brief, comprising simple vocabulary, thus making it easy to capture meaning. However, the mission statement addresses and assigns meaning to words, phrases and sentences; therefore, their interpretation is always different. The writer of the mission statement had to consider the emotive power of words employed, the choice of linguistic components, what meaning to convey and what to withhold (Gath, 2006, cited in Salomo, 2015).

Distinguishably, meaning poses a challenge to both readers and a writer. While the NSFAF mission statement claims to resolve financial obstacles for tertiary students, readers may think that it will lessen financial constraints for all Namibia citizens. Meaning is studied in relation to different fields, such as philosophy, psychology, linguistics, neurology and sociology. Philosophically, linguists take the existence of meaning for granted and accept it as of an intuitively accessible, natural kind (Cruse, 2011).

Although the NSFAF mission statement may appear simple to some, it may be complicated to others. From the writer's point of view, NSFAF exists to provide financial assistance only to Namibians but not to all students in Namibia institutions of higher learning. The noun phrase "financial assistance" can introduce ambiguity into the NSFAF mission statement. The noun phrase "financial assistance" is associated with a financial institution which provides money to all Namibian citizens. In the context of the NSFAF mission statement, it means to lend money to students, whereas other institutions, like banks, lend, save and invest, irrespective of whether one is a student or not.

Arguably, “Ambiguity is an effect of a rupture of the rule of identity in the context of the exchange of information. Particularly the sender may be physically absent, and the contexts explicitly divergent, such will be the case when the receptor is a reader and the sender was a writer” (Kasper, 1997). Therefore, the ambiguity that persists in the NSFAP mission statement is a contextual clue, because the writers is physically absent but readers will be present.

According to Chomsky (2000), “natural languages are massively ambiguous, words have multiple meanings” (as cited in Langer, 1991 p. 15). A word, phrase or sentence is ambiguous if it has more than one meaning. Ambiguity occurs where there is lack of intelligibility or when there is uncertainty about the application of a term.

However, multiple words are ambiguous; thus, some readers may capture a different meaning. The noun phrase “Namibian citizen” has stress on the last part of the noun and, therefore, readers hear “citizen” rather than “Namibian”. The extended meaning is that foreign students will not take chances to apply; neither will those Namibians who are studying at unaccredited, educational institutions of higher learning.

### **4.8.3 Linguistic constructs and stakeholders’ relations**

The NSFAP mission statement does not relate directly to its stakeholders. NSFAP is a public institution, rendering government services. The infinitive “enabling Namibian citizen to access tertiary education” highlights the relationship between NSFAP as an enterprise and the Namibian society. The financial support given to Namibian citizens shows a firm bond.

The noun phrase shows a positive relationship between the Namibian people and NSFAF. Even though the relationship between NFSFA and Namibian citizens is profound, criticism about student financial matters are rife in Namibia. The question is whether the mission statement lacks clarity on the matter or whether the citizens are too critical regarding the enterprise.

#### **4.9. The mission statement of the Namibia Broadcasting Corporation (NBC)**

*NBC to be a leading multimedia public broadcaster of choice in Africa and beyond. To effectively inform, educate and entertain the people of Namibia in order to promote peace, national unity and development*

##### **4.9.1 Linguistic components of this mission statement**

The NBC mission statement is structurally, syntactically and pragmatically expressed. Structurally, mission statements are noun phrases, verb phrases, infinitives and prepositional phrases. A study done by Halliday (1985) discovered that “sentences in mission statements consist of the following subject’s infinitive declarative, employee, customer economy and environment denoting subjects”.

The NBC mission statement consists of noun phrases, “multimedia, public broadcaster, Africa people of Namibia”. However, the linguistic components of any mission statement are unique because state-owned enterprises vary in their business missions. The infinite phrase “to be a leading media broadcaster” structurally consists of the noun phrase “multimedia”. The infinite phrase starts the mission statement, just to assure the readers that this state-owned enterprise has existed for ages and will remain. In depth, this language component proclaims that this state-owned enterprise foresees the future and that shareholders and stakeholders’ decisions regarding partnership are not superficial decisions.

Furthermore, the “multimedia public broadcaster” is an inclusive noun phrase that suggests harmony. According to Verna (2010), the content of the statement is important because of its influence on people’s behavior and resource allocation. Literature on mission statements (Stemler & Bebell, 1999; Mullane, 2002; Morphey & Hartley, 2006; Fox, 2006; Verna, 2010 Your sources must be in alphabetical order) demonstrate the value of mission statements as guiding principles, which help forming employee relationships inside the institution, as well as with the public and stakeholders, especially with customers. When an organization presents itself as a team, shareholders and stakeholders are likely to view them as a team. The extended trust is smoothed by “multimedia” because it is a buzz word. Firstly, media inform and communicate with people all over the globe.

Secondly, “public broadcaster” signifies all classes of people in the community. The propositional phrase “of choice in Africa and beyond” highlights the companions of the enterprise. The NBC is the national broadcaster; the prepositional phrase “of choice in Africa” proposes that NBC can position itself anywhere beyond its own boundaries. Clarity exists that the mission statement expresses the scope of operations and activities, such as customers, products or services, location, values and philosophy. These aspects of the mission statement reflect “how firms see themselves and how they want others to view them” (p. 454).

The news that circulates in Namibia should circulate in Africa, because Namibia belongs to Africa. The prepositional phrase “of choice” is embedded in another prepositional phrase pre-modifying it. The syntactic component demonstrates the syntactic function of words in the context. Similarly, the prepositional phrase “of choice in Africa” consists of a noun phrase “choice”, adhering to the syntactic rule that prepositional phrases are immediate constituents of a preposition and noun

phrase. In this context, “of” shows the position in relation to “choice”. Therefore, the NBC mission statement expresses and exercises its right to communicate in other African countries of its choice and beyond.

#### **4.9.2 Meaning interpretation of this mission statement**

NBC’s mission statement conveys its meaning strategically. The length of the NBC mission statement conforms to Alawneh’s (2018) findings that a mission statement is short to capture an organization's unique and durable purpose and practice. A short mission statement has few words, is easy to read and comprehend. The NBC mission statement employs verbs convincingly to state the business of their mission.

The discussion by Alkhafaji (2003) highlights that mission statements incorporate specifics about the organization that make it unique, and describes “the organization’s achievements and hopes, such as the size of the organization, the scope of endeavor and the number and diversity of the organization’s businesses, markets and customers”. Strategically, verbs express the ability and degree of the enterprise’s service delivery, as denoted in “to inform, educate and entertain the people of Namibia in order to promote peace, national unity and development”.

The encoded meaning is that the NBC exists to disseminate information to people. Language carries meaning; thus people are educated through language. Yet, education is a tool to change people’s lives; therefore, any reader who reads the NBC’s mission statement could capture that meaning. Distinguishably, people are inform and educated, but their lives are not yet transformed. The verb “entertain” prompts young and middle-aged readers as opposed to older readers. It is the center of attention for the younger generation, because entertainment is fashionable to them. Literature by Radlinska (2010) accentuates that the language of mission statements needs to be highly impressive in order to fulfil the purpose of transmitting and conveying meaning. Likewise,

Swales (2014) points out that “the verb form is predominantly the present, imperative and the purposive imperative example, to provide, to be the fastest carrier”.

Disputably, NBC’s mission statement claims to mean that, through entertainment, peace and unity, as well as national development, are promoted. People are united even in the absence of entertainment. Likewise, people are peaceful though not entertained. However, the opposite could also be true that some attain unity and peace through entertainment. According to Searle (1992), languages allow information to be conveyed, even when specific words used are not known by readers or listeners; people connect words with meanings and use words for reference. Sociologists and psycholinguists believe that language and meaning play a role in society to create social relations (Pandey, 2012).

#### **4.9.3 Linguistic constructs and stakeholders’ relations**

NBC’s mission statement does relate to its stakeholder. NBC is a national enterprise, and thus the mission writer implies the relationship with the NBC enterprise through contextual clues. The mission statement states that “entertain the people of Namibia”; thus, the verb phrase implies a positive relationship between NBC as state-owned enterprise and the rest of the Namibian nation; rarely impossible to entertain unrelated parties. Equally, the noun phrase “development” implies the relationship between the NBC’s mission statement and the rest of the Namibian nation.

#### **4.10. The mission statement of NIPAM**

*To develop the capacity of the Namibia public, to be a premier vehicle for capacity development of the Namibia public service.*

#### **4.10.1 Linguistic components of the mission statement**

The NIPAM mission statement is composed of vast linguistic components. Firstly, the infinitive “to develop” indicates their purpose, their continuation of the mission and their action embedded in the verb “develop”. It, furthermore, states where they are propelling to go, “a premier vehicle for capacity development of Namibia public service”. Secondly, the NIPAM mission statement comprises proper noun phrases “Namibia public service and Namibia public”. Proper nouns show care for the nation and solidarity. It emphasizes NIPAM as a state-owned enterprise that runs a public service.

Extensively, public services really need a dedicated driving force. In this context, “premier vehicle for capacity development” is subject to judgement. There is national outcry regarding substandard service provision by public services. Although some public institutions deserve credit, some need to re-engineer themselves. Yet, the NIPMA mission statement declares itself as the “premier vehicle” to address the development of Namibia public services.

#### **4.10.2 Meaning interpretation of this mission statement**

The prepositional phrase “for ‘capacity development’” is used to convey the mission statement’s meaning. Truly, the noun phrase “capacity” proposes more effort, transformation and a turnaround strategy in public service. The meaning underpinning “capacity development” in the NIPAM mission statement is that NIPAM renders solutions for service delivery problems. Many Namibian public institutions yield poor service; yet workers are not reflective to accept their challenges, but rather resistant to change. Therefore, the prepositional phrase is a rescue to the situation. In fact, many mission statements originate in order to deal with change, set goals to guide through change and provide reasons to pursue the set goals (Kotter, 1997). Goals are often indicated by the organization’s long-term “ability to satisfy principle claims and desires of employees and

stakeholders” (Pearce, 1982, p. 17). By communicating, the goals are used to clarify the general direction of the organization (Kotter, 1997)

#### **4.10.3 Linguistic constructs and stakeholders’ relations**

The mission statement does not articulate directly how it relates to stakeholders. However, speculation could be that as it stresses the “capacity of the Namibia public” and “Namibia public service”, these proper noun phrases highlight the relationship between Namibia as a country and its position which is public services rendered. The activities carried in public institutions positively and negatively affect the Namibia people. It is for these reasons that the Namibian public is touched by the voice in the NIPAM mission statement.

#### **4.11. The mission statement of Namdeb**

To produce diamonds profitably sustainably and responsibly for the benefits of its shareholders whilst making a lasting contribution to Namibia.

##### **4.11.1 Linguistic components in this mission statement**

Namdeb’s mission statement is simple and clear. According to Ketterer (2015), first and foremost, mission statements are tools to communicate the identity of state-owned enterprises to stakeholders and members of the public. Namdeb uses noun phrases “diamonds, shareholders and Namibia”. The noun phrase “diamond” is not ordinary but unique, as it echoes the wealth and riches of the Namibian soil. Significantly, “diamond” has a pulling force that mission readers would be interested to learn about, namely where it is mined, as well as by whom and how.

According to Lynch (2006), mission statements should be market-oriented, real, clear, enforceable, motivating, specific, flexible enough and environment adaptable. From the customer’s point of

view, mission statements ensure the frame of expectations. For the employee, there are the impulses to understand that the management of decisions made is good. Besides, the infinite “to produce” makes the mission statement meaningful to shareholders. The noun phrase “the benefits” stresses the language features that attract shareholders. Furthermore, the writer of the mission statement has tried to link the benefits to the shareholders, because it is one of their interests.

The identification of Namdeb with benefits strengthens the relationship between the noun phrases and shareholders. Debatably, the noun phrase “Namdeb” positions shareholders better in the mission statement but may not be better for the shareholders. Namdeb is a profit-making company, whose products are locally and internationally sold; thus, readers can have mixed thoughts.

Ketterer (2015) states that speakers can construct a unique, organizational identity by using multiple words that collectively identify the organization with a unique combination of several conventional categories. Thus, an identity claim that defines an organization neutrally may construct an identity that audiences consider more trustworthy. Conversely, some may argue that the very mention of any conceptual category in an identity claim implies the author’s rhetorical intent to define the organization either positively or negatively.

#### **4.11.2 Meaning interpretation of mission statement**

Stakeholders are interested in the verb phrase “produce”, because they are interested in profit. The action “produce” states the business, namely our business which is diamond production. The

extensive meaning is expressed by the adjective “profitably, sustainably and responsibly.” Adjectives describe the noun phrase “diamond”. These adjectives have persuasive meaning.

The majority of Namdeb mission statement readers would be attracted by “profitably and sustainably”. These adjectives are powerful and very economic. Readers improve their skills by capturing meaning and improving their living standards as they read Namdeb’s mission statement. Therefore, the choice of eye-catching adjectives in Namdeb’s mission statement reinforces meaning. Literature by Gath (2006, cited in Salomo, 2015) claims that persuasion in any advertisement is the shifting of people’s minds, beliefs and attitudes, causing them to react differently to the adverts.

Extensively, the adjective “sustainably” emphasizes that the diamond business is not a temporal business but long-lasting. Disputably, the Namdeb mission statement comprehensively means to last longer: yet many daughters and sons of Namibia soil are left unemployed due to retrenchment. Moreover, the meaning of the Namdeb mission statement is accentuated by the infinitive phrase, “making a lasting contribution to Namibia”. The infinitive phrase shows a continuation, and thus advocates that Namibia will benefit from Namdeb until the end of time. The extended meaning of this phrase means that as long as Namdeb is in operation, it will support the country financially. However, a question could be: What about in times of economic devastation? Will the support be there or not?

### **4.11.3 Linguistic constructs and stakeholders' relations**

Namdeb relates itself positively to shareholders, as denoted by “of its shareholders”; however, it does not say a word about other stakeholders. It could be perhaps because it promises a long-lasting relationship with the entire Namibia nation. The Namdeb mission statement credibly embraces the relationship with shareholders, for benefit's sake.

According to Ketterer (2015), some researchers have questioned the true benefits of mission statements. Whether or not the words in the mission statements are true testaments of the beliefs of the institutions or merely recruiting devices, is often questioned (Taylor & Morpew, 2010; Bartkus, Glassman, & McAfee, 2000 alphabetical order). Moreover, the fact that accreditation agencies require mission statements from state-owned enterprises allows for speculation as to whether they are so important or necessary to the existence of the institution or whether just a box that needs to be checked. In the same vein, the extent to which such promises may last is also not known.

## **4.12. The mission statement of NYC**

*To address challenges, opportunities and obstacles facing young people in Namibia and to foster among the Namibia youth a spirit of national identity, a sense of unity and self-respect as well as in depth awareness of social, economic, political, educational and cultural prospectus and adversities*

### **4.12.1 Linguistic components of this mission statement**

The mission statement of the NYC consists of one paragraph to save time and increase the meaning comprehensively. One paragraph means a monologue voice and thus enhances the identity of the enterprise. According to Gath (2006), being one, single individual or being a single voice in a text, encoding messages to a number of various groups as addresses, does not hinder message decoding. In fact, mission statements are estimated to spill over to ten sentences and 198 words, yet

incorporate the ideas and images of the enterprise. Mission statements are mirrors whose reflections shine to the addressees. The infinitive phrase “to address challenges” introduces the rest of the phrases to highlight that the mission statement exists to address matters of the enterprise continuously. Furthermore, the second infinitive phrase is linked by the conjunction “and” to show that the weight value of these phrases are equal. The infinitive “to foster among the Namibia youth a spirit of national identity” is used to impact positively on the identity of the enterprise.

It suggests that the NYC’s mission statement supports and reinforces unity among the Namibian youth. In the same vein, the youth should be proud because of the sense of togetherness and collaboration. Even though the mission statement aligns with positive components, the critical question is how many youth spend time in rebellion with the laws of their own country. They spend time on street fights, alcohol, sexual abuse and smoking, which are against unity in the country.

Divergently, it is difficult to understand because not all the plans and support that the NYC mission statement declares really come to pass. For instance, “to address challenges, opportunities and obstacles facing young people in Namibia” is an infinite phrase of hope, solutions and inspiration to the youth. Parallel to that, what the NYC mission statement claims to address is not always there.

Moreover, the NYC mission statement employs the noun compound phrase, “a sense of unity and self-respect” for solidarity and human dignity. Linguistically, compound noun phrases can be structurally different but semantically similar. The linguistic component in a compound noun “a sense of unity and self-respect” are a noun, pre-modifying the prepositional phrase, a conjunction and noun phrase. The key function is to complement the identity and sustain the vitality of humanity among the Namibian youth. Lastly, the NYC’s mission statement employs self-

possessed, dynamic nouns for “economic, political, educational” adaptability and flexibility in their operations.

#### **4.12.2 Meaning interpretation of this mission statement**

The NYC’s mission statement communicates meaning in one paragraph to stimulate readers’ interest, save time and increase the meaning comprehensively. The verb phrase “address challenges” pronounces the ability and the capability of the state-owned enterprise.

Additionally, it converses the benefit of associating and supporting the NYC mission statement; thus it reinforces that the NYC is prepared to overcome the youth’s problems, as it offers opportunities to conquer their obstacles.

According to Narayanan, Zane and Kemmerer (2011, as cited in Desmith), the language of mission statements is appealing, convincing and persuasive. The choice of words utilized in mission statements has the primarily function of attracting the audience’s attention. However, if the recipients of the message perceive inconsistencies between the content of the persuasive messages and the actions of the message senders, the projected message will evoke feelings of disbelief.

Though meaning is assigned better by readers than by writers, readers should critique what is meant and the possible meaning before believing what is said.

The NYC’s mission statement asserts meaning, as affirmed by the prepositional phrase “in depth awareness of social and cultural prospectus and adversities”. A prepositional phrase points out the degree to which societal issues are assimilated, accentuated, understood, regarded and sometimes disregarded. The proposed meaning is that NYC’s mission statement is set to alert society about what divides and what constructs the society. It tackles issues of cultural adversity which may hinder youth relations.

### **4.12.3 Linguistic constructs and stakeholders' relations**

The NYC's mission statement interconnects stakeholders without using the term stakeholders directly. A stakeholder is a group or individuals who can affect or be affected by the organization in pursuit of its organizational goals (Freeman, 1984). The young people are the main stakeholders in this mission statement and the mission relates to them positively: "To address obstacles facing young people in Namibia". The infinitive phrase points out that the reason for existence of the NYC is to deal with matters affecting young people's wellbeing. The inspirational part of the mission also plays a key role in the ultimate buy-in by stakeholders. It is indeed true to support those who inspire you because one shares a common goal and interest.

### **4.13. The mission statement of Air Namibia**

*To be a safe, reliable and profitable airline helping tourism to thrive and encouraging business investment in Namibia, safety: no operational urgency or business consideration would ever justify endangered any one's life.*

#### **4.13.1 Linguistic components in this mission statement**

Air Namibia's mission statement constitutes phrases merging into one paragraph. The format of one paragraph reinforces the enterprise's identity. Secondly, the mission statement employs commas to identify main ideas with one that sums up one idea. It is, in fact, one body but many parts. The present imperative stresses the noun, "safe", to appeal to readers' emotion, thus assures security. The compound noun phrase "reliable and profitable" used draws the attention of stakeholders, and grants reliable and profitable affinity whenever they want to partner with Air Namibia. Linguistically, the noun phrase, "business investment in Namibia", specifies whose air flights, mission and associates are being considered.

Air Namibia's mission statement identifies business people with the proper noun "Namibia", for prominence and protruding reasons. Additionally, the noun "investment" symbolizes wealth and thus solidifies the identity adhesion between the enterprise and stakeholders.

#### **4.13.2 Meaning interpretation of the mission statement**

The meaning of Air Namibia's mission statement is portrayed by the infinitive "to thrive and encourage business". This idea enhances trust and joy in business individuals, thus attracts them. Broadly, Air Namibia conveys meaning effectively as noted in "safety: no operational urgency or business consideration would ever justify endangering any one's life". The head of the noun "safety" means that passengers who take their flights with Air Namibia are guaranteed to reach their destinations. It is not easy to understand how context renders meaning to readers but it is easy to experience and portray meaning within the context (Searle, 1992).

The semicolon expresses an explanation of what is actually meant by "safety". The mission statement writer employed a semicolon to avoid and reduce ambiguity in the mission statement. The meaning across this mission statement suggests that the lives of users of Air Namibia are protected.

#### **4.13.3 Linguistic constructs and stakeholders' relations**

Air Namibia's mission statement is related to stakeholders. Stakeholders are the supportive structures of the mission statement. In this light, the noun phrase "tourism industry" is promised assistance by Air Namibia. This means that their processes and procedures favor the tourism industry by being a medium of transport from their destinations to Namibia, and bringing them home safely. Air Namibia's mission statement relates positively to business people, as noted in "no business would ever justify endangered any one's life". The negative phrase underpins that safety mechanisms are in place to save the lives of Air Namibia users.

Even though Air Namibia strongly emphasizes zero protection of human life, speculations regarding the safety of air passengers still exist. Firstly, the concept of the stakeholder is potentially problematic to the organization, and needs to be mapped, managed and controlled (Reed, 1999 as cited in Sheenan, 2015). Secondly, there is the concept of the stakeholder as an entity recognized in the discourse as a being with needs, rights and a voice, within an organization re-conceptualized as an entity with responsibilities, a sense of ethics and inclusiveness (Eggins, 2004). It is, therefore, the stakeholders who are the heart and soul of the ACC mission statement but they can also be sour to the ACC enterprise.

#### **4.14. The mission statement of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC)**

*To fight corruption in Namibia through effective law enforcement and preventive measures in a professional manner for the good of society.*

##### **4.14.1 Linguistic components in this mission statement**

The ACC mission statement expresses their actions and capabilities. Action speaks louder than words; thus, the ACC prefers to be identified with what they are able to do. Without action no production, no progress; thus, the ACC designed the mission statement to start with “to fight corruption”. The identity of the ACC makes an impression on readers with regards to action and credibility. The mission statement identifies and indicates a prepositional phrase “in Namibia” as the place where corruption takes place. It is a shame when “Namibia” is located as the place of corruption.

Broadly, a corrupt country is associated with poverty, because resources are either mismanaged or inappropriately used or else used for the benefit of a few elite. The adjectival phrase “effective law enforcement” promises order and security to mission statement readers and other stakeholders.

Although corruption is a threat to society, economic growth and development, “effective law enforcement” would wipe out tears of corruption in Namibia. Furthermore, the ACC mission statement lacks clarity as it fails to effect and associate itself with specific enterprises or mechanisms regarding the way in which to eradicate corruption. In this regard, the mission is supposed to add a compound noun phrase “ministry of safety and security” as linguistic component. According to Pandey (2012), the theory of person-organization fit (POF) claims that people’s attitudes to an organization’s mission are influenced by the level of perceived alignment between the organization and personal values expectations.

#### **4.14.2 Meaning interpretation of the mission statement**

The ACC mission statement impacts readers positively, as mentioned, because the noun phrase “preventive measures” expresses control mechanisms over corruptive issues as the responsibility of the ACC enterprise. Furthermore, the preventative measures assert the pro-activity and accountability of organizations and guilty individuals regarding corruption practices.

Even though the ACC mission statement conveys the meaning of controlling and fighting corruption, worries hunt Namibians regarding when corruption practices will end. On the other hand, the prepositional phrase “in a professional manner”, means to assure and encourage readers that the ACC is dedicated to eradicate corruptive cases. The prepositional phrase places emphasis on the manner of conduct and handling of corruptive cases. The noun phrase “professional” suggests careful procedures and that sensitive and diligent ways will be followed to grab hold of offenders. On a parallel view, the prepositional phrase “for the good of society” means that the investigation of the outcome of corruption practices are in the interest of the society.

#### **4.14.3 Linguistic constructs and stakeholders' relations**

The ACC relates to society members who are the stakeholders but also members of the society in a constructive manner. The infinitive phrase “to fight corruption in Namibia show the spirit of caring and positive relations”. The fight against corruption in the society shows companionship and relatedness between the ACC mission statement and its society. Lastly, the ACC mission statement expresses commitment to eradicate corruption, as noted in “law enforcement and preventive measures in a professional manner for the good of society”. This activity symbolizes a strong relationship. Clearly the use of the adjective “good of the society” indicates that the ACC mission is for the society and society is for the ACC.

#### **4.15. The mission statement of the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST)**

*NUST is a responsive University creatively meeting the needs of students, society and economy through multiple pathways for excellent education, applied research, innovation and service in collaboration with stakeholders.*

##### **4.15.1 Linguistic components in the mission statement**

NUST's mission statement comprises its own identity by stating the best action of their mission “NUST is a responsive University”. The proper phrase NUST is an acronym. It stands out so that readers cannot miss it as they read the mission statement. The acronym is post-modified by an adjectival phrase “responsive University”, which modifies the identity of NUST.

Additionally, the noun “university” in the adjectival phrase “responsive university” refers back to NUST, just to validate the identity, so that readers will know that NUST is a university and not something else, and that it is a university which is reactive. Simpson (2010) states that adjectives

help writers to convey both positive and negative meaning but, also, meaning displays writers' points of view.

The adverbial phrase “creatively meeting the needs of students, society and economy” stresses the identity of the enterprise, indicating the manner by which the students, society and economy's needs are met by NUST. By communicating, the goals are used to clarify the general direction of the organization. The goals are backed by the company's philosophy which includes how the institution will go about attaining its goals (Kotter, 1997). Truly, stakeholders and other mission statement readers align themselves with an enterprise of good traits as expressed by the adverbial phrase.

Disputably, some NUST students are still unemployed and some dropped out of NUST. It thus implies that their needs are not always met. Furthermore, these days, mission statement readers seek to align themselves with enterprises that address economic issues. Therefore, the infinite phrase “meeting the needs of students, society and economy” captures readers as it suggests a solution to economic crises. In this light, the noun “economy” justifies the vitality of NUST's mission statement. In the same vein, the society is troubled by multiple skill deficits, and thus needs skilled and knowledgeable people.

#### **4.15.2 Meaning interpretation of the mission statement**

“A world without effects would be pallid and meaningless, we would not know whether things happened, neither could we care whether they did or not” (Tomkins, 1995, p. 88, as cited in Tyler 2012). The meaning of NUST's mission statement is brought by the quantifier “multiple”, pre-modifying the noun “pathway” of economy.

The meaning of NUST's mission statement suggests that NUST offers a vast number of strategies to overcome economic battles. Largely, the mode of reaching the economic goal is specifically

given by the noun “applied research”. Ideally, the noun “applied research” represents positivity, while the prepositional phrase “for excellent education applied research” highlights the up-to-date, informed, education system of NUST. It is obvious that the prepositional phrase means sound knowledge and critical thinking in the NUST enterprise.

#### **4.15.3 Linguistic constructs and stakeholders’ relations**

NUST relates to stakeholders by tempting them with their needs and desires. The noun phrase “innovation proclaim, advanced creativity, new designs of products, good and spurs of economic growth and development”. The alignment between stakeholders and enterprise is enhanced by one advantageous, positive factor. The NUST mission statement, significantly, utilizes the prepositional phrase “in collaboration with stakeholders” to applaud and recognize stakeholders. It is obvious, when stakeholders’ read NUST’s mission statement; they are assured that their efforts are reckoned.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### 5.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the English language used in the mission statements of state owned enterprises in Namibia, in relation to three research objectives:

1. Determine the linguistic components used in the mission statements of state-owned enterprises;
2. Explore and discuss how meaning can be interpreted in the mission statements of state-owned enterprises;
3. Critically examine how state-owned enterprises employ linguistic constructs to relate to their stakeholders.

This chapter discusses the linguistic components utilised in the missions of state-owned enterprises, the meaning of mission statements and how mission statements of state-owned enterprises utilise linguistic constructs to relate to their stakeholders.

All mission statements of state-owned enterprises comprise noun and prepositional phrases (see all prints of the mission statements). Linguistically, customers and stakeholders, command, imperatives, directives are namely parts of mission statements (Sufi & Lyons, 2003). However, the study concludes that mission statements are constructed differently just to indicate the service rendered and to market the enterprise to the outside world, for example, the Roads Authority mission statement “To manage the national Road network and support our stakeholders in road-sector related matters in accordance with our distinctive legislation and agreed upon standards and principles. This is done with a view to achieving a safe and efficient road sector thereby promoting economic growth”, NAMPOWER “To provide of the energy needs of our customers, fulfil the aspiration of our staff and satisfy the expectation of our stakeholders” and UNAM “To provide

quality higher education through education teaching, research and advisory services to our customers with the view to produce productive and competitive human resources capable of driving public and private institutions towards knowledge-based economy, economic growth and improved quality of life”.

In all mission statements evidence exists that they are simple linguistic constructs, yet unique in nature. This confirms findings from a previous study. According to Mullane (2002), a mission statement is a linguistic construct that provides a precise definition of what an enterprise does on a daily basis. Additionally, more has been revealed and it is what is being manifested in various mission statements. Mission statements "are declarations of an organization's businesses or reason for being" (p. 27). “Mission statements reveal what an organization wants to be and whom it wants to serve" (Fred, 2003, p. 59). Mission statements can be defined as statements that validate and stipulate reasons for an organisation’s existence.

## **5.2.Linguistic components of mission statements**

It has been discovered that these mission statements comprise stakeholders, shareholders employees, staff and customers as main components of the linguistic aspects. Bart (1997) asserts that “mission statements warrant that stakeholders are considered and that the values and standards of an organization are being broadcasted for leaders, employees and customers alike”. Without considering main nouns, such as customers, employees and shareholder, this mission statement would lack directives and would have impeded vision. Mission statements in this study are unique because state-owned enterprises have different reasons and purposes for their existence. Secondly a mission statement is a strategic tool, crafted differently to market the enterprise and to state who the business of their business as well as providing a reason of why they are inexistence.

Linguistically, mission statements are constructed following the grammatical rule of a sentence, namely that it should have a noun phrase and verb phrase. Differently, other rules of grammar like

noun, verb, adjectival and a prepositional phrases, were used, composed of goals principle, customers and stakeholders. All state-owned enterprises used noun phrases just to lay a foundation and give the true identity of the organization. Verbs are positioned differently in mission statements, but share a similar role, just to express the action and dedication for the mission statement (see 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.10). Prepositional phrases are used to show the relationship and the standing points of the objects in the mission statement (see 4.4, 4.4, 4.6, 4.13 and 4.14). Divergently, mission statements (see 4.6 4.8 and 4.10) used plural nouns, “our”, “we”, just to show the overall responsibility to all parties included in the mission statement. It can be concluded that they are esteemed bodies and their contribution to the mission will not go unnoticed. Furthermore, compound noun phrases were used in a few of the mission statements (see 4.13 and 4.14) to present that the weight of solidarity in the mission statement is equal. Conjunctions, present imperatives and adverbial phrases were rarely used by mission statements 4.14 and 4.15. The present imperative was used for assurance of service rendered, while the adverbial of manner was used to indicate the manner in which issues would be dealt with in the mission statement. Finally, the semicolon and common were used for extra information of terms in the mission statement.

### **5.3. Meaning of mission statements**

The meaning of a mission statement is more reader- than writer-oriented; however, the comprehensive meaning of a mission statement is given by the length and the structure of the mission statement. By nature of design, mission statements are short, brief and displayable documents on a single page or paragraph, in order to display the cultures, ethos and ideologies of the state-owned enterprise (see 4.2.2, 4.3.2, 4.4.2, 4.6.2, 4.7.2, 4.10.2, 4.11, 4.12.2, 4.13.2, 4.14.2 and 4.15.2). Mission statements express meaning from their own point of view.

Simpson (2010) states that adjectives help writers to convey both positive and negative meaning but, also, meaning displays writers’ points of view. Overall, adjectives indicate the degree of

performance of state-owned enterprises through their mission statements. Some state-owned enterprises choose adjectives to convey meaning positively to readers, but also readers judge the adjective used from their own perspective to depict and perceive either a positive or negative

The Critical Discourse Analysis framework, as proposed by Fairclough (1992), acknowledges that, if meaning is exposed, interpreted and understood, all social, political, economic issues are systematically, discovered and unpacked within the discourse. Different mission statements of state-owned enterprises addressed hidden issues directly or indirectly; thus, implied meaning in relation to the reader's perception, experience and expectations. The writer of the mission statement had to consider the emotive power of words employed, the choice of linguistic components, what meaning to convey and what to withhold (Gath, 2006, cited in Salomo, 2015). Mission statements of state-owned enterprises failed to adhere to ambiguous words as obstacles that hinder meaning. What matter is the meaning decoded and encoded (see 4.7.2, 4.8.2 and 4.11.2).

#### **5.4.Linguistic constructs and stakeholders' relations**

With references to the findings, it can be concluded that a mission statement is structurally, syntactically and pragmatically expressed but also positively related to their stakeholders. Mission statement writers used linguistic constructs, such as noun phrases, possessive pronouns, infinitives, verbs, modal verbs, present participle, creatively (see 4.3.3, 4.4.3, 4.5. 3, 4.6.3, 4.10.3 and 4.13.3). Firstly, mission statements mostly used noun phrases to attain a true, positive, identity and maintain firm adhesion with the stakeholders. Possessive noun phrases were used to endorse solidarity and ownership of the mission statement; thus, to inspire stakeholders to put in their total effort to attain the enterprise's goals. Infinitives were frequently used by state-owned enterprises to emphasise a long-lasting relationship with stakeholders and the enterprise. Verbs were used to

convince the stakeholder how the mission would be translated into action that proposes the outcomes which are the core interest of the stakeholders. Modal verbs were used to express the promise between the enterprise and the stakeholder, because a promise is better than a gift. Finally, the present participle was used to emphasise that the relationship and the service rendered were not only for now but also the future, because stakeholders are interested in what they foresee, rather than in what they have. Some mission statements did not relate directly to their stakeholders; instead, they did it indirectly, knowing stakeholders would get the meaning from the mission statement (see 4.10.3, 4.9.3, 4.11.3, 4.12.3 and 4.13.3).

## **5.5. Conclusion**

The study sought to analyse the English language used in mission statements of state-owned enterprises. The English language used in these mission statements trailed a route from grammatical aspects (noun phrases, possessive pronouns, verbs, modal verbs, adjectives, adverbials, prepositional phrases, conjunctions, present participles and infinitives), down to syntagmatic and pragmatics. These were the aspects explored, exposed and systematically diagnosed and discovered in the study.

## **5.6. Recommendations**

The English language in a mission statement has great power to influence its meaning interpretations; therefore, interpreters need to consider the choice of words that introduce ambiguity in mission statements. From the mission statement writers' perspective, mission statements are viewed as strategic tools whose components are business oriented, but from the linguistic perspective, mission statements are linguistic tools with linguistic components as their identity, and those linguistic tools execute a linguistic function in the mission statement.

Mission statements writers should be aware that linguistic components should be redesigned, re-engineered, reshuffled as mechanisms of new word formation and functions. They use unique verbs and noun phrases, thus, moving from traditional grammar to generative grammar.

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