Multimodal Text Analysis of University Websites: The Case of Indonesian and Korean Higher Education

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Abstract. To attract new students, the study provides insight into how schools market their academic programs, research-informed teaching, and research findings. It draws attention to how images—such as pictures and photos—contribute to the textual, interpersonal, and ideational meanings prospective students want to take away from the websites. Its foundations are multimodal discourse analysis and genre analysis. The home pages of Korean and Indonesian university websites for potential students are included in the examined corpus. The corpus design allows for cross-cultural comparison and provides material for a case study of this online genre. The results of the contrastive research highlighted the importance of social and cultural circumstances in the manifestation and development of genres by highlighting the main form and function differences between Korean and Indonesian sub-corpora. The growth of internet technology and its expanding capabilities also significantly impact the creation of online genres.

Keywords: Discourse analysis, higher education, multimodal text, university website

1   Introduction

Websites and web phenomena are distinct representations of today's trend. As a result, they provide a lot of information regarding present views and behaviors among numerous national and ethnic groups. Even as more academics investigate the benefits and drawbacks of the internet as a research tool and source, the appeal of this enormous resource has mostly been limited to parts that can be managed in traditional, vocally focused manner. Because of this relatively narrow focus, many distinct components of websites that could reflect very enlightening features of cultures were removed [1]. A more complex and specialized instrument or technique is still required to adequately address the interaction of these multiple expressive traits as the key components and reveal the data source in all of its prominent and less evident modes.

Today's academic institutions are working harder than ever to position themselves as desirable establishments to get international recognition, particularly in emerging

nations. These organizations use language and visual tools, such as slogans, logos, images, and promotional films, to carry out a variety of promotional operations. In doing so, they draw from public discourses that support constructing and maintaining their identities and the pre-existing landscapes portrayed in advertising materials. To create distinctive corporate identities, the homepages combined architectural environments with cultural semiotic items and historical, global, and transformative discourses. As a result, the universities were converted from apartheid-era educational institutions to equal-opportunity ones [2].

Furthermore, research has demonstrated that academic leaders' discursive repertoire has grown to incorporate more free-market terms frequently found in business literature. Most of this research has concentrated on universities in the industrialized West and extrapolated its conclusions to universities across the globe. Given the disparities in status among people in industrialized nations, more research is needed to determine whether the results above apply to educational institutions in these nations. Therefore, it should be acknowledged that individuals from various historical backgrounds and groupings always have distinct goals and socioeconomic aspirations. Marketization discourses practical in rich nations might not always have the same impact in developing countries. Higher education in Korea and Indonesia becomes the main focus of this study.

Multimodal text analysis has been applied to university websites worldwide in numerous research. Nothing, nevertheless, has been done regarding higher education in Korea and Indonesia. The multimodal text on US university websites was examined by Fedorenko and Sheremeta [3]. Following that, Wu and Cheong [4] reviewed the websites of Chinese universities. Websites from Australian universities were examined by Zhang and Tu [5]. Rungruangsuparat [6] looked at Thai university websites. Tomášková looked at the websites of American, British, and Czech colleges [7]. Last but not least, Mafofo and Banda [2] reviewed the websites of South African universities.

Their ideology as academic resources in the marketplace is influenced by fierce competition among educational institutions, strengthening their brand. The English-language university websites mix multimodal components with intercultural communication. The official English websites serve as participatory venues for members to interpret identities created through specialized activities and a large mirror for the institutions. Identity construction is explained on university websites, and identity interpretation is based on realizing those traits. To achieve these objectives, multimodal discourse analysis is used to critically examine spoken and visual texts about higher education in Indonesia and Korea.

2   Literature Review

2.1   Multimodality Concept

A comprehensive and multidimensional examination of the Internet and websites, encompassing all their component elements, necessitates what is now referred to as a "multimodal" analysis. Many characteristics of a medium or a communicative utterance, such as physiological or sensory channels or capacity, can be referred to by the term "mode" (or "modality"). Since modalities are frequently defined from the media perspective, one may discuss, for example, texts and images, all of which are categorized as visual or aural channels or modes [1]. Almost all media cannot portray tactile, olfactory, or gustatory experiences since we either read or listen to texts, and even the most advanced hybrid and multimodal media cannot effectively handle two of our five senses (hearing and seeing). However, the term "visual mode" refers to a broad range of expressive systems that are frequently hard to categorize as "visual," such as textual elements (which need to be read or heard), layout, typography, and design aspects. In online communications, the auditory mode—speech or singing, music, and noises—also exhibits various characteristics, applications, and corresponding importance.

2.2   Multimodal Website Analysis

Six stages make up the paradigm for examining websites as sources of social and cultural information, and each one corresponds to a distinct logic of discovery. While Phase 3 involves deep interpretations of the constituent components and the complex interactions, Phase 2 concentrates on instantly manifesting qualities and makes basic measurements. As a result, the research shifts from relatively simple data quantification and coding to more interpretative analysis aimed at identifying the symbolic and metaphorical aspects of websites or elucidating their intentional and accidental meanings. In this talk, each of these stages of website analysis is briefly reviewed and provides instances of how they could represent different facets of culture [1].

2.3   Higher Education Websites

The widespread usage of the Internet has created an unprecedented area for communications that is now densely inhabited with a variety of more or less defined forms and established genres. According to Bax [8], a genre is a historically and culturally unique construct that reflects both historical evolution and current societal demands. University websites are a new form of institutional discourse that is still in its infancy in some societies. This indicates that these genres' evolution and applicability differ across cultures, leading to an uneven horizon for cross-cultural

comparison. University websites in the Czech Republic still display certain traits of emerging genres, but those in North America and Britain are thought to be approaching established genres [7]. Although it is outside the scope of this study to discuss whether the institutional website is an autonomous genre, it is assumed for this analysis that it is, albeit in a definite sense. Discourse colonies provide excellent descriptions of university websites, just like they do for other institutional websites. To create the complex composition of the online colony, elements from genres other than institutional discourses are incorporated into the main page and the level structure of the hypertext. Lastly, this genre's multimodal applicability is among its most noteworthy features. The interaction between verbal and nonverbal elements results in the meanings conveyed and the actions performed to seek and accomplish the primary communicative goal.

2.4   Previous Related Studies

Multimodal text analysis has been applied to university websites worldwide in numerous research. Nothing, nevertheless, has been done regarding higher education in Korea and Indonesia. The multimodal text on US university websites was examined by Fedorenko and Sheremeta [3]. Following that, Wu and Cheong [4] reviewed the websites of Chinese universities. Additionally, Laba [9] and Zhang and Tu [5] analyzed websites belonging to Australian universities. Rungruangsuparat [6] looked at Thai university websites. Tomášková looked at American, British, and Czech college websites [7]. Mafofo and Banda [2] analyzed the websites of South African universities. Multimodal text analysis was done on platforms other than university websites. In 2023, [10] examined Nigerian online public health. Febrianti [11] analyzed the films and posters used for university branding. The e-learning website was reviewed by Jamilah et al. [12]. Kong [13] completed the task on hospital hallways. Lewin-Jones [14] managed to reach the promotional websites. Multinational corporations' social media marketing posts were analyzed by Miri [15]. An online marketplace was investigated by Napitupulu et al. [16]. Sukma [17] reached a travel website.

3   Methodology

In light of broader research on the general state and features of institutional websites, this study aims to examine the multimodal environment of university online presentations. It specifically aims to determine whether and, if so, how the non-verbal modes enhance the websites' ideational, interpersonal, and textual semantic components. The study examines university websites in Korea and Indonesia from a cross-cultural standpoint to identify trends and distinctions in the number of non-verbal cues and the meanings they transmit. While honoring the genre's cultural uniqueness,

it also looks at how novel online genres are in the canon of modern genres. The Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse study, which draws from the theory of language metafunctions, serves as the foundation for this investigation [18].

Institutional websites have grown into substantial hypertextual complexes containing a plethora of textual and visual information, and they continue to expand via links to other hypertext networks, making the corpus for study an unavoidable choice. To collect a manageable amount of relevant information for the research purpose, this study concentrated on the sites most likely to be invaded by promotional features— prospective student pages and the path students are likely to take. According to Webometrics 2024, the corpus contains the homepages and websites of Korean and Indonesian universities for prospective students. Although inevitable to exclude the vast diversity entirely, the choice of these higher education was prompted by data compatibility. As a result, potential inconsistencies in the results may be less influenced by these social status and institutional inequalities, delivering a more accurate picture of their cultural specificities. However, they are at least comparable in terms of histories and status as credible research and education institutions with an international reputation.

Many nonverbal aspects may be seen on the homepages of Indonesian and Korean institutions and potential students' websites, including pictures, photos, graphs, infographics, and moving imagery such as photo strips with changing frames and video clips. Academic websites may feature downloadable audio recordings of lectures, speeches, and interviews with students and administrators that provide insights into academic life. This means that the website's audio content is more than simply text. The following subsections focus on images and pictures, investigating how these representations convey ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning. They also give specific threads that weave together to create the texture of multimodal ensembles.

4   Results and Discussion

Tabel 1. The top five universities in Indonesia and South Korea in 2024

Number	Institution	Website	Foundation	City
1	Universitas Indonesia	www.ui.ac.id	1849	Jakarta
2	Universitas Gadjah Mada	www.ugm.ac.id	1949	Yogyakarta
3	Universitas Airlangga	www.unair.ac.id	1954	Surabaya

4	Institut Teknologi Bandung	www.itb.ac.id	1959	Bandung
5	Universitas Brawijaya	www.ub.ac.id	1963	Malang
6	Seoul National University	www.snu.ac.kr	1946	Seoul
7	Yonsei University	www.yonsei.ac.kr	1885	Seoul
8	Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology	www.kaist.ac.kr	1971	Daejeon
9	Korea University	www.kore.edu	1905	Seoul
10	Hanyang University	www.hanyang.ac.kr	1939	Seoul

In light of emerging technology, there is currently a particular interest in ideational meanings about the evolution of visual culture in society. Ideational meaning analysis uses paralinguistic approaches to account for the functions of color, typography, signature, composition, and space. The information displayed on the websites of Indonesian and South Korean universities that are the subjects of the study is inextricably linked to interactive paragraphemic elements, static and slider images, animated videos (using Flash animation technology), and interactive text links that display a site context menu when the cursor is over them. These paragraphemic components are features of university electronic hypertext representations, draw readers in, and offer a more practical way to learn about a promising area of research and scientific endeavors.

Usually, spoken text is presented conventionally on the page or separated into several columns. The factual data shows that no explicit guidelines or standards exist for text positioning on Indonesian and South Korean university websites. It is clear that most of the content is given evenly and linearly at the same interval; occasionally, it is

arranged in columns. The most prevalent fonts on university websites in South Korea and Indonesia are basic ones. These typefaces are made to help the reader perceive information as quickly as possible. The universities' websites being examined mainly use conventional typefaces and avoid ornamental ones that could make it harder to comprehend information. It has been shown that font size directly affects how vital information is. The more crucial the information, the larger it is; the smaller the message, the less significant it is. The choice and arrangement of graphic components on the university websites under investigation are determined by their dual communication goals: to promote the higher education institution and give a comprehensive, multifaceted picture. The websites depict various events and activities, their locations or settings, and—above all—their participants, giving an impression of the varied environment these colleges provide. The majority of the pictures feature pupils in a prominent location, while occasionally they also feature students and professors together.

On Indonesian and South Korean university websites, concept graphics are frequently used with headlines and the first few paragraphs of news items that highlight recent achievements and events. They are representational, highlighting rather than exhibiting particular attributes, and foster a peaceful learning environment. Each university under consideration highlights how it preserves its historical heritage while staying current with cutting-edge technologies. Conceptual graphics typically portray the study's subjects as visually appealing and educationally valuable. Generally speaking, the assortment of images on each university's website under investigation creates a varied and vibrant ambiance, including campuses, labs, sports facilities, etc. Photographs frequently show students' lives in various settings and manifestations, such as sporting activities, research, field trips, etc., and university grounds. Students naturally merge in with the surroundings due to the atmosphere being prioritized (via perspective, camera angle, and colors). Individuals' active participation in storytelling unites the diverse society, and their drive and enthusiasm for education are conveyed through facial expressions. Furthermore, the diversity of student photos mirrors the target audience of the websites under analysis, which is the intended diversity of potential students. It offers many pictures that people can use to recognize themselves.

It has been determined that student-centered photos and images of campus landscapes (interior and exterior) are the most popular visual content on university websites. A vibrant atmosphere, immersive learning, a friendly academic community with a wide range of personalities, and a multicultural university setting are all depicted in the phrases; these attributes and values are reflected in the images. Furthermore, its corporate identity or color logo significantly influences the university's place in the educational market. Establishing a client link with a particular higher education institution's brand is the primary goal of a corporate identity. This has a direct

connection to the color mode. There are one or more dominant colors on every website being studied. This is because Indonesian and Korean higher education institutions have traditionally used their colors to distinguish themselves from one another, particularly when they meet at athletic events. Each university has its unique set of colors; even if two colors are the same, the other required colors will differ.

Since pragmatic language is the most important way to guarantee that educational institutions connect with their target audience in a timely and efficient manner, university websites place a high premium on pragmatic language. The kind of diverse discourse being examined seeks to disseminate the latest developments in science and education, attract potential students, researchers, and sponsors, and paint a picture of the "ideal" learning environment. When it comes to goal-setting, university websites' content is highly similar to advertising discourse, which aims to promote a good or service. Nonetheless, the characteristics of advertising discourse vary somewhat while operating in this environment. As a result, educational discourse influences the objectives of advertising discourse. Individual socialization and a person's orientation toward learning are the latter's objectives.

5   Conclusion

Every university in the study employs semiotic landscapes to highlight appealing companies on their websites. Because university websites are the most important means of ensuring timely and successful communication between educational institutions and their target audiences, their rhetoric is primarily pragmatic. The heterogeneous discourse being examined seeks to offer a picture of the "ideal" academic higher education, attract many, and share the most recent awards in education and science. The multimodality of the investigated South Korean and Indonesian university websites is mirrored in visual content via numerous paragraphemic and graphical features for the integration of language tools and visual materials in the construction. Due to a variety of semiotic resources, university websites that use multimodality not only effectively depict their sociocultural events but also appropriate scientific, educational, and advertising discourses to establish globally competitive educational brands. Future studies may employ a corpus-based approach, which can be effectively utilized to corroborate the results presented in this research.

Authors' Contributions

Nate Mandigo and Beni Wijaya contributed significantly to the study's core. Zakaria and Leni Rohliah supervised the data collection. Nate Mandigo and Beni Wijaya finished the data analysis and manuscript. They also provided feedback on how to improve the publication of the manuscript.

Acknowledgments

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