

# A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Ideological Identity Endorsed on the University's Homepages

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**Abstract**—Whilst a plethora of research has taken into account the exertion of website homepages as a conduit for effectively conveying information, it is acknowledged that the matter of ideological values and how these ideals are manifested through such digital communication media has been somewhat overlooked. Thus, the research at hand attempts to go over how the university advertises its ideological construal on its homepages by way of the adoption of multiple modes, involving both linguistic and aesthetic dimensions, and video. In this investigation, multimodal approaches encapsulated by Kress (2010) and Pauwels (2012) were employed to address the ideological values through visual components on the university homepages. Drawing from the attainable data, the university's homepage is crafted utilizing two fundamental categories of semiotic methods such as a combination of visual and textual elements, as well as video to reinforce the aesthetic, nevertheless, it neglects to incorporate any semiotic resource that places particular emphasis on visual components. The strategic utilization of diverse multiple modalities of communication on the homepage has effectively promoted an array of constructive ideological ideals that hold significant worth for stakeholders and the public, considering the pivotal role that universities play in shaping societal beliefs and perspectives.

**Index Terms**—ideology, semiotic resources, multimodality, textual and visual components, university homepage

## I. INTRODUCTION

In tandem with the swift change of communication brought on by the proliferation of digital multimedia, such as websites, a plethora of multimodality-oriented analyses on communication modes via the Internet or digital media has provoked academics and educators to engage in a broad spectrum of studies on how communication by way of such modes makes meaning. Through situational configurations of image, gesture, gaze, body position, sound, writing, music, speech, and other media, multimodality devotes attention to meaning as it emerges (Jewitt, 2008). As electronic communication tools, websites have gained widespread use by users including higher educational institutions or universities. Upon the widespread use of the Internet, university websites have shifted from merely informational or highly promotional platforms, liable for providing a substantial portion of the institutional identity of university profiles electronically (Laba, 2020), earlier contrasted with hand-printed advertising pamphlets. As well, the visual appearance and layout of websites are also strongly determined by the changing social context of their usage (Zhang & O'Halloran, 2013). Accordingly, leveraging distinct channels (modes) offers varying meaning potential, and the potentially distinct meaning comes with different societal consequences (Bezemer & Kress, 2016).

The wide-ranging utilization of websites as an avenue of propagating their details has evoked academics to undertake an assortment of studies on university websites or homepages to reveal how meaning-making is advocated by multiple semiotic resources endorsed upon the web. Despite the fact that many studies have echoed the nature of university websites through critical discourse analysis, such as promotion, brand endorsement, and other marketing purposes, queries about university homepages addressing the ideological basis viewed from a multimodal perspective have received less attention from academia. Therefore, there is room for research into how multimodal design principles contribute to ideological identity construal as an institutional context-bound mode of discourse. By embracing multimodal analysis, the current study looks into how the ideological construction of universities is brought to light on their homepages through multimodal representation. Ideology, inextricably linked with language as a means of communication (Wodak, 2007), is attributed to underlying patterns of meaning, frames of interpretation, world views, or forms of everyday thinking and explanation, and presumed as a subject worthy of investigation (Verschuere, 2011). While taking account into the role of ideological construal in educational circumstances, a university's ideology matters

because it determines the fundamental tenets, beliefs, and values that direct the organization's decisions, policies, and actions.

What's more, alongside improving their environmental communications and reaching the general public more effectively (José-Santiago & Fernández-Vázquez, 2020), this research through a multimodal methodology thereby can shed light on how multimodal communication involving verbal and nonverbal texts should be utilized for advancing the ideological character of universities, bearing in mind that universities do not merely serve as conduits for the dissemination of academic information, but more than that, that value or the perception of their readers and the public, in general, becomes institutionally responsible for universities. Moreover, the findings of this study provided insights into the multimodality subject matter to aid in the development of a rich and substantive understanding of multiple modes of communication in contemporary technological forms (Flewitt et al., 2018), especially within the realm of the educational milieu.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### A. *Multimodality and Its Research Foci*

The term multimodality refers to the practice of communicating via more than one media at once, such as text, images, sound, and video, offering a theoretical foundation for a thorough examination of visual texts, accounting in painstaking depth for the meaning feasible of aesthetic elements of graphic shapes (Wagner & Sherwin, 2014), such as font type, size, and resources for "framing," such as punctuation (Bezemer & Kress, 2008), and how the semiotic and epistemic functions of modality shape meaning, even though the recognition of the embodied meanings is reliant on the readers' abilities to perceive the multiple modalities (Jaipal, 2010). Furthermore, a multimodal framework could bear some potential for critical analysis, shedding insight into viewers/readers' social conceptions, affinities, and moral principles (Adami, 2015).

As a field of study, multimodality conceives representation and communication as reliant on a wide range of modalities, each of which has been socially evolved into meaning-making resources. Modes such as gesture, sound, image, colour, or layout are considered a series of structured resources that people, societies, and institutions have shaped meaning and articulate and draw values, ideologies, and power relations (Jewit et al., 2021; Knox, 2013). Additionally, as a phenomenon that discourse is always multimodal, multimodality designates that several semiotic modes (such as language and picture) are merged into a particular form of discourse or kind of discourse. Intonation, voice quality, facial expression, gesture, posture, and other facets of self-presentation like clothing and hairstyle, for instance, are all integrated into spoken discourse, while typographic expression and, more recently, illustration, layout, and color are integrated into written discourse (van Leeuwen, 2015). This bears a meaning that the multiple resources that appear in a community need to be noticed as an unbreakable, integrated field of - nonetheless different - resources for resulting in meaning, meaning that a multimodal approach intends to move beyond approaches in which mode was often inextricably associated with a theory and a discipline. In this oncoming, writing was evaluated through linguistics, images were looked at by art history, and so forth. Despite their apparent differences in material potential and social shaping, all modes have the possibility of imparting meaning to a complex semiotic entity (Kress, 2011). As such, in its application, it draws not solely on ideas and approaches from linguistic aspects but also from other pertinent domains like design, and aesthetic thoughts.

### B. *Multi-Semiotics via Webpage-Based Digital Communication*

The continual development of technological advancements has expanded the scope of communication beyond a singular modality, covering a diverse range of modalities (Haneef, 2018), encompassing web pages, films, animation, children's books, comic strips, print and television advertisements, newspapers, documents, museums, architectural spaces, home decor, websites, hypermedia applications, face-to-face interactions, and multimodal texts across different academic disciplines, and becoming a broad spectrum of multimodal text analysis (O'Halloran et al., 2013). This trend is also attributed to the growing prevalence of web-mediated communication in the contemporary era of globalization. Webpages, according to Swan (2017), as up-to-date media of communication, are unique hybrid genres that incorporate various modes of meaning-making, such as digital, verbal, aural, kinetic, and visual. These modes possess specific affordances that are inherent to the medium. Over the past decade, university websites have undergone enhancements through the incorporation of multimedia elements such as videos, images, and interactive pages. The aesthetically pleasing design and ideal layout of the webpage significantly streamline user accessibility, augment the browsing encounter (Wu et al., 2016), and enhance the interactivity of the pages, given the contemporary reality that students are immersed in a world of e-communication and are less inclined to engage with written information passively (Nasti et al., 2017). Therefore, universities have to be cognizant of cultural preferences while dealing with the issues of their website design, such as layout, animation, color, and other elements (Turra, 2020).

When looking at websites as social and cultural data sources, Pauwels (2012) proposes six distinct analysis phases following a specific logic of discovery, moving from an initial examination of readily apparent features and basic measurements to a more comprehensive interpretation of the constituent elements and their complex interrelationships, as displayed below.

TABLE 1  
A MULTIMODAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYZING WEBSITES

A Multimodal Framework for Analyzing Websites	
1.	Preservation of First Impression and Reactions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Categorization of 'look and feel' at a glance</li> <li>▪ Recording of affective reactions</li> </ul>
2.	Inventory of Salient Features and Topics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inventory of present website features and attributes</li> <li>▪ Inventory of main content categories and topics</li> <li>▪ Categorize and quantify features and topics</li> <li>▪ Perform 'negative' analysis: significantly absent topics and features</li> </ul>
3.	In-depth Analysis of Content and Formal Choices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 Intra-Modal Analysis (fixed/static and moving/dynamic elements)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Verbal/written signifiers</li> <li>▪ Typographic signifiers</li> <li>▪ Visual representational signifiers</li> <li>▪ Sonic signifiers</li> <li>▪ Layout &amp; design signifiers</li> </ul> </li> <li>3.2 Analysis of Cross-Modal Interplay               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Image/written text relations and typography-written text relations</li> <li>▪ Sound/image-relations</li> <li>▪ Overall design/linguistic, visual, and auditory interplay</li> </ul> </li> <li>3.3 In-depth 'negative' analysis</li> </ul>
4.	Embedded Point(s) of View or 'Voice' and Implied Audience(s) and Purposes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analysis of POV's and constructed personae</li> <li>▪ Analysis of intended/implied primary and secondary audience(s)</li> <li>▪ Analysis of embedded goals and purposes</li> </ul>
5.	Analysis of Information Organization and Spatial Priming Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Structural and navigational options and constraints (dynamic organization)</li> <li>▪ Analysis of priming strategies and gatekeeping tools</li> <li>▪ Analysis of outer-directed and/or interactive features</li> <li>▪ Analysis of external hyperlinks</li> </ul>
6.	Contextual Analysis, Provenance, and Inference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identification of sender(s) and sources</li> <li>▪ Technological platforms and their constraints/implications</li> <li>▪ Attribution of cultural hybridity</li> </ul>

The research, thereby, moves on from fairly simple data to quantify and code to a more interpretive analysis that focuses on uncovering the metaphorical and symbolic dimensions of websites.

### C. Unmasking Ideology Through Semiotics

If ideology is considered a comprehensive framework of ideas, then semiotics, the field of study concerned with sign systems, is poised to make a significant contribution to the examination of ideology (Noth, 2004). The presence of multiple codes and subcodes within culture illustrates that the same message can be interpreted from various perspectives and cater to different systems and conventions. The message is safeguarded by the fundamental denotation of its significance, although various connotations can be ascribed to it (Nescolarde-Selva & Usó-Doménech, 2014). The codes can be visually represented through a range of various facets, such as photographs, pictures, images, signs, paintings, movies, gestures, dance, and others. Even though such semiotic codes are confined to expressing and articulating abstract ideological beliefs more overtly, these visual messages are comparatively easier and simpler than discourse (van Dijk, 1998).

Semiotic ideology denotes individuals' fundamental assumptions regarding what signs attribute, their functions, and the potential outcomes they may generate (Keane, 2018). It determines various aspects, such as individuals' perceptions regarding the significance of intentions, the potential existence of different agents (such as humans, animals, or spirits) to which acts of signification can be attributed, whether signs are arbitrary or fundamentally connected to their objects, and other related inquiries (Keane, 2003). In this sense, what semiotic ideology might be encoded extends beyond merely the linguistic elements like vocabulary, syntax, and related variables. Keane claims that it directs attention to the whole spectrum of potential sign vehicles and the sensory modalities with which they might engage, including sound, smell, touch, muscular movement, pain, affect, and other somatic phenomena. This suggests that semiotic ideology pertains to the raw affordance of signs, which later affects the interpretation of their meanings (Khafaga, 2022).

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Since this study attempted to provide a thorough comprehension of the particular meanings and behaviors associated with a certain social phenomenon, that is the ideological construal within a higher educational institution through the subjective experiences of participants (Palmer & Bolderston, 2006), a qualitative research methodology was opted for. The adoption of qualitative research was to explore how individuals or a community in the educational institution create their social meaning, in this case, dealing with ideological identity (Flick, 2013), as represented through daily routines and practices (Patton & Cochran, 2004). In this current research, the construction of the ideology was assessed from

various semiotic resources, including verbal, visual, and the combined textual and visual components, and audio-visual facets, encountered on the homepages of a university; therefore, leveraging a multimodal analysis was deemed appropriate for thoroughly comprehending the messages conveyed via such various sorts of data. The practice of multimodal analysis entailed looking at multiple resources, such as text, pictures, audio, video, gestures, and other modalities, as well as the processes of meaning-making within the framework of ideology made by the university (Jewit et al., 2021).

As it falls within the parameters of qualitative inquiry, the researcher occupies a central position as the key instrument in collecting, interpreting, and presenting the findings. When gathering data, several relevant methods were taken into account to ensure that the data were accurate, while also minimizing the frequency of erroneous, as follows; (a) determine the specific sections of the university website that were examined for the study, (b) select a representative sample of each section (visual and verbal components) to ensure a balanced and comprehensive analysis, (c) for visual data, images, screenshots, or photographs of relevant visuals were manually captured, (d) in the light of auditory data, recording devices were employed to collect and extract the audio clips or dialogues from videos, (e) to obtain spatial data, screenshots or photographs depicting spatial arrangements, layouts, and designs were captured, and (f) each piece of data including its source, purpose, and any pertinent background information was carefully interpreted to provide contextual information.

For the current research endeavor sought to unveil the construal of ideological identity as articulated on the university's website via a range of distinct channels of expression, multimodal theoretical frameworks were put forward for the investigation. Typically, the material was divided into two discrete modalities: verbal and visual. The data was systematically encoded and categorized following its distinctive attributes to enable the researcher to organize and group similarly coded data into categories or "families" based on their shared similar characteristics to encapsulate the meaning and provide a comprehensive explanation of the data (Saldana, 2013). The visual materials, such as images, writing, layout, music, gesture, and video as socially and culturally shaped semiotic resources displayed in the university's homepages were interpreted by adopting Kress' (2010) and Pauwels' (2012) multimodal approaches to gain what values and ideologies are being articulated.

#### IV. FINDING

##### A. Ideological Values Looked at From the Combined Textual and Visual Elements

The university's ideology communicated through the integration of textual and visual elements as displayed on its homepage has emerged as a prominent method for promoting the university's ideological brand, surpassing other communication systems as the university can effectively convey its core values and beliefs to a wide audience, as exemplified in the image below.



Figure 1. A Hero Image

The interaction between linguistic and visual elements as depicted in the image depicted in Figure 1 can be initially examined in terms of *information reinforcement*. The visual impact of the woman's upward gesture serves to reinforce the message of "*reaching your future*," creating a clear connection between the written call to action and the aspirational visual cue. From a *cohesive design* standpoint, the utilization of a *blue color* scheme in both the woman's attire and the background of the text constitutes a visual representation of the university's branding. This particular color choice is often associated with qualities such as *trustworthiness* and *academic excellence*, which align with the university's values. The text and image collectively narrate the experiences of prospective students who take decisive actions in their pursuit of a bright future, with the university serving as the impetus for this endeavor.

When reviewing the concept of *visual hierarchy*, the placement and sizes of both textual and visual components play a crucial role in establishing a clear visual hierarchy that effectively directs the viewer's attention and guides them through the intended message. In the specific example provided, the visual hierarchy is constructed in a manner that leads the viewer's gaze in a specific sequence: first to the woman's face and gesture, then to the primary text message, and finally to the university's name. This arrangement of elements effectively organizes the information in a persuasive and logical sequence, enhancing the overall impact of the message. In conclusion, by interweaving the textual and

visual aspects, the website's homepage seeks to create a captivating story that not only educates but also emotionally and inspirationally interacts with its viewers. The design choices selected in both text and image work in harmony to depict the institution as a place where students can actively shape their futures, reflecting both the potential for personal development and the promise of academic success.

### B. Ideological Values Portrayed From Audio-Visual Elements

In order to gain insight into the underlying significance ingrained within the video, four distinct modalities including linguistic and verbal modes, visual cues, gestural expressions, and audio components were elucidated.

#### (a). A Delve Into Linguistic and Verbal Facets

The podcast commences with warm greetings in both Arabic and Indonesian languages, a noteworthy gesture that sets the tone for the ensuing discussion, firmly grounding it within the cultural and religious milieu of the university. As represented in the commencing discussion, the repeated use of the phrase "*Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh*" by the moderator and the vice-rector when extending greetings and salutations holds great significance. It serves as a powerful representation of the cultural and religious identity that resonates with the Islamic principles upheld by the institution. This is further emphasized by the seamless switch between Indonesian and English languages signifying its transcultural and translingual nature. This linguistic fluidity not only highlights the institution's global outlook but also underscores its commitment to fostering international dialogue. Meanwhile, the adoption of *formality and register* during interactions serves to convey a sense of formality within the conversation. The practice of employing formal titles, such as "The Honorable Miss," when referring to a U.S. representative and utilizing the academic title of vice-rector (Dr.) for an individual, serves as a sign of respect and acknowledgment of their esteemed position and specialized knowledge. The utilization of a formal register in the podcast serves to enhance the overall institutional atmosphere and academic essence of the content. The usage of such formal terms not only maintains the academic and professional decorum of the institution but also demonstrates a deep respect for the cultural norms prevalent in both the United States and Indonesia. In academic institutions, the use of formal terms is highly valued as it signifies a level of seriousness and professionalism.

When going over the *narrative structure*, the conversation covers the introduction, background exposition, discussion of partnership, and concluding comments. The utilization of a well-defined structure serves the purpose of effectively organizing the information and facilitating the comprehension of the intended audience. In addition to that, the use of a moderator implies a discourse that is well-structured and balanced. This structure enables an equitable sharing of thoughts, showcasing a respectful acknowledgment of both speakers' perspectives. The sequential arrangement of speakers (beginning with the vice-rector followed by the U.S. embassy envoy) reflects an underlying respect for institutional hierarchy or protocol. In the exploration of its *content and vocabulary*, the conversation involves *academic and diplomatic terminologies*, pointing out the significance of international collaboration, cross-cultural interaction, and the potential for educational advancement. In the realm of international cooperation, certain terms have gained prominence for their ability to highlight the advantages and opportunities that arise from collaborative efforts. Phrases such as "*collaboration*," "*exchange programs*," and "*intercultural learning*" have been carefully selected to highlight the positive outcomes that can be achieved through such collaborative endeavors.

#### (b). Going Over Visual Mode

When taking into account the *spatial arrangement*, the presence of a round table and the strategic positioning of participants contribute to the overall atmosphere of democratic and inclusive discussions as displayed in the figure below.



Figure 2. A Visual Representation of the Audio-Visual Element

This arrangement implies a space that fosters equal participation and encourages the exchange of ideas. In creating a formal atmosphere, the strategic placement of microphones and water bottles serves to reinforce the official nature of the discourse. The availability of microphones, carefully positioned throughout the space, signifies the importance of the event. They symbolize the need for clear and amplified communication, ensuring that every word uttered by the speakers reaches the audience with utmost clarity. Meanwhile, concerning the *backdrop color*, the showcase of the university's branding, set against a dominant green backdrop, presents a visual representation of the institution's identity

and values. This display may potentially establish an affinity to the Islamic tradition and the principles of growth and harmony. The incorporation of green in conjunction with the wood paneling creates a visually appealing blend that evokes a sense of traditional aesthetics. This deliberate choice of color and material suggests a possible appreciation for cultural heritage.

Furthermore, in the light of *typography and imagery*, the prominent showing of the university's name asserts its institutional identity. The logo of the podcast is prominently displayed in the center, anchoring as a focal point that firmly establishes the podcast within the realm of education. This strategic placement not only draws attention to the logo but also underscores the podcast's commitment to academic excellence, lending it a sense of credibility and authority. When it comes to the *production techniques* of the video, one important aspect is the opportunity for speakers to speak in turn. This technique promotes a balanced conversation where each participant's contributions are given equal importance. By allowing speakers to take turns, the video ensures that everyone has a chance to express their thoughts and ideas. This approach fosters a sense of fairness and inclusivity, as it ensures that no one person dominates the conversation.

(c). *Insight From Gestural Expression*

When witnessing the *participants' body language*, it becomes evident that they consistently display open and relaxed postures throughout much of the discussion as shown in the images below.



Figure 3. Gestural Expressions Represented in the Audio-Visual Element

The figures above display the sitting conditions of the individuals, exhibiting gestures such as *leaning forward* and *hand movements*. During the allotted time for speaking, the participants displayed a notable level of interest and enthusiasm towards engaging in the discussion. The speakers' body languages reveal important insights about their level of engagement and the significance of the topic at hand. It is noticeable from their sitting style, as they lean forward in their seat. These postures indicate a heightened level of interest and attentiveness towards the conversation. Additionally, the speakers' *hand movements* contribute to the overall impact of their message. This particular movement was sanctioned when she intended to draw attention to a point, as substantiated by the subsequent instance of an extract.

... ada lebih dari ribuan universitas, empat ribu universitas di Amerika Serikat, dan banyak kesempatan untuk siswa-siswa (mahasiswa-mahasiswi). Tapi, mungkin itu terlalu banyak informasi. Harus mencari sesuatu yang cocok untuk setiap orang... (... there are over thousands of universities, four thousand universities in the United States, and offer abundant opportunities for students. However, perhaps that's too much information. So, it is essential to find something suitable ...).

The emphasis was effectively conveyed by the speaker through the purposeful chopping motions that accompanied her delivery of the information, "... Tapi, mungkin itu terlalu banyak informasi. Harus mencari sesuatu yang cocok untuk setiap orang... (However, perhaps that's too much information. So, it is essential to find something suitable ...). The explicit intention behind employing such physical gestures was to underscore the significance and relevance of the information being presented. The speaker's deliberate use of these gestures was aimed at capturing and maintaining the attention of the audience, as well as reinforcing the key points being conveyed. Added to that, the act of maintaining *eye contact* while interacting with the conversation holds substantial significance constituted as a potent sign of active involvement and mutual agreement between individuals. They are observed *listening attentively and nodding*, reflecting mutual respect for one other's ideas and fostering a sense of collaborative engagement. Their facial expressions also share *attentiveness* and *openness*, which are essential for cultivating an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. Along with that, their *smiles* during introductions and while discussing potential programs represent enthusiasm, sincerity, and optimism regarding the collaboration.

(d). *An Extract From the Audio Component*

Getting acquainted with the tone and its variations is another crucial aspect when trying to decipher the message conveyed in the video. The initial focus of the scrutiny revolved around the speaker's use of language. The seamless transition between Indonesian and English languages by the moderator in the greeting and introduction sections of the talk appears to be a harmonious blend of cultural influences from the respective countries represented by the speakers, as denoted in the following excerpt.

“... *Walaikum'salam. Wah... selanjutnya, ini kita ada kedatangan tamu kita yang spesial, the Honorable Miss, the Honorable Miss Emily Yasmin Norris. Selamat sore, miss*”.

“Ok. miss Emily, ini adalah perwakilan dari Cultural Fairs Officer dari U.S. atau Amerika. Jadi, miss Emily bersama pak WR III saat ini akan berbicara tentang U.S. Indonesia Cultural Corporation.”

The incorporation of both Indonesian and English in the provided setting signifies a cultural interchange and the convergence of linguistic and ideological principles between the two agents. "Walaikum'salam" is an Islamic salutation often used in Indonesian culture to convey respect and recognize cultural differences. The transition to English signifies a change in the atmosphere of the discourse to be more formal or authoritative, consistent with the presence of a United States representative. The inclusion of "the Honorable Miss" in the introduction of Miss Emily Yasmin Norris imparts a sense of formality and reverence, reflecting the customary usage of honorifics in Indonesian society. By employing such an honorific, a sense of reverence is bestowed upon Miss Norris, highlighting her esteemed status.

In referring to the vocal modulations of the speakers, a *formal yet optimistic tone* is adopted, notwithstanding the presence of some variations in *pitch, volume, and pace* throughout the discussion. The vocal alterations employed by speakers during the interactions can reveal their underlying attitudes, intentions, and the nature of the discourse. The variation in of tone voice may be depicted by the snippets of utterances from speakers, as demonstrated by the moderator when welcoming the two guest speakers during the introductory segment, as exemplified below.

*Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, selamat sore, sahabat UMSU sekalian. Bertemu lagi di podcast Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara. Hari ini, dengan saya Wida Akasa, Broad member dari Office of International Affairs and Corporation. Saat ini kita sudah bersama tamu spesial kita. Kita sudah ditemani oleh Bapak Wakil Rektor Tiga Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara. Bapak Dr. Rudianto M.SI, selamat sore pak.* (Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, good afternoon to all UMSU friends. We meet again on the podcast of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara. Today, with me Wida Akasa, a board member at the Office of International Affairs and Cooperation. At present, we are honored to have our special guest, Dr. Rudianto, M.Si., deputy rector three of Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara. Good afternoon, Sir).

During her warm greeting, she began with the traditional Islamic salutation of "*Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh*," which translates to "May peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you." She then extended her greetings to all the friends and members of the university, wishing them a pleasant afternoon with the words *selamat sore sahabat, UMSU sekalian*. In the podcast, she enthusiastically greeted the audience with a lively tone and quick tempo. Although some intonations in the middle of the expression fell, overall, the opening statement was delivered with clear, high, and rapid tones. The moderator's use of a high pitch and rapid tone illustrates her enthusiasm and sense of urgency regarding the ideas being communicated. Following the initial greeting, the moderator proceeded with her speaking by adjusting the volume to a softer level and slightly slowing down her intonation. This was noticeable when she said, "*Hari ini, dengan saya Wida Akasa, Broad member dari Office of International Affairs and Corporation. Saat ini kita sudah bersama tamu spesial kita. Kita sudah ditemani oleh Bapak Wakil Rektor Tiga Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara. Bapak Dr. Rudianto M.SI, selamat sore pak*". By speaking at a slower volume and with a deliberate intonation, she intended to create an air of seriousness and emphasize the essential nature of the subject being addressed. This intentional approach to communication signals to others that the issue at hand is of significant importance and warrants careful attention.

## V. DISCUSSION

### A. Ideological Embodiment Through a Fusion of Textual and Visual Resources

Bringing forth an idea goes beyond just words; it can also involve combining text with visual elements to create an appealing representation (Allam, 2017). The interplay of different modalities generates a unique space where the possibilities for meaning go beyond what each component can achieve on its own (Kilby & Lennon, 2021). As endorsed in the current study, blending various methods can result in a more comprehensive grasp of ideology. This is due to the fact that conceiving ideological messages in a more comprehensive and nuanced manner can be facilitated by combining diverse resources, including textual and visual materials. As portrayed in Figure 1, the infusion of written and visual elements enhances the impact of messages, rendering them more potent and thorough. The juxtaposition amplifies the flow of information, resulting in messages that are not only more powerful but also provide an elevated and extensive understanding of the subject matter. For instance, the selection of imperative verbs in the headline "*Tentukan keputusan dan raih masa depan mu di Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara*" effectively prompts the viewers to make decisions, while also hinting that the university is a transformative institution where one's future is sculpted (Nasti et al., 2017). The message delivered in the text becomes more efficient and expansive with the use of images (Elmiana, 2019). The image depicts an aesthetically appealing young woman with a warm and amiable grin, thus conveying a positive connotation that coincides with the message of the text of creating a promising future at the institution.

What's more, the woman's gaze upward enriches the visual representation of "attaining your future", establishing an alignment between the written call to action and the aspirational visual cue. Along with that, the utilization of suitable

hues, exemplified by the incorporation of shades of blue in both the attire of the female model and the background components of the website, can be associated with the typical color often attributed to educational establishments, thus effectively imparting an aura of trustworthiness, intelligence, and reliability. The color of the image appears to be a key criterion for selecting and pinning the image (Jewitt & Henriksen, 2016). This suggests that the amalgamation of colors present within the image, in conjunction with their aesthetic attributes, not only fulfills a decorative function but also plays a crucial role in effectively communicating the intended message of the image. In doing so, these colors act as indicators or signifiers that further reinforce and augment the overall meaning that is being subtly conveyed, although their interpretation can vary across diverse cultural and societal contexts (Bezemer & Kress, 2016).

About the web design under scrutiny, the concatenated use of various modes, such as color, gesture, writing, dress code, and the like, possess an array of resources that facilitate the creation of meaning (Adami, 2015), and the projection of values that contribute to the establishment and portrayal of identity (Adami, 2018). He further contends that the formation of identity is achieved semiotically, as opposed to being exclusively linguistic, and is inextricably linked with a broader societal construction of preference (Adami, 2018). Referring to the specific homepage of the university under being considered, it is notable that the adept integration of both linguistic and visual components crafts a compelling narrative. The well-integrated mix of text and imagery on the homepage are not isolated entities, instead, they form integral components of a comprehensive design strategy of effectively conveying the core values, opportunities, and inclusive nature of the university (Pauwels, 2012).

### *B. The Portrayal of Ideology Through the Medium of Video*

Video messages are deemed to be significantly more impactful compared to audio messages since individuals tend to place more trust and are influenced by visual content rather than auditory information (Gunay, 2021). As evidenced in the present investigation, videos are employed as an instrumental mechanism to portray and disseminate the ideological persona of the educational institution. In the video, diverse forms of communication modes, including linguistic, visual, gesture, and audio elements, synergistically reinforce one another, resulting in a significantly enhanced conveyance of meaning as compared to the utilization of auditory elements in isolation or relying solely on linguistics (Mora & Golovátna-Mora, 2020; Lin et al., 2021). As illustrated in Figure 3, the process of communication, which serves as a fundamental pillar in human interaction, is aptly conveyed through a plethora of dimensions that collectively contribute to its overall functionality and efficacy in transmitting messages between individuals. Despite the fact that each element possesses its own distinct traits, the cohesive integration of linguistic and visual semiotic resources constructs impactful and enduring messages (Suphaborwornrat & Punksirikul, 2022). To illustrate, when she was conveying information, she was observed elevating his hand, with fingers extended, while simultaneously executing a circular motion. The synchrony of speech and hand movements establishes the conditions for a dialectical relationship between images and verbal expression (McNeill, 2005), thus effectively conveying her intent to persuade individuals that the institution to which she pertains boasts a multitude of significant programs that can be fruitfully collaborated upon, thereby fostering enhanced cooperation (Wong, 2019; McNeill, 1992).

In addition to this, the adoption of formal and composed tones that were nonetheless optimistic generates a linguistic framework that extends beyond mere natural meanings (Clark, 2007), that is to emphasize the favorable elements of the collaboration between the United States and Indonesia. The speakers employed a well-balanced combination of assertive and diplomatic languages, expressing eagerness for potential prospects while acknowledging the current frameworks in place. When considering the attire of the participants, all the speakers were attired in a formal manner, which mirrored their official roles. In alignment with this, Bouvier (2017) holds that clothing can govern and manage people in a significantly more overt manner. Uniforms, in particular, suppress differences, establish shared identities, or emphasize the position above the individual. The vice rector's attire leaned toward the academic formal, whereas the embassy representative's attire adhered to diplomatic dress codes. This amalgamation embodies a fusion of cultural identities and underscores the professional essence of the occasion, thus pointing out a formal and earnest approach to the topic under discussion. The backdrop showcases the university branding set against a verdant backdrop, potentially embodying the university's sense of self and principles. Additionally, the choice of this particular hue, traditionally linked to Islam, serves as a means of representing the cultural and spiritual beliefs of the institution. The aesthetically appealing hue combinations in the background and foreground (font) can greatly generate a positive effect, particularly for a commercial website (Hall & Hanna, 2004), and potentially facilitate users in perceiving text with greater ease due to the distinct clear contrast, thus augmenting visual exploration, when compared to other color combinations (Ling & van Schaik, 2002). The infusion of various semiotic resources strives to generate coherent meanings that collaborate harmoniously in organizing our comprehension of the intended messages (O'Halloran et al., 2019).

## VI. CONCLUSION

As the findings of this empirical investigation have demonstrated, the university's homepage is designed by employing prominently two categories of semiotic resources, encompassing a fusion of textual and visual constituents, and video. The deliberate arrangement of visual elements, and how participants interact in the video harmoniously blend to effectively convey a unified and purposeful message ultimately resulting in the successful communication of a cohesive message that aligns with the overarching goals of international ties, educational advancement, and cultural

understanding. The well-defined ideological identities accomplished through the extensive utilization of multimodal resources, such as words, images, and videos, may support stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and alumni to effectively navigate and engage within the context or system, and line up the values of the university. In a broad sense, the ideologies that are embraced and promoted within the university setting through which the institution's website shares can exert its influence and shape the perceptions of the wider public. By actively engaging with and promoting certain ideological frameworks, the university is capable of molding and directing public opinion and constructing the dominant discourse within society. More notably, the proliferation of digital technology has facilitated the integration of resources, making it more convenient than ever to create meaning through many modalities and media (Magnusson & Godhe, 2019), as delineated by websites, film, and video characterized by its dynamic, multifarious, and multidimensional nature (Tan et al., 2020), and each is regarded as having equal potential to contribute meaning to a complex semiotic entity (Kress, 2011). In an endeavor to gain comprehension and record diverse multimodal occurrences, employing multimodal discourse analysis emerges as a relevant instrument for analysis due to its aptitude to extract and deduce essential attributes, such as ideological identity from a multitude of modalities (O'Halloran et al., 2021).

As endorsed in the above discourse, a plethora of semiotic resources are employed to engender meanings that coalesce harmoniously to organize and shape our comprehension of the ideological attributes that are manifested in the digital interface of the website. Each of the employed semiotic resources possesses distinct internal structures that enable the construction of ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning in various manners (O'Halloran et al., 2019). While this study exclusively utilized a qualitative research approach to unravel the multifaceted phenomena, within this context of study which is of the realm of ideological identities, it is highly recommended to adopt a more all-encompassing and thorough analysis by integrating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This suggestion is driven by the recognition of the highly intricate and nuanced nature of the subject matters under examination, warranting a holistic and comprehensive approach to fully comprehend and explore their underlying intricacies. For institutional websites as digital platforms are increasingly becoming more prominent in the recruitment and marketing strategies of universities due to their capacity to rapidly convey substantial amounts of information to a wide audience (Nasti et al., 2017), it is imperative to carefully examine these sites in terms of their design and thorough analysis of the messages they generate, whether they function as informative, illustrative, or decorative information (Elmiana, 2019). To achieve this, it is crucial to comprehend multimodality as a field of investigation and the increasing interest in its focus on facilitating a more nuanced and profound comprehension of multimodal communication, particularly in light of the expanding context of digital platforms for interaction and communication (Flewitt et al., 2018), such as the universities' homepages.

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