

Engagement strategies in institutional discourses of internationalisation



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Contents

- Research question
- Rationale
- Data collection and analysis
- Findings and discussion
- Concluding remarks

Research question

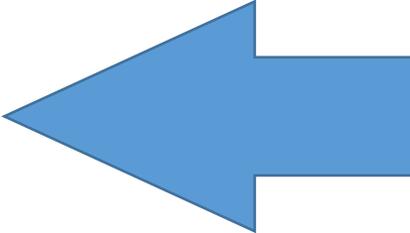
What are the discursive strategies that recur in internationalised universities' websites with a view to connecting with the audience and engaging students to become a part of a particular university community?



Rationale (I)

Askehave, I. 2007. “The impact of marketization on higher education genres – the international student prospectus as a case in point”. *Discourse Studies*, 9, 723-742.

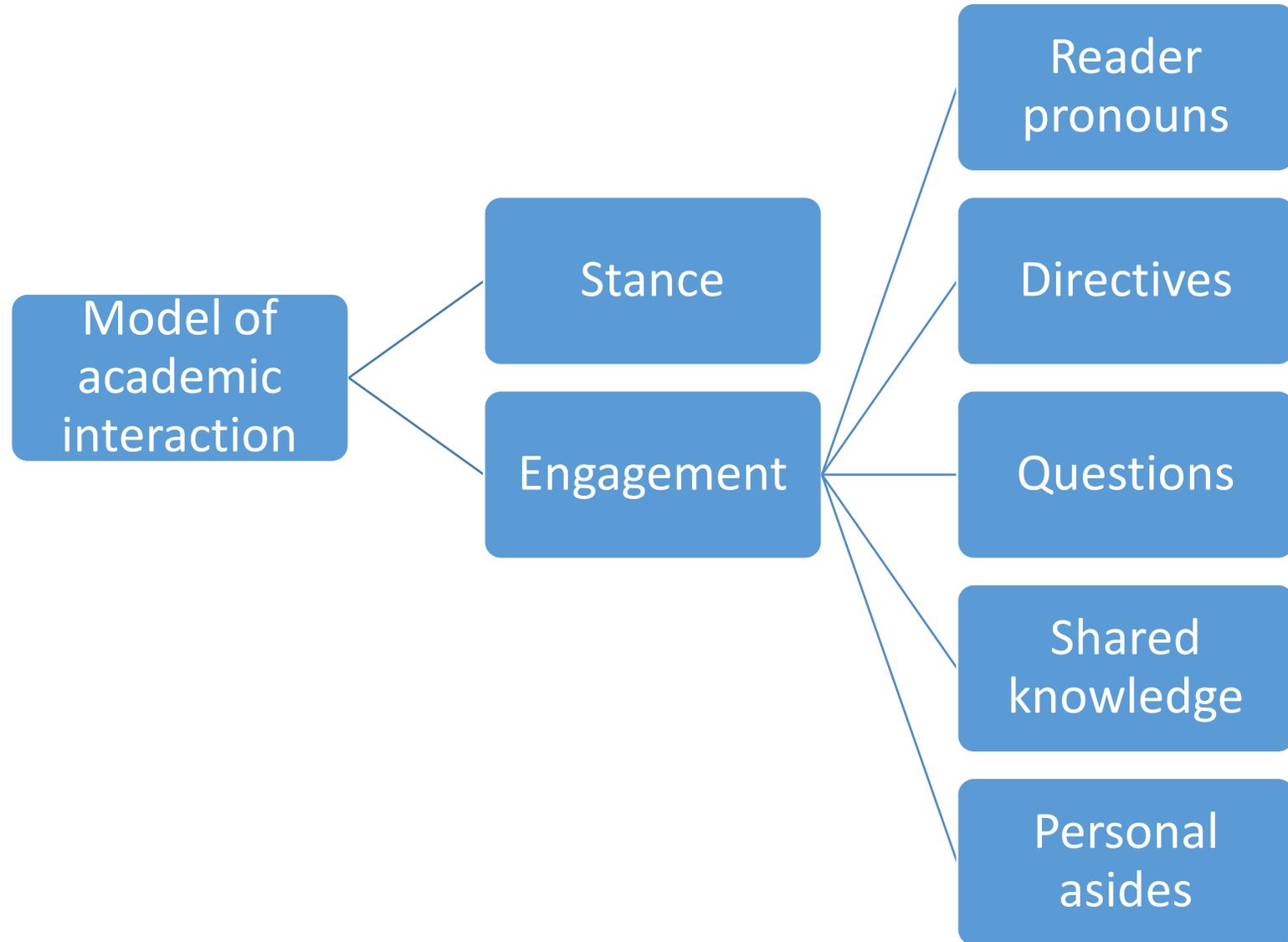
Teo, P. 2007. “The marketisation of higher education: A comparative case-study of two universities in Singapore”. *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis Across Disciplines*, 1, 95-111.



Fairclough, N. 1993. “Critical discourse analysis and the marketization of public discourse: The universities”. *Discourse and Society*, 4, 133-168.

Rationale (II)

Hyland, K. 2005.
“Stance and engagement: a model of interaction in academic discourse”.
Discourse Studies,
7, 173-192.



Data collection and analysis

Ten prestigious European universities (*Webometrics Ranking of World Universities*, edition 2017.1.1 Jan 2017)

University of Edinburgh (GB)

VU Amsterdam University (NL)

University of Oslo (NO)

Heidelberg University (DE)

University of Helsinki (FI)

Lund University (SE)

Aarhus University (DK)

University of Bologna (IT)

University of Zurich (CH)

University of Granada (ES)



“Why study at...?” / “Why choose...?”
subsections of university websites (main
sections = study / international).

Data collection and analysis

Methodology: *Qualitative text analysis of university websites*

Texts were scanned for discursive strategies following Hyland (2005)

Strategies were identified. Text samples were extracted

New strategies were explored and text samples gathered



Findings and discussion: as based on Hyland (2005)

Reader pronouns

Text sample

- Our International Office assists you with excellent services such as housing, visa and residence permits. We also organize social and career activities for you to attend. [[Amsterdam](#)]

Directives

Text sample

- Applicants with a valid Norwegian language proficiency test should apply through samordnaopptak.no. [[Oslo](#)]

Questions

Text sample

- Why the University of Bologna? [[Bologna](#)]
- Interested in learning new languages and cultures and meeting interesting people from all over the globe? [[Amsterdam](#)]

Findings and discussion: as based on Hyland (2005)

Shared knowledge

Text sample

- Helsinki is acknowledged as one of the trendiest cities in Europe (...) Almost everyone knows brands like Marimekko and Alvar Aalto ... [Helsinki]
- Join us and be part of an enthusiastic community of pioneers, visionaries and scholars, with the chance of one day working on life-changing research yourself. [Edinburgh]

Personal asides

Text sample

None

Findings and discussion: new elements to engagement

Conversation-like language

Text sample

- (...) the main library in Kaisaniemi with its comfy couches and armchairs is frankly so appealing to the students that some even camp outside to get the best places to study! Haha, well, maybe we are exaggerating just a teeny tiny bit. [[Helsinki](#)]

Testimonials

Text sample

- “*Edinburgh is renowned for biomedical research and I like that lecturers incorporate the latest developments into their teaching material. It keeps you up to date with what issues are facing scientists today.*” — Lewis Green
BSc (Hons) Medical Sciences graduate
[[Edinburgh](#)]

Findings and discussion: new elements to engagement

Word play and metaphorical language

Text sample

- Because it is the oldest and the newest university. [Bologna]
- As a new student or researcher at the University of Oslo, you are embarking on a journey towards new knowledge. [Oslo]

Facts and figures

Text sample

- It participates in over 800 bilateral and multilateral exchanges with institutions around the world (...) 13% of the students at the UGR are international students. The UGR offers a wide selection of academic and modern programmes (...) including 24 double degrees and joint degrees of more that 70,000 students. [Granada]

Findings and discussion: new elements to engagement

Performative verbs

Text sample

- We promise it's going to be something amazing!
[Helsinki]

Future tense verbs

Text sample

- As a VU Amsterdam student, you will have a wide range of facilities at your disposal. You will have access to an extensive library (...) you will have the opportunity to study abroad for one semester in various destinations. [Amsterdam]

Findings and discussion: new elements to engagement

Implicatures

Text sample

- A university among the international elite. [Aarhus]
- Today, we continue to make our mark, with world-leading experts educating the pioneers of tomorrow. [Edinburgh]

Adjectives

Text sample

- Danes were recently ranked as one of the best non-native English speakers in the world, so it is easy for international students to get along in Denmark even if they don't speak Danish. Safe, secure, equal. Denmark is widely cited as one of the world's most liveable places. It has the world's highest level of income equality according to the OECD. Based on the Corruption Transparency Index, Denmark is the least corrupted country in the world. [Aarhus]

Concluding remarks

Universities employ a number of discursive strategies to generate first-hand interest in that particular university and engage prospective readers (students and/or their parents/tutors) through an interpersonal dialogue towards effective enrolment.

Elements to engagement in Hyland's (2005) model for academic interaction may be partially applied to the university discourse of internationalisation.

Concluding remarks

Textual analysis of university websites yields new elements to engagement with varying purposes.

Proximity and familiarity

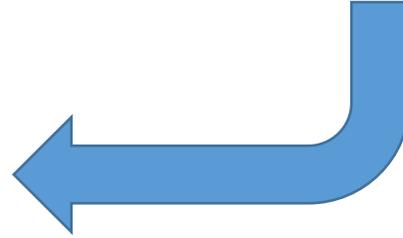
- Reader pronouns
- Shared knowledge
- Conversation-like language
- Testimonials
- Word play and metaphorical language



Concluding remarks

- Directives
- Facts and figures
- Reader pronouns
- Performative verbs
- Future tense verbs

Commitment and trustworthiness



Appeal and attention

- Adjectives
- Directives
- Questions
- Implicatures



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