

# Multimodal Communication Components in The Travel Agency Website

I Gusti Ngurah Adi Rajistha<sup>1</sup>, Dewa Ayu Kadek Claria<sup>2</sup>  
{rajistha@warmadewa.ac.id}

Universitas Warmadewa, Denpasar, Bali-Indonesia<sup>12</sup>

**Abstract.** A tour website is a way used by the owner to communicate to the website users. This article examines the model of multimodal communication in the travel agency website. The purpose of this study is to describe the components of multimodal communication of the website. The data source was the Gangga Bali website. The data were collected by observing the verbal and visual modes. The analysis proceeded with the model of multimodal communication through Kress' multimodal social semiotic model. The study shows the website owner that built information, message, and interaction with the website users through the design. The design involves verbal and visual modes. The visual modes used are images and website layout, and they are supported by verbal modes. Four major components of the multimodal communication model illustrate the process of transferring information by the rhetor to the interpreter through the website.

**Keywords:** Multimodal Communication, Travel Agency Website, Verbal Mode, Visual Mode

## 1 Introduction

The development of technology plays important role in creating models of communication. The massive use of the internet is one of the factors of the existence of the kinds of the communication model. The use of the internet gives a positive impact on communication behavior. Distance is not the barrier to communicate with others. Now, the development of technology and internet makes the communication more interesting. There are some models of communication developed, and one of them is through the website.

In this era, a website is not an expensive thing to have. Everyone can have a website. It can be easily and freely built up. A tour website is one of the examples. This kind of website is used to promote services and products offered by the owner. In this case, the owner of the website can communicate with the website users efficiently. At the same time, the website can be accessed by some website users, so the website can be said as one of the efficient strategies to promote services and products.

Although some kinds of a website can be freely made, offering services and products through the correct domain name is better. In addition, the way how the website, as the representation of the website owner, communicates with the website users is also an important part. This is an essential part of designing a website.

The use of a website is the same as an advertisement. Many previous studies have analyzed the use of language in advertising. Torto analyzed the use of descriptive language in advertisements presented in newspapers [1]. In addition, Lin, Wang, and Hsieh analyzed the effectiveness of decoded ad text for monolingual consumers [2]. Other previous studies have also seen language as an element forming an advertisement combined with visual elements. These studies analyzed the interaction between verbal and visual elements [3]–[5]. In addition, Huang also examines advertisements that apply hyperbole in a visual form that has the effect of making consumers believe in the products offered [6].

Technological developments also affect the use of language in technology-based applications. For example, the mobile app used by doctors in China creates a new space for digitally communicating about health knowledge and services [7]. The trend of research conducted in recent years shows that many studies have analyzed the use of language (verbal elements) on social media that involve non-verbal elements.

In addition to the studies above, several studies examine multimodal communication. Michelson and Valencia analyzed social-semiotic multimodal on institutional discourse from Arcadia University's promotional website [8]. This study also applies the four core components of multimodal communication theory. In addition, Dash, Patnaik, and Suar analyze TV advertising by applying the theory of multimodal communication. The study found that product positioning and brand identity involve discursive relationships from different cultural spaces [9].

This study focuses on the model of multimodal communication of the tour website. This study examines the components of multimodal communication. The theory used is Kress' multimodal communication theory. This study explains the initiator of the website, the way how the message is transferred, and the information received by the website users.

## **2 Research Methods**

This study is a case study that uses [ganggabali.com](http://ganggabali.com) as the tour website that is analyzed through the multimodal communication theory. The data sources are all parts of the website, both visual and verbal part. The visual data were collected by taking some screenshots of the website layout and images used in the websites. The verbal data were collected by using Antconc to make the data collection easier.

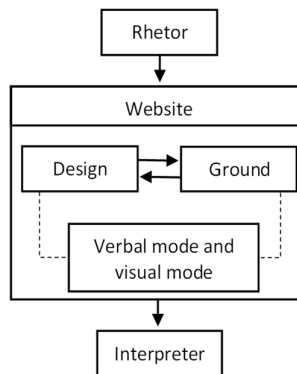
The collected data were classified based on the process made in creating a communication model through the website. The classified data were then analyzed through Kress' multimodal social semiotic model [10]. The analysis was done in some parts of the websites, namely home, Bali & Java destination, tour packages, and tour memories. The analysis was done to find out the model of multimodal communication constructed by the rhetor and received by the interpreter. The result of the analysis presented the four major components of Kress' multimodal communication theory, namely rhetor, design, ground, and interpreter.

## **3 Results and Discussion**

Gangga Bali is a tour website that not only offers services but also gives information about tourist destinations in Bali and Java. The website has four main pages, namely home, Bali destination, Bali & Java packages, and tour memories. The website has two versions, and they

are desktop version and mobile version. They are different in the case of the layout used. This study analyzes the desktop version of the website.

The four major components of multimodal communication are rhetor, design, ground, and interpreter. Based on the analysis, all four major components that built up the website inform the ideological discourse of the website owner or rhetor. The communication through the website was initially created by the rhetor through the design. By using the design, the rhetor composed message and information called ground. The website users as interpreters will receive the message and information composed through the website. The process of multimodal communication made through the website can be seen in the following diagram.



**Fig 1.** The process of multimodal communication in website

In the travel agency website, the rhetor can be the initiator or owner of the website, the website developer, and the copywriters that build the verbal mode used in the website. This team is the macro-rhetor [8] who builds up the website. They have their roles in building the website. For example, the visual mode is made by the website developer, and the verbal mode is made by the owner and copywriters.

This research is a case study that uses the travel agency website *ganggabali.com* as a data source. The part of the travel agency website reviewed in this study includes the home, Bali destinations, Bali & Java packages, and tour memories sections. Other sections, namely about us and booking, are not used as data in this study because the travel agency website *ganggabali.com* emphasizes the services offered and information related to these services.

The data collected from the four sections are data in the form of images and text. This study emphasizes the multimodal communication model that is designed to inform/promote the travel packages offered.

**Table 1.** The part of the website

Home	Bali Destinations	Bali & Java Packages	Tour Memories
<i>Home</i> shows a header that is combined with sliding text, welcoming text, and a comprehensive summary of the contents of the	<i>Bali Destinations</i> features 93 tourist destinations spread across the islands of Bali and Java.	<i>2 Days 1 Night</i> shows 1 tour package <i>Activity &amp; Adventure Tour</i> shows 12 tour packages <i>Bali Animal Tour</i> shows 1 tour package <i>Bali Full Day Tour</i> shows 22 tour packages	<i>Tour Memories</i> shows 22 stories about tourist trips handled by the <i>Gangga Bali</i> team

website. This part also shows <i>Tripadvisor</i> .	<i>Bali Half Day Tour</i> shows 4 tour packages
	<i>Bali Honeymoon Tour</i> shows 1 tour package
	<i>Bali Instagram Tour</i> shows 1 tour package
	<i>Bali SPA</i> shows 1 tour package
	<i>Nusa Penida &amp; Lembongan Tour</i> shows 3 tour packages

### Rhetor

The multimodal communication model on the travel agency website, *ganggabali.com*, was already formed when the website was developed by Rhetor. In this case, the *ganggabali.com* team is a macro-rhetor consisting of rhetors, website developers, and copywriters. The multimodal communication model has been formed when the website owners plan to develop this travel agency website according to their interests or goals. To achieve the goals, the owners cooperate with website developers in developing this travel agency website in accordance with the wishes and target market share. The website developer handles the visual mode, while the owners along with the copywriter focus on the textual mode. In this case, the owners can also act as a copywriter.

Rhetor as a website designer has a certain ideology or message that he wants to convey to website users. It is the same as the owner of the *ganggabali.com* website. The website owner designs a website to promote his services in the field of travel. In building a website, website owners work closely with website developers and copywriters. In this case, they are hereinafter referred to as macro-rhetors.

In developing the website, the website owners who work as a guide certainly cannot build the website. In this case, the website owners work with the website developer to build the website according to their needs. At this stage, the website owners decide to use a dynamic website instead of a static website. Website owners have their views regarding the use of this type of website. The dynamic website that is built is considered to provide a better experience for website users.

### Design

The designs discussed in this study are genre, mode, and discourse. The genre emphasizes the kind of media the rhetors use in conveying the message they build. Mode describes how the rhetors choose to convey their message by using the genre. Discourse confirms the message that is conveyed. In other words, design can be expressed as a pattern or composition that is formed by the rhetors to convey the ideology or message they intend which includes genre, mode, and discourse.

The first is genre. The genre is the media used as an intermediary for the delivery of information. In this case, the website is the genre. Mode describes the use of verbal and visual language. The visual modes are the image and layout of the travel agency website (layout). The discourse in this design is tourism or more specifically refers to a tour in Bali and Java.

The rhetors of *Gangga Bali* chose the website as a genre in informing the ideology or message they formed. Through a complete website component, Rhetors use the website as a medium in informing the travel services offered by using various modes that are conformed to their needs. In this case, the website was chosen by considering various things.

The first thing that becomes the basic reason for choosing a website is the reach of the website. Advances in technology make it easier for people all over the world to access the

internet. This causes the website to have a very wide reach. Anyone around the world can access the website.

The second consideration is cost. Website creation and maintenance are very cheap nowadays because there are many hosting service providers. In addition, the very wide reach of the website illustrates that the costs incurred are less than the use of print media which must be printed in large quantities.

The third relates to brand publication. The use of the website is one way for the rhetor of Gangga Bali to publish and promote their brand. Through this brand, tourists can easily remember and re-select Gangga Bali travel services if they need travel services in Bali.

The second discussion of design is the mode. Mode is the method used by the rhetor in informing the interpreter of an ideology or message. The mode is selected according to the needs felt by the rhetor. Modes can vary based on the concept of multimodal communication built by rhetor. In conveying information or messages to website users, the rhetors of Gangga Bali apply two modes, namely textual mode and visual mode.

Textual mode is a mode in the form of written language. This written language has become a widely used language in disseminating information and entertainment. Written language is widely found at this time such as in textbooks, newspapers, magazines, novels, and so on. Written language is a language that is quite effective in providing information. The rhetors of Gangga Bali use textual mode in building information through the website they created. This mode was chosen for some pretty basic reasons.

The first reason is that textual mode can be used to convey detailed information about tour packages, attractions, and travel experiences. Through this textual mode, the rhetors can communicate with the interpreters about the details that the interpreters need to know. The second reason is that the textual mode can be read repeatedly if the interpreters do not understand the travel services offered. By providing a textual mode, the rhetors provide an opportunity for interpreters who are new to travel services. The last reason is that the textual mode can be used to emphasize a particular topic by taking advantage of the position, type, and size of the letters used.

In addition to the textual mode, the rhetor also pays attention to the visual mode that supports multimodal communication between the Gangga Bali rhetor and the interpreter or website user. The visual modes that are emphasized on this website are layout (layout) and image (image). Layout provides information about how to organize content or website content. The rhetors consider the ease of access and search of information on the website. This is the underlying form of the layout applied to the Gangga Bali website. The Gangga Bali website has a layout consisting of a navigation bar, main body, sidebar, and footer. These sections are used as a place to provide information to the interpreter. The layout can be changed based on the media used to access the website. The Gangga Bali website has two slightly different layouts when it is accessed via desktop and mobile.

In addition to the layout that makes it easier for the interpreters to communicate with the rhetors, images are also used to communicate visually with the interpreters. Although the text is used to provide a detailed explanation of the tour package, images are still the fastest mode of conveying messages/discourses. In this case, the image becomes the most prominent form of message/discourse.

In this study, the analyzed images can be categorized into images that focus on actors, locations, and activities [8]. The actors shown in the picture are animals, tourists, parts of the human body, and certain other objects. The location category includes nature and its scenery, while the activity category includes the activities of travelling.

The images used are photos that provide a focus on actors, locations, and activities. Information about the photo is presented through a verbal mode, a description under the image. Through the interesting photos presented, the interpreter will be interested in choosing the tourist attraction they want to visit. The photos provide information to the interpreter about the travel services provided in Bali and Java. Although Gangga Bali uses the name Bali to describe this travel brand, there are several tour packages located in Java. This travel agency website discusses travel in Bali and Java.

The discourse of this website is not visible from the name of the website. However, building Gangga Bali as one of the travel service brands is shown from the content of the website. Parts of the website state and offer travel services through the home menu, Bali & Java Packages, tour memories, and booking forms. The Bali destinations section is specially provided to increase website rank by utilizing SEO. These contents build the discourse of travel services in Bali and Java in the name of Gangga Bali as a travel service brand. Discourse is also formed through the textual and visual modes used.

### **Ground**

The third part of the multimodal communication model is ground. This section is the ideology/information, the message conveyed by the rhetor to the interpreter. In general, the information conveyed is that rhetors provide travel services in Bali and Java. However, if it is looked closely, there are several messages conveyed by the rhetor to the interpreter implicitly.

The first message that is implied is that Rhetors provide quality travel services. This message is conveyed implicitly through the placement of Tripadvisor third-party services as a place for reviewing the travel services provided. Through reviews given by tourists, Rhetors get an excellent rating. This certainly gives rhetor confidence to state that the travel services offered are of high quality. This can also be seen from the ranking of travel services of Gangga Bali, which ranks 80th out of 690 travel service providers in Kuta. Thus, Gangga Bali is included in the 11% of the best travel service providers in Kuta.

The second implied discourse conveyed by Rhetors is that the travel services offered are trusted travel services. Rhetors form this message through tour memories that are created on a separate menu and listed on the navigation bar. Through tour memories, rhetors show the trust and satisfaction of tourists who choose their travel services through photos that rhetors take with tourists.

The third information conveyed by Rhetors is that the travel services offered are transparent without additional costs during the trip. This message is conveyed by the rhetors by including the price on each tour package offered. Rhetors also provide an opportunity for interpreters to negotiate the travel costs. The last message that Rhetors want to convey through this multimodal communication is that the travel services offered are flexible. Flexibility, in this case, means that the rhetors provide an opportunity for the interpreters to make their travel package by choosing the tourist attraction they want to visit.

### **Interpreter**

Rhetors, who build the ground by applying the design, communicates with the interpreter. This scheme is a multimodal communication model. The design used to communicate is certainly not in one mode, so this is what is called multimodal (more than one communication mode).

Rhetors who form the message/information conveys the message to the interpreter or website user. In other words, the interpreter is a participant in multimodal communication. In this case, tourists who choose Gangga Bali travel services are interpreters who communicate with rhetors.

Information on tourist trips in Bali and Java that is conveyed through the website is an explicit message conveyed by the rhetor. For interpreters or website users, this message is received immediately after visiting the Gangga Bali website. To find out the results of the communication that occurs between the rhetor and the interpreter, the results of reviews from Tripadvisor are used to determine the interpreters' interpretation of Gangga Bali tour services.

## 4 Conclusion

Research on the multimodal communication model on the travel agency website is very interesting to do. This study provides an overview of the multimodal communication model formed by the rhetor until it reaches the interpreter. Based on the analysis conducted, it can be concluded that four basic elements must be considered in forming this communication model. The components of the multimodal communication model applied to the Gangga Bali website have shown four basic parts of multimodal communication, namely rhetor, design, ground, and interpreter. These four parts form the process of multimodal communication through the website. Multimodal communication is successful if the rhetor can convey his message to the interpreter.

### Acknowledgment

We appreciate the head of the research institution of Universitas Warmadewa, Prof. Dr. I Made Suwitra, SH., MH., to support this research financially. We also want to thank the owners of the website who allowed us to analyze the texts that are consisted of the website. Besides, we thank all parties involved in this research that cannot be mentioned one by one.

### References

- [1] R. T. Torto, "An Analysis of Descriptive Features in the English used in an Advertising Text," *Int. J. Linguist. Commun.*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 47–55, 2016.
- [2] Y.-C. Lin, K.-Y. Wang, and J.-Y. Hsieh, "Creating an effective code-switched ad for monolinguals: the influence of brand origin and foreign language familiarity," *Int. J. Advert. Rev. Mark. Commun.*, vol. 36, no. 4, pp. 613–631, 2017.
- [3] E. Eynullaeva and E. Woodward-Smith, "The Verbal and the Visual in Advertising Language: A Cross-cultural Analysis," in *Relational Designs in Literature and the Arts*, 2012, pp. 199–212.
- [4] A. Makarova, N. Soluyanov, M. Gozalova, E. Loseva, O. Kobeleva, and M. Gazilov, "Verbal component of advertisement and the problem of its perception," *Eur. Online J. Nat. Soc. Sci.*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 478–493, 2018.
- [5] V. Stathakopoulos, I. G. Theodorakis, and E. Mastoridou, "Visual and verbal rhetoric in advertising: The case of 'resonance,'" *Int. J. Advert.*, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 629–658, 2008.
- [6] Y. Huang, "Hyperboles in advertising: a serial mediation of incongruity and humor," *Int. J. Advert. Rev. Mark. Commun.*, vol. 39, no. 5, pp. 719–737, 2020.
- [7] F. Zhou, "Borrowed language and identity practices in a linguistic marketplace: A discourse analytic study of Chinese doctors' journey online," *Discourse Commun.*, vol. 14, no. 5, pp. 533–552, 2020.
- [8] K. Michelson and J. A. Á. Valencia, "Study Abroad: Tourism or education? A multimodal social semiotic analysis of institutional discourses of a promotional website," *Discourse Commun.*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 235–256, 2016.
- [9] A. K. Dash, P. Patnaik, and D. Suar, "A multimodal discourse analysis of glocalization and cultural identity in three Indian TV commercials," *Discourse Commun.*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 209–234, 2016.
- [10] G. Kress, *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*. New York: Routledge, 2010