



Framing the Value of Online Databases: A Multimodal Study of UTB Library's Communication Strategies

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how Universiti Teknologi Brunei (UTB) Library communicates the value of Perlego and ScienceDirect through its social platforms. While previous studies have explored databases usage, the value of databases as well as library communication, limited research has investigated how meaning is constructed through multimodal communication or discourse in academic library contexts. Using a qualitative approach, this study employed desk based research and content analysis to analyse five selected screenshots obtained from UTB Library's e-Resources webpage and official Instagram account. By using Multimodal Discourse Analysis, the study examined textual and visual elements including colour, images and lexical choices. The findings revealed that UTB Library adopts different communication strategies across platforms, with the webpage presenting a formal and corporate approach while Instagram emphasises on engagement and user-friendly. The study contributes to understanding how academic libraries construct meaning and promote online resources through multimodal discourse and communication

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1. Introduction

The role of academic libraries in higher education institutions has evolved and transcended from being just a library to becoming of the most vital or central figure in shaping students' access to knowledge and information. In this rapidly changing and developing digital era, this role is vast increasingly mediated through social platforms and (electronic) databases that students rely on for their assignments, coursework, research or study.

At Universiti Teknologi Brunei Library (UTB), two (2) electronic databases, in Perlego and ScienceDirect which, are famously known for their prestigious status as the Spotify for Textbooks (Riley, 2023) and most efficient for literary research (Tober, 2011), respectively, clearly indicating their perceived importance for both teaching, learning and research. However, how these platforms are presented and framed by UTB Library directly influences whether the academic students here see them as relevant, accessible and useful for their academic work. Mayer et al. (2020) have stated, via their multimethod study, that they have observed and acquired an increased use of library services which significantly enhances student success, with each additional service used substantially improving student persistence. It emphasises the great impact of academic libraries on educational or academic results.

1.1 Problem Statement

Despite the existence of studies showing challenges in accessing online databases, which may discourage students from utilising such resources (Shimray et al, 2025; Ngessa 2018), recent research has focused on technical, accessibility and usability problems. Comparatively less attention has been given to examining how these databases, particularly Perlego and ScienceDirect are communicated through multimodal elements within academic library area.

While some studies have shown that it has been proven by a study conducted by Croxton and Moore (2020) stating that there is a strong, positive correlation exists between participation in library, co-curricular and extracurricular activities and student achievement (CGPA, grades or marks), little has been shown what made them feel intrigued to participate in a library or to access or utilise their facilities including online databases in terms of the multimodal aspects.

Sari and Prabowo (2026) conducted their study which concerns how Instagram marketing affects library users' choices by implementing the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire and Action) model that could support the abovementioned statement as to why there has been a strong evidence that exists showing students' success courtesy of them using the library's facilities, including and not limited to online databases, yet, such studies primarily focus on persuasive outcomes and user responses, rather than analysing how meaning is constructed through multimodal elements themselves. As a result, there remains a lack of understanding of how academic libraries multimodally communicate digital resources. In this case, online databases.

1.2 Research Question

The study has provided three (3) research questions to better understand what this research is attempting to answer.

How does Universiti Teknologi Brunei Library multimodally communicate Perlego and ScienceDirect through its social platforms to convey its message?

How does Universiti Teknologi Brunei Library communicate the importance of Perlego and ScienceDirect?

How meaning can be constructed through textual and visual elements used in UTB Library's communication platform?

1.3 Research Objectives

This section of the research aims to identify how Universiti Teknologi Brunei Library communicates and promotes the use of academic databases, specifically Perlego and ScienceDirect.

1. To identify the multimodal communication elements used by Universiti Teknologi Brunei Library in promoting Perlego and ScienceDirect.
2. To identify how meaning is constructed or made through multimodal discourse analysis in the creation of value of these databases.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of UTB Library communication strategy. As in, their way of promotion and engagement between users.

2. Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews past studies related to online databases, its usage, academic library communication, value construction and multimodal discourse analysis within academic settings. The literature review is divided into four themes. The first theme discusses the usage, success and challenges of online databases among academic users and students. The second theme examines how academic libraries communicate and promote their online resources through social platforms and communication strategies. The third theme explores how value is constructed around online databases particularly in relation to academic success and user perception. Finally, the fourth theme focuses mainly on multimodal discourse analysis (MDA).

2.2 Theme One: Usage: Success and Challenges

A research on undergraduate information-seeking behaviour consistently shows that students rely heavily on general online platform as their primary tool for locating information (Griffiths & Brophy, 2005). The research suggests that online library resources, including subscription databases, are often underused despite their availability, pointing to a gap between institutions' investment in e-resources and students' routine engagement with them. This pattern, interestingly, has been linked to two (2) factors: students' limited awareness of available databases and their perceived difficulty in navigating library interfaces, which can discourage sustained use beyond course-related assignments (Yevelson-Shorsher & Bronstein, 2018).

Furthermore, Shimray et al. (2025) supported that there is a declining reliance on OPACs (Online Public Access Catalogue) due to usability or accessibility problems, as users prefer e-resources. This would point to an agreement or consensus with Yevelson-Shorsher & Bronstein's research. To add, Shimray et al. (2025) also pointed out that e-resources mainly serve for research of academic articles. This would include assignments, coursework or other relevant materials or academic deliverables. Madu (2024) has examined the impact of online databases on research productivity. Her research has highlighted that online databases play a crucial role in research by improving access to materials that would ease in retrieving information. Thus, her work could reinforce or support this research scope that Perlego and ScienceDirect are important tools in academic setting.

2.3 Theme Two: Academic Library Communication and Promotion

Academic libraries increasingly rely on strategic communication and promotional activities to raise awareness and encourage the use of online resources (Cheng et al., 2020). Social media platforms, in particular, have emerged as important communication channels through which libraries can attract attention, explain their services, and guide users toward their online databases and resources. As mentioned previously in the Problem Statement chapter, Sari and Prabowo (2026) applied the A.I.D.A. (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) model and demonstrated how visually engaging and strategically structured content can influence users from passive viewing toward active resource engagement. This reinforces the role of academic libraries not just as information providers, but also as communicators that shape users' awareness and perceptions. Furthermore, studies suggest that social media functions not only as a one-way promotional tool but also as an interactive communication space between libraries and users (Cheng et al., 2020). Through comments, replies, and shared content, libraries are able to respond to usability concerns and strengthen users' familiarity with databases such as ScienceDirect and Perlego. However, Mensah and Onyancha (2021) emphasise that the effectiveness of such communication strategies depends heavily on careful planning, including audience targeting, consistency of visual and textual messaging, and alignment with institutional objectives. Similarly, Waral (2019) discusses how academic libraries increasingly adopt digital marketing strategies through websites and social media platforms to promote their services and resources. This is relevant to this research in understanding how UTB Library communicate with their users and promote databases like ScienceDirect and Perlego. Nevertheless, while Waral's study highlights the innovative marketing strategies in academic libraries, the study focuses more on the adoption of communication platforms rather than examining how meaning is multimodally constructed. Research from academic library contexts also suggests that libraries increasingly rely on digital communication platforms and online promotional strategies to improve awareness and engagement with library resources. Although, again, these studies do not specifically analyse multimodal discourse analysis or communication elements in depth, they remain relevant in demonstrating that communication itself has become an important component in encouraging users to access online databases and digital library services (Joshua & Michael, 2020).

2.4 Theme Three: Value of Databases

Recent studies in communication and library field studies highlight the importance that how resources are framed in promotional and informational materials play a central role in shaping user perceptions of their value. For academic libraries, electronic databases and online journals are often linked to research productivity, academic performance, and institutional prestige, which in turn strengthens their perceived importance among faculty and students (Scoulas & De Groote, 2024). At the same time, student-engagement research suggests that libraries typically frame their services as tools for increasing usage, awareness, and participation, rather than as purely transactional access points (Zhu et al., 2025). Studies of undergraduate students also show that, despite challenges related to access and usability, undergraduates generally view electronic databases as essential academic tools that support coursework and research activities (Abubakar & Haruna, 2023). These positive perceptions, however, are closely tied to prior exposure: students who have participated in library instruction(s) or used databases in coursework or assignments are more likely to recognise their value and rely on them regularly (Frandsen & Sørensen, 2020).

2.5 Theme Four: Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Several research have shown that MDA is used to identify how institutions communicate meaning, identity and value through online platforms such as websites. Jusslin et al. (2020) highlights that meaning is not only made or constructed through written language but with the inclusion of colour, typography, layout, images or / and logos. A research carried out by Ginting et al. (2024) has analysed university homepages found that institutions strategically combine textual and visual semiotic resources to project or display identities and persuasive messages to users. Furthermore, Moerdisuroso (2014) suggested that social semiotic and visual grammar approaches explain that visual structures function similarly to language whereby the likes of positioning, modality or / and salience can contribute to meaning-making. These studies collectively suggest

that multimodal analysis plays an important role in engaging with the users. For this research, it is to know how UTB Library multimodally communicate with its users. However, regardless of the application of MDA in past research, specifically with it being applied in website and institutional settings, limited research can be found about how academic libraries multimodally communicate such as Perlego and ScienceDirect in the context of higher education.

2.6 Research Gap

Existing studies have discussed the usage, impact, access and challenges of online databases in higher education settings. Other studies have also touched on how academic libraries utilise social media, websites and digital promotional strategies in engaging users. Multimodal discourse analysis has demonstrated how academic institutions, construct meaning, identity and persuasion through the combination of textual and visual elements. However, limited research has examined how academic libraries multimodally communicate the value and importance of online databases through textual or multimodal approaches. Research within the context of higher education libraries in Brunei, particularly UTB Library also remains limited. This research would seek to address the gap by analysing how UTB Library communicates and constructs meaning surrounding Perlego and ScienceDirect through MDA.

2.7 Theory Used

Seeing as the study takes Multimodal Discourse Analysis as its main approach, the study applies Visual Grammar Theory whereby it is a framework under Social Semiotics both of which are introduced by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen.

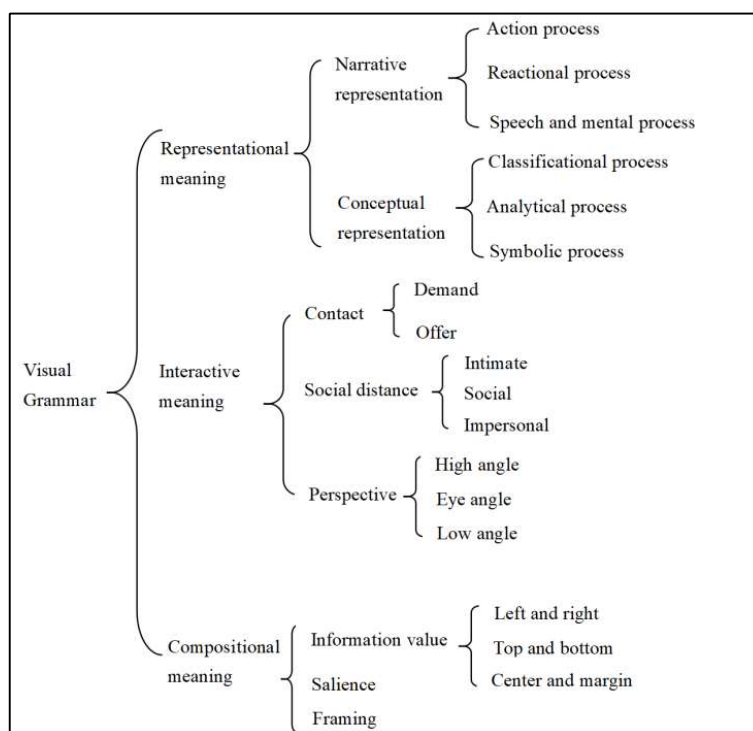


Figure 1. Visual Grammar Theory (Qi, 2024)

As seen in the figure above, Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar framework adapts linguistic metafunction to the analysis of images, revealing how visual elements guide viewer interpretation (The Comm Spot, 2026).

Representational Meaning (the Ideational Metafunction)

This dimension focuses on the content depicted in the image, including words, people and objects. Narrative representations show actions, events or process. For example: a person handing an item to another. On the other hand, conceptual representations capture timeless or analytical links. For example: diagrams, portraits or hierarchical diagrams. Overall, these patterns illustrate the visual construction and classification of reality.

Interactive Meaning (the Interpersonal Metafunction)

In this metafunction, it explores how images involve the viewers and construct social dynamics. The Contact includes Demand and Offer, where both encourage connection. A frontal gaze demands involvement (Demand), while an averted gaze: i.e. to turn away, offers detached viewing (Offer).

Social distance has three (3) elements: Intimate, Social and Impersonal. An example of intimate is having an extreme close up shots on faces or gestures as it defines and strengthens the intensity shown conveyed by the emotional closeness. The “social” in social distance signals personal involvement and familiarity which suggest confidentiality or empathy. An easy example would be medium close up shots of a photograph. The impersonal is big contrast to the intimate where it depicts detachment, placing the viewer as an observer or just spectating rather than as a participant or participating. For example, watching people from afar.

Compositional Meaning (the Textual Metafunction)

This metafunction address the layout of visual components into a uniform structure. Compositional has three (3) elements, namely: Information value, salience and framing. Information value concerns with positioning whereby if the content is on the left side then it denotes as familiar (“given”), right side portrays as novel information (“new”), top depicts ideals or promises and bottom shows the practical reality or showing the realness and originality of the content. Salience would resonate more with meaning making. Though the phrase ‘information value’ would or could imply literally ‘value’, but in Visual Grammar it is defined as a semiotic space component based on the organisation of its elements through further analysis of the text (*Information Value*, 2016). Whereas salience concerns with how the weight and the quality of object, word or picture can differentiate and capture the audience's focus (Visual Techniques, n.d.). framing would show lines, gaps or vectors to group or divide elements.

Although all three metafunctions guide the analysis process for this study, it is worth noting that not every visual element or sub-element is applicable to data provided (screenshots). This is due to the fact that each image contains different elements for different metafunctions which can be found more in detail on Finding chapter. For instance, some screenshots may strongly demonstrate compositional features such as salience from the word or text and information value while others may contain rich or abundant content of representational and interactive features for example narrative and perspective, respectively.

Therefore, the study selectively focuses on the most relevant multimodal features present in each screenshot rather than forcing all elements of the framework to or in every image.

2.8 Theory Analysis

Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar remain a foundational platform for visual communication research where it shows structured elements (for example: composition, representation and interactive). This theory or perspective of Visual Grammar is vital of this current study as the data (screenshots) collected and captured are one of the communication efforts done by the UTB Library. Visual Grammar also allows this study to systematically identify how meaning is constructed. On the other hand, while there have been some critics argued that the framework can be too rigid and was built for static print (The Comm Spot, 2026), this study overcomes that issue by using fixed or still screenshots allowing a structured and a closer look while analysing data.

2.9 Summary

To conclude, this section outlined the Visual Grammar framework used to decode the UTB's Library communication strategies. By breaking visual communication down into the three metafunctions, the theory serves as a toolkit to interpret data. Potential limitations or weaknesses towards the theory which focuses on static print are overcome in this study through the use of screenshots.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In Methodology, the chapter explains the methods used in conducting this study. It outlines the data sample(s), research procedures, ethical considerations, data analysis approach as well as the method's limitations. The research takes on qualitative method and applies desk-based research to identify how UTB Library convey their message or communication of ScienceDirect and Perlego through textual and visual elements on their website and official Instagram account.

Desk based research, also known as secondary research, is a research approach that involves collecting and analysing existing information from sources such as journal articles, websites, reports and online materials (Infomineo, 2026; K. Gupta, 2024). For this research, desk-based research is used to examine existing data between two (2) online databases that UTB Library own perpetually, and its users fully subscribed to in ScienceDirect and Perlego. The data comes in the form of photos, specifically screenshots. As such, the data

collected are relevant to be analysed for communication and discourse analysis areas, specifically multimodal discourse analysis studies.

The limitation of applying desk-based research is that some of the data or information maybe outdated. Another limitation is that a researcher might have no direct control over how the original data was collected. In other words, biases in the raw or original research may affect the reliability of the findings.

3.2 Data Sample

The data samples for this study consist of five (5) selected screenshots. Two (2) screenshots were obtained from UTB Library's website, while three (3) screenshots were acquired from UTB Library's official Instagram account. These screenshots were selected because they contain information and visual elements relevant to this study. The analysis mainly focuses on how meaning is constructed through the implementation of visual and textual semiotic elements such as typography, colour, layout, lexical choices, positioning and images.

3.3 Research Procedure

The data for this research consists of screenshots which have textual and visual contents. They were obtained and acquired from Universiti Teknologi Brunei Library website: <https://www.utb.edu.bn/library-home/> , specifically from the e-Resources page: <https://www.utb.edu.bn/library-e-resources/> . Naturally, the relevant screenshots captured are those of related areas such as social media and the main website. As mentioned, the selected screenshots or data that relate to the online databases are Perlego and ScienceDirect.

Selection criteria included the presence of textual and visual communication elements such as typography, colour, layout and logos among others.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Though this research does not or did not involve any participants, but it is crucial to note that the data obtained were extracted with caution and applying ethical principles such as respecting the privacy and the confidentiality of UTB Library and its users. It is also important that professionalism and ethics should be observed during the acquisition or collection of data.

Permissions have been asked and requested prior to the collection of the screenshots. As a result, permissions have been granted. It is also worth noting that a few parts, phrases or names have been brushed or coloured due to observing confidentiality. That is also upon the workplace supervisor's request of UTB Library, to which the author agrees to do so.

3.5 Data analysis

Content Analysis

The study used a qualitative method in content analysis approach, supported by Multimodal Discourse Analysis and Visual Grammar by Kress and van Leeuwen. The analysis was conducted whereby the screenshots were examined individually to identify communication patterns used across the selected data. Detailed findings and interpretation are presented in Chapter 4.

3.6 Method Limitations

This study observes a number of limitations. Firstly, the selected screenshots do not focus solely on ScienceDirect and Perlego as some screenshots also contain other appearances of databases. However, the selected screenshots were still considered to be relevant. Secondly, the study relies solely on desk-based research and content analysis without conducting or carrying out other methods such as interviews or surveys to explore more on users' perspectives. As a result, the research does not measure users or audience perception to determine whether specific words, visual or textual elements resonate with users rather the research focuses primarily on how meaning is constructed from UTB Library's perspective. Thirdly, the small number of screenshots gained and analysed may limit broader generalisation.

3.7 Summary of Chapter

Overall, this chapter has discussed the methodology applied in this study, including the selected data samples, research instruments, step by step procedures, ethical considerations, data analysis methods and its limitations. The following chapter presents the findings derived from the selected screenshots.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings obtained from the selected screenshots from UTB Library's website and official Instagram account. The chapter as well as the analysis focused on answering the research questions on how UTB Library communicated ScienceDirect and Perlego in terms of the multimodal aspect and how both textual and visual elements worked together in constructing meaning. The findings were analysed through Visual Grammar Theory.

As the study has mentioned in 1.2 Problem Statement, previous studies have widely examined and identified online databases in terms of usage and challenges among others. However, limited research had focused on how academic libraries communicated and promoted online databases through multimodal communication perspectives.

While it has been blurred or brushed where possible, it is worth noting that other irrelevant online databases that are not supposed to be in this scope of research are indirectly included or indirectly inclusive in various parts of the screenshots, such as EBSCOHost and Elsevier. Regardless, this study solely focuses on ScienceDirect and Perlego only.

This chapter examined the selected screenshots to identify the multimodal elements, textual and lexical choices utilised by UTB Library in promoting ScienceDirect and Perlego.

4.2 Themes

4.2.1 Theme one: Webpage

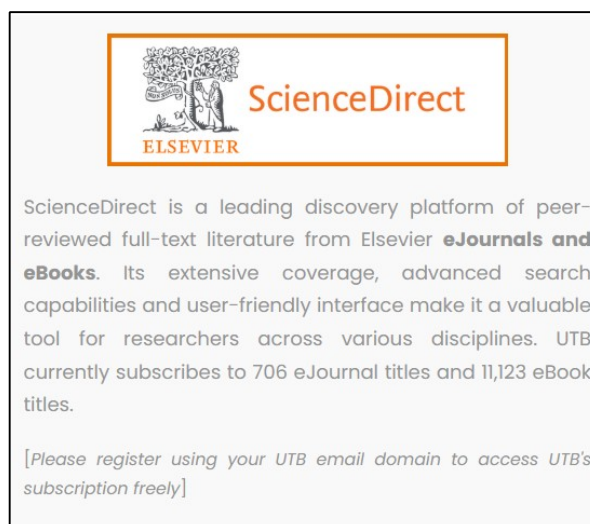


Figure 2. UTB Library E-Resources Webpage, ScienceDirect

Figure 2 shows UTB Library's E-Resources webpage ScienceDirect database. For ScienceDirect, the following is the metafunctions that apply to figure above:

Representational Metafunction (Conceptual Representation): There are no human participants involved or observed in the figure above. The representation is purely conceptual in its nature.

Compositional Metafunction (Framing): The ScienceDirect logo is framed in a thin, orange rectangle block. This framing separates it from the rest, creating high salience (visual weight).

Compositional Metafunction (Salience): Below the framed logo, key terms such as "eJournals and eBooks" are given added salience through bold typeface to ensure the primary formats of available research materials immediately stand out within the text block.



Figure 3. UTB Library E-Resources Webpage, Perlego

Figure 3 shows UTB Library's E-Resources webpage Perlego database. Listed below is the relevant metafunctions that only apply to the screenshot:

Compositional Metafunction (Information Value): The Perlego logo is positioned at the top, representing the 'Ideal' element. The texts explaining the details of the database sits underneath the framed logo. That would directly lead to the bracketed call to action at the bottom "[Please email library@utb.edu.bn for Perlego registration]".

Compositional Metafunction (Saliency): Perlego heavily uses bold typography contained in an orange frame. The contrast between the heavy black lettering and the white space surrounding the letters gives an immense saliency.

Representational Metafunction (Conceptual Representation): Similar to Figure 2 above, Figure 3 does not contain any human participants or narrative actions. Instead, the representation is purely conceptual.

4.2.2 Theme Two: ScienceDirect

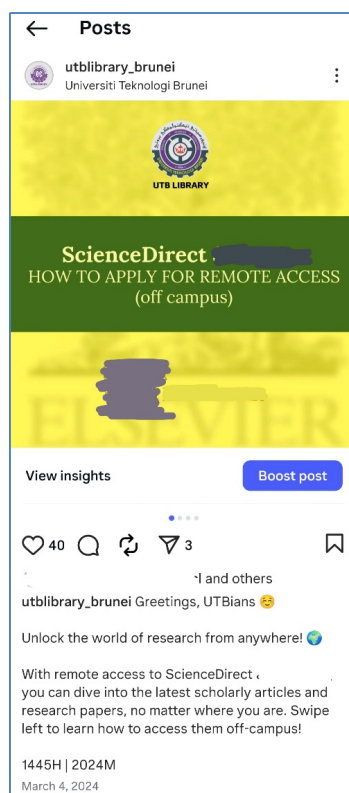


Figure 4. UTB Library IG ScienceDirect (1/2)

Figure 4 shows UTB Library's post on Instagram for their ScienceDirect (1/2) instruction in how to apply for remote access (off campus).

Representational Metafunction (Conceptual representation): As shown with the webpage, there are no human participants involved in the screenshot making it a conceptual representation.

Interactive Metafunction (Demand through lexical choice): The text can be seen using a strong typeface (a specific or particular type of font) in all caps "HOW TO APPLY". It shifts the connection from a passive 'Offer' of information to a directive guidance for the users.

Compositional Metafunction (Information Value, Top & Centre, and Salience): The official UTB logo is positioned in the top yellow shade where top represents 'Ideal' or in other words more authority being held. Moving to the centre, the text 'ScienceDirect: HOW TO APPLY FOR REMOTE ACCESS (off campus)' is centred in the green contrast block. Additionally, the central positioning of the text signifies salience.

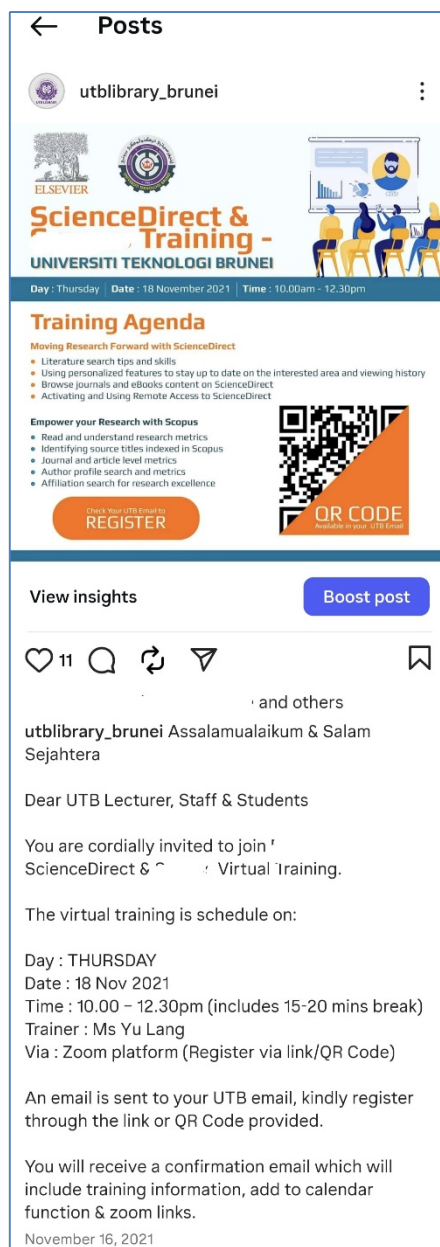


Figure 5. UTB Library IG ScienceDirect (2/2)

Figure 5 shows UTB Library's post on Instagram for their ScienceDirect (2/2) invitation to join ScienceDirect virtual training through Zoom platform.

Representational Metafunction (Narrative representation): At the top right of the screenshot, an animated participant or one of the audiences can be seen extending his arms while attempting to capture a photo through his smartphone.

Interactive Metafunction (Social Distance): The audience depicted at the screenshot can be seen sitting from a medium distance, seated with their backs to the chair and looking towards the projected screen.

Compositional Metafunction (Information Value and Salience): For the information value element, the lower quadrant of the uploaded photo contains the words ‘Training Agenda’ and ‘Register’. Bullet points and a large QR code for users to scan are also visible. For salience, going back to the words ‘Training’ and ‘Register’ to which they are in orange colour and in orange shaped rounded box, respectively.

4.2.3. Theme Three: Perlego

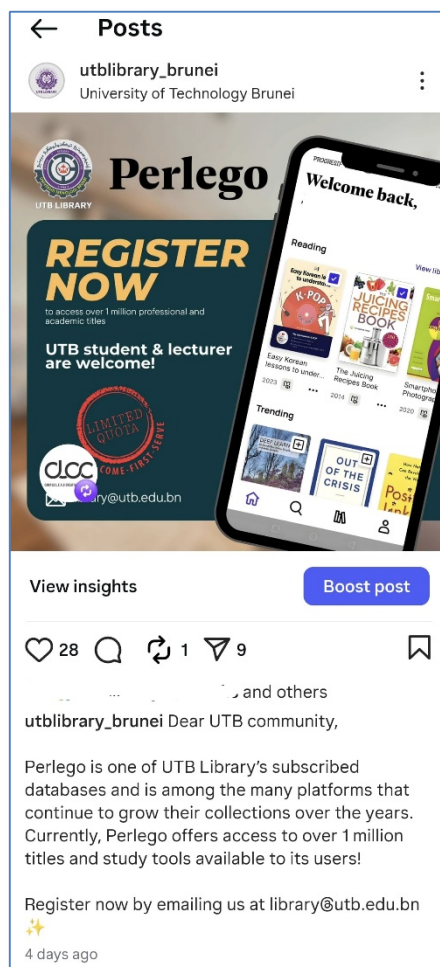


Figure 6. UTB Library IG Perlego

Figure 6 depicts UTB Library’s post on Instagram for their Perlego registration for UTB students and lecturers.

Representational Metafunction (Conceptual representation): Like the two of the screenshots earlier above, there are no human participants involved in this photo depicted. Therefore, it is a conceptual representation.

Interactional Metafunction (Social Distance, Social element): The smartphone shown in the photo is in a medium to close up shot, mimicking the point of view of users holding their smartphones

Compositional Metafunction (Salience): There are two lexical choices that can be found in salience element. The phrase ‘REGISTER NOW’ can be seen using a high contrast and at a slanted angle with all caps. The yellow colour would maximise its salience pairing it with a dark teal background. On the other hand, the phrase “LIMITED QUOTA” in red stamp acts as a stern reminder or warning.

4.3 Summary of Results

This chapter looks at how UTB Library utilises different lexical choices and colours to communicate, promote or convey their online database messages or announcements across their library's official webpage and official Instagram account. Strategy wise, although the official webpage maintained with a strong formal and corporate look, the library could be seen depicting a different narrative by way of using friendly colour tones. The patterns that have been extracted are the abundant use of orange colour, the frequent placement of UTB's official logo at the top and a shift of visual and textual representation from their webpage to Instagram.

4.4 Discussion

4.4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an interpretive analysis of the findings extracted relevant to this study. While the Findings chapter focused on identifying and describing separate multimodal themes and metafunctions, this chapter aims to address the core research questions.

This chapter also interprets how UTB Library constructs the value of its online databases on its webpage as well as official Instagram account. It also evaluates the overall effectiveness of the library's communication strategies, the significance of applying MDA within institutional setting and the limitations of the current study.

4.4.2 Interpretation of results

4.4.2.1 Webpage

The screenshots observed in both Figure 2 and Figure 3 represents a centralised "Offer" of information. By employing a conceptual representation, which is apparent that there were no human participants, the UTB Library webpage prioritises corporate uniformity.

The identical layout matrix used across both screenshots where they position the official logo at the top ("Ideal") and the description as well as call to action underneath (implies "Ideal") creates a standardised reading path.

The colour orange functions as a consistent and precise containment border. It gives salience to the databases. However, it also keeps the overall aesthetic design passive. The heavy reliance on flat colour palettes or choices and formal typography (for example: bolding terms like "eJournals and eBooks") addresses an audience already looking for resources, functioning as a directory than a marketing tool.

4.4.2.2 Instagram

Moving to social platforms, the library's multimodal narrative experiences changes. Where what would seem passive or constantly depicting "Offer" on the webpage, on Instagram it is replaced by active inclusion of "Demand" in an attempt to appeal to users' experience.

In Figure 5 and Figure 6, the depiction of relatable graphic elements such as a close up shot of a smartphone interface, and an animated audience vector (for example: when an arm is raised, it creates a vector) interacting with the presentation shifts the corporate display from the webpage to a social display in terms of Social Distance element.

While the webpage can be seen using orange as a passive border line, the graphics on Instagram, particularly Figure 5, takes leverage on it for salience. Bright orange blocks can be seen depicted deliberately on directives. For example: "Training Agenda", "Register" and "REGISTER NOW". This directly agrees with the research carried out by Sari and Prabowo (2026) who have demonstrated how visually engaging and structured social media content is vital in transitioning passive library users to an active information consumers. As a result, UTB Library successfully maximises this shift on Instagram to encourage user focus and attention.

The textual choices displayed on Instagram anchor the visual messaging to promote or encourage inclusivity or sense of community belonging. The direct phrases like "Greetings UTBians" with the emoticon 🤗 in Figure 4 and "UTB student & lecturer are welcome!" in Figure 6 would make the environment more humane and amicable.

Furthermore, the typography shown such as all caps "REGISTER NOW" and the red stamped "LIMITED QUOTA" would give a sense of urgency.

4.4.3 Significance

This study proves that UTB Library's digital footprint is never neutral. In other words, every single visual and textual choice made on their chosen platforms is doing its own work or function. That said, each design either has the ability to push or attract a user. Additionally, every layout, colour or palettes chosen, the

weight of fonts utilised or even the spatial placement acts as a guide. This study uncovers the covert or hidden communication mechanics by using Visual Grammar, showing that online social applications or platforms do not just present obvious data; to other perspectives or lenses, they construct meaning and value of an academic resource. This would align with Jusslin et al. (2020) who argued that institutional meaning-making is never limited to written language, but it is constructed through a network of non-verbal semiotic resources including layout, colour choices, typography as well as logos. With these visual elements, this study agrees with their standpoint, showing that choices like contrasting text sizes or frames are not done to look aesthetically pleasing but to also appear smart in guiding users' attention.

On the other hand, UTB Library invest highly and heavily in acquiring online databases subscriptions. By giving exposure to MDA and Visual Grammar within higher education setting, it can act as a bridge between graphic design and communication. It also shows design choices should not be limited to decoration or art in general. Instead, Visual Grammar allows a clear and structured way to see how an institution uses visuals to achieve a specific goal.

4.4.4 Evaluation of UTB Library's Communication Strategies

The core argument of this study is that the UTB Library's communication strategy is highly effective. However, it appears to be disjointed in both social platforms. When looking at how well the library promotes its databases, the findings show two different sides when compared to the research by Mensah and Onyancha (2021) whereby they emphasised that a successful social media strategy depends on careful planning, ensuring textual and visual choices would stay consistent.

First and foremost, the success of using the appropriate tone for social platforms. UTB Library understands its audience or users on different platforms. The webpage maintains a professional and corporate look whereby this serious tone reassures and maintains the library's as well as the university's standards. Conversely, UTB Library's official Instagram account feeds 'speaks' the language of a social media user. The transition from rigid instructions to a striking or attractive choice of words or colours can be seen as well.

Secondly, the study looks and critiques at the balance between style and improvement in consistency. The absolute contrast between these two platforms could be smoother. For instance, a user migrating from the lively and vibrant feel or look of Instagram to the rigid, text-heavy of the library's webpage will likely experience a disconnect. While the shared use of the colour orange acts as a consistency, the library's overall engagement strategy would be stronger if it brought the platforms closer together. For example, integrating some of the user-friendly elements from Instagram such as simplified icons or a much clearer call to action buttons, directly to the main webpage that would create a much better or even smoother user experience.

4.4.5 Evaluation of Research Questions

RQ 1, RQ 2 and RQ 3 were completely met. The utilisation of Visual Grammar Theory has proved that UTB Library does not just create and design its posts simply for decoration. Every layout choice from the UTB logo positioning at the top to using orange boxes for consistency and showing registration links is a deliberate choice used to construct meaning.

Through the application of Visual Grammar Theory, the study uncovers how UTB Library communicates on social platforms and builds a sense of importance around its database subscriptions. By transitioning from the corporate feel on its webpage to the more welcoming style on Instagram, the library effectively shapes its promotional messages to match what users expect on social applications or platforms.

4.4.6 Limitation of Study

Despite its critical insights, this study has boundaries and limitations. This study acknowledges the absence of quantitative software usage. This study did not utilise software such as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to count theme frequencies or calculate coding distributions. Instead, it relies solely on Visual Grammar, which means it does not include numerical data or information. For example, there is no clear result of the exact percentage of times orange was used compared to blue. The study is highly dependent on desk-based research. It did not implement or integrate mixed methods approaches. Consequently, while this study can objectively analyse what the library depicts or projects visually, it cannot empirically measure the actual perceived value or behavioural response from the users' side.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Addressing Research Questions

By applying Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar theory to a qualitative sample of five selected screenshots, this study fully answered its three core research questions. The analysis successfully interpreted how UTB Library multimodally communicates the Perlego and ScienceDirect databases through

its social platforms, how it communicates the importance of subscribing to the databases and how visual and textual design elements work together to create meaning.

5.2 Uniqueness of Study

The author is the first student from BSc (Hons) in Communication to conduct an internship at the UTB Library and directly analyse its communication strategies by using Multimodal Discourse Analysis as the approach and Visual Grammar as the main and relevant toolkit for this study. This study shifts away from user responses to objectively examine how meaning and database value are constructed through visual and textual choices.

5.3 Concise Results

The qualitative findings revealed a clear split between the library's social platforms. The e-Resources webpage adopts an authoritative and passive "Offer" approach. With database logos positioned at the top as an "Ideal" anchor and organised within a rigid structure, the webpage functions primarily as a directory for users who are already seeking information. In contrast, the library's Instagram page presents a more friendly and inclusive appearance, adopting a more active "Demand" approach compared to the webpage. Warm phrases such as "Greetings UTBians" are used to create a welcoming environment and encourage engagement with users. Despite the strengths of each platform in addressing its intended audience, the stark contrast between the visually engaging Instagram page and the text-heavy webpage creates a noticeable visual disconnect.

5.4 Recommendation

Firstly, it is to establish a unified cross-platform visual style. UTB Library should create a standardised design to bridge the visual gap between its different social platforms. While it is vitally important to keep a bright and amicable tone on social media and a professional tone on the website or the webpage, the transition between the two platforms should feel smooth than awkward.

Secondly, moving from the passive "Offer" to active "Demands" on academic webpage(s). The webpage currently communicates their database as passive. For example, strict containment borders. To increase user engagement on the likes of Perlego and ScienceDirect, the webpage should adopt the active visual communication strategies that make UTB Library's Instagram account look vibrant and lively. Instead of using bland or dull text directories, the main website should use high salience designs such as using clear action steps or a more friendly and vivid palette option.

5.5 Future Work

Future studies should consider combining different research methods through a mixed-methods approach. Qualitative findings could be complemented with quantitative data by examining engagement metrics such as Instagram likes, shares and saves. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how visual design choices and messaging influence student behaviour. Additionally, future research should investigate user perceptions through survey or focus groups discussions involving undergraduate students. Such approaches would help evaluate how students perceive and interpret visual elements, including layouts, colours and lexical choices.

5.6 Summary

In summary, this study reveals that the library's individual platform targeting is very adaptive but creating a smoother visual transition between social platforms would strengthen more of their tools in conveying their message or posts. Future work should pair qualitative with quantitative methods such as tracking Instagram engagement rates. Gathering real time feedback through student perception or their point of view through surveys will also greatly assist future researchers into how visual and textual choices are interpreted.

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