The prestigious world university on its homepage: a move analysis of an introductory genre set

Recent decades have witnessed growing demands for world universities to promote their international academic and financial status. Accordingly, university homepages have turned into the rhetorical space for promotional academic texts. In this study, we examined ‘university overview’, ‘university mission statement’, and ‘university introduction at a glance’ genres that provide the online visitors with instant introductory information about academic institutions. Based on a corpus of 210 texts selected from homepages of the first top 500 universities ranked by the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), we analysed their generic structures, move-step constituents, and order of moves. The findings demonstrated that the three genres shared communicative purposes, functional units, some moves and steps, socio-academic contexts, and discourse community members that led to the formation of a genre set. In addition, the tendency of the prestigious world universities for using common informative-persuasive generic patterns in their websites represent the shared cross-cultural communication among the members of the international academic community. This study may promise some practical implications for university students, teachers, and researchers.