

**How New Zealand universities present
themselves to the public:
An analysis of communication strategies.**

A thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of the degree of
Master of Arts (MA)
By Nadine Roggendorf

2008

School of Communication Studies
Auckland University of Technology
Primary Supervisor: Dr Frances Nelson

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Attestation of Authorship

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning."

Nadine Roggendorf

Abstract

This thesis investigates how the eight state-funded New Zealand universities present themselves in the prospectuses they publish yearly. The background for this research is the fact that the universities now have to compete for students and funding monies because the government has linked the amount of funding to the number of students and the universities' success in research (McKenzie, 1996). Additionally, student fees and private sources increasingly contribute to the universities' budget. The entry of competition into the tertiary education sector is a result of recent policy changes that led the education sector from an egalitarian scholarly system with a tradition of open and free access for all citizens to a market-oriented education industry, which contributes considerably to the national economy. This restructuring of the tertiary education sector is part of the major social, political and economic changes that New Zealand went through – and is still going through – beginning with the Fourth Labour Government's second term of office from 1987 to 1990 (Holland & Boston, 1990).

The historical background of this thesis focuses on these policy changes that influenced all areas of the public life in New Zealand in the last 25 years. The literature review established that these reforms resulted in processes of commodification of education, competitive marketisation and corporatisation of the universities (Butterworth & Tarling, 1994). The purpose of this thesis is to find evidence of these three tendencies within the language and visual presentation of the university prospectuses. The prospectuses have been chosen as the data corpus because they provide a comprehensive overview of the institutions. Moreover, they represent a hybrid genre of an advertorial text type, being partly informational, partly promotional. The data has been analysed by applying textually-oriented discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992). Discourse analysis has been proven to be a suitable methodology as it links linguistic analysis to the broader social context. The premise of this approach was that social changes leave traces within the discourse. The data analysis confirmed the intended outcome that the tendencies of commodification, marketisation and corporatisation are visible in the present material. This concludes that the order of discourse of business has colonised the order of discourse of tertiary education.

Chapter 1:

Increasing competition between New Zealand universities

If students pay fees, it does not make them clients or consumers: it makes them paying students. And if they are to be consumers, it is not clear how they can also be products, too, to which value may be added (conceivably without effort on their part). (Tarling, 1997, p. 97)

The overall nature of the university has become corporate rather than cultural. University administrators, government officials and policy experts increasingly talk of the university's mission in terms of 'excellence' rather than 'culture'. (Peters, 1997, p. 18)

1 Changing discourse of higher education

New Zealand universities have been under significant change for years and still are. Today, universities are exposed to fierce competition on several levels. Most obviously, they have to compete for students, because student fees have become a major source of income (Abbott, 2006). Increasingly, universities act as if they were ordinary businesses: they compete for student fees and research funding monies, apply managerial approaches in order to organise departments and structures “more efficiently”, introduce audit and performance control procedures and invest extensively in marketing and advertising (Brooking, 2004; McKenzie, 1996).

However, the eight state-funded universities in New Zealand¹, which are in question here, are not just private enterprises in many ways. Government funding is still the major source of income for the universities. Nevertheless, on the legislative level, a number of policies were introduced that drove the universities to change (Olssen, 2002b). While in past decades, funding has in

¹ Auckland University of Technology (Auckland), University of Auckland (Auckland), University of Waikato (Hamilton), Massey University (Palmerston North), Victoria University of Wellington (Wellington), University of Canterbury (Christchurch), Lincoln University (Christchurch), University of Otago (Dunedin).

principle been linked to the number of students enrolled², the funding model is being replaced by a new system acknowledging research outputs. Since 2007, the new Performance Based Research Fund system (PBRF) has been implemented completely (Ministry of Education and Transition Tertiary Education Commission, 2002; Smart & Smyth, 2008)³.

The PBRF system relates funding monies to research outputs, such as published papers, conference contributions and other pieces of work, as well as to rates of successful completions of post-graduate degrees. As a result, research excellence and teaching quality have become the new buzzwords of the educational discourse, and each university tries hard to convince government officials and the public that they are on top in their respective fields. Consequently, competition (for funding monies) is very high, both between institutions as well as within the universities between faculties, schools or research groups (Curtis, 2008).

1.1 Marketisation, commodification and corporatisation

Whereas in the tradition of the New Zealand education system, all levels of education have been regarded as a right for every citizen - provided for free by the state -, recent policy changes have resulted in a different attitude especially towards higher education. The educational discourse changed in the way that tertiary education is now seen as a private rather than a public good, a personal investment in the future of the individual, and as such a commodity not unlike every other good in the marketplace (Butterworth & Tarling, 1994; Olssen, 2002b). Accordingly, universities have become the providers of tertiary education who act similar to corporations in their appearance and presentation to public groups, such as the media, future and existing students, parents, employers, staff, researchers and government

² The government paid the universities a fixed sum per enrolled full-time student. This is called the Equivalent Full Time Student (EFTS) model (Küchler, Müller-Böling, & Ziegele, 1998).

³ For further information and downloadable documents refer to the web site of the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), which was installed by the New Zealand government in 2003, last accessed 16 September 2008 (www.tec.govt.nz). TEC's tasks are to implement tertiary education reforms, develop policies, and manage relationships with the tertiary sector.

officials (for instance, committee members, people who decide over funds, PBRF evaluators).

Those trends have been identified in the relevant literature as processes of “marketisation”, “corporatisation” and “commodification” of education (Fairclough, 1992, 1993; Olssen, 2002b). One consequence of these developments is that the universities, competing on the market for higher education, actively construct an entrepreneurial and institutional identity, which puts them in the marketplace of providers of tertiary education in New Zealand (Fairclough, 1993). They do that through various channels of communication, including for instance, classical advertising (print advertisements in newspapers, magazines, posters on bus stops; radio and television advertisements), public relations methods such as interviews with the media, press releases, involvement in community projects, promotional material and a wide range of measures that can be classified as partly informational, partly promotional, such as information material given out by the universities, or events such as orientation days for prospective students or fairs for employers and graduates.

1.2 The orders of discourse: Education versus the marketplace?

Along with attitude and policy changes, conventions that regulate social behaviour and language use changed as well. So, in certain social domains, particular conventions apply and are expected to be followed by their members. For instance, the workplace requires different types of behaviour than the family, depending on the social role someone plays in a specific environment and situation. Similar underlying rules apply to language use in any social context. The totality of such conventions in terms of language use (discourse practices) is called an “order of discourse” (Fairclough, 1992, 1993).⁴ In the realm of the present topic, one could oppose the order of

⁴ Terms belonging to the field of discourse analysis, such as ‘discourse’ or ‘orders of discourse’ will be referred to later and be explained in more detail in the Methodology Chapter 3.

discourse of the university or of tertiary education on the one hand, to the order of discourse of business on the other hand.

1.3 Research questions and purpose of thesis

The background literature sighted for this project stimulated the following research questions:

- 1) Can we see that the order of discourse of business has colonised⁵ the order of discourse of higher, especially of tertiary, education?
 - a. Is the new discourse of marketisation, corporatisation and commodification of higher education visible in the promotional and information material issued by the universities?
 - b. Do the universities as providers address students as consumers, and if so, how?
- 2) Is the pressure to be regarded as an excellent research institution visible in the analysed data?

Thus, the purpose of this thesis is to show evidence that the trends of commodification of education, marketisation and corporatisation of the universities, which have been identified in the literature and in relevant policy documents⁶, are apparent in the data to be analysed. This will be done in a first step by a close textual analysis of the present data. The next step will then be to set the findings of the text analysis in context with the broader social discourse, which is thought to be prerequisite and result of language changes at the same time. The idea is that the universities construct an institutional identity by – among other means – self-promotional material

⁵ Fairclough (1989) argues that the discourse of advertising has colonising tendencies on other discourses or orders of discourses in modern society. Fairclough himself refers to Jürgen Habermas who, in his 1981 *Theory of Communicative Action*, claims that contemporary capitalism “is characterized by a degree of ‘colonization’ of people’s lives by ‘systems’ that has reached crisis proportions” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 197), that means that the economy has colonised modern society on many levels.

⁶ See Chapter 2 Literature survey.

such as university prospectuses (Fairclough, 1993). These prospectuses are issued by the universities for every academic year in order to inform possible students about the study courses on offer and the institution in general. This research project will investigate the undergraduate prospectuses from all eight state-funded universities of New Zealand for the academic year 2007. They have been chosen as the data corpus for this study because they present an important source of information for prospective students, and at the same time, a central platform for the universities to present themselves as an organisation. Furthermore, they are readily available and provide a broader picture than, for instance, particular advertisements would do, which are more likely to only give a very limited and selective view of the advertised institution.

2 Qualitative research approach and methodology

This thesis will use a qualitative research approach. The chosen methodology is textually-oriented discourse analysis. The strength of discourse analysis is the combination of close linguistic analysis of the present data and the social analysis of the underlying political, social or historical context the data is embedded in. As discourse analysis is not restricted to a specific field of research, the approach is used in many disciplines, such as linguistics, literature studies, psychology, or sociology, to name a few. Ideally, discourse analysis offers the opportunity to design interdisciplinary research projects that bring groups of researchers from several academic fields and their various insights together.

2.1 Textual and critical discourse analysis

The analytic model applied here mainly follows the approach of textual discourse analysis as formulated by British linguist Norman Fairclough (1992). In addition, it also draws upon further ideas from the area of critical discourse analysis, as represented by for instance Wodak (1996) and van Dijk (2001). As the term 'discourse' is used in confusingly many ways in the academic literature, it seems necessary to define what is meant by 'discourse'

in the following. Discourse is used in both linguistics and social studies, but can be understood quite differently. As this project aims to draw together linguistic and social analysis, I will attempt to provide a synthesis of the term 'discourse'.

In brief, discourse is here understood as language use. Since language use is shaped socially (Fairclough, 1989; Kress, 2001), not individually - the latter was de Saussure's position (Saussure, 1959) - , discourse is at the same time social action (van Dijk, 2001). Furthermore, a dialectical relationship between discourse and the social context is assumed: discourse is both shaped by social structure (events, laws, regulations, norms, institutions, etc.) and socially constructive (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). This means that discourse not only represents the world, but is also "constituting and constructing the world in meaning" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 64). Critical discourse analysts emphasise the relationship between discourse and its societal context more than followers of other approaches do (van Dijk, 2001; Wodak & Chilton, 2005). In so doing, they challenge sociocultural practices and relationships between groups of people that are often taken for granted. Critical discourse analysis claims that social structures are manifest in discourse; that is, that underlying social processes, relationships and attitudes influence the way language is used. For instance, it is assumed that the assertion that education is a private good shapes the language within the educational discourse. Examples might be found within texts by and about the universities, the language of advertisements, speeches, texts by the media, and eventually also within the language of students, teachers, parents, employers and university staff. Social relationships are analysed particularly with a focus on power, ideology and authority, which are seen as concepts underlying and shaping discourse. Stubbe, Lane, Hilder, Vine, Vine, Marra, Holmes & Weatherall (2003) summarise:

Critical discourse theory focuses explicitly on exploring how power and ideology are manifested in discourse, and on the linguistic aspects of social and cultural processes and structures. (Stubbe et al., 2003, p. 378)

Van Dijk (2001) defines the aim of critical discourse analysis similarly:

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. (van Dijk, 2001, p. 352)

2.2 Cultural change, language change, discursive change

Acknowledging such a relationship between discourse and societal structures, it can also be assumed that there is an interdependency between sociocultural changes and discursive changes. That means that changes in language use are linked to change processes in society and culture – and vice versa. Changes in cultural politics, as they happened in New Zealand in the tertiary sector from the 1980s onward, should thus be visible in the discourse about tertiary education since then.

Although it would be a very interesting project to track down changes in language use by and about the universities from the implementation of new policies until today, this study cannot prove that those changes have happened and that they are linked to sociocultural changes. In order to follow change processes, I had to be able to research, analyse and compare text samples from several years, which would exceed the limitations of this thesis by far. Obviously, I also cannot offer a multidisciplinary study over an extended period of time and set up a team of researchers from different disciplines. However, the purpose of this work is to find evidence that the identified trends of commodification, marketisation and corporatisation – which are results of the cultural and policy changes – are visible in the language and presentation of the university prospectuses. Although considerable limits and constraints are set to this research project, I believe that one cannot adequately analyse and interpret textual material without considering the wider social, cultural, political, and historical context.

3 Organisation of the thesis

The following Chapter 2 contains a concise review of relevant literature about the development of the New Zealand universities, with a focus on the policy

reforms of the last 25 years. The literature study stimulated the idea for this research project and the shaping of the research questions as introduced above. Chapter 3 explains the methodology and method used for this study. Discourse analysis – and more specifically, textually-oriented discourse analysis – is such a complex approach that underlying concepts such as discourse, text or ideology need some discussion. Closely related are the ideas of intertextuality and interdiscursivity, which will also be introduced. Moreover, Chapter 3 is the place where the three identified trends of commodification, corporatisation and marketisation in relation to university education are explicated in more detail, as they are important concepts for the following analysis. The second part of Chapter 3 lays out the chosen model of my text analysis, describing the data corpus and the method of analysis.

Consequently, Chapter 4 provides the data work. It is organised in two parts: the first part gives examples for the three tendencies taken from all the eight prospectuses, whereas the second part consists of two case studies. These case studies provide a much more in-depth textual analysis of two limited pieces of text, taken from the introductory sections of the prospectuses of AUT University and the University of Auckland. The last chapter finally connects the close textual analysis with the wider social-political context as described in Chapter 2. Chapter 5 also answers the research questions and proposes further research projects.

Chapter 2:

Literature survey

1 History of New Zealand tertiary education: Before 1989

The New Zealand education system clearly has its roots in the country's colonial past. The model of the university as an institution was imported from the United Kingdom, which means "a gentlemanly scholar ideal mitigated somewhat by concepts of professional training" (McKenzie, 1996, p. 146). Just one year after the University of Otago was founded as New Zealand's first university in 1869, the University of New Zealand (UNZ) was established as a federal institution that embraced several colleges in different locations throughout the country. This model, which was adopted from the University of London, lasted until 1961, when the UNZ was split up into several, autonomous universities. While the university centres were commissioned to teach

the 'general' arts and sciences to the people of their region, [...] certain specialisms were developed within them. Indeed the establishment of a 'special' or 'professional' school was often keenly sought, partly because, under the University of New Zealand, special schools were separately and often more generously funded, partly because, as in other colonial societies, professional education tended to be more highly valued than general education. (Butterworth & Tarling, 1994, p. 16)

1.1 Tradition of open access to free education for every citizen

In the mind of New Zealanders, tertiary education traditionally seemed to be the logical extension of primary and secondary education, following that the community understood the role of the universities majorly as providers of formal instruction and education of students (Tarling, 1999). They were less thought of as a place for free research and open discussion (Tarling, 1999) and thus lacking an intention to carry out research in order to gain new knowledge and skills that might serve "national economic development" (McKenzie, 1996, p. 147). On the contrary, in 19th century continental Europe, the ideas of a mutual interplay of teaching and research and life-long

learning became popular, largely promoted by German philosopher and linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt. Also due to New Zealand's colonial roots and strong economic dependency on the United Kingdom, the welfare state remained a strong institution until the end of the 20th century. The principles of Welfare Labourism guaranteed free education as a right to every citizen, enforced by the First Labour Government in the 1930s (Butterworth & Tarling, 1994). Education was seen – until the 1980s – “as a public good which the State should mediate to all citizens in New Zealand, freely, fully, and comprehensively” (Grace, 1990, p. 171). In accordance with the scholarly university ideal, education “was the principal means for achieving a redistribution of public goods aimed at social integration” (Peters, Marshall, & Massey, 1994, p. 253). Due to New Zealand's small size and its lack of an established and dedicated upper class, “sources of intellectual support” such as “interested-oriented organisations” and associations were limited, so that “the universities acquired a somewhat larger role” (Butterworth & Tarling, 1994, p. 18) to play in the intellectual life of New Zealand than they did elsewhere. For instance, many members of the intellectual elite such as writers and artists as well as many leaders of professional organisations emerged from the universities or were employed by the universities.

Traditionally, tertiary education was funded by the New Zealand government. While a number of private training institutions have entered the market recently, so far, no private universities compete with the eight public universities (Tarling, 1999). Free access to university education also went along with New Zealand's egalitarian open entry policy. After the First World War, university entrance without previous “examination was [...] allowed to ex-servicemen. Later it was extended to all over 30, and then all over 21” (Butterworth & Tarling, 1994, p. 24). While the open entry policy reinforced the perception of the universities as providers of general higher education for all citizens and for all professions, it also led to the fact that a significant number of students were only enrolled part-time and that many of them never completed their degrees. As in a protected, fairly wealthy and barely hierarchical economy, university degrees have long not been necessary to

advance in most careers, both full-time and post-graduate study remained the occupation of a minority (McKenzie, 1996).

1.2 Expansion of the university sector

This changed fundamentally when – also due to open entry policy – a new generation of tertiary students entered university in the 1960s. As enrolment numbers increased, it became clear that the current university system had become inadequate to meet the requirements of contemporary society. In consequence, the two decades between 1960 and 1980 experienced a vast expansion of the New Zealand university sector. The government invested heavily in the upgrading of staffing levels and salaries, support services, buildings, resources and facilities, and provided access to generous allowances and bursaries. This development programme was intended to encourage full-time study and higher engagement in research, which was claimed to be necessary to develop a modern, progressive society and to cope with the emerging student market (McKenzie, 1996). This period was a time of relative trust in the ability of the universities to serve the society and to make the right “educational decisions” (McKenzie, 1996, p. 149).

1.3 Introduction of managerialist thinking in the academic discourse

But when political and economic circumstances changed rapidly on an international and national prospect in the 1980s⁷, generous financial support for university education came under scrutiny. Not only the cost of tertiary education, which stood for a significant part of the public sector budget, was questioned but also the quality of the education provided was discussed. For the first time, the universities had to justify their existence instead of relying “on the belief that the taxpayer would be grateful that they were there” (McKenzie, 1996, p. 151). Consequently, the argument won popularity that

⁷ To name a few: Britain’s entry into the European Economic Community left New Zealand to find new trade partners for its produce, the oil price rise made transport much more expensive, unemployment rates rose, protection barriers fell, and a worldwide political trend to a New Right era, for instance in the United States under President Ronald Reagan or in Great Britain under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

“once students could choose themselves the knowledge and skills which they wished to attain, the discipline of the market would automatically” prohibit a “mismatch of skills and knowledge with vocational need” (McKenzie, 1996, p. 152).

Thus, a whole new way of thinking was shaping the discourse about the purpose of tertiary education. This new political and social discourse became manifest in a new language that introduced the vocabulary of market economics and managerialism into the academic discourse (see Chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion). In the tradition of the university as a scholarly community, students were scholars, not clients or customers.

2 Changes to New Zealand cultural politics: From the Fourth Labour government to today

With the election of the Fourth Labour Government in 1984, the perception of universities and their students began to change fundamentally. The former scholarly ideal had to give way to the assumption that universities should compete for students in order to achieve higher levels of financial and administrative efficiency, in fact making students to consumers who are supposed to choose their educational goals opportunistically and rationally according to market demands. Competition and consumer choice were alleged to be the miracle cure for New Zealand's economic weaknesses and poor performance (Grace, 1990).

2.1 Processes of deregulation, privatisation, corporatisation, marketisation

The 1980s brought a period of tremendous deregulation processes that led New Zealand from one of the world's most regulated economies to a post-industrial society with extraordinarily liberal markets (Collins, 1987; Peters 1997). In particular, the Fourth Labour government established during its second term of office (1987-1990) a series of reforms revolutionising virtually all areas of New Zealand society and economy. The country's public administration infrastructure faced drastic changes, mainly brought by legislation such as the State Owned Enterprises Act (1986)⁸, the State Sector Act (1988)⁹ and the Public Finance Act (1989)¹⁰ (Olssen, 2002b). The introduction of study fees and student loans in 1989 was part of this development. This period of political and societal change was heralded by the so-called "Rogernomics", a line of economic and fiscal policies followed mainly by then finance minister Roger Douglas (1984-1988) (Easton, 1989).

⁸ Refer to the New Zealand Legislation web site
http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1986/0124/latest/DLM97377.html?search=ts_act_state+owned&sr=1, accessed 17 September 2008

⁹ Refer to
http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1988/0020/latest/DLM129110.html?search=ts_act_state+sector&sr=1, accessed 17 September 2008

¹⁰ Refer to
http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0044/latest/DLM160809.html?search=ts_act_public+finance&sr=1, accessed 17 September 2008

Rogernomics comprise a move to marketisation by cutting subsidies and trade barriers such as import restrictions, privatisation of state assets, a monetarist control of inflation and a total restructuring of the public sector (Peters, 1997).

These changes are not unique to New Zealand – although the reforms here have been very far-reaching and have been pushed through with an astonishing pace – but they are the expression of “a worldwide trend back to free-market economics” (Collins 1987, p. 33). From the 1980s onwards, neo-liberal theories, such as Agency Theory and Public Choice Theory (Olssen, 2002a), have gained popularity in most Western countries (Collins, 1987; Butterworth & Tarling, 1994; Peters, 1997) and led to the implementation of “policies of deregulation, corporatisation and privatisation” (Olssen, 2002a, p. 62) in general.

In relation to international changes in society, politics and culture, New Zealand tertiary education was seen as too conservative, unresponsive and inefficient. Thus, the

fourth Labour Government and the citizens of New Zealand were being advised in 1987 that the answer to all of these problems was the introduction of an open and competitive market culture. [...] Thus, tertiary education in New Zealand required, in the view of its critics, not only a cultural transformation but an organizational and management transformation. (Grace, 1990, p. 174)

2.2 Education as a private commodity rather than a public good

In 1988, Prime Minister David Lange appointed business leader Brian Picot to head a taskforce with the aim to review the New Zealand education system. The Picot Commission produced a report on the future of public administration and education in New Zealand, called “*Administering for Excellence: Effective Administration in Education*” (Department of Education, 1988).

Picot recommended that, if New Zealand hoped to reform its education system to cope with the challenges of a rapidly changing world, schools and universities should be run more like businesses. He

argued against the older orthodoxy that education constituted a public good that benefited the whole community. Instead, he suggested that it brought private gain because of the access it provided to high-paying jobs. (Brooking, 2004, p. 156)

Although the commission focused on the primary and secondary school level, the Picot report pointed in the same direction as the following *Hawke Report* (Hawke, 1988) and the 1989 reports *Learning for Life I and II* (Ministry of Education, 1989a, 1989b), produced by the Ministry of Education, which are more relevant for the tertiary level. Central recommendations included a demand for more private funding – for example, through student fees and through selling services –, the introduction of accountability, audit procedures and performance appraisals to control the universities, annual government funding based on EFTS numbers instead of quinquennial grants and generally the increase of competition between all TEIs¹¹, meaning that also polytechnics and private training institutions gained the potential to award academic degrees. Most of these demands were incorporated by the 1989 Education Act¹². The extent of these changes remained not only on the administrative surface, but resulted in a genuinely cultural change:

Basically, Picot, Hawke, and others wanted a cultural change so that citizens approached education in a more entrepreneurial manner. To encourage such a shift, they literally changed the language relating to education overnight. Students suddenly became clients; staff were reconstructed as resources, while parents and the wider community acquired the status of stakeholders. (Brooking, 2004, p. 157)

This cultural change and the resulting change of language and discourse will be the subject of more detailed discussion later (see Chapters 4 and 5). Peters and Marshall (1996) go so far as to call those reforms of the decade of the 1980s a “radical right-wing experiment in New Zealand” (p. vii). The New Right Ideology that, according to Peters, Marshall & Massey (1994), combines neo-liberal, free-market economics with neo-conservative elements (p. 252ff.), follows the critique that the welfare state makes its people more dependent rather than to liberate them. While the old welfare state guaranteed free education as a right for every citizen (Grace, 1990), education – and in particular tertiary “post-compulsory” education – is now

¹¹ Tertiary Education Institution

¹² Refer to New Zealand legislation web site
http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0080/latest/DLM175959.html?search=ts_act_education+act&sr=1, accessed 17 September 2008

seen as an investment in the future of talented “human capital“ (Grace, 1990; Butterworth & Tarling, 1994; Crozier, 2000). A university degree is thought to lead to personal success in the professional life and to the ability to secure an above-average income and a prestigious career, so that study fees seem justified (Küchler, Müller-Böling, & Ziegele, 1998). The political discourse changed in the way that it is now believed that “education shares the main characteristics of other commodities in the marketplace and as such is a private rather than a public good” (Olssen, 2002a, p. 63). The

trend to see tertiary education as a private investment rather than a right [...] was in line with the views of Human Capital Theory and the other micro-technologies of neo-liberal government that were to encourage student-centred funding models in the later 1990s. (Olssen, 2002a, p. 66)

However, this trend to commodification of education has been widely criticised as not sensible. As Tarling (1997) notes:

If students pay fees, it does not make them clients or consumers: it makes them paying students. And if they are to be consumers, it is not clear how they can also be products, too, to which value may be added (conceivably without effort on their part). (p. 97)

In the 1990s, the universities had to become much more competitive and 'efficient' and to act like businesses, accountable for their financial budgets (Küchler, Müller-Böling, & Ziegele, 1998): “University councils tightened their budgets, except for advertising and the provision of much more generous packages for vice chancellors and higher-level managers” (Brooking, 2004, p. 165). At the same time, students had to bear a higher financial burden, as student fees were increased and loan schemes, that had to be paid back, widely replaced the formerly generous student allowances:

The philosophy which drove the scheme of student loans held that if an individual had to go into debt to obtain educational qualifications, that person would demand value for money in the services that she/he received, and that person also would choose for herself or himself the ,knowledge' and ,skills' that would ,pay off' in the market. (McKenzie, 1996, p. 156)

However, the turn of the century also brought a turn in thinking about the role of the universities. With the election of a Labour-Alliance government in 1999, neo-liberal policies were re-assessed. The newly installed Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (TEAC) consequently presented a „vision of

a more cooperative social democratic model for tertiary education“ (Olssen, 2002a, p. 80). Whether the goal to get away from an extremely competitive and market-driven education sector to a more collaborative and coherent system can be reached must be the subject of future research.

Chapter 3: Methodology and method

1 Methodology: Textually-oriented discourse analysis

1.1 Discourse analysis as a methodology

This research is conducted by using discourse analysis. More specifically, I will mainly follow the approach of textually-oriented discourse analysis (TODA), as developed by Fairclough (1992). Discourse analysis has been chosen as an especially appropriate methodology for this research project, because it not only focuses on the language of the texts in analysis, but the social and political context in which every piece of text is inevitably embedded is also taken into account. In the following, I will give brief examples in order to show the usefulness of this methodology for my project.

Discourse analysts assume a dialectical relationship between discourse and society (Fairclough, 1993; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). This interdependency means, for my research topic, that the social discourse both shapes the discussion about the role of universities for a society and, as a consequence, also shapes the way the universities present themselves to the public (Trowler, 2001, p. 11).

Discourse analysis – particularly in the form of Fairclough's textually-oriented discourse analysis – aims to combine close linguistic analysis with social theory. The material studied in this thesis will be analysed with the question in mind whether a social and cultural change concerning the perception of the role of universities and students in New Zealand is happening or has happened in the last 25 years. For this purpose, it is essential to take the historic and political social background as analysed in the previous chapter into account.

The following chapter provides an overview of some main concepts that are essential for understanding the methodological basics of discourse analysis, which are relevant for the further text analysis.

1.2 Concepts of discourse

Discourse itself is not easy to understand and to define, as the term is used in many different ways and alludes to many different phenomena. Although discourse consists of language, discourse cannot not be solely equated with text. However, a working definition that can be used in the present context is:

The term discourse is widely and sometimes confusingly used in various disciplines. It is helpful to distinguish two main senses. One is predominant in language studies: discourse as social action and interaction, people interacting together in real social situations. The other is predominant in post-structuralist social theory (e.g. in the work of Foucault): a discourse as a social construction of reality, a form of knowledge. (Fairclough, 1995, p. 18)

In the following, discourse will be mainly understood in the first sense, as social action in the form of language use. People use language, orally and written, as a means of communication. This is why language use is shaped socially, not individually (the latter was de Saussure's position - see Chapter 1). Regarding the verbal nature of discourse, discourse is language use, and as such social action (van Dijk, 2001), and discourse is both shaped by social structure (for example, events, laws, regulations, norms, institutions) and socially constitutive. This means that discourse not only represents the world, but is also "constituting and constructing the world in meaning" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 64).

This dialectical nature of discourse leads to the other mentioned sense of 'discourse' as a social construction of reality. In post-structuralist understanding, discourse (the use of language) can shape and alter reality. For instance, in gender issues it is believed that the use of gender-neutral language and/or the constant use of male and female forms will gradually change the consciousness of the language users. If women are made more visible in language, this might also change their perception in the discourse. Another example is the change in language that happened with the introduction of competition in the tertiary sector. Students have been made consumers, with consumers' choice, and universities have become competitive, efficient providers of a private good. As Wodak (1996) summarises:

To sum up, discourses are, therefore, multi-layered, verbal and non-verbal, they are rule-bound, the rules being either manifest or latent, they determine actions and also manifest them, they are embedded in forms of life (cultures), of which they are simultaneously co-constituent. (p. 17)

1.3 The orders of discourse

Drawing upon a term used by Michel Foucault (1971), Fairclough introduces 'orders of discourse' as one aspect of discourse analysis. The order of discourse is the network of conditions and conventions that apply to a particular social institution. Foucault explains that

in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers, to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality. (Foucault, 1971, p. 8)

All social spheres have their own order of discourse, which regulates the behaviour and language use of the subjects that interact within it. For instance, there are orders of discourse of education, of law, of medicine, religion and so on (Fairclough, 1989). In social interactions, existing underlying conventions can either be followed or challenged. The orders of any discourse will be subject to subtle change because it must always be newly negotiated what kind of discourse will be accepted within an order of discourse. Even following conventions can lead to subtle changes, but of course, challenges can produce far marked changes. Orders of discourse are therefore not stable constructs, but constantly reproducing and transforming. Fairclough (1989) argues: "... in so far as dominant conventions are resisted or contested, language use can contribute to changing social relationships" (p. 20). Social change and discursive change are inevitably interconnected. The assumption that discursive change is both a prerequisite and a result of social change stimulated the concept of this research project. The objective of this study is to show evidence that the order of discourse of tertiary education has been colonised by the order of business of the economy (Fairclough, 1993). The idea of this thesis was that the colonisation is observable in the texts that the universities produce.

1.4 The concept of 'text'

As, for the data analysis, I will basically follow the approach of textually-oriented discourse analysis, the concept of 'text' should be explained briefly. Although 'text' will be understood in a broad meaning, including written language and visual signs, 'text' and 'discourse' should be clearly differentiated. A text is a product (of the process of text production), whereas a discourse implies the whole process of social interaction (which may result in the production of a text):

A text is a product rather than a process – a product of the process of text production. But I shall use the term *discourse* to refer to the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part. This process includes in addition to the text the *process of production*, of which the text is a product, and the *process of interpretation*, for which the text is a resource. Text analysis is correspondingly only a part of discourse analysis, which also includes analysis of productive and interpretative processes. (Fairclough, 1989, p. 24)

In the conception of 'text', I will also differ from Fairclough's main point, as I include visual images and design in my definition of text, whereas Fairclough has a stronger focus on written and spoken language¹³. The texts that will be analysed in the following define the corpus of the research work.

1.5 Approaches to discourse analysis: Textual and critical discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is not so much a theory on its own, but it is more an umbrella term that embraces several different strands of theoretical approaches (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Foucault, 1982; Hall, 2001; Schiffrin, Tannen, & Hamilton, 2001; van Dijk, 2001; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). One characteristic of discourse analysis is that it often takes a multidisciplinary approach, which makes it interesting for many different fields of research, such as linguistics, psychology, sociology, political sciences and so forth.

¹³ For a reference on the interpretation of visual communication see Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).

This research project combines two approaches within discourse analysis and proposes a model that includes the specific strengths of several practices. The close textual analysis follows mainly the framework of textual discourse analysis as developed by Fairclough (1992), because he provides a very detailed and feasible approach to linguistic text analysis. Fairclough attempts to draw together language analysis and social theory. According to him, a linguistic analysis of the language of texts can be used “as a method for studying social change” because “changes in language use are linked to wider social and cultural processes” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 1). Unlike other theorists of discourse analysis, Fairclough attempts to present an analytical model that can be employed for actual discourse analysis research projects, which makes his approach especially useful as a tool for researchers, in particular with a focus on study of social change.

However, although Fairclough claims to provide a synthesis between linguistic and social analysis, I found that his work does not provide a strong enough link to analyse the relationship between discourse and society. Therefore, this project additionally draws upon ideas of critical discourse analysis, as formulated by, for example, Ruth Wodak (1996) and Teun A. van Dijk (2001)¹⁴. Critical discourse analysis emphasises that discourse is a form of social practice, and as such has a dialectical relationship with society:

discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially shaped: it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258)

Critical discourse analysis has its roots in the ideas of the Frankfurt School, a group of thinkers of critical theory, philosophy and social research, which scrutinises predominant social and political power structures, hegemonies and ideologies:

Critical discourse theory focuses explicitly on exploring how power and ideology are manifested in discourse, and on the linguistic aspects

¹⁴ Fairclough can also be considered to belong to the critical discourse analysis approach, as in Fairclough (1993), but the monograph I mainly refer to here, proposes what he calls TODA (textually-oriented discourse analysis).

of social and cultural processes and structures. (Stubbe et al., 2003, p. 378)

Although Fairclough (1992) developed a three-step model for analysis, I will condense his framework to a two-step model of close textual analysis as a first step, followed by interpretation in regard to the research questions in a second step. This approach is definitely oriented at Fairclough's more detailed framework:

The part of the procedure which deals with the analysis of texts can be called 'description', and the parts which deal with analysis of discourse practice and with analysis of the social practice of which the discourse is a part can be called 'interpretation'. (Fairclough, 1992, p. 73)

However, in the course of my work, it did not seem feasible to follow Fairclough's model more closely for a variety of reasons: throughout his work, Fairclough changed his approaches¹⁵ so that it is difficult to extract his main points to a coherent model. Furthermore, some of his concepts which he laid out in detail (especially in Fairclough, 1992, Chapter 8: Doing Discourse Analysis) are not relevant for my analysis. Therefore, concepts such as 'ethos' or 'politeness' will not be used. This can be explained by the fact that Fairclough himself does not exactly follow his own framework as can be seen in his 1993 analysis of the contemporary public discourse about universities in Britain (Fairclough, 1993).

Concerning the limitations of this and other studies, it remains to state that discourse is such a complex construct with hundreds of layers of structure, that a complete discourse analysis even of a very limited piece of data is practically impossible. This is the reason why the researcher has to make choices "and select those structures for closer analysis that are relevant for the study of a social issue" (van Dijk, 2001, p. 99).

¹⁵ For example, "Critical language study" in Fairclough, 1989 versus "TODA" (= textually-oriented discourse analysis) in Fairclough, 1992.

1.6 The tendencies of commodification, marketisation and corporatisation

As Chapter 1 showed, the purpose of this thesis is to examine for the presence of commodification, marketisation and corporatisation in the selected corpus of texts. These concepts are so significant that they bear discussion here.

As is documented in the cited literature in Chapter 2, higher education has gained the image of a personal advantage rather than a general citizen right, and as such is now been regarded as a commodity not unlike others in the marketplace. Fairclough (1992) defines **commodification** as “the process whereby social domains and institutions, whose concern is not producing commodities in the narrower economic sense of goods for sale, come nevertheless to be organized and conceptualized in terms of commodity production, distribution and consumption” (p. 207). In this study, the example is the education “industry”, which manifests itself in language, to be seen in “the wording of courses or programmes of study as commodities or products which are to be marketed to customers” (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 207-208). Symes (1998) notes that if education is thought of as “just another pecuniary asset”, it is estimated as “offering value for money, constituting an investment in the future, and [...] providing their investors with security and long-term pecuniary benefits” (p. 139). Fairclough (1989) sees changes in post-modern capitalism in so far as the

commodity has expanded from being a tangible ‘good’ to include all sorts of intangibles: educational courses, holidays, health insurance, and funerals are now bought and sold on the open market in ‘packages’, rather like soap powders. And an ever greater focus has been placed upon the consumption of commodities, a tendency summed up in the term *consumerism*. As a result, the economy and the commodity market massively impinge upon people’s lives, including, especially through the medium of television, their ‘private’ lives in the home and the family. (p. 35)

This impingement leads to another term that has already been used to formulate the research questions: the **colonisation** of one discourse by another (here, as it might be, the order of the discourse of business might colonise the order of the discourse of tertiary education). Fairclough (1989) explains that certain

key discourse types [such as advertising, interviewing or counselling] embody ideologies which legitimize, more or less directly, existing societal relations, and which are so salient in modern society that they have 'colonized' many institutional orders of discourse. (p. 36)

Ideologies are another concept underlying the discussion of discourse (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 1998). Fairclough (1989) defines ideologies as

'common-sense' assumptions which are implicit in the conventions according to which people interact linguistically, and of which people are generally not consciously aware. [...] Ideologies are closely linked to language, because using language is the commonest form of social behaviour, and the form of social behaviour where we rely most on 'common-sense' assumptions. (p. 2)

This concept of ideology is supported by Janks (1997), who postulates that ideology "is at its most powerful when it is invisible, when discourses have been naturalised and become part of our everyday common sense" (p. 341). Fairclough (1993) further understands ideology "as the key means through which social relations of power and domination are sustained" (p. 139). One of those taken for granted assumptions of neo-liberal ideology, as academics such as Olssen (Olssen, 1996, 2002a, 2002b) or Peters (Peters, 1996, 1997; Peters & Marshall, 1996; Peters, Marshall, & Massey, 1994) define them, is the perceived benefits of free market competition:

Increased competition represents improved quality within neo-liberal economic rationality because self-interested choosers are able to choose between competing alternatives. [...] Within neo-liberal discourses, although it is acknowledged that markets can function imperfectly, competition is invariably seen in purely positive terms as a means of increasing efficiency and effectiveness. (McKenzie, 1996, p. 155)

As seen earlier in Chapter 2, this assumption lay behind the policy changes made in the New Zealand public sector during the 1980s and '90s. Critical discourse analysts in particular point out the role of ideologies that underlie discourses (van Dijk, 1998).

The ideology of market liberalism leads to another tendency of change within the educational sector that has been named '**marketisation**'. In short, marketisation means "the extension of market models to new spheres" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 99). In this sense, marketisation might be one of the effects of a possible colonisation of the order of discourse of education by the

order of discourse of the market. Fairclough (1993) claims that in Great Britain – similar to New Zealand – institutions

of higher education come increasingly to operate (under government pressure) as if they were ordinary businesses competing to sell their products to consumers. [...] For example, universities are required to raise an increasing proportion of their funds from private sources. (p. 143)

Other examples of these recent changes towards more market-like methods are “introducing an ‘internal’ market by making departments more financially autonomous, using ‘managerial’ approaches in, for example, staff appraisal and training, introducing institutional planning, and giving much more attention to marketing” (Fairclough, 1993, p. 143).

One assumption of free market ideology is “the imperative that once students could choose themselves the knowledge and skills which they wished to attain, the discipline of the market would automatically ensure an outcome of ‘correct’ and ‘robust’ policy decisions”. So, it is believed that inefficiencies will be cured by forcing “all institutions to compete in the marketplace of consumer choice” (McKenzie, 1996, p. 152). Students – now being renamed “the purchasers of educational services” (McKenzie, 1996, p. 155) – are regarded as consumers whose educational choices the universities have to influence by professional marketing. This is why education providers “have become involved in impression management, corporate imaging and promotional stratagems to enhance their market profile, to increase their share of a contracting educational market” (Symes, 1998, p. 134). One example of this impression creation is the regular publication of university prospectuses, which will be the subject of the following analysis.

Competition and the application of marketing strategies lead to the fact that universities increasingly present themselves in ways similar to private sector corporations. They have to build up an image that is attractive to interest groups such as students, parents, employers and researchers. Therefore, the “entry of competition into the education system has led to a blossoming of an entrepreneurial culture, which is most marked in school advertising and prospectuses” (Symes, 1998, p. 134). Slogans, signage, iconography, and

other tools to attract, are a “product of [the universities’] reconstitution as corporate entities” (p. 136) in order to “establish distinctive profiles” (p. 138). “Market reputation” has become so vital that “many universities are employing advertising and public relations agencies to ensure that only positive statements appear about the university and its products” (Olssen, 2002b, p. 78).

But it is not only the “management of appearance”, or the “stylisation of commodities and services” (Symes, 1998, p. 136) that lets universities resemble private businesses: Changes in policies have resulted

in a degree of **corporatisation** whereby TEIs operated like private businesses, utilising the private-sector industrial relations framework and enabling a change in the managerial style of university administration. (Olssen, 2002b, p. 65)

Universities began to postulate “mission statements” and to set “performance objectives” (p. 65). The vice-chancellor has become a CEO, and as such the employer of every member of staff. Olssen (2002b) lists a number of consequences that result in a turning from traditional collegial to more managerial governance practices: “the emergence of a new kind of leadership in universities”, the appointment of “internal market research and vice-chancellors’ advisory groups” (p. 77), “the increased emphasis on performance and accountability assessment”, “a concern with corporate loyalty” and with “market reputation” (p. 78).

The following analysis will mainly focus on the colonisation by the managerial discourse that is eminent in the discursive data and in the verbal and visual presentation of the university as a corporate entity.

1.7 The technologisation of discourse: Technologies at work

The three trends of commodification, marketisation and corporatisation I isolated and highlighted above, are connected with a phenomenon Fairclough (1992, 1993) defined as the ‘technologisation of discourse’. This means, that increasingly, experts are trained in the use of language and

discourse technologies in order to achieve pre-defined effects on their audience. On the one hand, there are discourse technologists, who are specially trained in using discourse technologies, e.g. “teachers, interviewers, advertisers, and other ‘gate-keepers’ and power-holders” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 216). The technologists are the experts who are professionally aware of how to use language and discourse in order to provoke certain reactions. On the other hand, there is the untrained “publics (clients, customers, consumers)” (p. 216) upon whom the technologies are supposed to have an impression. Fairclough sees the importance of discourse technologies in their capacity to “bring about discursive change through conscious design” (p. 216).

Discourse technologies are certain discourse practices, conducted by professional experts or discourse technologists. “Examples of discourse technologies are interviewing, teaching, counselling, and advertising” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 215). I will show in the analysis that the application of discourse technologies such as advertising strategies has spread into the order of discourse of education. This has become so common-sense that it has been incorporated into perceivably informational material, which has to be shown in the following data analysis. As already said above, these discourse types, for instance advertising, embody ideologies with the result that they colonise many orders of discourse. Technologies thus are strategies: they are employed to create a certain effect. Technologisation is consequently the outworking of previously established ideologies, such as commodification and marketisation. As Fairclough (1993) interprets the process of technologisation:

Technologization of discourse is, I suspect, most widely experienced in the form of top-down imposition of new discursive practices by organizations upon their members. (p. 141)

The university prospectuses that will be the basis of the following textual analysis might in this sense be the products of the work of discourse technologists. Those professionals, such as public relations or marketing specialists, aim to create a certain effect on the public, to create an image of the institution in question (Fairclough, 1995; Motion & Leitch, 1996).

1.8 The concepts of interdiscursivity and intertextuality

Closely intertwined with textually-oriented discourse analysis are the concepts of intertextuality and interdiscursivity. Both concepts rely on the understanding that discourse can neither be understood nor produced without taking the wider social context into consideration. Discourses therefore are historical:

Discourses are always connected to other discourses which were produced earlier, as well as those which are produced synchronically or subsequently ('the intertextuality of a text'). (Wodak, 1996, p. 19)

Interdiscursivity is the broader of the two concepts, although it is not easy to differentiate them precisely. Interdiscursivity implies the potentially "endless combination and recombination of genres and discourses" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 137). Fairclough (1993) defines interdiscursivity as follows:

The concept of *interdiscursivity* highlights the normal heterogeneity of texts in being constituted by combinations of diverse genres and discourses. [It] highlights a historical view of texts as transforming the past – existing conventions, or prior texts – into the present. (p. 137)

Interdiscursivity stresses the conventions underlying discourse or the orders of discourse, which are subject to constant changes and renegotiations, as seen earlier. Discourses and orders of discourse are not stable constructs, but always changing because they react to changes in the social context and incorporate new inputs. At the same time, they are also influencing other discourses and orders of discourses. Discourses, therefore, do never stand on their own, but are related to other discourses. This phenomenon relies on the fact that, on the level of the text, texts are also influencing and are influenced by other texts. Interdiscursivity is consequently brought about by the capacity of texts to be related to and to incorporate other texts. While interdiscursivity describes the combination and relationships of discourses and orders of discourses, the concept of intertextuality focuses more on specific instances of snatches of text echoing other texts:

On the one hand, we have the heterogeneous constitution of texts out of specific other texts (manifest intertextuality); on the other hand, the heterogeneous constitution of texts out of elements (types of convention) of orders of discourse (interdiscursivity). (Fairclough, 1992, p. 85)

In contrast to the broader concept of interdiscursivity, Fairclough (1992) defines “‘manifest’ intertextuality” as “the explicit presence of other texts in a text” (p. 10):

Intertextuality is basically the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth. (Fairclough, 1992, p. 84)

Fairclough (1992) further explicates different dimensions or modes of intertextuality: discourse representation, presupposition, negation, metadiscourse and irony.

These dimensions of intertextuality might be found in the textual analysis of the data. Within the limited data corpus of the present study, it will probably be hard to locate proofs of concrete instances of intertextuality, but the concept is nevertheless still important to understand as a background idea for discourse analysis and will be referred to within the textual analysis.

The complexity of discourse analysis poses a challenge on the researcher because he or she has to be conscious of the limitations of their own possibilities given the numerous interconnections of every piece of text or discourse with many others. As Wodak (1996) asks to consider:

[...] every discourse is related to many others and can only be understood on the basis of others. The limitations of the research area therefore depend on a subjective decision by the researcher, and on the formulation of the questions guiding the research. (p. 14)

The following section outlines the premises that guided the concept of my research project. It explains the selection of the data corpus and my method for the further analysis.

2 Description of the corpus and the method of analysis

2.1 University prospectuses as the selected material

As outlined above, this thesis uses textually-oriented discourse analysis. It deals with printed, publicly available material. My data consists of the New Zealand universities' undergraduate prospectuses for the year 2007. The universities issue a prospectus for every academic year. These publications are available on request directly from the universities and are intended to help interested prospective students to gain a general impression of the institution and an overview of the courses of study on offer. School leavers seeking a first academic degree and their parents are probably intended as the primary audience of the prospectuses. However, going deeper into the analysis of the language of the prospectuses, other potentially interested groups might be targeted as secondary audiences: for instance, employers, post-graduates or academic researchers possibly interested in joining the university. In this capacity, the prospectuses play an important role as an aid for the decision where and what to study and are thus an essential medium for the universities to present themselves as a corporate organisation.

I have selected this type of text because these prospectuses are an important source of information for prospective students. They are issued yearly and are rather elaborate and costly publications considering their layout, volume, comprehensiveness and often also the high quality material they are printed on, which indicates that they are taken seriously by the universities' marketing strategists. I assume that people who think of studying a certain subject or degree which is available through more than one institution and are not restricted to a certain geographical area will order the prospectuses of all universities in question in order to compare and decide which one is the most appealing for them. In this sense, those publications are an important tool for the universities to present themselves and to set their distinctive image in competition with other organisations. As the prospectuses are valid for a whole year and provide an overview over the institution as a whole, they might give a broader picture than just selected advertising pieces would do. For example, print advertisements, radio or TV spots, are more temporary,

transitory and often aimed at specific study programmes, schools, degrees or similar, so that they would not give an impression of the entire institution.

The contemporary appearance of university prospectuses is highly likely to be influenced by the results of specific market research. Fairclough (1993) names – for the UK –

evidence of what applicants most want to know (hence the prominence of careers information in the 1993 entry), an understanding of the literacy culture of young people (e.g. the salience within it of ‘glossy’ printed material of various sorts), an understanding of the conditions of reading documents of this sort (they are likely to be flicked through rather than carefully read).
(p. 156)

Taking these thoughts into account, the prospectuses are produced by discourse technologists and as such are the result of a technologisation of discourse.

The selected texts belong to the **genre** of university prospectuses, a pamphlet detailing the courses, facilities, etc. of an educational institution. A prospectus usually is “a preliminary printed statement that describes an enterprise (as a business or publication) and that is distributed to prospective buyers, investors, or participants” (Merriam-Webster online dictionary¹⁶), such as prospectuses of investment houses. University prospectuses therefore have a twofold purpose: on the one hand, they inform possible interest groups about the institution, courses on offer and entry criteria; on the other hand, they also have a promotional, advertising character, presenting the institution to prospective customers, for example, students, parents or employers.

In the terminology of discourse analysis, genres can be understood as “uses of language associated with particular socially ratified activity types” (Fairclough, 1993, p. 135), for instance the genres of interview, counselling, or medical examination.

¹⁶ Definition by the Merriam-Webster online dictionary (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/>), last accessed on 16 June 2008.

2.2 Method of analysis

As already mentioned above, the model for the data analysis and interpretation is mainly oriented at Fairclough's TODA approach, but also draws upon ideas of the approach of critical discourse analysis. More specifically, I will look for instances of underlying ideologies that are incorporated in the discourse of tertiary education. Ideologies are understood as common-sense assumptions, which have become so much part of the discourse that they are hard to challenge.

With the research purpose in mind, I will focus on traces of the three tendencies of commodification, marketisation and corporatisation within the texts. Following Fairclough's (1992) notion of finding the cruxes within a text, I look for vocabulary or expressions that might come from discourses other than the educational discourse. This idea is due to my research question asking whether the order of discourse of the economy has colonised the order of discourse of tertiary education. Therefore, I work with keywords (Mautner, 2005), expressions that struck me during the research process as significant or that are frequently used, possibly within several prospectuses.

The data chapter (Chapter 4) provides, first of all, an overview of the prospectuses in general, supported by a cursory search of signs of the three tendencies with examples drawn from any of the eight prospectuses. These findings are then further substantiated by two case studies, which provide a more detailed textual analysis of two limited pieces of text. For the textual analysis, I mainly rely on Fairclough's 1992 framework, as proposed in the style of a catalogue of questions and criteria in chapter 8 of his book (Fairclough, 1992). In search of the answers to the research questions, I will not only analyse the language, but also include remarks about the layout and visual design, because I think that this plays an equally important part of the presentation of the organisations and their address of their audiences.

My model of analysis and interpretation consists of a two-step approach: the first part is the close textual analysis based upon keywords (Chapter 4),

whereas the second step links the findings to the wider societal and discursive context. This last step will be the subject of Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Data analysis – The prospectuses

In the following, I will consider the way the universities present themselves to the readers of their prospectuses. Every prospectus is structured in a different way, so that a direct comparison is difficult. However, even a cursory examination shows that they all contain similar sections, such as an introductory or welcome section, that aims to give the readers a first impression about the university as a whole institution and about what makes it different from other universities. Furthermore, every prospectus contains an overview of the subjects and degrees on offer and of any prerequisites for application. Some universities also describe further services they offer, such as help with accommodation, health and wellbeing, financial support, academic help, and provide other material such as campus maps.

For my purposes, the general introductory overview of the institution seems most revealing because that is the place where the universities try to capture the flavour of student life at their institution. The universities have to present it in such a manner that the prospective students will feel attracted. Those sections are titled, for example, “Welcome to...”, “Is the University of Auckland right for me?”, “Why choose the University of Auckland/Lincoln University?”, “Getting to know AUT University”, or similar. While some universities only spend one double page for the welcome, others dedicate a whole chapter of several pages to the topic.

In this section, I have extracted some noteworthy points that struck me during the research phase as most interesting. These are themes or topics that many prospectuses have in common but obviously deal with in different ways. I assume that such topics have been identified as important points to promote by the universities, so that it seems justified to give them considerable attention within this research project. This technique follows Fairclough (1992), who proposes that one method of starting discourse analysis, is to find the “crucial moments of crisis” (p. 227) within the discourse. This method is complemented by working with keywords

(Mautner, 2005), a technique that extracts a certain vocabulary or wording, which appears as notable and possibly representative of certain discourses.

In accordance with the research questions raised above, I will set the main focus of the analysis on signals of marketisation, corporatisation and commodification in the language and the visual signs used, as well as on a perceived emphasis of the importance of research.

The data section of my thesis consists of two parts. The first part presents significant examples for the three trends of marketisation, corporatisation and commodification, drawn from any of the eight prospectuses. The reason for this approach is to show that signals of these three trends can be traced within the whole range of the present data. The second part gives a closer, more detailed textual analysis of two texts, which complements the more general analysis in the form of case studies. For the case studies, I will concentrate on the texts of welcome by both Auckland University of Technology (AUT) and The University of Auckland (UoA). The reason for focusing on these two organisations is that they stand in direct competition with each other given their location across a single busy road from one another. Also, they represent two different groups of New Zealand tertiary education institutions: whereas the UoA is one of the older, more traditional universities offering a full range of courses, founded in 1883 and emerging from the former federation of the University of New Zealand as seen in Chapter 2, AUT is New Zealand's youngest university. Formerly a polytechnic, AUT only gained university status in the year 2000¹⁷ (Dougherty, 1999; Sinclair, 1983; Tarling, 1999).

1 The trends of commodification, marketisation and corporatisation

In the following, I will present examples drawn from the text samples of the data corpus that I found significant in showing evidence of the trends of

¹⁷ For a short timeline on AUT's history refer to AUT's web site http://www.aut.ac.nz/about/governance_and_history/ (last accessed 17 June 2008).

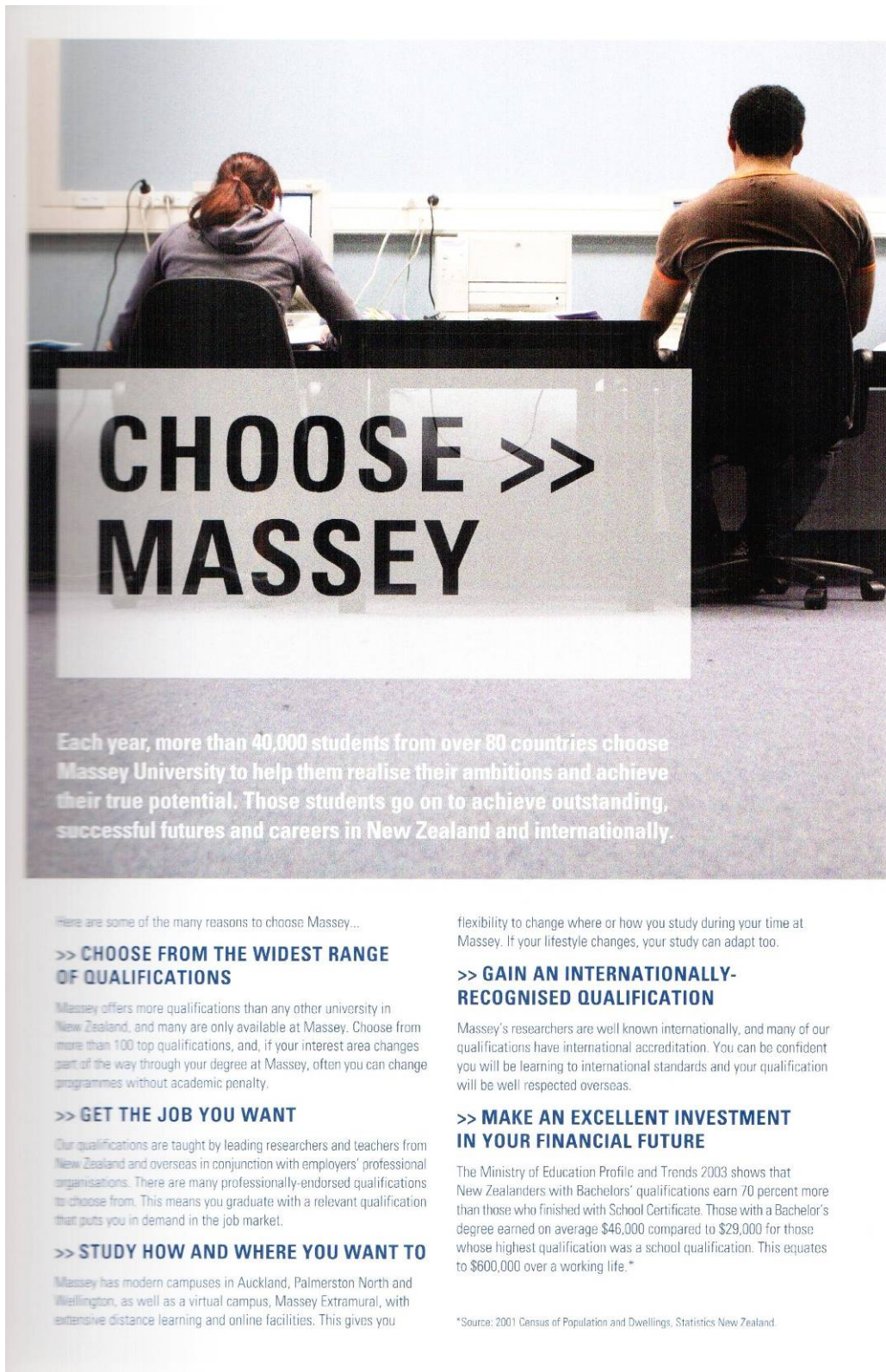
commodification, marketisation and corporatisation. Those trends are certainly intertwined, so that one sample might be able to show signs of more than one trend.

1.1 Commodification

As said in the previous chapter, this thesis will illustrate that the discourse of tertiary education in New Zealand shows signs of commodification. Higher education is – at least in some instances – treated not unlike tangible goods, especially in terms of education as an investment in a successful future and, as such, a tool in gaining a personal advantage. Following Fairclough (1989, 1992), commodification is the process whereby intangible values are treated in ways similar to tangible goods. Social domains and organisations, which do not produce commodities in the economic sense of the production, distribution and consumption of goods, nevertheless begin to market their “products” and services as if they were goods that can be bought and sold. My argument in this thesis is that this process of commodification also applies to the sector of university education in New Zealand. In the following section, I will present examples of the analysed data, which reveal an ideology of education as a product.

University study - An investment in the future

First of all, every university, to some extent, stresses future career opportunities for their graduates. For instance, Massey University frankly advertises qualifications offered by the university with the headline: “Make an excellent investment in your financial future” (Massey University, n.d.-b, p. 3) or says later in the text: “Invest in yourself with professional development” (p. 15). Similarly, the University of Canterbury claims: “Study at UC – an investment in your future” (University of Canterbury, 2006, p. 4).



**CHOOSE >>
MASSEY**

Each year, more than 40,000 students from over 80 countries choose Massey University to help them realise their ambitions and achieve their true potential. Those students go on to achieve outstanding, successful futures and careers in New Zealand and internationally.

Here are some of the many reasons to choose Massey...

>> CHOOSE FROM THE WIDEST RANGE OF QUALIFICATIONS

Massey offers more qualifications than any other university in New Zealand, and many are only available at Massey. Choose from more than 100 top qualifications, and, if your interest area changes part of the way through your degree at Massey, often you can change programmes without academic penalty.

>> GET THE JOB YOU WANT

Our qualifications are taught by leading researchers and teachers from New Zealand and overseas in conjunction with employers' professional organisations. There are many professionally-endorsed qualifications to choose from. This means you graduate with a relevant qualification that puts you in demand in the job market.

>> STUDY HOW AND WHERE YOU WANT TO

Massey has modern campuses in Auckland, Palmerston North and Wellington, as well as a virtual campus, Massey Extramural, with extensive distance learning and online facilities. This gives you

flexibility to change where or how you study during your time at Massey. If your lifestyle changes, your study can adapt too.

>> GAIN AN INTERNATIONALLY-RECOGNISED QUALIFICATION

Massey's researchers are well known internationally, and many of our qualifications have international accreditation. You can be confident you will be learning to international standards and your qualification will be well respected overseas.

>> MAKE AN EXCELLENT INVESTMENT IN YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE

The Ministry of Education Profile and Trends 2003 shows that New Zealanders with Bachelors' qualifications earn 70 percent more than those who finished with School Certificate. Those with a Bachelor's degree earned on average \$46,000 compared to \$29,000 for those whose highest qualification was a school qualification. This equates to \$600,000 over a working life.*

*Source: 2001 Census of Population and Dwellings, Statistics New Zealand.

Figure 1: Massey prospectus, p. 3

Study at UC – an investment in your future

One of the top two universities in New Zealand for research quality,* the University of Canterbury balances the best of university life. We offer a stimulating range of courses, a vibrant campus environment with students from around the world and a great student lifestyle.

Developing tomorrow's leaders

The University of Canterbury – Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha – was established in 1873 and is New Zealand's second oldest university. We have built up an international reputation for our high quality degrees, teaching staff and research.

Since its establishment, UC has produced graduates who have gone on to become leaders in their fields. Our distinguished alumni include the faces on New Zealand's \$100 and \$50 notes: Nobel prize-winner Ernest Rutherford and Apirana Ngata, New Zealand's first Māori graduate. Another early graduate, Helen Connon, was the first woman in the British Empire to graduate with an honours degree.

We are committed to developing tomorrow's leaders and you'll find our graduates in top jobs and graduate schools the world over. Some of our more well-known graduates include Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Dr Michael Cullen; National Party Leader and former Reserve Bank Governor Dr Don Brash; children's author Margaret Mahy; film-maker Vincent Ward; multisport athlete Steve Gurney; journalists Linda Clark and Kim Hill; artist Shane Cotton; Te Papa Chief Executive Dr Seddon Bennington; NZ Rugby Football Union Chief Executive and former All Black Captain Jock Hobbs; Head of MTV Networks Europe/International Brent Hansen; and Director of the SIS Richard Woods.

Learn from the best

You will learn from lecturers who write the textbooks, are internationally respected and push the boundaries of knowledge. UC's world-class education is enhanced by the many outstanding international academics who visit the University each year on our staff exchange programmes, including the unique Erskine Fellowship. Recent Erskine Fellows have included two Nobel Prize winners: Emeritus Professor Clive Granger for Economics in 2003 and Professor Bob Grubbs for Chemistry in 2005.

*Performance-Based Research Fund Report, 2004



The education specialists

It is proposed that the Christchurch College of Education (CCE) become part of the University of Canterbury from 2007 (for the latest information on the proposed merger go to www.ccecanterburymerger.ac.nz). CCE has been providing teacher education for over 130 years. They have a teaching staff who are education specialists, and whose teaching draws upon practical experience and the latest research. CCE has developed a reputation for a supportive study environment with small, friendly classes, and a range of delivery options to suit you, including on-campus, distance, part-time and flexible.

Innovative programmes leading to careers in the real world

UC continues to develop new and innovative programmes tailored to careers in the real world. Recent developments at undergraduate level include:

- new programmes in Art History and Theory; English Language; European Union Studies; and Computer Engineering
- endorsements for the Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting; Computer Systems and Networks; Economics; Finance; Human Resource Development; Information Systems; Marketing; Operations Management; Operations Research; Software Development; Strategic Management; and Taxation and Accounting

- a new structure for the Engineering Intermediate year leading onto either an Engineering or a Science pathway
- a Certificate in Science and
- a Diploma in Maori Studies.

At postgraduate level there are new qualifications in Antarctic Studies, Art Curatorship, Creative Writing, Engineering Studies and Professional Development (Electronics and ICT); and new majors available in Bioengineering, Computer Security and Forensics, and Plant Biology.

If the proposed merger with CCE proceeds, from 2007 UC will also offer a range of new qualifications, including a Bachelor of Sport Coaching; Teaching and Learning qualifications at undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate level; and qualifications in Children's Literature, and Learning Support.

Unique research facilities

We have cutting-edge research facilities, including New Zealand's leading nanotechnology laboratory; the Human Interface Technology Laboratory (HITLabNZ); the New Zealand Institute of Gene Ecology; the Social Science Research Centre and many other specialist research units in a diverse range of fields. The University of Canterbury was recently chosen to host UCI³, the New Zealand ICT Innovation Institute, a national centre for excellence in Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

Figure 2: Canterbury prospectus, p. 4

The mentioning of career opportunities is an indicator of commodification that is present in all the analysed prospectuses. This is hardly surprising as especially the parents of prospective students, whom I have identified as secondary target audiences of the publications, will be interested in such a return on investment for the study fees and other expenses spent. Whether or not parents do or can support their children's studies financially, they are certainly likely to be keen to know that their children will be equipped to succeed in the future. Foreshadowing a favourable future also is the reason for an extensive use of the simple future tense (for example, "skills you will gain" as a sub-headline of every subject portrait in the UoA prospectus, p. 12) – which will be analysed in more detail in the following case studies.

There are other statements about the future, career and employment that serve the same purpose. Some examples of these are "You can look forward to a qualification that is valued by future employers. [...] You can join the long list of Massey graduates sought after, in New Zealand and throughout the world, as successful achievers." (Massey, p. 2). Victoria University promises that "staff who care about your future help make your time at Vic a success" (Victoria University of Wellington, 2006, p. 6). Claims that describe a discourse field concerning the topics of career, job and employment are also frequent, as the following examples reveal: "Get the job you want" (Massey, p. 3); "International and local employers recognise the value of a Victoria degree. Vic graduates consistently have among the highest employment rates of graduates from any New Zealand university." (Victoria, p. 6); "A Canterbury degree equips our students with a range of durable intellectual skills that ensure career flexibility, a lifelong love of learning and the ability to create, absorb, analyse and present knowledge." (Canterbury, p. 3)

Another noteworthy aspect, which I subsume under 'commodification', is the fact that New Zealand university degrees are often marketed as internationally recognised. A worldwide reputation seems to assure the students that they will earn a qualification that they can make use of in foreign countries too, an aspect probably important in a globalised world.

WELCOME FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR



WHEN YOU MAKE A DECISION TO STUDY AT MASSEY UNIVERSITY, YOU ARE CHOOSING A UNIVERSITY THAT IS LIKE NO OTHER.

Some of the differences are obvious. We are the largest university in New Zealand with more than 20,000 students studying at campuses in Wellington, Palmerston North and at Albany on Auckland's North Shore. About 20,000 students study via Massey Extramural, throughout New Zealand and offshore. The choice of three campuses and extramural study gives you the flexibility to change where and how you study throughout your time at Massey. Our size also means you can access a very wide range of courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. We offer more qualifications than any other New Zealand university.

Massey nurtures excellence. You can expect high levels of contact with inspiring teachers, access to well-stocked libraries and well-equipped laboratories. You can look forward to a qualification that is valued by future employers. You can enjoy a culture that encourages you to achieve

your best. You can join the long list of Massey graduates sought after, in New Zealand and throughout the world, as successful achievers.

Welcome to the aspirational and inspirational world of Massey University, a university distinguished by excellence in teaching and research and a 'can do' attitude based on a strong tradition of contributing to New Zealand's economic, social and cultural development. Join us and I am confident we can help you to meet your educational goals and be the best you can be.

PROFESSOR JUDITH KINNEAR
VICE-CHANCELLOR

Figure 3: Massey prospectus, p. 2



Figure 4: Victoria prospectus, p. 6

Contents



Kia ora and welcome to the University of Canterbury

At the University of Canterbury, we are passionate about education. Students and staff form a vibrant campus community, and our staff and graduates are respected around the world.

A Canterbury degree equips our students with a range of durable intellectual skills that ensure career flexibility, a lifelong love of learning and the ability to create, absorb, analyse and present knowledge.

Of course, life at university is much more than study. It is a time of enormous personal growth through new pursuits and the development of lifelong friendships.

Here at UC we are fortunate to have modern, purpose-built facilities in beautiful surroundings, but student life is not limited to the campus. Our students enjoy living in a vibrant city with all the benefits of New Zealand's great outdoors on their doorstep.

We look forward to seeing you in 2007.

Professor Roy Sharp
Vice-Chancellor
University of Canterbury



I welcome your interest in the Christchurch College of Education

We are proud of what the College has achieved since opening in 1877 but, at the same time, we are conscious of the need to look forward.

Historically we have had a teacher education focus and, although teacher education remains a central focus, we now offer much more to our students.

These benefits will broaden further next year when we expect to join forces with our University of Canterbury neighbours.

While it will certainly be a time of change, we will not lose sight of the College's vision of pursuing excellence in the teaching of professional qualifications.

Nor will we lose sight of our commitment to providing our students with a supportive, stimulating environment in which they can realise their full potential.

Kia ora, kia kaha.

Dr Graham C Stoop
Principal
Christchurch College of Education

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- 6 Christchurch – the lifestyle capital of New Zealand
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Published July 2006 by the Publications team, Marketing, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand.

Every effort is made to ensure that information is correct at the time of publication. Please refer to the University Calendar for official degree regulations.

Designed by UC Design, University of Canterbury. Photography by Duncan Shaw-Brown and Eve Welch, Photographic Services; and Strategy Advertising and Design.

Figure 5: Canterbury prospectus, p. 3

This thought might be especially relevant for people from a “remote country on the edge of the world” (University of Waikato, n.d., p. 0) for which a certain time period spent overseas has become a traditional rite of passage (Alexander, 2008; Bell, 2002; Ling, 2007; Myers & Inkson, 2003; Sell, 2004). This understanding is also visible in the promotion of the universities’ student exchange programmes, such as the one offered by Victoria University (“Victoria offers the opportunity to combine travel and study through the Vic OE programme”, Victoria, p. 23). Other universities make similar claims. For example, Massey claims that students can “Gain an internationally-recognised qualification” and “You can join the long list of Massey graduates sought after, in New Zealand and throughout the world, as successful achievers.” (both Massey, p. 2). Victoria enters the fray with the claim that “International and local employers recognise the value of a Victoria degree” (Victoria, p. 6), while Otago students have “the opportunity to gain an education and qualifications that are very highly regarded internationally” (University of Otago, n.d., p. 4). Auckland’s claim is simple but all-embracing: “world-class, world-wide” (University of Auckland, n.d., p. 3).

Students as products – and consumers

If education is regarded as any other commodity, the consequence is that students are regarded not only as consumers, but also as products at the same time. Subsequently, the university becomes the producer of graduates who are “equipped” with features that make them valuable for prospective employers who in turn “buy” the “completed” students. In this sense, the student as a useful product equipped with specialised skills and knowledge is comparable to industrial commodities such as cars, for example. Naturally, any buyer aims to purchase a high-specification car for a good price and similarly, employers might like to invest in those applicants who promise to be the best-equipped and best-fitting for the positions available.

New Zealand is on a roll. A remote country on the edge of the world has captured international attention in many fields. Will you?

Isolated from old-world ways of doing things, we have developed a unique viewpoint. Kiwi ingenuity is not trivial – it will help you stand out from countless others.

The University of Waikato has an attitude unique among New Zealand universities. Waikato hasn't been afraid to challenge the way things are done, to take risks and stand up for what it believes in.

That is why The University of Waikato is one of New Zealand's leading universities. Our lecturers can claim to be the best researchers in the country for over a quarter of the subjects we teach.

We expect our students to push themselves too - both inside and beyond the classroom. Work experience, international exchanges, scholarships, community projects, world-class labs and theatres, leadership opportunities, support and mentoring, social events, as well as passionate lecturers, are all part of the Waikato experience.

In this prospectus you'll meet Waikato graduates who are taking New Zealand ideas to the world. Graduates developing tools for Google. Making waves and artificial surf breaks around the world. Silver Ferns keeping it real by balancing their studies and sport.

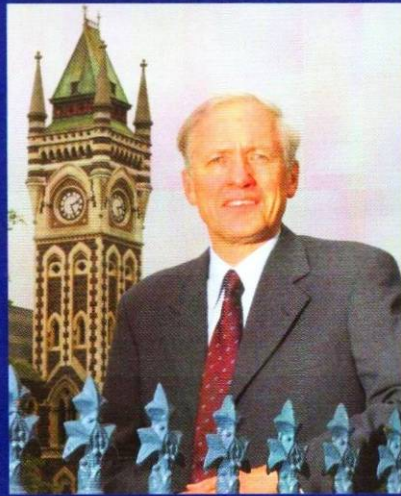
These people didn't let anything stand in their way. Will you? ▼

Call 0800 WAIKATO | WWW.WAIKATO.AC.NZ

Figure 6: Waikato prospectus, p. 0

WELCOME TO OTAGO

WELCOME TO OTAGO



Otago, New Zealand's first University, is committed to excellence in teaching and research, and providing a unique learning experience.

Students are welcome here for the life and diversity that they bring to the city. You will find that the University and its activities are right at the heart of Dunedin.

Our staff are committed teachers who make significant contributions to the wider community through their research and teaching and we are proud of the facilities and support we provide.

As a student at the University of Otago you will have the opportunity to gain an education and qualifications that are very highly regarded internationally. Your time here will be challenging and enjoyable, and you can certainly be assured of a warm welcome.

Professor David Skegg
Vice-Chancellor
June 2006

Figure 7: Otago prospectus, p. 4

This ideology is visible within the language of the prospectuses, as for instance by Victoria University: “The University strives to produce graduates who will become leaders in whatever field they choose, equipped to think creatively and critically, and with superior communication skills.” (Victoria, p. 6) or by the University of Canterbury: “UC has produced graduates who have gone on to become leaders in their fields.” (Canterbury, p. 4)

Thinking of students as products and consumers at the same time, results in the fact that the university prospectuses have to address their audience as consumers. It is a promotional technique to suggest that the advertiser understands the needs and worries of their prospective consumers (Arnould, Price, & Zinkhan, 2004; Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2005), demonstrating an empathy that stands for the trustworthiness of the advertiser who seemingly takes the consumer (as an individual) seriously. Many prospectuses feature stories or portraits of successful students or graduates. These personalisations serve a twofold purpose: on the one hand, they prove evidence that taking on the effort of university study pays off in terms of positive change, on the other hand, they add to making appear a rather big, bureaucratic and unknown institution more human and more approachable.

While most other universities make an effort to highlight their excellence in teaching, research and their ability to prepare their graduates for a successful career, Waikato University accentuates other aspects of student life. The “benefits” of Waikato have hardly to do with academic success, but are named as “Free parking, the largest and most beautiful campus in the country, the best student nightlife in the country” (Waikato, p. 8). These “benefits” are all about convenience and fun, which leads to the impression that not only the university as an institution of education, but rather the location and the area are to be marketised. That the discourse of education is often linked with that of tourism – including advertising the environment, the region and safety – is also visible in other prospectuses, which I will comment on in the following section about marketisation.

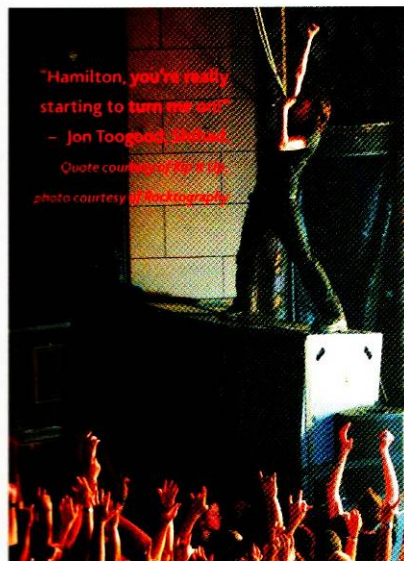
Rent's cheap. Traffic is light. People are genuine.
Waikato is action central and we have
everything in place to help you reach your
personal best – both in or beyond the classroom.

Waikato: Action Central ▼

Events

Other events held each year in the Waikato include:

- The Shoot-Out 24-hour film making competition
- The FUEL Festival of New Zealand Theatre
- Rip Curl Raglan Surf Classic
- Parachute Music Festival
- EdgeFest
- Bridge to Bridge Water Ski Classic
- Hamilton Gardens Summer Festival
- Balloons over Waikato
- Soundsplash Raglan Reggae Festival
- NZ National Agricultural Fieldays
- Motorcross at Tokoroa and Huntly
- International Basketball, Softball, Netball and Cricket clashes
- Student prices for Super 14 and NPC rugby games



Only a short drive from Hamilton or Tauranga, the Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions encompass the Coromandel, Rotorua, Waitomo and Taupo – many of NZ's most popular tourist destinations.

The Coromandel offers some of the best beaches in New Zealand, and the North Island's premier ski fields are less than three hours away on Mount Ruapehu. Surfing is 40 minutes away at Raglan, the "best lefthand surf break in the southern hemisphere."

Waikato is the closest University to Whakapapa's ski resorts. There are forests, lakes and thermal hot pools within an easy drive of the campus. The West Coast provides the location for a great day trip of exploration. South Waikato has some awesome mountain biking tracks and motor sport courses. Adrenalin junkies can choose from jet boating, four-wheel drive touring, skydiving, gliding and some of the best white water rafting in the country. Taupo is famous for its trout fishing experience and white water adventures.

University clubs cater for all of these activities, making it easy to get involved in a new pastime or sport.

Hamilton is also the sunniest city in the North Island. The region's weather is temperate and warm. It is similar to Auckland, except with less rainfall and less fog than cities like Christchurch ▼

Adrenalin junkies can choose from jet boating, four-wheel-drive touring, skydiving, gliding and some of the best white water rafting in the country.



CHOOSE WAIKATO

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO

5

Figure 8: Waikato prospectus, p. 5

1.2 Marketisation: Selling products to consumers

Together with signs of commodification, the trend of marketisation is clearly visible in the present data. Both trends have in common that higher education is regarded as a good that has to be sold to consumers (for instance, “skills you will gain / career opportunities”, UoA). Prospective students – and their parents – have to be convinced that the investment – of time, effort and money – into university study will result in personal growth and financial advantage. Consequently, students, parents and employers are regarded in their capacity of consumers who opt for the products on offer of one particular education provider. The effect of this consumer choice is that the universities stand in competition with each other, competing for student numbers, government and private funding monies. The application of marketing techniques and promotional tools serve the purpose of building a positive image of the institution in order to secure its market share of the marketplace for tertiary education.

I will argue here that every university tries to build up a specific profile, in order to make it seem unique and to distinguish it from its competitors. The institutions promote their products and services as specific brands using advertising techniques and a distinctive corporate design. The language used in the present prospectuses shows this striving for uniqueness and distinctiveness. Also, the texts clearly illustrate the awareness of competition, as some organisations compare their benefits openly with the characteristics of other locations, while other institutions again do that more implicitly, as the following analysis will demonstrate.

Unique and distinctive

Referring to the “Government’s Tertiary Education Strategy” (University of Waikato, 2007, p. 1), Waikato University highlights its striving for distinctiveness by even publishing a separate ‘distinctiveness’ document on its web site. As one could expect, the university wants to be distinctive in “its academic portfolio and its teaching and research excellence” (p. 1). Since these goals, however, probably apply to all tertiary education providers, Waikato further promotes its point of difference in “its reputation for being

student-centred” as well as in “its genuinely Aotearoa/New Zealand identity” (p. 1). In its prospectus, Waikato also makes explicit claims to be “unique”, for instance in the text on the inner cover page:

we have developed a unique viewpoint. [...] the University of Waikato has an attitude unique among New Zealand universities. Waikato hasn't been afraid to challenge the way things are done, to take risks and stand up for what it believes in. (Waikato prospectus, p. 0)

Analysing the present data, I found that the distinctive Waikato profile communicated by the prospectus hardly mentioned academic qualities but rather, focused much more on everything else concerning student life: in the introductory section, Waikato promotes mostly sporting events and opportunities, the nightlife, the convenience of a comfortably sized city and the beauty of the surroundings rather than facilities concerning learning and education at university. For instance, the university's location, Hamilton, is marketed as a “student city” with benefits such as “Great shopping, cafés, restaurants and bars”, “the best student nightlife in the country” supported by a “free late-night bus service” and cheap prices (p. 4). Another distinctive advantage about Waikato seems to be its convenience for the motorised student: “Waikato is the only university to offer its students free parking, with six huge car parks.” (p. 6) Even Hamilton's climate is praised as “the sunniest city in the North Island” and directly set against competing student cities: Hamilton's weather “is similar to Auckland, except with less rainfall and less fog than cities like Christchurch” (p. 5).

While Waikato advertises Hamilton as the “student city” and equates its Tauranga campus with “Beach lifestyle”, Canterbury University markets Christchurch as “the lifestyle capital of New Zealand” (Canterbury, p. 6) – and Canterbury also speaks about the weather as a beneficial factor:

CHOOSE WAIKATO



Hamilton: Student City

Hamilton is a student city. With more than 25,000 people in tertiary study, there is a huge range of things for students to do and see. Great shopping, cafés, restaurants and bars, international sporting venues, theatre groups, art galleries – you name it, Hamilton's got it.

The Night Life

Hamilton has the best student nightlife in the country. In fact there are 54 bars and cafés in one block, and 74 on one street alone. Sports bars, hip-hop, house music or the classics are all in one central spot.

A free late-night bus service from campus into the city and back provides a safe and fun way to getting about at night. Hamilton's prices are cheap and door charges are rare. Famous for its live music scene, Hamilton has spawned bands such as The Datsuns, 48May and Katchafire. With great venues for live acts, there's always a band playing just for you.

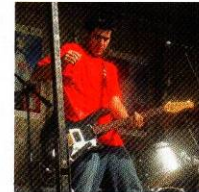
The Day Life

Hamilton has all the benefits of a big city without the hassles. Traffic is minimal and the University is only five minutes drive to the central city. Yet it has all the facilities, shops and entertainment options you expect, with the student discounts to match.

Hamilton is a cosmopolitan city with a wide variety of restaurants and cafés to choose from – Thai, Mexican, Spanish, Japanese, Indian, Chinese and many more, so you'll never be short of a place to eat.

Following the Waikato River through town will take you past riverside cafés, beautiful running and cycling tracks, Hamilton Gardens' internationally-themed gardens and even some swimming holes.

Hamilton and the Waikato are the home to some great events and traditions. While you're studying here you'll soon find yourself caught up in them, be it ringing a cowbell at a Waikato rugby match, watching student performances at the Academy, or cheering on our team in The Great Race.



The Great Race

Waikato has links to some of the most prestigious universities in the world through The Great Race – a Waikato University tradition. Each year more than 20,000 people line the banks of the Waikato river to cheer home Waikato University's Mens Rowing Eight against Britain's top universities. Cambridge and Oxford Universities take turns each year to come down under for the challenge. Riverbank entertainment includes water skiing, super cat races, wakeboarding, live music and more.

"O" Week

Every year the Waikato Students' Union puts on a week-long celebration welcoming students – Orientation or "O" Week. During the day activities include live music, competitions, "Fear Factor" style challenges, sports matches, markets, a clubs' day and much, much more. After sunset the nightlife takes off. Top national and local bands play in Hamilton and our many bars and cafés turn it on for the students. Buses run from the campus into town, providing a safe way to enjoy events. As well, on the study side of life, there is Academic Orientation and all new students receive a Welcome Pack of useful resources.



Figure 9: Waikato prospectus, p. 4

Christchurch – the lifestyle capital of New Zealand

Christchurch is an ethnically diverse city which offers an exciting and easy lifestyle for students. With a population of around 350,000, Christchurch is the largest city in the South Island and one of New Zealand's three main centres. Located on the coastal edge of the Canterbury Plains the city is close to both the mountains and the sea, offering a huge range of recreational options.

The most affordable major New Zealand city to live in, Christchurch is also the easiest to get around. The city is mostly flat and has wide streets and many cycle lanes. There is an excellent public transport system and relatively uncongested roads. An international airport providing direct flights to other New Zealand and international centres is ten minutes drive from the University.

Christchurch has a temperate climate, with low rainfall (half as much as Auckland and Wellington), lots of sunshine and the full range of spectacular seasons. From hot, hot summers when nor'westers whip across the plains, to crisp winter days with clear blue skies (and great skiing), to awesome autumnal displays and springtime blossoms, Christchurch is a city of colour and constant change.

Also known as the Garden City, Christchurch is a cosmopolitan centre with an English flavour and is the shopping mecca of the South. Its internationally influenced cafes, bars, restaurants and clubs offer something for everyone and stay open until late – including the legendary 'Strip' on Oxford Terrace.



A major cultural centre, Christchurch has a vibrant arts and entertainment scene, with many festivals including the major Christchurch Festival, the International Buskers' Festival and Cup Week. There are movie theatres galore, from arthouse cinemas to multiplexes, and a professional theatre company (the Court Theatre). There is live music to suit all tastes just about every night of the week. Christchurch is regularly visited by top international performers and boasts its own symphony orchestra and opera company. The stunning new Christchurch Art Gallery and Canterbury Museum hold nationally significant collections and host major touring exhibitions.

For the sports-minded, Christchurch is hard to beat, with first-class sporting facilities, whether you're a player or a spectator. The city regularly hosts international sporting events such as one-day cricket internationals, and rugby and netball tests, and is home to the legendary Canterbury Crusaders rugby team. If you're feeling adventurous Christchurch is within easy reach of the great outdoors for climbing, tramping, mountain biking, skiing (ten skifields are within two hours' drive), sailing, surfing and much more.

From the city it's only a short drive to the beach, the rugged beauty of Banks Peninsula and the historic French town of Akaroa, the thermal resort town of Hanmer, the mountains and bush of Arthurs Pass National Park, Kaikoura and its whales, or the many wineries surrounding the city.

The best thing about being a student in Christchurch is that you can choose the lifestyle you want – from scarfie to sporty to arty, the choice is yours.

Figure 10: Canterbury prospectus, p. 6

“Christchurch has a temperate climate, with low rainfall (half as much as Auckland and Wellington), lots of sunshine and the full range of spectacular seasons” (p. 6). It is obvious that Christchurch as “one of New Zealand’s three main centres” (p. 6) is competitively contrasted with the other two centres, that is Wellington as the political capital and Auckland as the biggest city and economic centre of the country. This is also done by mentioning factors such as more affordable living costs (compared to Auckland as the most expensive city) or traffic conditions:

The most affordable major New Zealand city to live in, Christchurch is also the easiest to get around. The city is mostly flat [contrary to the landscape of both Auckland and Wellington] and has wide streets and many cycle lanes. There is an excellent public transport system and relatively uncongested [different from Auckland] roads. (p. 6)

All analysed tertiary education providers market their locality. Whether located in a city or in a more provincial setting, each institution presents the specific benefits of its area. The locality always is an important element of the visual presentation of the prospectus, for instance showing pictures of iconic buildings, such as the UoA’s clock tower, or aerial photographs of the nearer environment. In this sense, the discourse about education is clearly linked with the discourse of tourism (Symes, 1998). Tourists are people who are visiting places and travelling for pleasure and entertainment. The self-promotion of the universities praises attractions of the surroundings that are usually of interest by pleasure-seeking travellers. I will call these typical interests in the beauty, climate or locality ‘touristic’ as they are often promoted and provided particularly for tourists. The university prospectuses, then, describe those ‘touristic’ interests in order to attract prospective students to the location of an educational institution.

Victoria University, for example, strongly promotes the city of Wellington, using pictures of Wellingtonian symbols such as Cuba Street (Victoria, p. 2). The city is advertised by a slogan that could be written in a guidebook: “Refresh your spirits by checking out the festivals, galleries, sports, and shopping on offer.” (p. 5)

WELLINGTON



Victoria University and Wellington city have a lot in common. Both are creative, diverse places full of intelligent people and fresh ideas. Refresh your spirit by checking out the festivals, galleries, sports, and shopping on offer.

Wellington is New Zealand's creative capital, rolling out the red carpet for film premieres and hosting one of the world's largest arts festivals.

Looking out on its busy blue harbour, Wellington is a beautiful city that makes the best use of its natural setting. Just a five-minute walk from the centre of town you can be playing volleyball on a sandy beach or mountain-biking in native bush.

With more eateries per head of population than New York, Wellington is New Zealand's café capital. New bars, restaurants, cafés, and clubs are opening all the time. Courtenay Place is the centre of the city's nightlife, and can be as busy at two in the morning as it is during the day.

With Wellington's high employment rates, Victoria's students have the best opportunities in New Zealand to find part-time and holiday work, and full-time work once graduated. Wellington also hosts the largest concentration of scientists and science organisations in New Zealand.

Buses, trains, and the famous cable car make getting around town easy. The Kelburn Campus is a 10-minute walk from the city centre and can also be reached by the cable car, which runs every 10 minutes. Every day around 70 buses run between the Kelburn and Pipitea Campuses. Students enrolled in courses taught on both campuses qualify for free bus tickets.

Figure 11: Victoria prospectus, p. 5

Comparing the university to the city as being both “creative, diverse places full of intelligent people and fresh ideas” (Victoria, p. 5) reminds of Wellington city’s well-known marketing slogan “Absolutely positively Wellington” (refer to the Wellington tourism web site¹⁸), illustrating the city’s role as a factor that might influence the decision for a certain study location. Touristic attractions, such as the nearby beach, the “busy blue harbour”, “native bush”, cafés and restaurants (“more eateries per head of population than New York”, Vic, p. 5), nightlife and “the famous cable car” (Vic, p. 5) are presented to create the spirit of an attractive student environment.

Additionally, other aspects about the environment and locality are also highlighted. These can be promises of a safe and caring environment, which might be important for young school leavers and their parents, or descriptions of the surrounding nature. Safety and personal support is a topic that many prospectuses promote, for instance:

- Otago: “Here we have the people to teach, protect, guide, support and help you all to complete your academic qualifications” (Otago, p. 2); “So it’s comforting to know that Otago is also famous for its campus lifestyle, where you can work, play and live in a safe and welcoming environment.” (Otago, p. 5)
- AUT: “Helping you to study” (AUT, p. 5), “Keeping you safe and well” (AUT, p. 7) with services such as health centres, counselling or harassment prevention programmes. Student apartments are advertised as “a safe, supportive and modern environment” (AUT, p. 8).
- Canterbury: “Living in a supportive environment” (Canterbury, p. 7)

While most other universities describe the excitement of living in a city and the many opportunities in terms of culture, entertainment or employment that an urban setting provides, Lincoln University pictures the idyllic atmosphere of a rural setting and a smaller size:

¹⁸ http://www.wellingtonnz.com/about_us, accessed 30 September 2008

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He mihi tēnei ki a koutou e mīna ana ki te haere mai ki te whare wānanga tuatahi o Aotearoa, arā, Te Whare Wānanga o Ōtāgo.

Tēnei te pōhiri atu ki a koutou kia whakarauika mai ki konei whai mai ai i ngā tohu mātauranga e tika ana mā koutou. Kei konei ngā tāngata ki te whakaako, ki te tiaki, ki te ārahi, ki te tautoko, ki te āwhina i a koutou ki te whakaoti i ngā tohu mātauranga, ahakoa he aha te kaupapa, ko te reo Māori, ko ngā āhuatanga Māori me ngā kaupapa o Te Wāhanga Aronui, o Te Wāhanga Ture, o Te Wāhanga Pūtaiao, o Te Wāhanga Hauora, o Te Wāhanga Tauhokohoko rānei.

Nō reira, nau mai, haere mai, tahuti mai.

This is a greeting to all of those wishing to come to the first University of New Zealand, the University of Otago.

We invite you all to gather here to pursue academic qualifications that are appropriate for each of you. Here we have the people to teach, protect, guide, support and help you all to complete your academic qualifications no matter what the subject, whether it be the Māori language, aspects of the Māori world, in Humanities, Law, the Sciences, Health Sciences or Commerce.

A very warm welcome to you all.

2

Figure 12: Otago prospectus, p. 2

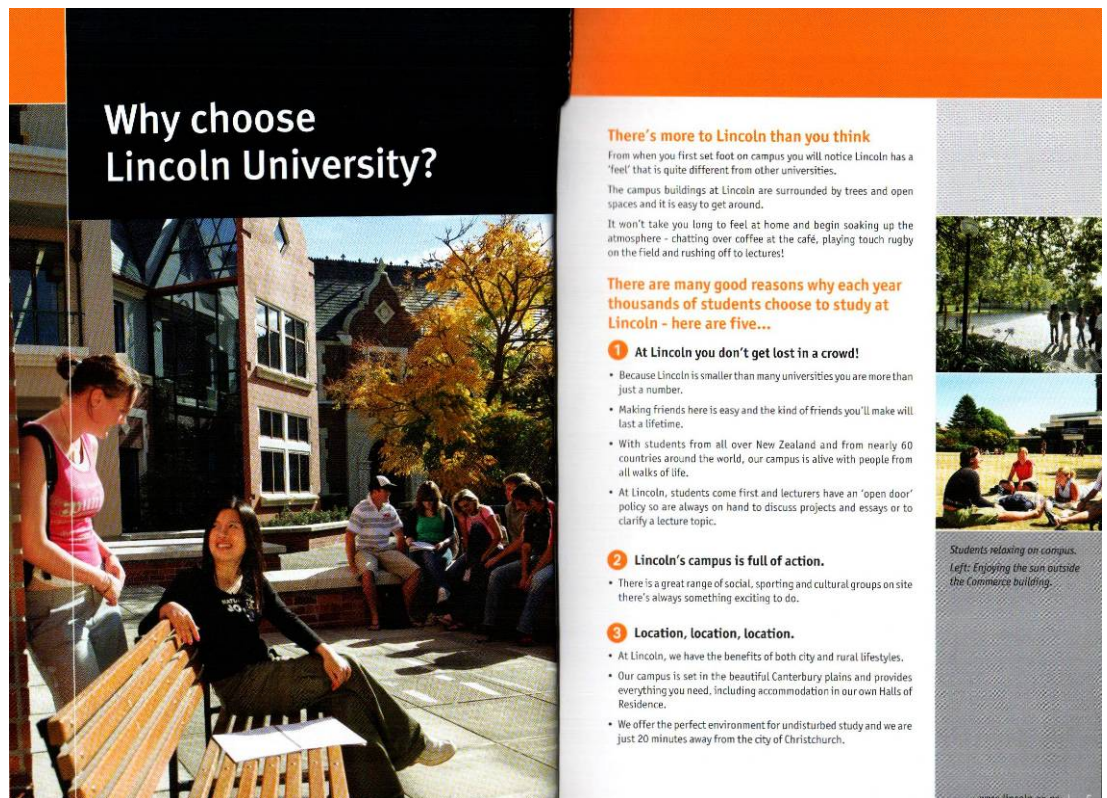


Figure 13: Lincoln prospectus, pp. 4-5

The campus buildings at Lincoln are surrounded by trees and open spaces and it is easy to get around. [...] At Lincoln you don't get lost in a crowd! [...] At Lincoln, we have the benefits of both city and rural lifestyles. Our campus is set in the beautiful Canterbury plains [...] We offer the perfect environment for undisturbed study. (Lincoln University, 2007a, p. 5)

One can expect that the authors of the prospectus might have considered highlighting the benefits of a country lifestyle because these might appeal in particular to students who are interested in Lincoln's focus subjects of agriculture and tourism.

Competition

As already said, competition is the most obvious sign that universities are under the pressure of marketisation. The language of the prospectuses shows signs of competition for instance by comparisons, as I have shown above, or by using superlatives that make a university stand out from its competitors.

Massey University, for instance, uses numerous superlatives in order to demonstrate its distinctive profile. Reading the prospectus, Massey is a "university that is like no other" because they "are the largest university in New Zealand" offering "more qualifications than any other New Zealand university" (Massey, p. 2). Massey's introductory section of the prospectus is designed in a very promotional manner, both concerning the language used and the visual layout. Reasons why to "choose Massey" are arranged in easy-to-read bullet points, headlines are set in large bold capital letters and strong colours and many coloured photographs are used in the first section, with the effect that the document looks very promotional resembling classical print advertisements. This layout style, however, apparently could not be continued throughout the whole publication, because the more informational part describing the study subjects is set in just one colour, featuring only bland tables with text but without any pictures. Going back to its text of welcome, Massey declares to "help you to [...] be the best you can be" (Massey, p. 2). It is interesting that Otago, too, uses this expression in its prospectus (Otago, twice on p. 5).

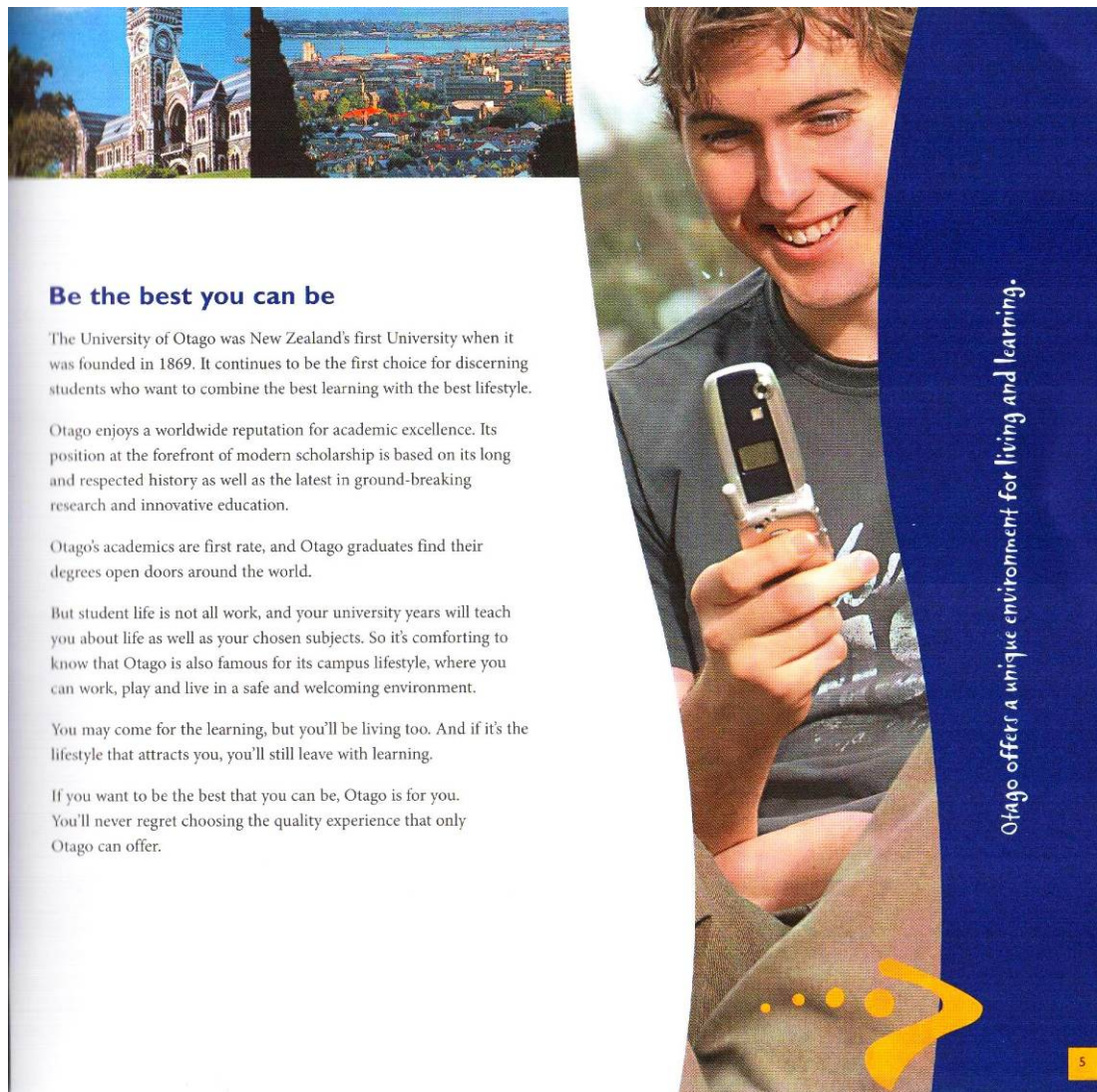


Figure 14: Otago prospectus, p. 5

Having that noted as a crux, I did a cursory search on the internet, in order to find out if this slogan has a specific source in the educational context. Indeed, I found the phrase “be the best you can be” or slightly altered versions as book titles of self-improvement or training literature, for instance concerning topics such as parenting, sports or career advancement. Moreover, several schools have chosen this slogan as their motto, for example, Kelvin Road School in Auckland (refer to <http://www.krs.ac.nz/>, accessed 30 September 2008).

Concerning competition, universities not only compete for students, but also for (academic) staff – on a world-wide prospect. As an important part of their reputation relies on academic excellence, the universities must employ staff that either has already built up a relevant reputation in a significant research community or is promising to develop such a standing. In this regard, it is not unlikely that the prospectuses also have potential academics as a secondary audience in mind.

1.3 Corporatisation

In general, corporatisation, as Chapter 2 showed, is the process whereby formerly state-owned or public organisations or functions become converted into corporate entities – sometimes owned privately, sometimes only publicly (Olssen, 2002a). In New Zealand, for instance, functions such as the postal and telecommunication services or the electricity supply have been transformed into state-owned enterprises that are now managed and audited like private businesses (refer to the web site of the State Services Commission¹⁹, or the Treasury web site²⁰, accessed 30 September 2008).

This process is driven by legislative, political and cultural changes in society. In the context of this research, corporatisation is the tendency that universities increasingly act similar to corporate business enterprises. This tendency leaves traces in the documents that universities publish. In this

¹⁹ http://www.ssc.govt.nz/display/document.asp?docid=6774&pageno=7#P189_6478

²⁰ <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/statesector/soes>

sense, the mere fact that all universities regularly publish image-building prospectuses shows that they are understood as corporate entities that have to build a distinctive profile in order to be distinguishable from their competitors and to attract business. All universities use a distinctive corporate identity for their publications, be it advertisements, stationery, internet presences or the prospectus. This includes a logo that contains a heraldic coat of arms (with the exception of AUT), a corporate colour scheme, layout templates, a set of typefaces and often a recurrent slogan. Such a visual corporate profile serves the need of brand recognition – the institution aims for being recognised quickly, clearly and unmistakably.

The University of Auckland, for example, uses its slogan “Celebrate thinking” – which can also be found on UoA advertisements – on the front cover page as well as on postcards that are attached to the back cover page of the prospectus. Other universities use slogans within the text of the prospectus: for instance, Otago claims “Get serious!” (Otago, p. 0) and refers repeatedly to being “serious” about something, such as “study, fun” (p. 1) or “sport” (p. 7).

Another sign of the entry of an entrepreneurial culture into the tertiary education sector is the fact that universities formulate mission statements and performance objectives, as well as postulations about commitment, vision and values. The text of welcome by the Principal of the Christchurch College of Education – which is associated with the University of Canterbury – is a good example:

... we will not lose sight of the College’s vision of pursuing excellence in the teaching of professional qualifications. Nor will we lose sight of our commitment to providing our students with a supportive, stimulating environment in which they can realise their full potential. (Canterbury, p. 3)

The University of Auckland, too, spells out a “mission”: “We are here to provide you with the best teachers, learning environment and support so that you can succeed in the goals you have set for yourself” (UoA, p. 1). Lincoln University publishes a “Profile” document on its web site stating the “vision [...] to provide the national and international leadership in research and

teaching that will contribute positively to ensure a sustainable environmental, social and economic future for New Zealand” (Lincoln University, 2007b, p. 2).

Even if the institutions do not formulate so-called “missions” or “visions”, the language used reveals that they comprise themselves as a corporate entity. In particular, this understanding of an entity is expressed by using the personal plural pronoun “we” and the possessive pronoun “our”. Examples taken from the introductory texts of the present prospectuses are:

“... we are passionate about education” (Canterbury, p. 3), “We are the largest university in New Zealand” (Massey, p. 2), “Our lecturers can claim to be the best researchers in the country for over a quarter of the subjects we teach.” (Waikato, p. 0), “Our reputation attracts the very best staff and students” (Victoria, p. 6), “Our staff are committed teachers who make significant contributions to the wider community through their research and teaching and we are proud of the facilities and support we provide.” (Otago, p. 4), “Manu tawhiowhio or ‘bird satellite’ stands proudly at the entrance to AUT University, symbolic of our role as navigator for our students...” (AUT, p. 0).

Some institutions even post investment and strategic plans as well as annual reports on their web sites. These sorts of documents have originally been publications presented by companies in order to inform their stakeholders about their performance and financial position. The fact that also universities publish these documents shows that they have come under pressure to perform – in many ways – as if they were businesses. Taking all the mentioned signs into account, it becomes obvious that tertiary education providers are adapting to the way companies are managed. In this regard, I assume that the universities increasingly employ public relations and marketing agencies or in-house specialists to ensure that the best possible image of the institution is created and communicated to the public. The employment of professional advertising and marketing strategies is what Fairclough (1992) calls the technologisation of discourse. Based on my findings in the textual analysis, I will argue in the following that the genre of the university prospectuses oscillates between information and advertising.

2 Case Study 1: The University of Auckland

If you have an image of The University of Auckland, it's probably of high-quality teaching and research, excellent facilities and international recognition. (UoA prospectus, p. 5)

The University of Auckland's (UoA) prospectus is made of 64 pages in colour. The A4 format uses a high quality paper. It is remarkable that the great majority of 50 pages features photographs, which reveals a significant consciousness about visual appearance (Symes, 1998). The front page shows three smiling graduates dressed in cap and gown sitting in front of a stonewall. It can be assumed that the pictured persons represent UoA students who are apparently happy with their decision to study at the UoA. The targeted audience of prospective students can identify with those smiling faces, which might encourage a decision for the advertised institution. The top part shows a panorama of Auckland city featuring the university's clock tower in the centre. This might imply that the UoA is of central importance to the city and located in the heart of the city.

The first double page features an aerial photograph of some of the buildings of the main city campus by night with the Auckland city skyline in the background. On the left, the table of contents is inserted in a white text box, and the right page contains the greeting and a photo of the Vice-Chancellor Stuart McCutcheon together with the headline "Welcome to the University of Auckland". This first section comprises ten pages. In the following, I will analyse the Vice-Chancellor's greeting.

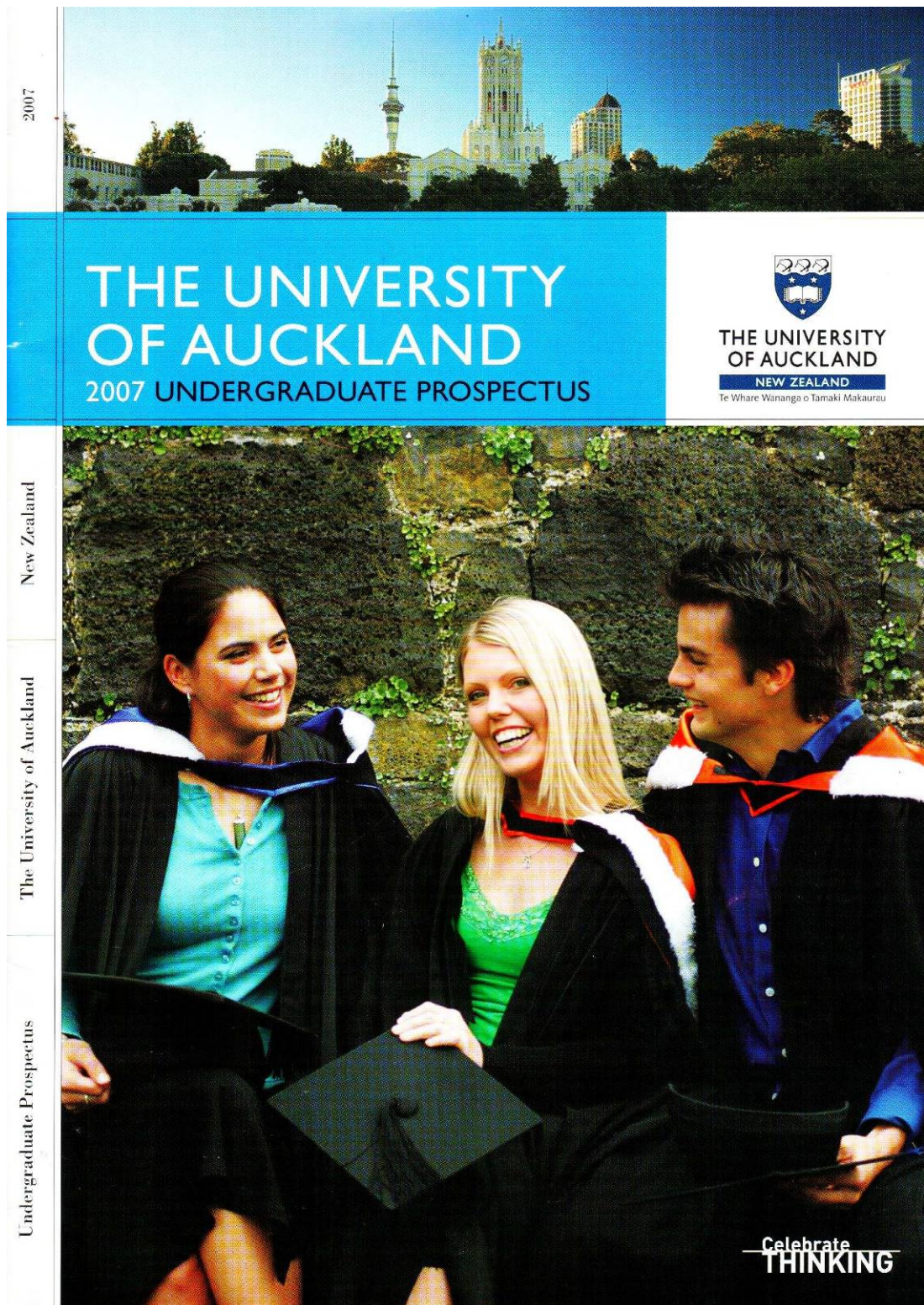


Figure 15: UoA prospectus, front cover page



Figure 16: UoA prospectus, p. 1

2.1 “Welcome to the University of Auckland”: Synthetic personalisation as the mode of address

It is noteworthy that the text opens by addressing the reader personally with the personal pronoun “your/you”: “Your interest in studying at The University of Auckland shows that you recognise how important knowledge is to your future.” This seemingly personal address is strongly continued. There are only three sentences that do not speak directly to the reader by calling him or her “you” or referring to something as “your ...”. The first sentence is a rhetorical means that gives the readers the impression that their motivation and interest in tertiary study is appreciated by the university. That is a method of positioning the reader in an order to respond in a positive mood, making more likely that also the following will be received favourably. Participants of this text are the addressees of this greeting, called “you”, on the one hand, and an undefined group of speakers representing the University of Auckland, called “we”, on the other hand. Taking into account that the text is signed by the Vice-Chancellor and accompanied by a photograph of him, I assume that “we” speak with his voice, which has the effect of a rather personalised welcome. In contrast to the noticeable personal address of the reader, the university as an institution stays in the background. As late as in the third paragraph, the university speaks of itself as a collective in the plural voice of “we”.

The “we” that is used in the first paragraph has a different meaning: this “we” includes the reader because it denotes a general agreement that is commonplace in contemporary society: “In this world, where change is the norm, there is one thing we can be certain of – knowledge will be a key resource and a scarce one which will be eagerly sought by employers within New Zealand and around the globe.” This use of “we” implies an ideological use in the sense of Fairclough (1992). It expresses a common-sense view to which everyone is assumed to agree. This usage of “we” is also a means to express an impersonal, abstract agent, not meaning specific persons, but rather a commonality, the general public. The phrase above reveals a couple of interesting points to consider.

The university speaks on behalf of an undefined community, including the reader by stating the obvious (“change is the norm”). This universality of a vision results in positing a certainty that has a moral character, because the audience is made to agree to a moral issue. It instils a unity between the university and the reader (“the university and you”), suggesting that the university and the addressees are at the same level and agree in important matters so that any oppositions between “them and us” is reduced. In general, this text uses a rather informal, seemingly personalised mode of address. Although the prospectus is a product that is distributed to everyone who expresses interest, it treats its audience as if they were individuals. This process, often supported by the frequent use of the second person pronoun (you) as it is the case here, is called “synthetic personalisation” (Fairclough, 1989, 1992). This concept implies that individuals are synthetically created by linguistic utterances while in fact addressing a mass audience or in other words “a compensatory tendency to give the impression of treating each of the people ‘handled’ *en masse* as an individual” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 62). The artificial character of synthetic personalisation as “the simulation of power symmetry and informality” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 216) or as “the simulation of a personal relation between a text and an audience” (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 180) is another example for discourse technologies. Fairclough (1989) argues that the discourse technology of advertising needs to build a relationship between the advertiser and the consumer:

Both the mass and indeterminate nature of the audience, and the complex and indeterminate nature of the producer, present the advertiser with a challenge. (...) Both producer and audience need to be *personalized*. (p. 203)

Fairclough (1989) further suggests to

use this term [synthetic personalization] to refer to all phenomena in strategic discourse, whether in its consumerist or bureaucratic varieties, where relational and subjective values are manipulated for instrumental reasons. This may be a matter of constructing fictitious individual persons (...) or of manipulating the subject positions of, or the relationships between, actual individual persons (in the direction of equality, solidarity, intimacy or whatever). (p. 217)

2.2 Authority and the promise of a good investment return

The use of the simple future - four out of ten sentences of the text of welcome use the simple future tense - indicates an authoritative voice of the university: this alleged ability to make predictions about the future is designed to reassure prospective students. Since, as the university knows what the future will be like, it can prepare and equip the students today for future challenges. Fairclough (1992) comments that when "...sentences are modalized with 'will', [this modality] gives a meaning of categorical prediction – 'this is what will happen' – and suggests that the text producer is writing from a position of insider knowledge" (p. 173). The use of the simple future with 'will' implies therefore an authoritative possession of the future by the university. Such an assertive voice is typical for advertisements, because the addressees must be convinced of the quality of the advertised product.

This encouraging tone is further fuelled by other predictions assuring that graduates will not only find a job, but will even "be eagerly sought by employers". The university offers guidance to its students and promises them that their education will be recognised world-wide so that they can find work "around the globe". The institution further declares that an education at the UoA is a worthwhile investment that will pay off throughout the student's whole life: it is claimed that "you" will gain "skills you will use all your life" and which "will serve you well in whatever career path you follow".

A very business-like approach to education becomes visible when the UoA speaks of the "wealth of life-long learning opportunities which are available to you at The University of Auckland". This offer seems to suggest that the UoA can sell 'you' even more of its products and services later in life. The voice of business and of the competitive marketplace is also present in characterising "knowledge" as a commodity and emphasising its supposedly scarcity ("a key resource and a scarce one"). The discourse of competition and the marketplace is further very visible in the many remarks dealing with the future employability and career chances of the UoA graduates ("eagerly sought by employers", "whatever career path you follow", "succeed in the

goals you have set for yourself"). The reassuring, authoritative tone that the university employs in regard to its (prospective) students is also present in more expressions that suggest that the UoA knows how the world outside works ("In this world, where change is the norm...", "in a world where change is constant...").

2.3 Research success as a point of distinction

Another point to remark is how the UoA markets itself as a high-ranking research institution. The university positions itself as "a research-led university" with the "best teachers" who are "unlocking new knowledge through their research". The importance of research is emphasised, both for the position of the university itself and for its contribution to the changing world of the future. The high valuation of research is also used as a point of difference in contrast to the other New Zealand universities: the UoA stresses that it was awarded the "highest world ranking of any New Zealand university". Research is an important topic to the university, not at the least because a significant part of its funding monies depend on high research outputs due to the introduction of the PBRF²¹ funding system (Ministry of Education and Transition Tertiary Education Commission, 2002). While it is obvious that research is important to the university, it might be less so for the students, especially those seeking a first degree. In order to minimise this disparity, the UoA again adopts a view of universality. An underpinning assumption that has guided the structure of the text is that research is important for everyone ("We are a research-led university ..., and that is important in a world where change is constant."). And in regard to the students, they are told that lecturers who are engaged in research also are the better teachers, because they are "unlocking new knowledge" and "passing it on to our students". Those propositions "are taken by the producer of the text as already established or 'given'" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 120). Such postulations are called "presuppositions" and can be interpreted as instances of intertextual relations with previous texts. Such a previous text that is echoed within the presupposition is often "not an individual specified or

²¹ Performance-based Research Funding (PBRF)

identifiable other text, but a more nebulous 'text' corresponding to general opinion (what people tend to say, accumulated textual experience)" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 121).

Reverting to the concept of knowledge, "knowledge" is a noticeable keyword in this text of welcome. It is used five times, which I found a striking accumulation in a rather short text of just over 250 words. This "dense wording of a domain" can be classified as "overwording" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 193):

We sometimes have 'overwording' – an unusually high degree of wording, often involving many words which are near synonyms. Overwording shows preoccupation with some aspect of reality – which may indicate that it is a focus of ideological struggle. (Fairclough, 1989, p. 115)

This frequent mentioning implies the importance of the knowledge concept to the text producers. This is not surprising considering that knowledge is here described as a commodity: knowledge is classified as "a key resource and a scarce one" and it is further specified in the categories of "specialist knowledge", "existing knowledge" and "new knowledge". This emphasis on knowledge together with the mentioning of world-wide employment opportunities and the internationally high ranking of the UoA, form a discursive theme that can be defined as the assumption that the audience lives in a globalised, post-industrial knowledge society – with the implication that studying at the UoA provides the tools to deal with that fact. This again is a presupposition, which is hard to challenge, having the effect that the readers are likely to agree with the content of the text.

3 Case Study 2: AUT University

If you want an education that will give you a foundation for an exciting career in the modern economy, then welcome to AUT University. (AUT prospectus, p. 1)

AUT University presents its prospectus in an A4 format, using it in the landscape layout rather than the more usual portrait format. Like the UoA, the introductory section consists of ten pages, before getting into the description of the subjects and study courses on offer. The first four pages apparently are designed for quick reference as they provide – with the exception of the text of welcome by the Vice Chancellor – lists or indexes with telephone numbers and e-mail addresses, “key dates”, a table of contents and an alphabetical listing of the subjects AUT offers.

The following pages of this first part of the prospectus under the headline “Getting to know AUT University” focus on general services and the facilities AUT provides. This section is more readable than the previous, using short paragraphs of text that are broken up with “fact files” (bullet points graphically set apart) and two or three colour photographs on each page. This general overview of the institution seems to try to show the reader how it feels to be a student at AUT, emphasising the care that AUT students receive, illustrated by topics such as “Orientation”, “Financial services and assistance”, “Helping you to study”, “Student mentors”, “Keeping you safe and well”, “Dine at AUT”, and “Family friendly”. The right half of the first double page features a text of welcome by AUT’s Vice Chancellor Derek McCormack, which presents the university to the readers of the prospectus and describes what the audience can expect from AUT. In the following, I will analyse this text sample in the form of a discursive case study.

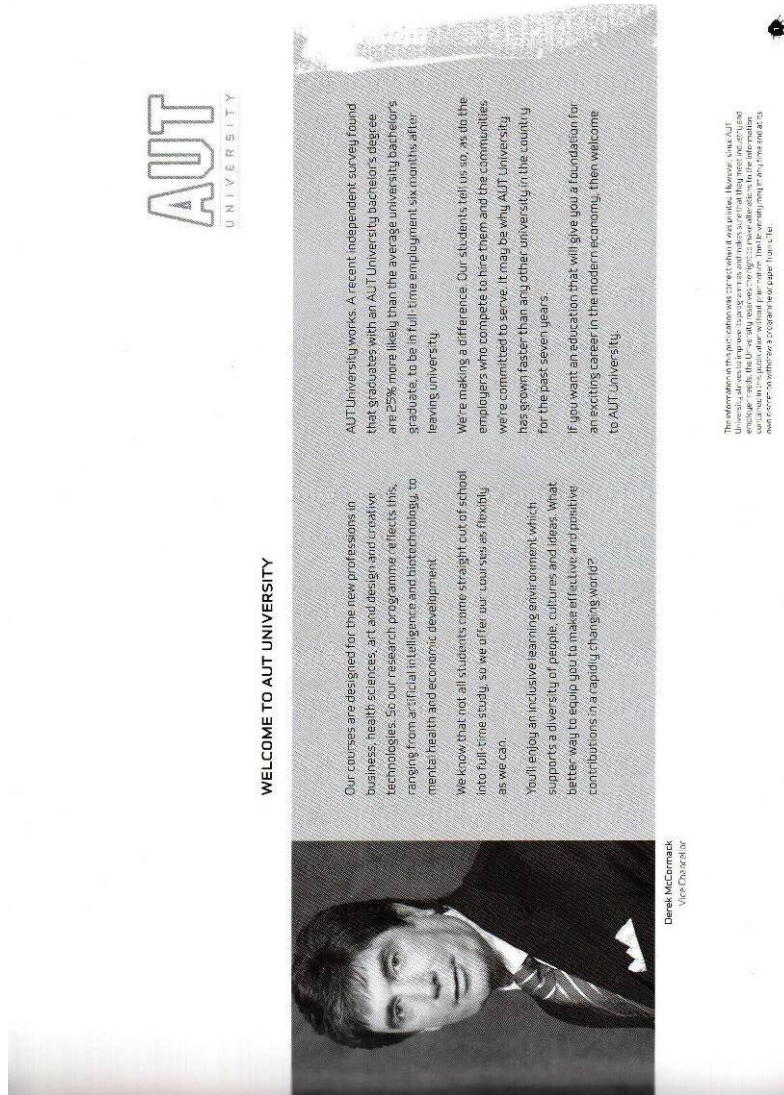


Figure 17: AUT prospectus, p. 1

Figure 18: AUT prospectus, p. 7



3.1 “Welcome to AUT University”: The university as a corporate entity

This text of welcome is seemingly targeted – as a primary audience – at prospective students seeking a first degree that will qualify them for the future job market. AUT University addresses the reader in a personalised style, making extensive use of the personal pronouns “we”, “our” and “you”. The university – in the voice of its Vice-Chancellor Derek McCormack – presents itself by the personal plural pronoun “we”. Apart from the use of the personal pronoun “we”, which presents the university as a community of people with the same goals, AUT University gives itself a very prominent focus as an institution. For instance, the title of ‘AUT University’ is named four times within this short text of less than 200 words. Additionally, ‘AUT University’ is mentioned once in the headline, plus once within the logo, as well as in the disclaimer²² on the same page. This frequent mentioning of the name ‘AUT University’ shows that the organisation establishes itself an image as a corporate identity, supported by a consistent layout and the prominent use of its easily recognisable logo.

Another indicator for corporatisation is the creation of the label ‘AUT University’, which is a newly designed lexical item. As AUT is short for ‘Auckland University of Technology’, ‘AUT University’ is a tautological expression. However, the repetition of an abbreviated word (here ‘university’) is not uncommon, because in many cases, the meaning of the acronym may not be obvious to everybody²³. In this sense, the redundancy emphasises the main point and shapes the context. Thus, the expression ‘AUT University’ leaves no doubt that the organisation in question is a fully-fledged university, which differentiates itself from other tertiary education

²² The use of a disclaimer is an interesting feature. Not every university includes a disclaimer in its prospectus. The disclaimer adds to the feeling of seriousness of this kind of document, because of its legal status and the very formal language. But at the same time, it is also a sign that the university keeps a door open to back out of its promises made in the prospectus. In this sense, the disclaimer allows the universities to cancel any programmes or services they had offered to the students, signalling authority and power that the institutions can execute over their “customers”.

²³ For example, PIN number (Personal identification number number), ATM machine (Automatic teller machine machine), LCD display (Liquid crystal display display).

providers, such as polytechnics or private training institutions. Emphasising its being a university rather than spelling out the expression 'Auckland University of Technology', shifts the focus on the universality of the institution, hedging at the same time its roots as a polytechnic. Polytechnics in general focus on vocational courses that prepare for a profession in the industries. This distinction may be especially important to AUT because it gained its university status as recently as in the year 2000. Before becoming a university, AUT was known as 'Auckland Institute of Technology' (AIT)²⁴. Emphasising its new status in the public perception might be considered an essential goal of AUT's marketing and communication plans.

It is also clearly visible that AUT tries to stand out from competing universities: they are claiming that "[w]e're making a difference". AUT compares itself directly with other institutions by stating that "AUT University has grown faster than any other university in the country" and by positioning AUT openly against "the average university", which might imply every other institution except AUT itself. This frank positioning of the own institution in competition with others is a clear sign of marketisation, because it acknowledges the fact that New Zealand's TEIs have to defend their market share. The pivotal distinction stated by AUT is that its graduates gain employment faster than those of competing universities, which proves the relevance of AUT's education programmes for imminent success "in the modern economy". It is interesting that AUT not only asserts its different standing but that the organisation tries to prove this claim by citing authorities:

A recent independent survey found that graduates with an AUT University bachelor's degree are 25% more likely than the average university bachelor's graduate, to be in full-time employment six months after leaving university. (AUT, p. 1)

Referring to authorities is a common means of convincing the readership of the truthfulness and trustworthiness of the claims made. This rhetorical technique is called "appeal to authority" (Slade, 2002). Also, naming numbers ("25% more likely") adds to the voice of seriousness. However, the

²⁴ Refer to AUT's history on the web site http://www.aut.ac.nz/about/governance_and_history/ (last accessed on 17 June, 2008).

reference remains vague, as no source is named and it is also not clear what the “average university” really means.

Modality is another feature that communicates certainty: most sentences (six out of eleven) in this text use the simple present tense indicative, marking clarity, positiveness and assertiveness. What is said in this mode usually is a defined statement, which is not open to question (for example, “our research programme reflects”, “we know”, “AUT University works”, “our students tell us”). Similarly, the use of the simple future tense communicates a certainty about the future, which is generally unknown. The statements about the future forecast a positive perspective for the people who decide to study at AUT: the sentence “You’ll enjoy an inclusive learning environment...” implies that the reader will actually choose AUT over another institution and that the outcome of this decision will be a pleasant one (“enjoy”). The other sentence (“If you want an education that will give you a foundation for an exciting career in the modern economy, then welcome to AUT University.”) also provides an encouraging outlook on the future, promising “an exciting career”. Education thus is perceived as a means to achieve success in the business life.

Within this text, other keywords implying commodification can be found: some parts directly relate to the order of the discourse of the workplace. Examples of this are “the new professions in business, health sciences, art and design and creative technologies”, “the modern economy” and “the employers who compete to hire” AUT’s graduates. The future workplace is also implied in the claim that AUT’s graduates are likely to gain “full-time employment” soon after leaving university. The fact that AUT offers its programmes with the aim to “equip” their students “to make effective and positive contributions” indicates that the courses are perceived similar to a more tangible commodity, a piece of ‘equipment’ the possession of which supplies the bearer with tools to succeed in life. Learning programmes are apparently seen to “‘deliver’ a standard ‘product’ in the shape of learning outcomes which are exchangeable” (Trowler, 2001, p. 188). Consequently, Trowler (2001) warns that students might become “no longer active

participants in learning but a totalized category having learning outcomes delivered to them” (p. 189).

3.2 Selling tailor-made education products

Another theme shows that education is not only perceived as a commodity that will serve the student-consumer well, but that also has to be marketed favourably in order to seem attractive to a broad range of prospective students. Therefore, AUT’s “courses are designed” and “offer[ed] flexibly” to cater for “a diversity of people, cultures and ideas”. By selling convenient and sure-to-succeed pieces of education equipment, the students are addressed as consumers in the way that AUT knows and serves the needs of its students. AUT claims to know what learners need because they talk to their students (“our students tell us so”, “We know not all students come straight out of school”). That is why AUT can match the demand by making tailored offers of flexibility and support for a diversity of backgrounds.

Although acknowledging the students’ authority as potential consumers of education, AUT at the same time still has the authority to impose conditions upon its students. This is visible in the last sentence of the text through the structure of the conditional if-clause. It implies that a prospective student is only welcome under the condition that “you want an education that will give you a foundation for an exciting career”. This requirement might state that AUT sets high standards and therefore is a place for committed people only. This sentence along with other signs in the following is a sign of a fundamental contradiction within the relationship between the university and the students. It is a contradiction of an authority relationship where the roles of ‘authoritor’ and ‘authoritee’ swap. On the one hand, the university is the ‘authoritor’ who imposes regulations on an ‘authoritee’ by controlling who can enter which university courses and who can remain at university. On the other hand, the consumer can also be seen as the ‘authoritor’ who has the power to buy or not to buy the products on offer. In this role, the university is then the ‘authoritee’ trying to sell a product to a consumer whose buying decisions, ultimately, decide over the organisation’s continuing prosperity.

Fairclough (1992) characterises such an ambivalence as a hybrid discourse of “telling-and-selling” (pp. 115-17). The text here shows traces of a mix of two discourse types; that is information about regulations on the one side, and advertising services on the other side. The disclaimer on the same page (see above) adds to the contradiction within the authority relation. This feature clearly marks the authority of the university to make its own rules:

... the University reserves the right to make alterations to the information contained in this publication without prior notice. The University may at any time and at its own discretion withdraw a programme or paper from offer. (AUT, p. 1)

The language used – also set in small print at the bottom of the page – reminds of terms and conditions of business that regulate a seller-buyer relationship and the rights of both. For instance, sometimes, a seller or shop states that the goods purchased cannot be returned when the buyers change their mind or only under rigid conditions. The disclaimer serves a similar purpose: claiming that the student-consumers cannot complain if they find some information in the prospectus not to be correct.

3.3 Asymmetry of authority

This ambivalent relation can also be found in the contrast between the featured photograph of the Vice Chancellor and the language of the text. While the text addresses the audience directly, using short sentences and trying to convince the reader of the advantages of studying at AUT, the photograph has a very formal appearance. The Vice Chancellor is pictured in black and white with the attributes of a passport photo. He is wearing a formal dark suit with shirt, tie and a carefully arranged handkerchief, all adding to an aura of importance and seriousness. He is obviously portrayed as a respectable person whose statements can be trusted. His slightly open mouth and the fact that he looks the onlooker straight in the eye might mean that he is actually speaking to his audience, which further supports the direct mode of address used in the text.

The very formal appeal of the visual signs contrasts the rather informal, in instances even “matey” language of the text. As already said, the text mainly

consists of short, uncomplicated sentences that should be able to be captured by just a quick, superficial reading. Using a rather simple language acknowledges that the target audience is most likely to flick through such a prospectus rather than spend an extended time to read thoroughly (Symes, 1998). Even the logical relations between sentences are constructed in a way that reduces complexity. The first two paragraphs are structured similarly, using the cohesive marker “so” to connect the sentences to an argument that is easy to follow (“Our courses are designed... So our research programme reflects this... We know that..., so we offer...”). Another example for an informal language use is the sentence in the fifth paragraph: “Our students tell us so, as do the employers who compete to hire them and the communities we’re committed to serve.” The first part (“our students tell us so, as do the employers”), relating to the preceding sentence (“We’re making a difference.”) is in this context a lexical and grammatical oddity, which has an effect of jovial informality.

This marked “matiness” might be intended to reduce a possible distance between the university as a respectable institution and the audience. This effect is also supported by using short forms, such as “you’ll enjoy”, “we’re making”, “we’re committed” (instead of “you will”, “we are”), which usually are used in oral, not written language. The result of such a rather casual, informal language is that the text simulates a conversation between the university – represented by the Vice Chancellor – and the audience. In this sense, the conversational discourse has spread into the public, formal domain of a printed publication (Fairclough, 1992). Drawing on the informality of conversational discourse seemingly reduces the asymmetry of authority between the university and the students.

In summary, the text sample shows the contradiction between the authority of the university as a serious institution that has the power to impose regulations on the student and the authority of the student as a consumer who has to be convinced by promotional means to “buy” the advertised “product”. The contrast between the formal visual sign of the portrait and the matey language serves this purpose well, because the visual sign is usually

the first and quickest to be perceived. Therefore, the first impression the audience might experience is that of the seriousness and trustworthiness of the institution, which is then moderated by an approaching language with a welcoming effect.

3.4 Connection with the real world

Next, I would like to compare a discursive theme within the AUT text sample and the previously analysed text sample of the UoA, demonstrating intertextual relations. While the UoA emphasises its prominent research profile, AUT highlights its strong connection with the ‘real world’ – that is the world of business and the economy (Mautner, 2005). As already mentioned, the vocabulary throughout the text reflects the discourse of the economy and the workplace (“new professions”, “employment”, “exciting career”, “modern economy”). This emphasis presupposes that the audience has a strong interest in career orientation and the practical application of what can be learned at university.

This focus shows the ideological orientation to education as a commodity, serving the purpose of success in career terms. AUT’s emphasis of the applicability and practical relevance of its study programmes is also reflected by its claimed commitment to the “communities” (“the communities we’re committed to serve”). Students educated at AUT will have received a vocational training that makes them ready to serve the society, for instance the communities of medicine, technology, industry, and so forth. Those communities – and the prospective employers of AUT graduates – can be seen as secondary audiences of this prospectus. Again, education is thus not understood as a goal in itself, an opportunity for the learners to develop their own personalities, but as a benefit that leads to a direct pay-off.

In contrast to the UoA, research is mentioned, but not emphasised – the connection to the real world and the preparation for the job market seems to be more important. Research is only mentioned in passing within the second sentence (“our research programme reflects this”), but it is just one of other

features that make AUT interesting. Research is therefore not a good in itself, but it serves the needs for “the new professions”, so it is directly linked to the business world. Specific areas of research are listed, so that research does not obtain the aura of an academic exercise without relation to the real world outside the university cosmos. It is also notable that only applied sciences are referred to, omitting programmes in the classical humanities such as languages or social sciences²⁵.

This weighting of study areas is also reflected by the new organisation of faculties within AUT (refer to AUT’s web site, <http://www.aut.ac.nz>, accessed 30 September 2008), where Art and Design and Communication Studies – traditionally classified as Humanities – have been merged with Engineering, Mathematics and Computer Sciences into the “future field” of “Creative Technologies”. Also other traditional Arts and Humanities subjects such as Education, Languages and Social Sciences apparently cannot stand for themselves, but are categorised as “Applied Humanities”, suggesting that the learning contents are ready to be applied to the professional world. This faculty restructuring could also be a result of the competition between several schools and departments within one university, “as the introduction of accrual accounting methods means that each element in the system must demonstrate its financial viability” (Olssen, 2002b, p. 75). Apart from that, AUT puts a much stronger emphasis on its connection to the professional business world, for which it promises to prepare its students.

Another instance of intertextuality can be found in the rhetorical question: “What better way to equip you to make effective and positive contributions in a rapidly changing world?”. This reference to the “rapidly changing world” echoes the UoA text (“In this world, where change is the norm...”). Without saying that both text samples are directly intertwined, they draw on the same presuppositions that are taken as given with the effect of including the reader in a common-sense statement. Both texts state that everyone agrees that the world has become scary but at the same time, the universities promise that they can deal with the menace, as they make sure that their students will

²⁵ Which is surely also due to AUT’s roots as a polytechnic.

withstand any future challenges. I think that in this sense, the prospectuses are also targeted at parents as secondary audiences because usually the parents have to be convinced that they are spending their money at the right place in order to facilitate a promising future for their children.

Chapter 5: Conclusion, discussion and answers to research questions

What is an educational system, after all, if not a ritualisation of the word; if not a qualification of some fixing of roles for speakers; if not the constitution of a (diffuse) doctrinal group; if not a distribution and an appropriation of discourse, with all its learning and its powers? (Foucault, 1971, p. 19)

The intention of my research was to show evidence that the order of discourse of tertiary education has been colonised by the order of discourse of the economy. The idea for this project emerged from my observation of some tools that the New Zealand universities use for presenting themselves to the public, namely the yearly prospectuses, the design of their web sites as well as several forms of advertisements, be it print advertisements in newspapers, posters at bus stops or radio commercials. This observation led to the hypothesis that advertising tools and strategies have become incorporated into ostensibly informational material, such as the prospectuses that are the object of my analysis here. Since this idea touches areas of the interpretation of language and visual signs as well as implications of changes and developments in society and politics more generally, I have decided that discourse analysis would be the most revealing methodology for my research purpose. I assumed an interdependency between sociocultural changes – in this case manifested in policy changes made by the New Zealand government – and discursive changes, which have been identified in the language and discourse of higher education.

Subsequently, I have identified the three trends of commodification and marketisation of tertiary education and of the corporatisation of New Zealand universities as relevant factors proving the spreading of the discourse of business into the discourse of higher education. In the previous chapter, I found evidence of these three trends within the data corpus. The close textual analysis of the 2007 prospectuses of all eight universities revealed clear signals of the tendencies through the language and design of

the material. Since I have mainly followed Fairclough's (1992) method of textually-oriented discourse analysis (TODA), I will, in this final chapter, move from "description" to "interpretation".

In discourse analysis, the description already contains elements of interpretation (Fairclough, 1992). The specific second step of interpretation, then, provides the link to the broader social context, which is both prerequisite and result of language and discourse changes. This drawing together of textual analysis and social theory is the special feature of discourse analysis and the reason why I chose this methodology for my thesis. My main argument here is that the prospectuses form a hybrid genre of discourse, being partly informational, partly promotional. The result of such a hybridisation is the phenomenon of the entrepreneurial university (Mautner, 2005).

This chapter, then, starts with a general discussion of the findings of the textual analysis of the previous chapter. The following part answers the research questions as developed in Chapter 1. The chapter closes with recommendations for further research and a short, final conclusion.

1 Discussion: Advertorial hybrid genre

As the data analysis has shown, educational discourse is now colonised by the discourses of the economy and the marketplace. Tertiary education has become commodified, with the result that students are perceived as customers. As the universities are now regarded as corporate entities, they aim to present a consistent image to the public (Olssen, 2002b; Symes, 1998). Furthermore, the universities engage in marketing and promotion techniques in order to secure their share within the marketplace of higher education.

The prospectuses are one of many other tools that serve this purpose of building a positive image of the institution. At first sight, they seem to provide mostly informational material, such as information about the courses

and subjects on offer, or about study costs or regulations for enrolling. However, in most cases, these kinds of information are situated in the latter parts of the documents, and sometimes also provided in bland presentation (tables and only one colour instead of pictures). The design and layout of the prospectuses seem to be rather costly and glossy. If the prospectuses were all about information, they would not need such an eye-catching way of presentation. All prospectuses work with pictures, photographs and a wide range of colours. Analysis of both the language and the appearance of these documents shows that the prospectuses are more marketing-oriented than informational. I assume that the prospectuses are publications that are likely to be flicked through quickly, so that they serve the purpose of providing a first impression of the institution.

Following an expression also used by Symes (1998), I would like to call these kinds of publications “advertorial”. They do provide substantial information on regulations for applying for a course of study and so forth, but the main point is that they promote the image of the institution in question. The colourful layout is certainly designed as an appealing eye-catcher, and the language clearly positions the advantages of one institution in contrast with its competitors. The prospectuses, therefore, form a hybrid genre of discourse, being partly informational, partly promotional. Hybrid genres are an especially interesting topic for discourse analysis because naturally, they draw on more than just one discourse: “Hybridity is a fruitful area for CDA²⁶ to investigate because it is here that the different interests are played out” (Janks, 1997, p. 340). In terms of this study, I have shown that the university prospectuses draw on the discourses of education and of the economy and business.

The prospectuses as “advertorials” show that advertising strategies as discourse technologies have become incorporated into seemingly informational material. The result of this colonisation is the development of the hybrid genre of the partly informational, partly promotional prospectuses. As Fairclough (1992) argues, advertising is a discourse

²⁶ Critical discourse analysis

technology, applied by trained discourse technologists. Engaging in advertising leads to – or might also be a result of – the marketisation of the education sector. In this sense, the prospectuses are the products of discourse technologisation, because they are produced by professionals with the intention of creating a certain impression. One of the objectives of impression management is to construct an entrepreneurial and institutional identity (Symes, 1998), which also serves the purpose of positioning one organisation against its competitors.

However, I think that especially for the education sector, the providers have to be careful not to over-engage in advertising. It is very important for the universities that the prospectuses and other means of communication really convince the readers (as well as the audience of advertisements, web sites, and so on) of their qualities. If the communication strategy fails, because the message does not convince, a serious “problem of trust” has developed. The key question the public will ask is: “how can we be sure what’s authentic?” (Fairclough, 1993, p. 142). The decision for a certain course of study is a serious one, given the amount of time and money that university study demands of the students. Education providers offer a “good” and “values” that are important for the future of their students. Although the decision for a degree or subject can be altered or corrected over time, of course, it probably often is a carefully considered one. This is the reason why the education providers apparently take their audience seriously, addressing them in a welcoming and seemingly personal way. Being too provocative, for instance, by using irony or making jokes, which is often used in advertising in other contexts in order to draw attention to the products, would be out of place here.

2 Answers to research questions

This section will answer the research questions developed in Chapter 1, which I will repeat here.

The first question was:

- 1) *Can we see that the order of discourse of business has colonised the order of discourse of higher, especially of tertiary, education?*

Since I have split up the 'order of discourse of business' into the three trends of marketisation, corporatisation and commodification, as identified in the previous chapters, the question is further concretised into the two following sub-questions:

- a. *Is the new discourse of marketisation, corporatisation and commodification of higher education visible in the promotional and information material issued by the universities?*
- b. *Do the universities as providers address students as consumers, and if so, how?*

In the following, I will provide answers and points of discussion under the headlines of the three trends.

- **Marketisation**

Marketisation, in terms of this study, means that the universities compete in the same marketplace for tertiary education. Consequently, education is sold in much the same way as other products, with the help of marketing, promotion and advertising techniques. Engagement in advertising and the issuing of school or university prospectuses therefore is a sign of the entrance of the market into the education sector. As I have argued above, the prospectuses are regarded as one tool within the promotional mix of impression management (Symes, 1998). The main evidence of marketisation is the entry of competition into the university sector. As shown in Chapter 2, in the course of the reforms in the educational and many other sectors of the public life in New Zealand in the last 25 years, a competitive market culture has been perceived as a remedy to economic problems of efficiency. As Olssen (2002b) points out, in the neo-liberal discourse, competition is seen "as a way of increasing productivity, accountability and control. Increased competition represents increased quality within neo-liberalism" (p. 74). The ideology that free-market competition not only leads to increased efficiency

but also improves the quality of the services and products legitimates the marketisation of education.

If, in the course of marketisation, the selling and advertising of education is analogous to other commodities, the consequence is that students are addressed as the consumers of education. As a result, competing education providers are likely to align their courses to the perceived needs of the students rather than to the pure concept of knowledge and education, as for example, Case Study 2 about AUT University has shown. As critical and well-informed consumers usually seek for the offer with the best quality and price, the universities have to continually improve, or at least be seen to improve, their services and also their presentation and marketing techniques. One consequence of the increased orientation towards the market is the fact that the universities show a tendency to prepare and present courses that are 'designed' to meet the needs and interests of the students. Education, skills and knowledge are offered as 'packages' including a respected qualification, career prospects as well as personal support and fun.

Every university therefore tries to position itself as unique and special in contrast to all the other competing institutions in order to build a distinctive profile. As the students as consumers have the power of consumer choice, the universities need to create a recognisable brand, which convinces the student-consumers of the excellence and suitability of the products and services on offer. Courses are now being "designed" (AUT, p. 1) in order to "demonstrate their relevance to labour market conditions and prospects" (Olssen, 2002b, p. 76). The reason for this is the assumption that the student-consumers behave like rational optimisers, choosing the education programmes that promise the best possible benefit in their future career path. While it is certainly understandable that young adults are keen to invest in a promising future in order to secure themselves a stable income and a comfortable standard of living, a too one-sided orientation towards career prospects and market demands might limit their view of their own interests, talents and possibly of the importance of the variety of aspects that form a culture and society. In the case study, I have already mentioned how AUT

University had rearranged its study subjects into categories that seem to be more applicable to business life, which results in a perceived devaluation of the traditional humanities.

A further effect of the universities' intensified engagement in marketing might be that a successful marketing campaign might influence a student's decision for a specific institution, without necessarily providing a true representation of the quality of the education on offer. However, it is probably still highly subjective how an individual perceives the situation of studying at a certain institution. Whether someone succeeds at university and is satisfied with the circumstances presumably depends on a great number of personal and coincidental factors, so that it is hard to argue which element of the decision-making process has finally led to a definite decision.

Another corollary of the increasing marketisation of tertiary education is the universities' concern "with their market reputation" (Olssen, 2002a, p. 43). Being aware that the level of funding and continuing prosperity are indirectly dependent on a positive image, the universities have become "increasingly intolerant of adverse criticism of the institution by the staff" (Olssen, 2002a, p. 43). According to Olssen (2002a), this concern has already led to "the use of discipline against employees who criticise their universities" (p. 43). Such a development is a significant change in the self-conception of academics, who traditionally, have been required to cultivate their free spirit in order to be able to challenge the status quo and so to lead to new discoveries and progress in society and science. University researchers had been able to engage in fundamental research that might neither be goal-oriented in the first place, nor even contract research sponsored by a company. If academic staff is now expected to show corporate loyalty, they might lose some aspect of their former freedom, and are thus made more comparable to employees of ordinary businesses.

- **Corporatisation**

Within the scope of this study, the concept of corporatisation implies that universities should be run like businesses (Olssen, 2002a, 2002b). Even

though the eight New Zealand universities are not private businesses, but rather, are still principally funded by the government, a catalogue of criteria demanding accountability and efficiency is now being applied to the education providers. Indicators for corporatisation, such as calls for improving financial and administrative efficiency, which Olssen identifies in his studies, could not be the object of my thesis. Such criteria are not visible in the prospectuses but rather in other documents such as policies or in mission statements and performance objectives (see, for example, Lincoln University, 2007b; Massey University, n.d.-a; University of Otago, 2007).

However, the prospectuses show other clear signs that the universities present themselves as corporate entities. The mere existence of these publications serves the idea of building a corporate image. As I have demonstrated above, the distinctive corporate design is supported by the use of a corporate logo, colour and typeface set. Also, in many cases, the personalised welcome using the name and a portrait of the vice-chancellor serves the purpose of giving the institution a face and a memorable profile. This is especially important to consider because in the course of corporatisation, the vice-chancellor has adopted the role of the Chief Executive Officer, that is the top manager of the organisation and the employer of every member of staff (Küchler, Müller-Böling, & Ziegele, 1998, p. 7).

Including pictures and sometimes also names of people associated with the university, for instance, students, lecturers or graduates, is another means of giving the institution a more human face. Short stories of successful graduates or happy students might help convince prospective students and their parents that studying at this institution will be a worthwhile investment. These profiles and photographs also contribute to a certain degree of personalisation, because the audience can identify with the portrayed persons as possible role models.

Although the data analysis has provided clear instances of corporatisation within the university sector, I think that corporatisation has not such an

obvious effect on education and on the students than the other two trends probably have. Corporatisation provides evidence of the presence of the universities in the marketplace, because the universities have become aware that they need to present themselves in a professional manner in order to be noticed in a positive way. The reputation of a certain institution is also influenced by promotion techniques, so that the prospectuses are one tool to build and cultivate an image. For instance, some universities emphasise their high research ranking and their world-wide reputation. In this respect, corporatisation is closely intertwined with the marketisation and commodification of tertiary education. However, I would like to argue that corporatisation also is an aspect of an increasing professionalisation of the university sector and as such another indicator of the technologisation of the discourse of education. It is probably more a side effect of marketisation and commodification, but does not have such strong implications on the perception of the value of university education.

- **Commodification**

In the data section, I have been able to find evidence of the commodification of tertiary education. University education is regarded as a commodity, in the sense of an investment into a successful future. This overall ideology is clearly visible in the language, as well as in the frequent mentioning of possible career paths for every subject or degree course. Moreover, the portraits of seemingly successful and confident advanced students and young professionals, which many universities use in their prospectuses, add to the perception that the effort of university study will pay off in the near future. The presupposition that lies behind this ideology is the belief that fee-paying students will make sure that they gain the relevant skills and knowledge to secure a good income. The students are perceived as rational economically self-interested subjects (Olssen, 1996) seeking “value for money” (McKenzie, 1996, p. 156).

With the introduction of the EFTS funding system, the New Zealand government has adopted the idea of a demand-driven financing (Küchler, Müller-Böling, & Ziegele, 1998). However, this system has also been

criticised because it might force the universities to promote those courses, which are thought to lead to an economically successful career, and to neglect the traditional humanities:

To have funding 'follow the students' through the system of fees (supported by bank loans) places a conservative pressure on course design and planning, and supports those programs and courses that are perceived to have direct economic pay-off, consequently diminishing those (such as humanities and social sciences) that are not so perceived. (Olssen, 2002b, p. 80)

Such a one-sided concentration on business-orientated study courses might also lead to a situation, where "learning programmes 'deliver' a standard 'product' in the shape of learning outcomes which are exchangeable" (Trowler, 2001, p. 188). Knowledge and skills are now seen as a resource, not unlike money, and they can become outdated (see UoA text of welcome in Case Study 1).

In addition to the discourse about education as a product and students as consumers, I have earlier referred to the "education industry" (Chapter 3). This expression demonstrates how closely connected the domains of education and business have become. In New Zealand, the education industry has a strong focus on the international market. The "export education industry" (Codd, 2005, p. 199) has become a major factor of the national economy. This means that schools and tertiary education providers aim to attract international students, because those both might add to the international reputation of the New Zealand education system and also, because they usually pay higher fees than domestic students. This is a reason why education institutions compete for foreign students as they contribute to the financial funding of the education system. Furthermore, the data analysis has shown that the universities pay attention to globalisation by emphasising their world-wide reputation, the international recognition of their degrees and the global career chances of their graduates.

A further implication of the tendencies of commodification and marketisation in particular is that the public benefits of higher education and

research move out of focus. The literature review has shown that, before the reforms of the Fourth Labour government, the universities could rely on their perceived authority and a general benevolence of the society (Codd, 2005). But as the discourse changed in the way that education was not perceived as a public right any more, but rather as a personal advantage, the general acceptance of the existence and the work of the universities decreased, so that the education providers had to provide more insight into the “ivory tower” – which is partly be done with the help of marketing and promotion. However, the question remains if education is not rather a public good that results in social benefits, teaching members of the society the basics of “citizenship, tolerance, literacy, and the democratic functioning of a community” (Olssen, 1996, p. 342). Although Olssen, in this article, focuses mainly on the primary and secondary level of education, I would equally like to argue that tertiary education and research, too, add to the social wealth and prosperity of a society, and are in this sense, also public goods (Codd, 2005). Well-educated citizens might not only be equipped to bring their skills and knowledge into service for a business corporation, but also able to engage in community-related issues, in politics and scientific progress.

To sum up, the data has shown that the discourse of business has spread into discourses of tertiary education. Assumptions and ideologies originating from the discourses of business have become incorporated into the education sector, so that they are now perceived as common-sense beliefs and a matter of course, which are hard to challenge. Promotion and marketing now belong to the ordinary activities of tertiary education providers, which are accepted because it is understood that they have to compete for students, staff and funding monies.

My second sub-question was:

b) Do the universities as providers address students as consumers, and if so, how?

As education has become commodified, the consequence is that students are perceived as the consumers of education. However, the prospectuses do not directly address prospective students as consumers. The targeting is rather

subtle. Within the language of the prospectuses, the prospective students are generally warmly welcomed, addressed personally using the personal pronoun “you”, and so seemingly taken as individuals. As it is taken for granted that students aim to enhance their career prospects through their university study, a student is regarded as an individual who acts “as a rational optimiser and the best judge of his/her own interests and needs” (Olssen, 2002b, p. 58). The emphasis that all universities put on the importance of a university education for establishing a successful career is a clear indicator for the belief in “economically self-interested subjects” as the protagonists in the marketplace.

The other side of the addressing of students as consumers is the care and fun that the universities promise with campus life. For instance, many universities present themselves as providers of a safe and fun environment. They sell facilities and support services that serve all the needs of the students as young adults, ranging from accommodation in halls of residence, academic and learning help, cultural support, orientation for first year students by buddies or mentors, health and wellbeing services, counselling and sport to financial assistance. In addition to the prospect of an academically well-regarded education, the universities also advertise other aspects of student life, such as the beauty and convenience of the location, the weather, the level of living costs or things such as shopping, nightlife and the choice of bars and cafés.

As the analysis has shown, the universities compete for students. Competition has entered the university sector at the latest when the funding system has been reorganised to the EFTS system, which links the amount of governmental allocations to the number of students. But since the year 2007, this per-head count has been altered to the PBRF funding system, which considers the success in research that the universities can produce (Ministry of Education and Transition Tertiary Education Commission, 2002; Smart & Smyth, 2008). Based on this important policy change, my second research question was:

2) *Is the pressure to be regarded as an excellent research institution visible in the analysed data?*

The data analysis has revealed that the reputation of being an excellent research institution is an important factor for the promotional presentation of the universities. This might, at least to some extent, be due to the policy changes, which connect research success with funding allocations. Research excellence and teaching quality have become buzzwords of the educational discourse (Mautner, 2005). As a speaking example, Case Study 1 has shown that the UoA promotes its high research ranking as a point of distinction. Other universities, too, speak of their respectable standing within the research community. This is interesting because I would assume that excellence in research might not be of particular interest for undergraduate students seeking a first degree. A good reputation within the scientific community as well as well-regarded teachers and researchers are assets that are probably more important for post-graduates who aim to learn from respected teachers and for prospective staff members who might want to join a certain institution. For instance, the University of Canterbury claims to be “one of the top two universities in New Zealand for research quality (PBRF, 2004)” (Canterbury, 2006, p. 1) on the first page of its prospectus, even before the text of welcome. The citing of the PBRF reports is a clear sign that this information addresses “insiders” who know what the acronym stands for. This is why I argue that the prospectuses are not only targeted to young students or school leavers and their parents, but as secondary audiences also to graduates and scientists. This circumstance adds to the argument that the prospectuses are more marketing-orientated documents than informational material.

However, there are differences in the emphasis that the universities put on their research reputation. For instance, the two case studies in Chapter 4 have shown that the self-conception of AUT University and the University of Auckland differ greatly. Whereas the UoA promotes its high research ranking explicitly, AUT hardly mentions the research topic. In contrast, AUT puts more emphasis on the usefulness of its degree programmes for securing an appropriate position in the business world.



Kia ora – welcome to UC's Student Guide.

The Student Guide has all the information you need to plan your first degree at the University of Canterbury in 2007.

One of the top two universities in New Zealand for research quality (PBRF, 2004), UC offers internationally recognised qualifications and a great student lifestyle. Best wishes for your planning and decision making. We look forward to welcoming you to UC in 2007.

Figure 19: Canterbury prospectus, p. 1

3 *Recommendations for further research*

It is characteristic for discourse analysis that the researchers have to decide about the scope of their research and to limit the study to a reasonable degree of complexity (van Dijk, 2001). This is due to the nature of discourse analysis integrating different disciplines. In this case, textually-oriented discourse analysis aims to link linguistic analysis to the wider social context. For this thesis, I have confined myself to a specific genre which I found representative of the way the universities present themselves to the public. Continuing research could be done by analysing other promotional material, such as web sites, newsletters, advertisements, magazines, or further documents issued by the universities. As one of my guiding questions was whether there has happened a change within the order of discourse of tertiary education, it would also be interesting to compare the development of prospectuses from a decade or so ago with those of today. I am convinced that such a more historical investigation would trace the increasing colonisation of the discourse of education by the discourse of the economy.

Based on the assumption that the universities exist in a quintessentially promotional culture, other kinds of research about education providers in the promotional culture would be of interest. For instance, comparative studies that draw analogies between the circumstances of New Zealand and the situation in other countries, which might experience similar developments of corporatisation, privatisation or policy changes in general, might provide further insights. As an example, the university sector in Germany faces similar – and also very different – challenges to the one in New Zealand, so that experiences could be exchanged. One topic might be the effect of the introduction of study fees, which is still fiercely disputed in Germany.

Inspired by critical academics such as Peters (1996, 1997) or Olssen (1996, 2002b), it might also be worthwhile to take on a wider prospect of the social impact of policy reforms in the education sector. For instance, Olssen (2002a) believes that the implementation of neo-liberal policies result in greater state control. This leads to the question if the processes of reforming

the education sector might threaten academic freedom and the autonomy of the universities (Kelsey, 2000; Savage, 2000). Therefore, it would be a different research layout to ask what this means for the identity of academics and of the universities as organisations.

4 *Final conclusion*

The purpose of this work was to find evidence that the trends of commodification, marketisation and corporatisation, which have been identified in the literature and in relevant policy documents²⁷, are visible in the language and presentation of the university prospectuses. I assumed that these trends are results of the cultural and policy changes reforming the education sector as well as many other sectors of the public life of New Zealand. This assumption led me to the decision to use discourse analysis as the methodology for my research. Discourse analysis recognises a dialectical relationship between discourse and society, supporting my belief that one cannot adequately analyse and interpret textual material without considering the wider social, cultural, political, and historical context. Furthermore, social structures are manifest in discourse and form the orders of discourse, conventions underlying discourses. In this project, I have understood 'discourse' mainly as language use, and insofar as a form of social practice. Therefore, I concentrated on the analysis of language and text present in the university prospectuses, which confirmed me in following Fairclough's TODA approach. The underlying assumption of my research was that discursive changes are visible in the language. This is why I, in the textual analysis, worked with keywords – expressions that struck me as significant in the research phase and that showed a background in the vocabulary of managerialism and market economics.

A characteristic strength of TODA and critical discourse analysis is that the researchers can develop their own specific approach. For instance, the starting point for discourse analysis can be a close textual analysis, which leads to the formulation of further research questions. Insofar, discourse

²⁷ See Chapter 2 Literature survey.

analysis as a research tool provides “the means both for producing research questions and for analysing data” (Janks, 1997, p. 341).

My data analysis has confirmed the assumption that the discourse of business has colonised the discourse of tertiary education. The university prospectuses provided numerous examples for this colonisation. Tertiary education is now perceived as a commodity that secures a personal advantage in the form of a qualification that probably leads to a better-paid position in the business world. This new discourse of education as a personal good is a change from the traditional scholarly ideal where education was valued as a citizen’s right and a public good. This, in addition with the introduction of study fees, challenges the egalitarian New Zealand tradition of open access to free education. The ideology of the benefits of a free market and the entry of competition into the university sector affect the public image and valuation of the universities.

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