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Storing, Circulating, and Cueing Memory through "Beautiful Man" Slogans

Uci Elly Kholidah[1*], Pratiwi Retnaningdyah[2], Ayu Saraswati[3], Sabrina Wardatul Jannah Husain[4]
[1*] Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia
[2] Universitas Negeri Manado, Manado, Indonesia
[3] Universitas Negeri Manado, Manado, Indonesia
[4] Universitas Negeri Manado, Manado, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes how slogans with the theme of beautiful man function as a medium of memory through three main mechanisms: storage, circulation, and cue within Astrid Erll's theoretical framework. The research objects are 66 slogans initially written in guided infographics by first-semester students, then extracted into text format and loaded as a corpus in Voyant Tools. The method used combines qualitative-interpretive analysis with Voyant output to map three dimensions of Erll's cultural memory, material (lexical/rhetorical forms), social (practices, actors, task contexts), and mental (value/identity schemas). The results show: (1) storage, persistent and canonical word/phrase patterns (seen in Cirrus, Corpus Terms, Phrases), cementing the horizon of meaning of "beautiful man"; (2) circulation, dispersion and variation of terms across documents (seen in Trends and the Documents panel), suggesting the path of discourse circulation in the campus ecology; (3) cue, a trigger word/icon that immediately activates associations of values and identity (read in Contexts/KWIC and Collocates). The discussion links the findings to the interaction of communicative and cultural memory, showing how symbolic production fixed by the medium meets the actualization of individual memories in classroom practices.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past three decades, memory studies have emphasized that how people remember is shaped by media, symbols, and cultural practices, not simply by what is known. Within Astrid Erll's framework, slogans can be read as a medium of memory that operates through three main functions: storage (across time), circulation (across space/media), and cueing (triggering collective memory associations) (Erll, 2011; Nora, 1989). This article applies these three functions to the issue of the "beautiful man", the configuration of the meaning of "beautiful man" that shifts the boundaries of masculinity through campaigns and digital channels, focusing on slogans written in a guided infographic by 66 first-semester students at a university. This dataset represents early symbolic production within the campus memory ecology: guided slogans that still reflect value schemes, concise/rhetorical language, and icon choices that have the potential to be stored, circulated (circulation within classes/communities and assignment platforms), and trigger memory associations (cues) about "beautiful men".

The objective of this research is to examine 66 guided infographics created by first-semester students at a university; each infographic features a slogan themed "beautiful man" that is designed to be short, repetitive, and memorable. For cultural memory analysis, all slogans were extracted from the infographics as plain text, one slogan per document, then compiled into a single corpus and uploaded to Voyant Tools to generate initial visualizations and statistics (e.g., word clouds, term frequencies, collocations, and word contexts). This process included anonymization and attribution of the assignment sources to maintain academic integrity, while also allowing for a consistent reading of

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how lexical form, classroom production context, and potential distribution within the campus community contribute to the formation of memories about "beautiful man".

Talking about the previous studies that reinforce the relevance of this approach. The first is that Hamshaw & Gavin showed that the intensity of social media use correlates with men's grooming practices and that appearance standards are shaped by the overlap between traditional and digital media, suggesting the strong role of circulation in the transmission of memories across platforms (Hamshaw & Gavin, 2022). The second study, conducted in 2024, through a semiotic analysis of men's skincare advertisements, found that linguistic and visual elements (narrative, color, props, masculine bodies) encode myths of masculinity (Rahmawati, 2024). These findings link the material dimension (the form of the slogan/phrase) with the function of the cue (the word/icon that triggers memory associations). The third previous study demonstrated that self-image mediates the influence of social media use on men's skincare purchase intentions (Duarte et al., 2025); these results indicate how circulating brand cues can become embedded as identity schemas (storage function) while simultaneously triggering behavior (cue function).

Based on Erll's framework, this study formulated a question: "How do slogans function as a medium of memory (storage, circulation, cue) in the issue of beautiful men?" Theoretically, this article operationalizes three dimensions of cultural memory, material (lexical/rhetorical form of slogans in guided infographics and their media), social (classroom actors/practices, task rules, context of circulation in the campus community), and mental (value schemas, concepts of time, identity), to map how slogans stabilize (storage), circulate (circulation), and activate (cue) memories of "beautiful men."

RESEARCH METHOD

This research method began by preparing a corpus of 66 slogans on the theme of "beautiful man" written in guided infographics by first-semester students. Then, the author extracted the text into .txt/.docx format and uploaded it to Voyant Tools as a single corpus. In Voyant's default interface, the author used Cirrus to generate word clouds to illustrate the most frequent words, Summary to provide concise corpus statistics, and Corpus Terms/Document Terms to examine term frequency across the corpus and per document. To read word usage in micro-contexts, the author used Contexts (KWIC); while Trends explored the distribution of terms across documents. Collocates Graph/Corpus Collocates explored networks of frequently adjacent vocabulary as an indication of meaningful associations. All analyses were run with stopword settings (auto-detect or custom lists) to focus Voyant's visuals and tables on meaningful words in the corpus, in accordance with Voyant's official guidelines on tools and stopwords (e.g., Cirrus, Contexts, Trends, Phrases, Collocates, and globally applicable stopword settings).

The interpretation stage follows Astrid Erll's framework of media of memory, storage, circulation, cue (Erll, 2011), by mapping Voyant's output to these three functions. The most frequent word/phrase patterns in Cirrus and Corpus/Document Terms, along with the Phrases list, are interpreted as indicators of storage (the retention of narratives and slogan forms that tend to become canonical); the Trends graph and Documents summary help read circulation (the distribution and variation of terms across documents/task groups); while the Contexts (KWIC) and Collocates Graph reveal cues (trigger

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words/icons that activate collective memory associations). Thus, Voyant's output goes beyond quantitative descriptions, but is linked to Erll's three dimensions of cultural memory, material (lexical form and medium), social (directed writing practices in the classroom, contexts of circulation in the campus community), and mental (value/identity schemas evident in collocations and contexts), so that the corpus of 66 slogans is read as a mediative process that stores, disseminates, and triggers cultural memories of "beautiful men."

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Opening the corpus in Voyant Tools reveals an initial landscape of the slogan's lexical memory through Cirrus (word cloud), which highlights the most frequent keywords generated by the 66 guided infographics as seen in Figure 1. This frequency, detailed in Corpus Terms/Document Terms, provides an initial indication of the storage function within Astrid Erll's framework: recurring lexical forms tend to persist as "mini-canons" in the microcultural memory of class communities (Erll, 2011).

Figure 1. Cirrus/Word Cloud from Slogan Corpus

Here, Erll's material dimension is evident in the concise, imperative, and metaphorical diction choices that make the slogan "sticky," while the social dimension emerges from the context of the guided infographic, which encourages a convergence of speech styles; both prepare a mental dimension in the form of a normalized value scheme and identity. Thus, the top word/phrase lists from Cirrus and Phrases (n-grams) can be read as a micro-archive that solidifies the horizon of meaning for "beautiful man" as can be seen in Figure 2.

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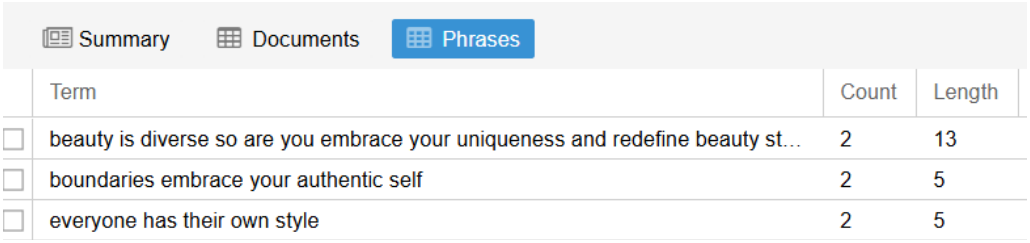

Figure 2. Phrases panel from Slogan corpus

Furthermore, the Trends panel presents the dynamics of circulation: how specific keywords spread across documents within the corpus (e.g., rising in the middle, plateauing at the end). For example, the curve for "embrace" shows a significant increase in the document segment 6 and 8. At the same time, the word "make" is relatively flat, suggesting that some diction has stronger intra-corpus spread than others. This reading aligns with Erll's idea that media is not neutral; it shapes how memory circulates and is understood in social spaces (classrooms, presentations, LMSs), mediating the path from symbolic production to individual actualization (Erll, 2011). To strengthen the analysis, Contexts (KWIC) provides a micro-understanding of cues: phrases that, when invoked, immediately activate value/identity associations. For example, as stated in Figure 2, the following KWIC line exhibits a distinctive nuance of call-to-action and identity framing:

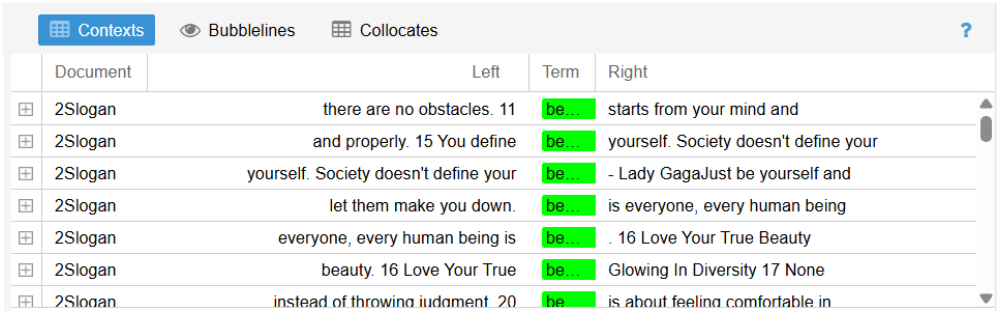

Figure 2. Context Panel from Slogan Corpus

In a corpus of 66 slogans generated from a guided infographic, which were then extracted into text and analyzed in Voyant, we see how collective symbolic order (uniform diction choices, imperative patterns, and concise metaphors) intertwines with the actualization of individual memories in campus spaces, for example, through the process of writing, presenting, and circulating slogans in the classroom environment. Theoretically, this is a moment of encounter between what Jan Assmann calls cultural memory (memory fixed by media, symbols, and institutions) and communicative memory (fluid memory negotiated in everyday interactions), two distinct layers that intersect through repeated symbolic practices (Assmann, 2011).

In this study, the initial infographic medium (visual + text) was then remediated into text (.txt extraction) and a Voyant dashboard (analytic visualization); each stage of mediation contributes to shaping how the slogan is "remembered," precisely in line with Erll's idea that media are not merely carriers, but rather architects of memory, and operate through the mutually supporting functions of storage, circulation, and cues (Erll, 2011). Here, the media environment itself influences how memory "works": from the canonization of

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forms (e.g., recurring phrases in the Phrases panel), intra-corpus distribution (seen in Trends), to the triggering of quick associations (read in Contexts/KWIC and Collocates).

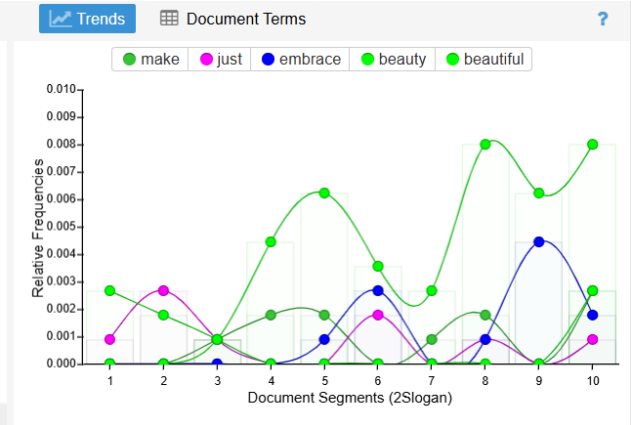

Figure 3. Trend Panel from Slogan Corpus

Olick's framework helps label this relationship as collective vs. collected memory: the former refers to the order of symbols/practices that structure a shared past, the latter to the aggregate of individual narratives/memories shaped by culture. Thus, the relatively uniform production of slogans under guided instruction signals collective memory, whereas variations in diction, thematic emphasis, or the way students cite/use slogans in presentations signal collective memory, which returns symbols to individual experiences. (Olick et al., 2011)

Answering "How do slogans function as a medium of memory (storage, circulation, cue) in the issue of beautiful men?", findings based on Voyant's output can be synthesized as follows. First, the storage function: Cirrus and the Corpus/Document Terms table demonstrate persistent and persistent vocabulary across documents; combined with Phrases, the data mentioned formulaic phrases (inviting imperatives, consistent word pairs) that readily become "mini-canons", hardening the horizon of meaning of beautiful men through material (sticky lexical forms), social (task practices that standardize speech standards), and mental (normalized value/identity schemas) dimensions.

In other words, slogans store memory through repeated forms, reused archives, and contextual legitimacy, just as Erll explains that modality shapes the stability of cultural memory (Erll, 2011). Second, the circulation function: Trends demonstrates how keywords circulate and vary across documents. This illustrates the transition between communicative memory (classroom interactions) and cultural memory (medium-fixed symbol standards), while also supporting Assmann's idea that collective memory moves through social communication and media fixation (Assmann, 2011). Third, the cue function: the Contexts (KWIC) lines and the Collocates network display trigger words/icons that immediately invoke associations (authenticity, self-care, stylistic expression, empathetic power); these are the memory triggers that make slogans effective in bringing shared narratives to life.

Overall, Voyant's data demonstrates that these three functions operate simultaneously within Erll's three dimensions of memory (material–social–mental), so that slogans in the campus ecology not only convey the meaning of "beautiful man," but also create a stable

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memory framework (storage), circulate (circulation), and are easily retrieved (cue). This synthesis aligns with Olick & Robbins' program to read mnemonic practices as networks of action and media (rather than simply content), while affirming Halbwachs's legacy that human memory, both collective and individual, depends on the social frameworks in which symbols circulate and are formalized. Thus, it is clear that the slogan functions as a memory medium which, through its mediality, stabilizes, disseminates, and activates cultural memories of the beautiful man in campus spaces (Halbwachs, 1992; Olick et al., 2011).

CONCLUSION

An analysis of 66 slogans on the theme of beautiful men, extracted from a guided infographic and then read using Voyant Tools (Cirrus, Trends, Contexts/KWIC, Phrases, Collocates), shows that slogans function effectively as a medium of memory through three mutually supporting mechanisms: storage (the consolidation of lexical forms and "sticky" phrases that tend to become canonical), circulation (the spread of terms across documents/campus spaces that normalize value and identity schemes), and cues (trigger words/icons that immediately activate memory associations about more inclusive masculinity). All three work simultaneously in three dimensions of cultural memory, material (word forms, imperative patterns, metaphors), social (directed task practices, presentations, and campus ecology), and mental (value schemes and time horizons), so that slogans not only "carry" meaning, but also create a way of remembering the issue of beautiful men. This finding also shows the link between communicative and cultural memory: symbolic production fixed in the medium meets the actualization of individual memories in classroom practices. Practically, this study offers an Erll-based operational framework for assessing storage–circulation–cue in micro-units such as slogans; in the future, cross-cultural/channel exploration and tracking of impacts on personal narratives are needed so that the memory traces formed by slogans can be mapped more broadly.

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