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**EMOTIONAL APPEAL VS. RATIONAL APPEAL:
TRENDS IN MODERN EDUCATIONAL ADVERTISING****АПЕЛЛЯЦИЯ К ЭМОЦИЯМ И АПЕЛЛЯЦИЯ К РАЗУМУ: ТЕНДЕНЦИИ
В СОВРЕМЕННОЙ РЕКЛАМЕ ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНЫХ УСЛУГ**

This paper aims at revealing the trends of appealing to emotion vs. appealing to reason in educational advertising. For this purpose, types of advertisements in Chinese, English and Russian are determined: emotional appeal advertisements, rational appeal advertisements and combined emotional-rational appeal advertisements. The number of ads in each category, as well as the number of linguistic means marking each type, is further determined and compared. The analysis shows that advertisements combining emotional and rational appeal are the prevalent trend in modern educational advertising. Research results can provide a reference for selecting promotional appeal tactics when creating an advertisement.

Key words: educational advertising; promotional appeal; method of persuasion; rational appeal; emotional appeal.

Цель статьи – выявить тенденции использования тактики апелляции к эмоциям и тактики апелляции к разуму в рекламе образовательных услуг. Определяются типы рекламных сообщений на китайском, английском и русском языках: реклама, апеллирующая к эмоциям, разуму, а также комбинированная реклама. Далее сопоставляется количество рекламных текстов разных видов и систематизируются языковые средства, маркирующие каждый тип рекламы. Анализ показывает, что преобладающей тенденцией в современной рекламе образовательных услуг является сочетание апелляции к эмоциям и апелляции к разуму. Результаты исследования могут использоваться в качестве рекомендаций при выборе стратегий и тактик воздействия в рекламе.

Ключевые слова: реклама образовательных услуг; стратегия убеждения в рекламе; способ убеждения; апелляция к эмоциям; апелляция к разуму.

The evolution of mass media has brought about the prosperity of advertising, educational advertising being one of its actively developing types. Meanwhile, for the language of promotion, which is a hot topic in today's linguistic research, scholars' attention is mainly focused on traditional commercial advertising, while less attention is paid to the advertisement of educational institutions and services.

As a rule, educational advertising involves the use of general and specialized vocabulary related to the subject of "education". Such advertising has a number of specific features: maintaining a balance of informativeness and emotionality in the composition of advertising text; presenting information which is characteristic of image building, i.e., designed to create a favorable image of a particular educational institution; reflecting the characteristics of educational services by using the language of an advertising text (e.g., the necessity of licenses, the dependency of learning outcomes on future activities, the possibility of objective verification of information, seasonality, etc.) [1, p. 72]. These particularities of education make educational advertising different from other types of advertising, but it also has all general features of advertising.

A common feature of advertising is to attract consumers' attention by displaying information to them, and the strategy which is applied to achieve this is called promotional (or advertising) appeal. Promotional appeal refers to a set of techniques "used to attract the attention of consumers and/or to influence their feelings toward the product, service, or cause" [2, p. 37]. It reflects the product's attributes, benefits, and even the brand image a company wants to express, and is designed to influence the way consumers see themselves and helps them understand how buying a certain product can benefit them. The classifications of promotional appeal tactics are numerous, and discussing their types from the perspective of emotional appeal vs. rational appeal is probably the most common.

Emotional appeal "stimulates the consumers' emotional attitude towards the product by adding emotion to the advertisement as well as creating the specific advertising image" [3, p. 40]. P. Keshari and S. Jain define emotional appeal as "an attempt to stir up either negative or positive emotions that can motivate purchase" [2, p. 38]. P. De Pelsmacker and M. Geuens put forward another view, believing that if an advertising contains one or more of the following emotional means, it is an emotionally appealing advertising. These means of emotional appeal include humour, warmth, eroticism, nostalgia, fear and provocation [4, p. 125]. In general, emotional appeal is a method of persuasion, a manipulative technique that appeals

to the emotions of consumers rather than using logic or facts. It seeks to stir up feelings in consumers so that they are more likely to respond positively to a message. Based on the valence of emotion, emotional appeal can be further divided into positive emotions, which include love, joy, pride, and humor, and negative emotions, which are associated with fear, shame, guilt, etc. [5, p. 8].

As opposed to emotional appeal, rational appeal adopts the method of rational persuasion. It provides information and facts without emotions and persuades the consumers through reasoning and appealing to reason [6, p. 284]. It is specifically manifested in the advertising to convey the advantages of the product in terms of price, quality, technology and function as the core content, focusing on the expression of the product's material satisfaction to consumers, so that consumers decide whether to buy it or not through rational thinking [7, p. 160]. The displayed information cues usually include: price of the product or service, quality, function, material, purchasing time and place, any research data about the product, packaging, and so on. The characteristic of rational appeal is that it clearly conveys data, strengthens consumers' cognition with the information itself and logical arguments, and guides them to make analysis and judgment. Therefore, it relies on arguments, figures, and facts, which become the main criteria for the effectiveness of the advertising text [8, p. 70].

The particularity that distinguishes educational advertising from others is that the advertised object is usually an intangible educational service rather than a material product with clear objective parameters. Therefore, it should be noted that when promoting educational products or services, both objective descriptive words and phrases, such as *£ 25 per hour (Private Session from £ 25 per hour)*, and emotionally charged words and phrases, such as *competitive pricing (Our courses offer **competitive pricing** with no compromise on excellence)* and *reasonable fee (**Reasonable fee** for full course with a small group)*, are used. This leads to difficulties in distinguishing between emotional appeal and rational appeal in educational advertising during the process of analysis. In this paper, words and phrases describing educational products or services that contain some emotional coloring are still categorized as rational appeal due to the fact that they essentially refer to the advertised object, and these emotions are conveyed indirectly through the description of the object itself rather than appealing to consumers, whereas words and phrases that directly appeal to consumers are categorized as emotional appeal.

Being the two most important types of appeal in modern advertising, emotional appeal and rational appeal, as well as their effects and trends of usage, have attracted the interest of scholars from various countries. As Chinese scholars H. Zhang et al. have suggested, a strong need to tailor ads to fit different categories of product and service leads to the following conclusion: “an emotional appeal would be more effective for experience services, and a rational appeal would be more effective for credence services” [9, p. 2015]. The results of another study show that “advertisements with a rational attraction approach tend to influence consumers more to use the advertised product. Whereas advertisements with emotional appeal tend not to affect consumer interest due to alleged switching behavior during commercial breaks or advertisements” [10, p. 66]. A further analysis and synthesis of the scientific literature revealed that emotional appeal and rational appeal are used “interchangeably as mood/logical or transformational/informational in different contexts” [11, p. 412]. Other scholars argue that the effectiveness of using a single appeal in educational advertising is insufficient, and that there are advantages and disadvantages to both types of appeal. “Only the combination of emotional appeal and rational appeal can produce significant effects in advertising texts of educational sphere” [1, p. 75]. Therefore, the discussion on the effects of emotional appeal vs. rational appeal in educational advertising makes the study of their modern trends an inevitable topic.

The results of some analyses indicate that the use of rational appeal vs. emotional appeal differs across both product type and country [12, p. 42]. Based on this, on the one hand, this paper uses educational advertisements as material, making the study targeted and innovative. On the other hand, comparative analysis helps to identify trends in using emotional appeal and rational appeal across countries and languages. Contrastive approach, quantitative analysis, contextual analysis and semantic analysis are used in this study. The contextual and semantic analysis is used to define words and phrases that indicate rational appeal and emotional appeal tactics in ads, the quantitative analysis is applied to determine the distribution of rational appeal and emotional appeal markers in Chinese-, English- and Russian-language messages, while the contrastive approach is used to determine and compare the trends of appealing to reason vs. appealing to emotion in modern educational advertising.

In contemporary society, the Internet is one of the most effective channels for disseminating advertising information. Online educational advertising is characterized by a large quantity, a variety of transmission

forms and a wide range of broadcasting, which can effectively help educational institutions promote themselves. The material of this study is advertising texts that promote educational institutions and services, which are posted on the websites of schools and training institutions in China, the UK and Belarus, with 30 examples in each language.

The basic units of analysis are words or phrases that express emotional or rational appeal. Ads that only use emotional appeal markers are considered as emotional appeal advertising, ads that only use rational appeal markers are considered as rational appeal advertising, and the rest are considered as combined emotional-rational advertising. Some examples from the texts under consideration are as follows.

First, let's focus on Chinese-language ads. *把你的孩子教育好, 是你一生最重要的事业.* 'Educating your children well is the most important endeavour of your life.' This message does not specifically describe educational products or services, but appeals to the readers' needs. This aim is achieved through such words as *教育好* 'educating well' and *最重要的事业* 'the most important endeavour' which highlight the necessity of good education for children. So, according to the criterion applied in this paper, the text is identified as an emotional appeal advertising, which addresses the consumers directly.

199元24节课, 你还在等什么, 有史以来最划算的活动课程, 赶紧抢购哦. '199 Yuan for 24 lessons, what are you waiting for, the most cost-effective activity course ever, hurry up and grab it.' The words and phrases *等什么* 'waiting for', *有史以来* 'ever', *最划算的* 'the most cost-effective', *赶紧* 'hurry up' and *抢购* 'grab it' (a total of five markers) encourage the readers to act promptly and get the best deal. Thus, such linguistic units can be ranked as markers of emotional appeal. On the contrary, the phrases *199元* '199 Yuan' and *24节课* '24 lessons' (two markers in total) appeal to reason as they provide details about the advertised courses (in this case, price and duration). Thus, the text can be defined as a combined emotional-rational appeal advertising.

多种课程任你选择! VIP一对一班, VIP 6-8人班, 精品25人班. 'A variety of courses to choose from! VIP one-to-one classes, VIP 6-8 person classes, and boutique 25 person classes.' This ad introduces educational options and provides a detailed description of the courses under consideration by using the phrases: *多种课程* 'a variety of courses', *VIP*, *一对一* 'one-to-one', *6-8人* '6-8 person', and *精品25人* 'boutique 25 person'. All of them convey information about the advertised object itself (size of class, mode of work) and thus appeal to reason. Therefore, this text is considered to be a rational appeal advertising.

After analyzing 30 examples of Chinese-language advertising in this way, the statistics are shown as follows (tab. 1).

Table 1

Verbal markers of emotional and rational appeal
in Chinese-language advertising

Type of advertisement	Number of texts	Number of verbal markers of emotional appeal	Number of verbal markers of rational appeal
Emotional appeal advertising	6	14	0
Rational appeal advertising	5	0	15
Combined emotional-rational appeal advertisement	19	58	34
Total	30	72	49

It can be seen from the results of the analysis that in Chinese educational advertising, emotional appeal markers are used more frequently than rational appeal markers. The types of advertising are dominated by combined emotional-rational appeal advertising, with a number of 19, more than half of the total. Emotional appeal advertising (6 in total) and rational appeal advertising (5 in total) are fewer, and the number of these two types demonstrates no obvious difference.

Next, let's provide examples from English-language ads. *A language learning journey awaits your command! Let's get started... I will be so happy to meet and help you. Don't Waste this opportunity!* The words and phrases *await your command, let's get started, so happy, help, don't waste, opportunity,* etc. all appeal directly to consumers' needs and expectations. They prod the readers into taking immediate action. Thus, we identify this message as an emotional appeal advertising.

We are delighted to invite you to join our spring term sessions to learn French in a nurturing atmosphere! Our conversation classes that begin from beginners to proficiency level feature a mix of grammar revision, discussion and debate of various topics. The words and phrases *delighted to invite, join and a nurturing atmosphere* can motivate consumers' emotion, while the phrases

spring term sessions, conversation classes, from beginners to proficiency level, grammar revision, and discussion and debate of various topics are objective descriptions of the educational service (in this case, time/duration of courses, types of learning activities, required proficiency level). Consequently, the message is classified as a combined emotional-rational advertising.

Learn English via Skype from US \$ 9.99 / hour. Check English Proficiency. Set English Learning Goals. Discuss Learning Style. Create Cultural Training Plan. Phrases such as *via Skype* and *from US \$ 9.99 / hour* are used to describe the features of the advertised item (price, mode of work). So, it is a rational appeal advertising.

After considering 30 examples of English-language advertising in this way, the statistics are shown as follows (tab. 2).

Table 2

Verbal markers of emotional and rational appeal
in English-language advertising

Type of advertisement	Number of texts	Number of verbal markers of emotional appeal	Number of verbal markers of rational appeal
Emotional appeal advertising	9	24	0
Rational appeal advertising	4	0	18
Combined emotional-rational appeal advertisement	17	46	48
Total	30	70	66

According to the results of the analysis, emotional appeal phrases are used more often than rational appeal phrases in English educational advertising. The most prominent type of advertising is combined emotional-rational advertising, of which there are 17 samples, over a half of the total. Emotional appeal advertising (9 in total) and rational appeal advertising (4 in total) are in the minority, with emotional appeal advertising still prevalent.

Last, we turn our attention to Russian-language ads. *Давайте вместе создадим языковое будущее, которое вы заслуживаете!* 'Let's work together to create the language future you deserve!' This ad uses phrases *давайте вместе* 'let's work together', *создадим языковое будущее* 'create the language future', and *которое вы заслуживаете* 'you deserve' to directly address the consumers, taking into account their needs and encouraging them to act (namely, attend a language course). Therefore, in this paper such kind of ad is classified as an emotional appeal advertising.

Центр развития и возможностей «РостНью» приглашает всех желающих приобщиться к изучению польского, английского и испанского языков, традиций и культуры. Опытные педагоги помогут овладеть необходимыми знаниями, раскрыть творческий потенциал и сделать изучение языков интересным и доступным для каждого. 'The development and opportunities centre "RostNew" invites everyone to join the courses of Polish, English and Spanish languages, traditions and culture. Experienced teachers will help to acquire the necessary knowledge, unlock creative potential and make language learning interesting and accessible for everyone.' On the one hand, the words and phrases *приглашает* 'invite', *опытные педагоги* 'experienced teachers', *помогут овладеть* 'help to acquire', *раскрыть творческий потенциал* 'unlock creative potential' and *интересным и доступным* 'interesting and accessible' are aimed directly at consumers. They highlight the fact that the clients' needs and demands are taken into consideration. On the other hand, the phrase *польского, английского и испанского языков, традиций и культуры* 'Polish, English and Spanish languages, traditions and culture' describes the content of the courses (i.e. the advertised product itself). So, this is a combined emotional-rational appeal advertising.

Более 1000 выпускников, уникальная система обучения, высокое качество подготовки, преподаватели с большим опытом. 'More than 1000 graduates, a unique education system, high quality training, teachers with extensive experience.' Everything in this ad is an exposition and presentation of the institution itself and its services (long history, unique and high-quality education system), i.e. it describes the advertised object. Thus, despite the fact that some words are emotionally charged (e.g., *уникальный* 'unique'), it is classified as a rational appeal advertising according to the criteria applied in this paper.

After itemizing 30 Russian-language texts in this way, the statistics are shown in table 3.

Table 3

Verbal markers of emotional and rational appeal
in Russian-language advertising

Type of advertisement	Number of texts	Number of verbal markers of emotional appeal	Number of verbal markers of rational appeal
Emotional appeal advertising	7	29	0
Rational appeal advertising	7	0	17
Combined emotional-rational appeal advertisement	16	33	38
Total	30	62	55

In the analyzed results, emotional appeal markers are still used more than rational ones in Russian-language educational advertising, and it is combined emotional-rational advertising that dominates (16 samples, exceeding half of the total). There are fewer emotional appeal or rational appeal types of advertisement, both numbering 7.

It should be noted that the number of verbal markers is directly affected by the number of words in each ad. As the number of words used to express the same meaning varies greatly from one language to another, the number of emotional and rational appeal markers can only be compared within the same language. Based on the results of comparison, it can be observed that emotional appeal phrases tend to be more frequent than rational appeal phrases in all the three languages. However, the mainstream tendency in modern educational sphere is combined emotional-rational appeal advertising. There is no obvious trend concerning the distribution of emotional appeal vs. rational appeal advertising, but emotional appeal is slightly more common. So, it can be concluded that the tendency to combine emotional appeal and rational appeal within the same ad is consistent in Chinese-, English- and Russian-language educational advertising. As both types of appeal have their own pros and cons, their combination can enhance the persuasive effect of the message. This conclusion can also provide some reference for the creators of modern educational advertising.

The weakness of this study is that Chinese-, English- and Russian-language ads differ in length (i.e. number of words), which leads to some limitations in applying a comparative approach. In subsequent studies, the number of examples can be increased and the sources of the examples can be standardized to further improve the accuracy of contrastive analysis.

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