

**RATIONAL APPEAL IN MESSAGES
ADVERTISING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND SERVICES**

Education is an important factor affecting social development, but it is also driven by economic interests. The purpose of educational advertising is to promote educational consumption, and this parameter shapes the meaning of the message as well as its form. This paper sheds light on production and presumable reception of messages by analyzing means of rational appeal in Russian-language texts which advertise Belarusian educational institutions and services. It focuses on rational appeal as a tactic that makes part of the overall promotional strategy in educational advertising. The aim is to find ways of increasing the effectiveness of rational appeal in texts that advertise educational institutions thus encouraging customers to purchase educational services.

Promotional appeal is a communication strategy that marketing and advertising professionals use to grab attention and persuade people to buy or act. It aims to influence the way consumers view themselves and help them understand how buying certain products can prove to be beneficial for them. The way of using promotional appeal is a key factor in determining the effectiveness of advertising. Marketers strive to stimulate consumers directly or indirectly in order to make the latter feel good about the advertised products and eventually make a purchase. According to different ways of its manifestation, promotional appeal can be divided into two major categories: rational appeal and emotional appeal.

Emotional appeal is a way of expressing ideas by directly referring to consumers' feelings and emotions. Emotional appeal is very powerful, but it lacks the support of indicators such as the basic function of the product, and it ignores quality. In comparison, rational appeal is usually perceived as more authentic, thus it is the rational appeal of educational advertising that deserves our attention.

Rational appeal is one of the most important forms of advertising appeal in general. Rational appeal highlights the content of presentation. This kind of advertising adopts the method of rational persuasion, clearly conveys information, strengthens the readers' cognition with the information itself and logical arguments, and guides them to make analysis and judgment. The power of rational appeal does not come from rendering atmosphere, expressing emotions or language decoration, but from the specific information, clear organization and strict reasoning. It focuses on describing the unique quality of the product and the

actual benefits it may bring to consumers. Rational appeal is especially effective when the product, service or idea contains many functions that can attract people's rationality.

The application of discourse analysis and pragmatic analysis methods can help to identify the factors influencing rational appeal as a tactic in the advertising of educational institutions and services, and to specify the linguistic means used for purchase motivation. Texts published on *relax.by* by language training institutions in Minsk were selected for practical analysis.

Means of achieving rational appeal in texts advertising educational institutions and services are numerous. The groups of means under consideration are represented by the following: price appeal, feature appeal, convenience appeal, prospect appeal.

Price appeal. This is a practical rather than emotional approach to advertising, where the promotion of a product or service is based on their price. According to the advertiser's intent, price appeal is usually shown through financial benefits, often using terms such as *discount*, *promotion*, *free*, etc. It is a very popular way of rational appeal since economy attracts one and all.

Английский язык «Стандарт» со скидкой 5 %. 'English "Standard" with a 5 % discount'. This ad uses the word *скидка* 'discount' which is undoubtedly an eye-catcher. It enables the reader to think rationally about economy, thus reflecting the attractiveness of the price.

Мотивирующая система обучения и умеренные цены. 'Motivating training system and reasonable prices'. This ad uses the expression *умеренные цены* 'reasonable prices' which also reflects the price appeal.

Feature appeal. Ads using this type of appeal usually focus on introducing unique features of products and services that similar products often lack. Based on this, buyers can make rational purchasing decisions. Ads with feature appeal usually use some words to describe the characteristics of the product, which can help to catch readers' attention.

Носитель языка из США. 'Native speaker from the USA'. It makes the advertised product attractive. Students are likely to think that it is better to learn a language with a native speaker.

Основной упор идет на изучение основы основ – грамматики английского языка. 'The main emphasis is on learning the basics – English grammar'. By the words *основной упор* 'main emphasis', *основа основ* 'basics', and *грамматика английского языка* 'English grammar', we can see that the ad reflects the feature of the course – English grammar.

Prospect appeal. Everyone knows the importance of education for personal development. Compared with other goods and services, the particularity of education is that it will have an important and significant impact on a person's future. This impact is long-term and important, and it is worth investing a lot of time and effort. Ads with prospect appeal often tend to tell readers that it is worthwhile and necessary to invest in our future, which is a rational choice.

Подготовка к сдаче HSK для дальнейшего поступления в учебные заведения Китая. ‘Preparation for the HSK for further enrollment in educational institutions in China’. This advertising emphasizes the phrase *дальнейшее поступление* ‘further admission’. Everyone wants to be admitted, and this will cause students to think rationally about their future development, which is likely to promote purchase.

Подготовка школьников и студентов к поступлению на бакалавриат и магистратуру в вузы Европы и Беларуси. ‘Preparation of schoolchildren and students for joining undergraduate and graduate programs at universities in Europe and Belarus’. Education is a long-term process, and investment in education should start as early as possible. Some schoolchildren and their parents may fail to realize the urgency for undergraduate and graduate study, as it is too early to think about this problem. But when *школьники* ‘schoolchildren’ and *поступление на бакалавриат и магистратуру в вузы* ‘admission to undergraduate and graduate programs at universities’ appear in the same sentence, readers’ rational thinking about their future study and life is stimulated, and the purchase behavior is more likely to occur.

Convenience appeal. When purchasing goods and services, customers often consider many factors, and convenience is one of them. If the advertising information can answer the question “what’s in it for me?” it will be easier to convince the audience. This type of appeal explains to the reader the convenience of the product and service, and thus helps the reader to make a rational purchase decision.

Филиалы школы находятся в разных районах Минска. ‘School branches are located in different districts of Minsk’. Since there are many *филиалы школы* ‘school branches’, it is obvious that you can choose the place of study closest to you and the convenience is thus revealed.

Возможность обучаться онлайн. ‘The opportunity to learn online’. The phrase *обучаться онлайн* ‘learn online’ will instantly make the reader think of the convenience of being anywhere and anytime. For many people, studying is difficult because they are too far from school or don’t have enough time. And online learning does bring them great convenience. This rational appeal is likely to increase the effectiveness of the advertising.

It can be seen that for promotional strategy used in Russian-language advertisements of educational institutions and services, rational appeal tactic is common and important, because it can simply and accurately clarify the advantages and selling points of the product, so as to help coordinate the relationship between buyers and sellers, and create the necessary conditions for making a purchase.

Therefore, educational institutions and services should consider rational appeal when developing advertising texts. Combined with the specific selling point of educational products, the appropriate use of tactics expressing the semantics of price, feature, convenience, and prospect can greatly increase the promotional appeal of the advertising text, so as to achieve the purpose of getting the reader to buy.