
VERBALIZATION OF AUTHORITY APPEAL IN ADVERTISING: CONTRASTIVE APPROACH

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Advertising is a bridge between enterprises and consumers, and promotional strategy is a key factor, which determines whether the advertisement can reach consumers' approval and stimulate purchases. This paper takes educational advertising texts as research material. The ads were published online by Chinese, British and Belarusian educational organizations. Quantitative analysis and a comparative method are used to identify the linguistic means of authority appeal as a tactic in Chinese-, English- and Russian-language texts advertising educational institutions and services. While similar semantic groups of words are found in all educational advertisements (such as names of authoritative persons and institutions, indicators of time and place, phrases expressing high level or beneficial quantity), the realization of authority appeal is language-specific and manifests unevenly. Based on the results obtained, it is recommended that in educational advertisements, the verbal means of authority appeal should be chosen appropriately according to the language. The analysis carried out may provide some references for educational institutions to develop more effective advertising.

Keywords: *advertising; promotional strategy; tactic; authority appeal; linguistic means.*


Advertising is an activity for communicating information and promoting awareness. It is a means of disclosing relevant data to the public open g buyers to consume goods or services for a certain amount of money. In order to achieve the purpose of spreading information and stimulating purchase, advertising texts use promotional strategies. Promotional appeal refers to the point that is emphasized in the advertisement of a product or service, trying to persuade or impress the reader, which reflects the whole advertising strategy



and is often the key to the success or failure of the advertisement. According to different pragmatic perspectives, promotional appeal can be further divided into different categories: emotional appeal, rational appeal, authority appeal, value appeal, etc. They can be viewed upon as different tactics under the overall advertising strategy. The proper use of specific tactics can increase the promotional appeal of an advertisement in order to achieve the ultimate goal of getting consumers to buy goods. Naturally, different types of advertising texts often use different advertising appeals. The analysis in this paper is devoted to authority appeal in educational advertising texts.

Authority appeals are those in which the person making the claim cites methods such as authoritative opinions or authority figures as evidence to support the argument in order to gain the reader's trust and thus reach the ultimate goal of the discourse. According to T. Leeuwen, authority appeals are found in a variety of forms: expert authority, role model authority, personal authority, impersonal authority, the authority of tradition and the authority of conformity. In different types of discourse, authority appeals also have different manifestations. In political discourse, influential public and political figures, "universal values, authoritative media, public opinion and authoritative politicians of competing parties" are considered as "authorities" [1, p. 96]. In scientific texts, "the tactics of 'authority appeal' is used by the author to increase the credibility of scientific work" [2, p. 59]. In pedagogical discourse, however, authority appeal is generally made "by reference to the authority of tradition, custom and law, and of persons in whom institutional authority of some kind is vested" [3, p. 92]. The authority appeal in religious texts "serves to confirm the truth of the statement and acts as a reference to the primary source" [4, p. 110]. It has been proven that this advertising tactic is very effective. "Reference to authority automatically strengthens the speaker's position in the eyes of the recipients, reduces the fire of possible criticism to a minimum, and, by means of vivid expressions and linguistic imagery, increases the expressive power of the speech as a whole and is a kind of language economy technique" [5, p. 39].

Since educational institutions appear to have an authoritative image in the public eye, authority appeal is widely used in a large number of texts advertising educational institutions and services. The analysis of authority appeal in ads can help educational institutions to determine effective advertising strategies and improve promotional appeal. In politics, "an analysis of the 'authorities' to which



a politician appeals makes it possible to clearly identify those voters whose support the politician hopes to gain” [6, p. 93]. Similarly, an analysis of the authority appeal in the sphere of education can help educational institutions clearly identify the groups of students they want to acquire.

In addition, authority appeals can have an impact on readers’ values. “It is the logical method of ‘authority appeal’ that is currently the most relevant for the formation of the value chain in all spheres and types of modern culture” [7, p. 34]. The use of authority appeal can help readers generate new perceptions of value. “Authoritative institutions are sources of knowledge external to the sender and receiver and can be credible or relative” [8, p. 72], but readers will often perceive them as objective and more trustworthy as a third party. Thus the use of authority appeal in educational advertising is common and deemed persuasive.

When using authority appeal, the most common method is to mention an expert, an authority figure, an institution, a well-known fact, or an indisputable fact in the ad. Even though the figure or institution may not be authoritative enough and the facts mentioned may not be necessarily objective and true, advertisers often use this ploy in the ad to give the reader a sense of authority. The reason is that “a dubious statement attributed to a supposedly authoritative entity looks pretty convincing and discredits competitors in the eyes of the target audience” [9, p. 235]. Apart from this, advertisers use some numbers (*top ten, first, only one*, etc.), some superlative adjective (*the biggest, the best, the most advanced*, etc.), and some words that indicate time and location (*American, ancient, all-European*) to create an authoritative image of the product in order to fill the reader’s consciousness and thus facilitate the purchase behavior.

Comparative analysis and quantitative analysis methods are used in this paper. Quantitative analysis method helps to determine the number of words in each semantic group used for the realization of authority appeal tactic in the ads published by educational institutions and services. Comparative method helps to identify similarities and differences of linguistic means used in Chinese-, English- and Russian-language ads published by educational institutions and services. Within each part of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives and numerals), words are further divided according to the semantic meaning they convey. It is worth mentioning, though, that the translation is based on semantics and the paper considers only the part of speech in the original language. Thus, the parts

of speech in the original text and translated version may not coincide. The analyzed material of this paper is selected from online advertising platforms and websites of educational institutions in China, the UK and Belarus. Twenty ads are selected for each language. Some examples from the texts under consideration will be provided below.

First, let's focus on Chinese-language ads. *成都大学是四川省、成都市重点建设大学* 'Chengdu University is a key constructional university in Sichuan Province and Chengdu City'. In this example, the nouns *四川省* 'Sichuan Province' and *成都市* 'Chengdu City', which denote geographical location, and the adjectives *重点建设* 'key constructional', which denote high quality semantics, are used together to describe the advertised Chengdu University. *老牌名校, 源于1896* 'Old and famous school, originated in the year 1896'. The nouns *老牌名校* 'old and famous' and the year 1896 state the time, while the verb *源于* 'originated in' reflects its relationship to the long history. *开教育风气的文翁石室, 从汉代一路走来, 走过了2160个春秋* 'The Wenon Stone Room, which started the educational trend, has come all the way from the Han Dynasty and has gone through 2160 years'. In this ad, the adjective *开教育风气的* 'started the educational trend' reflects the semantics of advancement, the nouns *汉代* 'Han Dynasty' and *2160个春秋* '2160 years' state the long history of this educational institution, while the verbs *一路走来* 'come all the way' and *走过了* 'has gone through' reflect the meaning of continuous development.

After analyzing the selected 20 educational ads in the Chinese language, the classification of verbal means according to part of speech and semantics is as follows.

1. Nouns and noun phrases.

A. Names of authoritative subject: *省商务厅* 'Department of Commerce of the province', *省级文明校园* 'Provincial Civilized Campus', *教育部* 'Ministry of Education', *综合大学* 'Comprehensive University', *专任教师* 'full-time teachers', *具有博士学位者* 'teachers with PhD degree', *世界大学生夏季运动会运动员村* 'Summer Universiade Athlete Village', *清华* 'Tsinghua University', *生命之水* 'the Water of Life', *贤才* 'sage'.

B. Time and geographical area: 国家 ‘Nation’, 四川省 ‘Sichuan Province’, 成都市 ‘Chengdu City’, 老牌名校 ‘old and famous school’, 历史悠久 ‘long history’, 汉代 ‘Han Dynasty’.

2. Verbs and verb phrases.

A. Relationship with authoritative subject: 直属 ‘directly under’, 依法 ‘according to law’, 以质 ‘with quality’, 布局在 ‘layout in’, 源于 ‘originate in’, 出自 ‘out of’.

B. With developmental meaning: 求德 ‘seek virtue’, 求知 ‘seek knowledge’, 求真理 ‘seek truth’, 签署 ‘sign’, 为荣 ‘for glory’, 古今 ‘from ancient times to the present’, 扬辉 ‘to carry forward the glory’, 一路走来 ‘come all the way’, 走过了 ‘has gone through’.

3. Adjectives and adjective phrases.

A. High quality and advancement: 一流 ‘first-class’, 最高 ‘highest’, 省政府批准 ‘provincial government approved’, 教育部备案的 ‘filed by the Ministry of Education’, 全国重点 ‘national key’, “双一流”建设 ‘Double first-class construction’, 重点建设 ‘key construction’, 高水平 ‘high-level’, 研究型 ‘research-oriented’, 教育之颠 ‘the top of education’, 开教育风气的 ‘started the educational trend’.


B. Indicating range: 四川首批 ‘the first batch of Sichuan Province’, 中国西部的 ‘in Western China’, 北 ‘North’, 南 ‘South’.

4. Numerals and numeral phrases.

A. Indicating quantity: 面积5350亩 ‘area of 5350 acres’, 学生3.66万 ‘36,600 students’, 专业41个 ‘41 majors’, 规模143亿 ‘size of 14.3 billion Chinese Yuan’, 39个国家和地区 ‘39 countries and regions’, 152所高校 ‘152 universities’, 项目223个 ‘223 projects’, 1632人 ‘1632 people’, 近800人 ‘nearly 800 people’, 百年学府 ‘100 years of academic institutions’, 123年办学经验 ‘123 years of schooling experience’, 千秋 ‘thousand years’, 2160个春秋 ‘2160 years’.

B. Indicating level: A类 ‘Class A’, 第31届 ‘the 31st’.

Next, we turn our attention to some examples in English-language ads. *Our staff have been awarded 29 National Teaching Fellowships.* The verb *have been*



awarded indicates that it has gained recognition, while the numeral *29 National Teaching Fellowships* reflects the number of awards received. *The University of Glasgow has been recognized for its world-leading research and the positive impact it has on society, by the Research Excellence Framework (REF)*. In this example, the verb *has been recognized* reflects the university's strengths in *research* and *impact*, the adjectives *world-leading* and *positive* also reflect these, while the noun *the Research Excellence Framework (REF)* indicates the recognition of the university by the authority. *Top 10 in the world*. The numeral *top 10* reflects excellence, and the noun *in the world* magnifies the scope of this excellence.

As regards the selected 20 English-language educational ads, the groups of verbal means according to part of speech and semantics are as follows.

1. Nouns and noun phrases.

A. Names of authoritative subject: *colleagues worldwide, in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Ranking, the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, official UK-wide assessment, a world leader in higher education, Research England, Birmingham 2030, the QS World University Rankings (2023), Queen's Anniversary prize, the Research Excellence Framework (REF), REF 2021*.

B. Time and geographical area: *in the English-speaking world, in the UK, in the UK, in the world, in the UK*.

2. Verbs and verb phrases.

A. Relationship with authoritative subject: *collaborate with, is nationally funded, have been awarded, has been recognized*.

B. With developmental meaning: *has been producing, has pioneered change*.

3. Adjectives and adjective phrases.

A. High quality and advancement: *world-leading centre, world-leading research, a rich academic heritage, the world's leading universities, world-leading research, the positive impact, world-leading research*.

B. Indicating range: *the oldest university, the largest volume of, a distinctive and personal, first civic university, the only UK institution, the first true civic university, a greater proportion of*.

4. Numerals and numeral phrases.

A. Indicating quantity: *nine centuries of continuous existence, for 800 years, since 1836, 25 Nobel laureates, in 1583, three times, 29 National Teaching Fellowships.*

B. Indicating level: *ranked first in the world, one of the four ancient universities, the top 50, ranked 92nd, top 10, 1st.*

Last, let's analyze authority appeal in some Russian-language ads. *Белорусский государственный университет является одним из организаторов Евразийской Ассоциации Университетов* 'The Belarusian State University is one of the organizers of the Eurasian Association of Universities'. Here, the nouns *организаторы* (organizers) and *Евразийская Ассоциация Университетов* 'Eurasian Association of Universities' reflect the authoritative status of the university. *БГУ вошел в 1% лучших вузов мира!* 'BSU entered the top 1 % of the best universities in the world!'. The verb *вошел* (entered) reflects the development and progress of the university, the numeral *1 %* reflects the authoritative status, the adjective *лучшие* 'the best' reflects the quality, and the noun *мира* 'in the world' reflects the breadth of its authority. *БГМУ – Ведущий белорусский медицинский университет* 'BSMU – the leading Belarusian medical university'. In this example, the university refers to its advancement and authority by using the adjective *ведущий* 'leading'.

The analysis of the selected Russian-language educational ads revealed the following groups of verbal means of authority appeal.

1. Nouns and noun phrases.

A. Names of authoritative subject: *организаторы* 'organizers', *Евразийская Ассоциация Университетов* 'Eurasian Association of Universities', *подготовка специалистов* 'training specialists', *CATTI в языковой паре «русский – китайский»* 'CATTI in the language pair "Russian – Chinese"', *вузовские репозитории* 'university repositories', *Шанхайский предметный рейтинг по физике* 'Shanghai Physics Subject Ranking', *научный лидер* 'academic leader', *участник* 'participant', *мировое медицинское образовательное сообщество* 'the global medical education community', *базовая организация* 'a key organization', *лидер* 'leader', *Институт Конфуция по науке и технике* 'Confucius Institute for Science and Technology', *лидер в области языкового образования* 'leader in language education', *олимпийский пьедестал* 'Olympic podium', *члены*

национальных и сборных команд Беларуси ‘members of national and national teams of Belarus’.

B. Time and geographical area: *Республика Беларусь* ‘Republic of Belarus’, *Восточная Европа* ‘Eastern Europe’, *Беларусь* ‘Belarus’, *Мир* ‘world’, *государства-участники СНГ* ‘CIS countries’, *постсоветское пространство* ‘post-Soviet space’.

2. Verbs and verb phrases.

A. Relationship with authoritative subject: *функционировать* ‘operate’, *прочно удерживать передовые позиции* ‘to be firmly in the forefront’.

B. With developmental meaning: *стать* ‘become’, *представить* ‘present’, *войти* ‘enter’, *выпустить* ‘release’.

3. Adjectives and adjective phrases.

A. High quality and advancement: *ведущий научный, образовательный, инновационный и культурный центр* ‘a leading scientific, educational, innovative and cultural center’, *лучший* ‘best’, *ведущее учреждение* ‘leading institution’, *заслуженный международный авторитет и признание* ‘deserved international prestige and recognition’, *ведущий вуз в отрасли* ‘the leading university in the industry’.


B. Indicating range: *крупнейший центр* ‘largest center’, *единственный* ‘the only’, *крупные и старейшие вузы* ‘the largest and oldest universities’.

4. Numerals and numeral phrases.

A. Indicating quantity: *более 200 тыс* ‘over 200K’, *более чем за 80-летнюю* ‘more than 80 years’, *поднимались более ста пятидесяти раз* ‘have risen more than one hundred and fifty times’, *569 учащихся вуза* ‘569 students at the university’.

B. Indicating level: *первая в мире* ‘1st in the world’, *2 в мире* ‘2nd in the world’, *1 %*, *Топ-300* ‘Top 300’.

The data above are counted, and the resulting statistical chart is as follows (fig. 1). In this chart, each set of bars in the horizontal coordinates represents a semantic group, in order: words stating names of authoritative subject, words stating time and geographical area, words embodying the relationship with authoritative subject, words with developmental meaning, words expressing high quality and advancement, words indicating range, words indicating quantity, and words indicating level. The numbers in the vertical coordinates represent the



number of occurrences of each semantic meaning in the 20 examples of each language analyzed.

It can be seen that authority appeal is a commonly used tactic in Chinese-, English- and Russian-language educational ads. All the three languages will use the same groups of verbal means implementing authority appeal as a tactic, such as words with the semantic meanings of authoritative subject (person or institution), time and geographical area, high quality, high level and beneficial quantity. Another commonality is that each language prefers to employ nouns with authoritative semantics. Of all the phrases analyzed in the three languages, nouns account for 27.7% of means of authority appeal in the Chinese language, 32.6% in the English language, and nearly half (48.2%) in the Russian language, which in all cases exceeds the usage of other parts of speech.

There are also differences in the manifestation of authority appeal in the three languages. In the Chinese language, nouns expressing the names of authoritative subjects (16.9%), adjectives expressing quality and advancement (18.5%), and numerals expressing quantity (20%) are more frequently used, while adjectives indicating range (6.2%) and numerals indicating level (3.1%) are less frequently used. In the English language, the most used are nouns expressing the names of authoritative subjects (22.4 %), the least used are verbs expressing developmental meanings (0.41%), while the distribution of other semantic groups of words is more balanced. And in the Russian language, the most used are nouns expressing the names of authoritative subjects (36.5 %), followed by nouns expressing time and geographical scope (17.3%), while all other semantic groups of words and parts of speech are used less often.

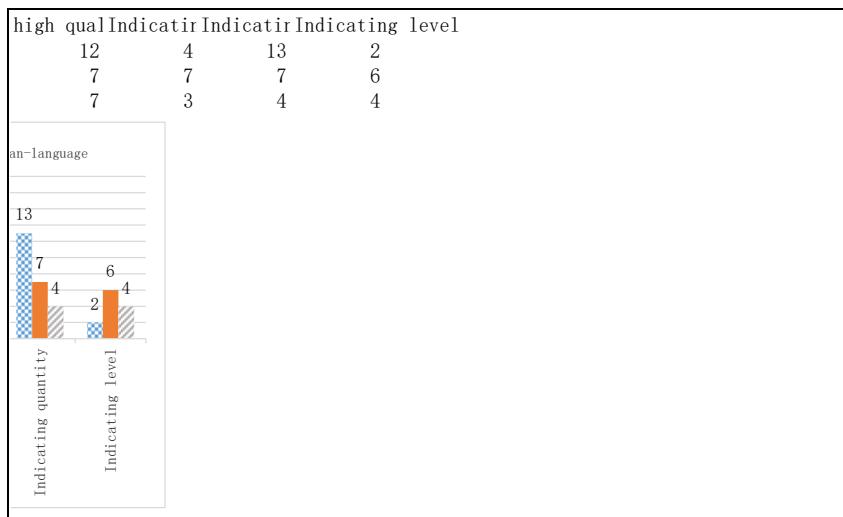


Figure 1 – Quantitative analysis of verbal means of authority appeal

It can be concluded that educational institutions are often successful in developing advertising text containing authority appeal as a tactic due to the use of such verbal means as nouns that express the semantic meaning of authoritative person, institution, time and place, etc. The persuasive potential of these semantic meanings brings authority appeal to the entire advertising. Adjectives expressing the semantics of quality and range and numerals expressing the semantics of quantity and level are also powerful means of authority appeal. Verbs, on the other hand, are mainly used to express a relationship with authority, and these linguistic means are not abundant, thus their pragmatic power can be deemed relatively weaker.

Educational institutions can use the tips above as a basis for developing advertisements that are able to enhance their overall promotional appeal and thus achieve the result of changing consumers' purchase behavior as appropriate.

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ԳՈՎԱԶԴՐՈՒՄ ՀԵՂԻՆԱԿՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԴԻՄԵԼՈՒ ՄԱՐՏԱՎԱՐՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՎԵՐԱԼԱՏՈՒՄԸ. ԿՈՆՏՐԱՍՏԻՎ ՄՈՏԵՑՈՒՄ

ՉԺԱՈ ԼԻՆՑԶՅԱՆ

*Մինսկի պետական լեզվաբանական համալսարանի
խոսքի գիտության և հաղորդակցության
տեսության ամբիոնի ասպիրանտ
ելփոստ՝ brandon.zhao@yandex.by*

Գովազդը կազմակերպության և սպառողների միջև կապող օղակ է, իսկ առաջընթացի ընդհանուր ռազմավարությունը այն գլխավոր գործոնն է, որով որոշվում է, թե արդյոք տվյալ գովազդը կարող է արժանանալ սպառողների հավանությանը և խթան հանդիսանալ գնումների համար: Սույն հոդվածում որպես հետազոտական - նյութ է դիտարկվում կրթական ծառայությունների գովազդը: Ընտրվել են Չինաստանի, Մեծ Բրիտանիայի և Բելառուսի կրթական հաստատությունների առցանց գո-

վազդերը: Կրթական հաստատությունների և նրանց կողմից առաջարկվող ծառայությունների չինարեն, անգլերեն և ռուսերեն գովազդերում հեղինակությանը դիմելու մարտավարության համար ընտրվող լեզվական միջոցները վեր հանելու նպատակով կիրառվել են համեմատական մեթոդը և քանակական վերլուծությունը: Թեև բոլոր վերլուծված գովազդային տեքստերում հանդիպում են բառերի համանման իմաստային խմբեր (օրինակ՝ հեղինակավոր անձանց և հաստատությունների անուններ, ժամանակի և վայրի ցուցիչներ, ինչ-որ բանի բարձր մակարդակ կամ շահավետ քանակ ցույց տվող արտահայտություններ), հեղինակությանը դիմելու մարտավարության համար ընտրվող լեզվական միջոցները երեք լեզուներում էլ ինքնատիպ են՝ պայմանավորված բանավոր միջոցների անհավասար բաշխվածությամբ: Ստացված արդյունքները ցույց են տալիս, որ կրթական ծառայությունները գովազդելիս պետք է ընտրել տվյալ լեզվին բնորոշ լեզվական միջոցներ: Կատարված վերլուծությունը թույլ է տալիս ռաումնական հաստատությունների կողմից արվող առաջարկությունների հիման վրա պատրաստել ավելի արդյունավետ գովազդային հաղորդագրություններ:


Բանալի բառեր՝ գովազդ, խթանման ռազմավարություն, մարտավարություն, հեղինակություն, լեզվական գործիքներ:

ВЕРБАЛИЗАЦИЯ ТАКТИКИ АПЕЛЛЯЦИИ К АВТОРИТЕТУ В РЕКЛАМЕ: КОНТРАСТИВНЫЙ ПОДХОД

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Реклама является связующим звеном между предприятиями и потребителями, а общая стратегия продвижения выступает ключевым фактором, который определяет, сможет ли реклама вызвать одобрение потребителей и стимулировать покупки. В настоящей работе в качестве материала исследования рассматривается реклама образовательных услуг. Были отобраны сообщения, опубликованные онлайн образовательными организациями Китая, Великобритании и Беларуси. С целью выявления языковых средств, реализующих тактику апелляции к авторитету в китайскоязычной, англоязычной и русскоязычной рекламе образовательных учреждений и услуг, использовались количественный анализ и сравнительный метод. В то время как во всех анализируемых рекламных текстах встречаются сходные семантические группы слов (например, имена авторитетных лиц и учреждений, указатели времени и места, фразы, обозначающие высокий уровень чего-либо или выгодное количество), апелляция к авторитету специфична в каждом из трех изучаемых языков в силу неравномерного распределения вербальных средств. Полученные результаты свидетельствуют, что для рекламы образовательных услуг целесообразно выбирать вербальные средства апелляции к авторитету соот-



ветственно языку. Проведенный анализ позволяет сформулировать рекомендации для образовательных учреждений по составлению более эффективных рекламных сообщений.

Ключевые слова: *реклама, стратегия продвижения, тактика, апелляция к авторитету, языковые средства.*

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Հոդվածը գրախոսվել է 05.04.2023թ.:

Ընդունվել է տպագրության 17.11.2023թ.: