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RHETORICAL APPEALS OF SMARTPHONES

ADVERTISEMENTS ON BILLBOARDS

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ABSTRACT

This research deals with rhetorical appeals namely logical, emotional, & ethical appeal used in 10 smartphone advertisements from billboards such as Lenovo, Oppo, Evercoss, Advan, Samsung, iPhone, Asus, Vivo, Huawei, & i-Cherry. The analytical tool of this study is based on Ramage et al's (2010) theory of rhetorical appeals. A qualitative research design is suitably used in this study to give in-depth description and result of analysis. The findings of the analysis about the rhetorical appeals in the smartphone advertisements are: 1) The rhetorical appeals that mostly used in the ten smartphone advertisements is logical appeal due to the total 67 characteristic strategies, whereas emotional appeals only used in 29 characteristic strategies, & ethical appeal which cannot be counted in numbers as it is about credibility which is something qualitative namely expertise, experience, & reputation; 2) The rhetorical appeals in the ten smartphone advertisements are actualized by including the characteristic strategies that tightly represented to each type of rhetorical appeals; 3) The reasons of the actualization of rhetorical appeals application in the smartphone advertisements are because logical appeal attempts to provide sufficient evidence from empirical sources and sound reasoning.

Keywords: Advertisement; Language Style; Persuasive strategies; Rhetorical Appeals

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INTRODUCTION

Smartphone advertisement is an interesting case that uses rhetoric to persuade the potential buyers. The reasons are the need of smartphones nowadays is increasing and cannot be separated from human's life for they function not only as communication device such as to send and receive text message or make a phone call that can connect one person to another no matter how far the distance is between them, but also as entertainment device as smartphones are able to streaming songs and viewing videos, playing games and music, to take pictures, and more.

As the topic of this study is about rhetoric, the writer has found a gap between the reality and expectation which is related to the popular trend of using smartphones in social life. The gap is from the more problematic social phenomenon about the use of smartphones in which they are used as an indication of prestigious status and modern lifestyle. More expensive and sophisticated someone's smartphone is, more prestigious, dashing and popular he/she is. Those who seek such status prefer to have a smartphone that included with various sophisticated features that can fulfill their satisfaction and support their necessity. Consequently, most of people, especially the young ones, spend much of their time with their smartphones and seem not really care about their surroundings as they are carried away. Such phenomena are facts and can be statistically proven by a survey research that has been done by Roy Morgan in his website that the development of smartphone users in Indonesia highly increases year by year and that the Indonesian smartphone market gains almost 13 million owners in just six months in 2015 (Morgan, 2015), let alone in 2016. The factual discovery may be caused by smartphones advertisements that occasionally pop up throughout our society, often showing attractive graphic pictures and words which strengthened with powerful and persuasive rhetoric such as found on billboards. Billboards are used by the marketers because it is highly visible and has powerful presence, meaning it is a large-sized outdoor media that available along the streets and potentially entices the passersby to take a look repeatedly in a longer time rather than moving image such as TV advertisements so that it's unconsciously kept in their mind.

Due to such situation described, people are expected to be more aware and critical in consuming and understanding whatever the advertisements promote and show to the consumers. People should be able to balance their needs of using smartphones whether as communication facility or entertainment gadget, and not easily and psychologically influenced by the persuasive rhetoric in the smartphone advertisements.

Thus, this thesis aims at analyzing the meaning of smartphones advertisements based on rhetorical appeals and also to analyze the current trend in the advertisements especially from billboard as it usually shows large pictures and descriptive words that accompany a visual image. Billboards are used by the marketers because it is highly visible and has powerful presence, meaning it is a large-

sized outdoor media that available along the streets and potentially entices the passersby to take a look repeatedly in a longer time rather than moving image such as TV advertisements so that it's unconsciously kept in their mind.

Based on the explanation, the objectives of this study are: 1) to find out the rhetorical appeals and their persuasive strategies that used in the smartphone advertisements in persuading potential buyers and; 2) to explain the reasons of using the rhetorical appeals in the smartphone advertisements.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to find the pattern and structure of rhetorical appeals in smartphone advertisements, descriptive qualitative method is best to use to discover the three types of rhetorical appeals, observation sheet is preferred to analyze verbal and visual text such as smartphone advertisements for the purpose of identifying specified characteristics of material, it's possible to understand their kinds of the persuasive strategies of each rhetorical appeal and the pattern, and then drawing conclusion to see what kind of rhetorical appeal strategies in the ten smartphone advertisements, how rhetorical appeals occur in the ten smartphone advertisements, and why do they occur.

The data of this research are words. The sources of the data are 10 smartphones advertisements that currently displayed on billboards that are taken as purposive samples which according to Gay (1991: 87) a good sample is the representative one of the population from which it is purposively selected, so there are ten smartphone advertisements as purposive samples that were investigated and typical that selected from each brand. Ten smartphones advertisements are analyzed in this study, such as Lenovo, Oppo, Evercoss, Advan, Samsung, iPhone, Asus, Huawei, Vivo, and iCherry. They represent each product type of the same brand.

Triangulation techniques that used to make this study credible is achieved through data (source) triangulation, which entails gathering the data such as verbal & visual texts through the sources of smartphones advertisements that have been taken from billboard and; theoretically triangulation, which refers to the use of a theoretical position of rhetorical appeals in interpreting the obtained data from the smartphones advertisements.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There are twelve findings about rhetorical appeals and their persuasive strategies in ten smartphone advertisements, they are: 1) Evidence, 2) Fact, 3) Example, 4) Abstract language, and 5) Survey result that belong to logical appeal; 6) Color, 7) Visual Creativity, 8) Representative Model, 9) Emotional Language, 10) Vivid Language, 11) Wordplay, and 12) Figurative language that belong to emotional appeal.

1. Evidence Strategy in Logical Appeal of Smartphone Advertisements

Evidence is material or thing that is presented to audience or viewer to help find the truth about something, in this case is smartphone. This persuasive strategy of logical appeal is used to convince people about what a product can give or facilitate to their necessity that are accepted by logics or common sense.

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the reasons of the evidence strategy applied in logical appeals of smartphone advertisements are to convince the potential buyers that the smartphones have things to facilitate our activity and necessity that are required in today's modern technology era.

2. Fact Strategy in Logical Appeal of Smartphone Advertisements

In terms of rhetoric, fact is information that can be checked by testing, observing firsthand, or reading reference materials to support an opinion or statement.

Based on the data analysis, the reasons of the application of fact strategy that belongs to logical appeal can be concluded that the usage of fact in smartphone advertisement slogan or tagline and headline texts are used to convey the truth or strength of the products to make people believe and persuade them.

3. Example Strategy in Logical Appeal of Smartphone Advertisements

In terms of rhetoric, example is something or someone that is chosen to help explaining what is being stated or said in order to show what it is like, and also to show that a general statement or fact is true.

Based on the data, the reasons of the usage of examples can be concluded that examples in promoting a product is an important strategy in order to make the potential buyers are visually satisfied and logically convinced at the same time.

4. Abstract Language in Logical Appeal of Smartphone Advertisement

In terms of rhetoric, abstract language means an intrinsic form with little or no attempt at pictorial representation that relating to general ideas or qualities.

Abstract language strategy only can be found in Samsung smartphone advertisement as shown in the following data:

“Rethink what a phone can do”

The sentence seems to challenge the potential consumers to do what Samsung states in the advertisement. This imperative sentence implies the verb “rethink” is a mental verb which abstract. By this, Samsung confirms itself that it is not like other phones that can only do average things. It is

distinguished. Although the logical appeal is not much, but what Samsung present in the advertisement is enough to make people curios.

5. Survey Result in Logical Appeal of Smartphone Advertisement

In terms of rhetoric, survey result means a beneficial consequence or conclusion that obtained by comprehensively measuring or examining.

This strategy only can be found in Asus smartphone advertisement as shown in the following data:

“Top 2”

The fact that is stated in sentence *“Built for Photography”* is strengthened with a survey result *“Top 2”* that shown in a golden mark logo (see appendix 7). It is located at the up left side of the space which means that it’s very considerable to use. So far, the logical appeal in this advertisement is convincing.

6. Color strategy in Emotional Appeal of Smartphone Advertisement

In terms of rhetoric, color is an aspect of the appearance of objects and light sources or visual perception that enables one to differentiate otherwise objects.

On the data analysis, it can be concluded that the reason of applying colors in smartphone advertisement are important to give particular meaning symbolically and intrinsically which relating to quality and particular values that may affect potential buyers’ perception or mental imagery.

7. Visual Creativity in Emotional Appeal of Smartphone Advertisement

In terms of rhetoric, visual creativity means the ability to make something that appeals to the sight and is used for effect or illustration in order to produce mental image.

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the reason of applying visual creativity is to elicit or evoke mental image in people’s mind, like potential buyers, and attract their attention as if this kind of strategy represent what the product may give or cause if they experience of using it.

8. Representative Model Strategy in Emotional Appeal of Smartphone Advertisement

In terms of rhetoric, representative model means someone that is used as a typical example of particular people or thing in a group.

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the reason of using representative model in smartphone advertisement is considerably important to advance the prestige and to support the selling of the product.

9. Emotional Language Strategy in Emotional Appeal of Smartphone Advertisement

In terms of rhetoric, emotional language means a use of language that markedly aroused or agitated in feeling or sensibilities.

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that the reason of using emotional language in smartphone advertisement is emotional language is very important for advertising in order to bring out the quality or positive values and ideas about the promoted product to influence people's thought.

10. Vivid Language Strategy in Emotional Appeal of Smartphone Advertisement

In terms of rhetoric, vivid language means a use of language that having the appearance of vigorous life or freshness to produce a strong or clear impression on the senses such as mental image in people's mind.

11. Wordplay Strategy in Emotional Appeal of Smartphone Advertisement

In terms of rhetoric, wordplay means a playful way or clever use of words to generate verbal wit.

There is only one smartphone advertisement that uses this strategy, that is Advan smartphone advertisement as shown in the following data:

“ACTION, ACTIVE and FASHION”

The data shows that from the emotional appeal, Advan plays creatively with language to attract potential consumers. The word *“action”* in this advertisement stands for *“active & fashion”* which is its selling point. This specification may attract people who has concern with a fascinating result of personal photograph either it's the look or physical movement.

12. Figurative Language in Emotional Appeal of Smartphone Advertisement

In terms of rhetoric, figurative language means a kind of language with a meaning that is different from the basic meaning and that expresses an idea in an interesting way that usually describes something else or not literal.

After analyzing the data, there are some points that are considered as the important things to be discussed relating to the problems of study.

The logical appeal turn out to be the mostly occurred appeal in the ten smartphone advertisements. This appeal is seemingly the strongest one to apply in advertisements that concerning technology such as smartphones.

The arguments in logical appeal engage readers or observers by appealing to reason, logic, and data in order to convince them that the real proven or tested products are much more important. Therefore, to gain such achievement, the characteristic strategies that frequently occurred in the smartphone advertisements are evidences, facts, & examples.

The rhetorical appeals and their strategies in the smartphone advertisements are tightly related to each type of rhetorical appeal. Each strategy must depict or represent the three rhetorical appeals natures or characteristics.

By ably recognizing & understanding the characteristic strategies, it is easy to relate it with what rhetorical appeal that they are encompassed in. The verbal texts & visual texts of each smartphone advertisements are supported & completed one another. As a whole, both the verbal & visual texts are the ideas & arguments to promote the smartphones.

The reasons of why the rhetorical appeals are realized in the smartphone advertisements are logical appeal attempts to provide sufficient evidences as this type of appeal is very useful and if used appropriately can be extremely effective for persuading people to believe something; Emotional appeal is used to draw viewers or target consumers in by offering emotionally charged reasoning with vivid visuals & language that affect the viewers' mental imagery or feeling.

CONCLUSION

The logical appeal is seemingly the strongest one to apply in smartphone advertisements as it is related to technology that must be scientifically proven. The arguments in logical appeal engage readers or observers by appealing to reason, logic, and data in order to convince them that the real proven or tested products are much more important. Therefore, to gain such achievement, the characteristic strategies that frequently occurred in the smartphone advertisements are evidences, facts, & examples.

Thus, the rhetorical appeals and their strategies in the smartphone advertisements are tightly related to each type of rhetorical appeal. Each strategy must depict or represent the three rhetorical appeals natures or characteristics. By ably recognizing & understanding the characteristic strategies, it is easy to relate it with what rhetorical appeal that they are encompassed in. As a whole, both the verbal & visual texts are the ideas & arguments to promote the smartphones.

The reasons of rhetorical appeals are used in smartphone advertisements are to evoke people's reasoning, influence people's minds & feeling, gain people's acceptance through any ethical values. It can be investigated by analyzing the rhetorical appeals such as logical, emotional & ethical to understand the message and meanings of smartphone advertisements to persuade and convince the target consumers.

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