

**Enticement in Universities' Offers for
International Students: A Pragma-Rhetorical Study
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Abstract

This study investigates the concept of enticement as a persuasive strategy in some offers that international universities prepare to make students join them. It aims to scrutinise how enticement is pragma-rhetorically realised in such offers adopting the model of Dascal and Gross (1999). The study endeavors to answer the following questions: What are the pragma-rhetorical strategies used by universities in their offers to entice international students join them? What are the most frequent argumentative appeals and figures of speech utilised in the data under investigation? Five offers from different international universities are the data of this study. It is revealed that those universities make use of some of the persuasive pragma-rhetoric strategies. Moreover, it is found that the more frequent strategy is the value argumentative appeal whereas overstatement is the figure of speech highly utilised to entice international students to join these universities.

Keywords: Enticement, Persuasion, Pragma-rhetorics, Universities Offers.

1 .Introduction

Universities offers are regarded as an educational channel for helping students join the university. They try to present persuasive messages that aim to inform, persuade, or remind the students about the services or facilities those universities present for students. These messages often highlight the offering's features, benefits, or unique characteristics of those universities. They are crafted to resonate with the target audience's needs and desires. Universities implement different strategies to target the right audience and drive enrollment. These offers aim to familiarise prospective students with the university, the city, and the country, display campus life, and provide information about support for international students (Alex et al., 2012; Saleem et al., 2022; Kushwaha et al., 2020). They achieve their goals via the use of different persuasive strategies. One of them is enticement which has not been tackled in linguistics as a linguistic concept, to the best of our knowledge. This research scrutinizes them in terms of the pragma-rhetorical approach .

2 .Literature Review

The current section reviews the literature and introduces the concept of enticement as a persuasive strategy in its first part. The second presents the pragma-rhetorical approach to enticement.

2.1 Enticement Conceptualised

According to the Cambridge and Collins Online Dictionaries, enticement is persuading someone to do something by offering pleasurable things. It differs from other types of persuasion in that it is a common strategy in advertising and offering to engage and attract customers with no negative intentions. Enticement is a persuasive strategy in nature that aims to achieve specific goals. Several companies provide discounts on university programs; some may include additional incentives such as travel discounts.

Enticement can be used to describe something that seduces or has seductive qualities. It can attract individuals by creating the image of offering a reward. Moreover, enticements can motivate individuals to perform an action they might not have otherwise. To entice someone to do something means 'employing persuasive tactics to engage them in that specific action' (Osman,1987, pp. 91).

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines enticement as the act of luring skillfully or effectively or leading to hope or wanting. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (1989), enticement is the benefit provided to someone to persuade them to go somewhere or engage in a specific action. The word "enticement" originated from the Old French word "enticier" which means "to stir up or excite." It was first used in English around 1303. It refers to the act or practice of enticing, alluring, or tempting. However, it has synonymous use in terms of tempt, allure, beguile, decoy, lure, solicit, bait, betray, lead on, and seduce (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Such terms have been tackled in linguistics, but not enticement. Temptation, for example, is a type of persuasion. Armstrong (2010, p. 293) states that the 'fundamental goal of an offer is to persuade the intended audience to buy or use the products or services being offered'. According to Jibreen and Al-Janabi (2018, p. 35), persuasion can be obtained consciously and indirectly. However, Searle and Vanderveken (1985, p. 12) claim that persuasion is not direct, and

there are no utterances like "I hereby convince you". Thus, it seems that enticement is an argumentative process that achieves its goal through specific linguistic strategies. The pragma-rhetorical ones are the concern of this research work.

2.2 Pragma-Rhetoric of Enticement

Following Dascal and Gross (1999), Larrazabal and Korta (2002, p. 1) present pragma-rhetoric as a new perspective, which they characterise as "A pragmatic and rhetorical view in discourse analysis, combining both disciplines to explain the intentional phenomena that occur in most communicative uses of language, namely the communicative intention and the intention of persuading". A work of rhetoric is pragmatic; "it comes into existence for the sake of something beyond itself" as Persson and Ylikoski (2007, p. 55) point out. The relationship between pragmatics and rhetoric is defined by Archer et al. (2012, p.148-149) as "using words to influence others and change their behaviour in a particular direction ."

Rhetoric is essential in the development of an activity or the changing of the world. Furthermore, rhetoric is a technique for changing reality by creating a discourse in which the audience is wholly involved; rhetoric is always persuasive. Dascal and Gross published their work on the Marriage of pragmatics and rhetoric in 1999. They introduce "The combination of Aristotelian rhetoric with Gricean pragmatics", as Capone et al. (2013, pp. 537-538) expound. They believe that combining the firmness of "Gricean pragmatics and Aristotelian rhetoric" is attainable and productive. As such, argumentative appeals and figurative language use are inherent aspects of the pragma-rhetorical approach .

2.2.1 Argumentative Appeals

The renowned theory proposed by Aristotle (1956) claims that if one wishes to be a captivating speaker, he must be familiar with three methods of persuasion. Proofs are the persuasive appeals in discourse: logos, pathos, and ethos. Logos refers to the formulation of logical arguments, pathos involves appealing to the audience's emotions, and

ethos is concerned with the speaker's credibility and trustworthiness, as Tkachova (2016, p. 2) explains .

1 .Logical Appeal (Logos) refers to the logic of speech or the reasons it presents. Speech can affect the audience's beliefs by guiding them via logical processes. Kennedy (2007, p. 4) states that logical appeal refers to the validity of the claims, the logic of the explanations, and the message's internal consistency .

2 .Emotional Appeal (Pathos) is a technique that utilises an argument to captivate the audience. Aristotle states that despite being a rational animal by nature, a person's emotions frequently drive him or her to do or accept something (Xiu Guo, 2005, p. 23). Keith and Lundberg (2008, p. 39) define persuasive presenters as those who have successfully aligned the emotions of the audience with the argument they make.

3 .Ethical Appeal (Ethos) is the most powerful appeal among Aristotle's three appeals of persuasion. Ethos is a persuasive approach that relates to the writer's or speaker's personal status, academic authority, and moral traits and is used to ensure or raise the speaker's or writer's acceptability and credibility in the eyes of the readers or audience (Xiu Guo, 2005, p. 23).

According to Keith and Lundberg (2008, p. 39), persuasive presenters strive to acquire the trust of the audience by establishing ethos through deeds, actions, understanding, and competence. Six more additional appeals have been added by Asemah et al. (2023, pp.157-160) to the well-known list of Aristotelian appeals. Only two of them can be utilised in this study .

4 .Value Appeal focuses on aligning the persuasive message with the audience's deeply held values, beliefs, or ideals. By emphasising how a product, behaviour, or cause reflects or supports these values, the appeal aims to influence attitudes or actions.

5 .Rational Appeals emphasise logical reasoning, practical benefits, or cost-effectiveness to persuade the audience. These appeals highlight a product's or behavior's advantages, features, or utility, appealing to individuals' rational decision-making processes.

The second part of pragma-rhetoric concerns figurative language. The pragmatic part of the theory is known as figures of speech, which means a way of saying something other than the ordinary way (Perrine, 1977, p. 61). According to Tarigan (1985, p. 179), figurative language is the language that is employed imaginatively and not literally. The use of figurative language is one technique to breach Grice's cooperative principles. Grice (1975, p. 53) contends that in a discourse, different strategies are used to perform the breaching of maxims such as simile, metaphor, overstatement, rhetorical question, or understatement. Using figurative language is a way for speakers to express intentions indirectly .

2.2.2 Figures of Speech

According to McQuarrie and Mick (1996, p. 424), the primary goal of using figurative language or figures of speech is persuasion, with the speaker aiming for the most effective communication. Furthermore, they demonstrate that figurative language arises when a word deviates from expectation, implying that the expression cannot be regarded as illogical or incorrect because the departure occurs at the level of form rather than content. They distinguish between two forms of figures of speech: schemes and tropes. Schemes are creative variations from the usual arrangement of words and are outside the realm of pragmatics. Thus, this study will not address them; tropes only are utilised in this study.

Tropes are pragma-rhetorical strategies that emerge from breaking the rules of engagement in a particular setting. The term "Trope" is derived from the Greek words for "turn of phrase," "twist of plot," and "turn of thought." A trope unexpectedly bends the meaning of the word. It is "shifting a word's meaning from its conventional sense to a new and frequently surprising one" (Killingsworth, 2005, p. 121).

Huhmann (2008, p. 90) classifies tropes into two types: destabilisation and substitution. The former entails understanding the intended meaning with increased cognitive effort. The latter entails interpreting the intended meaning by simply substituting it for the literal meaning.

2.2.2.1 Tropes of Destabilization

McQuarrie and Mick (1996, p. 433) explore the destabilization trope within advertising, suggesting that advertisers utilize this tactic to unsettle consumers' established beliefs or perceptions about a product or brand. By introducing ambiguity or unease, advertisers aim to trigger cognitive dissonance, prompting consumers to reassess their preferences and consider different choices. This process of destabilization can heighten attention and receptivity to advertising messages, ultimately shaping consumer behavior and purchase choices .

These tropes shall be more complicated than substitution ones since they frequently have more potential interpretations and major differences between elements. For the aim of this study, two types of destabilisation tropes are discussed: metaphor and simile.

1 .Metaphor is usually presented as a violation of Grice's maxims. So, it is pragmatically interpreted. It is the situation in which a term or phrase is employed to describe something it does not imply. For instance:

a. "This journal is a gem" (McGlone, 2007, p. 2).

2 .Simile is a figure of speech in which two distinct concepts or things are described or imagined as having something in common. The use of "like" and "as (...as)" as well as additional terms like "more than", "as if", and "resembles" are common indicators of this comparison (Xiang Li, 2008, p. 5) .

2.2.2.2 Tropes of Substitution

According to McQuarrie and Mick (1996, p. 429), substitution tropes involve using a word that requires further processing to achieve the intended meaning. This involves overstatement, understatement, and rhetorical inquiries .

1 .Overstatement (hyperbole) is a figure of speech that uses negative or positive exaggeration to heighten effect or draw attention. For example:

b. "The traffic was moving at a snail's pace" (Cruse, 2006, 80) .

This trope is classified as a rhetorical-pragmatic tactic in which the speaker's description is stronger than the real circumstance. It emerges from the breaching of the principle of quality.

2 .Rhetorical question, this type of trope refers to a question that does not require an answer, as the solution is evident. It is used to guide the listener to a conclusion and to convey the point rather than to elicit an answer. For example:

c. "Would you like to be quiet?" (Bussman, 1996, p. 1009). It does not require an answer; it is a request to others to be silent.

3 .Understatement (litotes) is the exact opposite of overstatement. Levinson (1983, p. 110), states that this trope deviates from customary communication and hence violates the criterion of quality. According to Leech (1983), understatements are used to downplay the severity of a problem. He describes this method as "a way of downplaying aspects of meaning that are pragmatically disfavored". For example:

d. "He was a little intoxicated" said about somebody known to have destroyed all the furniture (Cruse, 2006, p. 186).

2.3 Universities Offers

Universities use a mix of traditional and digital techniques in their promotions. Important information about the effectiveness of university offers, such as print media and direct mail, in reaching specific groups is offered by Smith's (2022) study. five offers from different universities are the data of this study. The main reason for choosing these offers is that they are appropriate for the study's primary objective, which is uncovering the enticement implemented in the language of university offers. The selected data of the current study is based on how the chosen data reflect enticement as one type of persuasion utilised in different universities' offers.

3 .Methodology

The study conducts a mixed research method, as the goal of the current study is to investigate the pragma-rhetorical strategies of enticement used by universities. Creswell (2009) states that the difference between qualitative and quantitative research is that it emphasize the use of words rather than numbers or closed-ended questions (quantitative hypotheses) rather than open-ended ones (qualitative interview questions) .

The mixed method analysis of the offers seeks to interpret how universities' offers are marked in an enticing way to persuade students to join their universities. The model adopted to investigate enticement in universities' offers is the Pragma-Rhetoric of Dascal and Gross (1999), as explained in (section 2.2).

Figure (1): The Analytical Framework of Analysing Enticement Pragma-Rhetorically

4 .Data Analysis

Five offers from different universities are the data of this study. The first and the second offers are from Trent University, the third offer is from Presidency University, the fourth one is from Cornell University, while the fifth one is from Oxford University.

Offer 1: Trent University's Offer (Retrieved from <https://pin.it/6rsYos2el>)

In Offer 1, Trent University entices international students to join the university by utilising argumentative appeals and figures of speech, which are illustrated as follows:

1 .Argumentative Appeals

In the first sentence, "There is no thinking App", the university uses the logical appeal because this is the fact that all applications cannot think like the human mind, no matter how smart they are; they can only recover information stored by humans. At the same time, the university used value appeal to emphasise the value and importance of the human mind. In the second sentence, "Can you become a better thinker? We believe the answer is yes", the university employs the value appeal to emphasise the ability of the students to be better thinkers, to be part of a group of not only thinkers but the best of them. In the third sentence, "At Trent University, we know the best knowledge is shared," the university employs value appeal to demonstrate the value and the modernity of their university as they know and introduce the best knowledge shared nowadays. In the fourth sentence, "Exploring our differences and listening to diverse perspectives, we create new

thinking," Trent University utilises value appeal to show its flexibility by listening to different opinions and benefiting from them to create new thinking. In the fifth sentence, "And we think the world could use more of that", the university uses value appeal to give value to the world and the amount of knowledge it contains.

2 .Figures of Speech

In Offer 1, Trent University entices international students by using substitution tropes. In the first sentence, "There is no thinking app", Trent University uses an understatement trope to disguise the degree to which applications are little than the human mind by flouting the maxim of quality to belittle the value of the applications. In the second sentence, "Can you become a better thinker?", Trent University uses the rhetorical question, which needs no answer, to bring the hearer to a conclusion, and it is used to reveal the point rather than to get an answer; this point is that you will be a better thinker, and we believe in that.

Offer 2: Trent University's Offer (Retrieved from <https://pin.it/6maTf713A>)

In Offer 2, Trent University entices international students to join the university by utilising argumentative appeals and figures of speech, which are illustrated as follows:

Argumentative Appeals

In the first sentence "The most powerful search engine is between your ears", Trent University uses value appeal to emphasize the powerful and the great capacity of human brain by describing it as the best search engine. In the second sentence "At Trent University, we believe you can", the university utilises value appeal to show that their university is the best place to make your brain think better and at the same time the university utilises emotional appeal(pathos) to entice international students by creating the feelings of self-confidence. In the third sentence "Our collaborative learning environment allows students to have meaningful interaction with professors and fellow students where every voice is heard and debate is encouraged. That is when real thinking happens", the university uses emotional appeal to generate and sustain certain feelings that supports collaboration and there is no

suppression of opinions where every voice is heard. In the last sentence "Challenge the way you think", the university utilises emotional appeal by motivating the feelings of enthusiasm to encourage students to think better.

Figures of Speech

In Offer 2, Trent University entices international students by using destabilization and substitution tropes. In the first sentence "The most powerful search engine is between your ears", Trent University utilises overstatement appeal to exaggerate human brain capacity of thinking by describing it as the most powerful engine and at the same time utilises the metaphorical strategy by comparing human brain with an engine that has the ability to think. In the second sentence "What if you could teach it to think better?", Trent University utilises rhetorical question that does not need an answer to emphasize the ability of the university to help students to think better. In the sentence "Where every voice is heard", the university utilises metaphorical trope by describing their ability to accept and heard different opinions by every voice is heard .

Offer 3: Presidency University's Offer

)Retrieved from <https://newspaperads.ads2publish.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/presidency-university-the-best-invites-the-best-admission-2018-19-ad-times-of-india-bangalore-05-04-2018.png>(

In Offer 3, Presidency University (henceforth PRU) entices international students by utilising argumentative appeals and figures of speech, which are illustrated as follows:

1 .Argumentative Appeals

In the first sentence, "The best invites the best" (PRU) utilises value appeal by describing their university as the best and inviting the best students. In the second sentence, "Start your journey of becoming a successful professional and responsible citizen", (PRU) utilises rational appeal by showing the advantages and benefits you will get when you become a student at (PRU). In the sentence "make the juice that will help shape your life", (PRU) utilises rational appeal, which means the benefit of choosing our university will shape your life. In the sentence

"through elevated scholarly exposure", a value appeal is utilised to emphasise the value of their scholarly exposure and describe it as elevated. In the sentence "at a university founded on the distinguished legacy of over 40 years of academic excellence of the Presidency Group of Institutions", an ethical appeal is used to show the acceptability of the university and how it has been a trustworthy university for over 40 years. By the sentence "Serenely nestled in a vast, state-of-the-art infrastructure, the University prides itself in its Faculty Members more than half of whom possess Ph.D.", (PRU) utilises value appeal to show the value of the university by containing the faculty members more than half of whom possess Ph.D. degrees. In "Are alumni of premier Institutions like IISc, IITs, IIMs, NLU, BITS, NITs", the university uses ethical appeal to attract international students and enhance credibility through trustworthy faculty members. In "Primed to offer you informed career choices and guidance at every step of the way", (PRU) utilises emotional appeal to motivate international students by targeting their emotions, creating a strong personal connection with the students, and creating a sense of help and cooperation.

2 .Figures of Speech

The first sentence, "The Best Invites the Best" utilises an overstatement trope by using the superlative form 'Best' to describe the university and the invited students. It is an exaggeration and flouting of the maxim of quality. "Start your journey" in this sentence (PRC) used metaphorical expression by describing the studying period as a journey and flouting the maxim of quality.

Offer 4: Cornell University Offer (Retrieved from <https://pin.it/11QBmeVrd>)

In Offer 4, Cornell University entices international students to join the university by utilising argumentative appeals and figures of speech which are illustrated as follows:

1 .Argumentative appeals

In the first sentence "An intellectual community of 22,000 students and 14,000 faculty and staff members", Cornell University utilises logical appeal to entice international students by submitting the number of students and faculty members to persuade students logically. In the

second sentence "representing more than 80 countries and hundreds of disciplines-global cultures, experiences, perspectives, and ideas", Cornell University uses value appeal to emphasize that the huge number of students and faculty members choose this university. In the third sentence "Set in a place of unparalleled natural beauty. The best quality of life in the Ivies", Cornell University uses emotional appeal to attract international students by evoking the feelings of relaxation and happiness by showing the beauty of the location in which this university occurs.

2 .Figures of Speech

In Offer 4, Cornell University utilises a simile trope in the sentence "people who think like you do", by making a comparison between the intended students and others who will join by using the common marker of comparison 'like'. In the sentence " more than 80 countries and hundreds of disciplines", the university uses an overstatement trope by using the hyperbole markers 'more' and 'hundreds' to exaggerate the number of countries and disciplines that are included in their university. In the sentence "The best quality of life", Cornell university entices international students and attracts them by using an overstatement represented by the use of the word 'best' to describe the nature of life in this university. Cornell University uses overstatement in the sentence "Make the best partners", through the use of the word 'best' to describe the partners the students make while joining their university .

Offer 5: Oxford University Offer (Retrieved from <https://pin.it/45G8FNIQI>)

In Offer 5 Oxford University entices international students to join the university by utilising argumentative appeals and figures of speech which are illustrated as follows:

Argumentative Appeal

In the first sentence "To be or not to be?", Oxford University utilises emotional appeal by generating feelings of self-confidence and motivating students to enhance their education statues by joining their university. In the second sentence "I f you too are smarter than Shakespeare", Oxford University uses ethical appeal (ethos) by appealing to ethical personality (Shakespeare), which help to support

and accept the offers argument to build trust with the students and persuade them. In the last sentence "We've the degree for you", the university utilises value appeal by showing the ability of the university to provide education at a high level and compare it with the degree of Shakespeare.

Figures of Speech

In Offer 5, Oxford University used different figures of speech to entice the international students, in the first sentence "To be, or not to be?", the university utilises rhetorical question which does not need an answer in order to emphasize that students need motivation to gain a better education degree and they will get this degree by joining Oxford University. In the second sentence "If you too are smarter than Shakespeare", the university enticing international students by using overstatement appeal with the word (smarter than Shakespeare), with this exaggeration the university create a vivid image about what type of student you will be when joining our university. In the last sentence "We've the degree for you", the university uses metaphorical expression by describing the good quality of education with the word 'degree' to show that their university is a suitable place for international student no matter how smart they are.

4.1 The Quantitative Analysis: Results and Discussion

In this section, the results of the selected offers analysis are counted to provide total results which enable us to compare and discuss these results. Table (1) shows the total frequencies and percentages of the strategies that occurred in the data analyzed.

Table 1

Pragma-Rhetorical Strategies in the Selected Offers

Argumentative Appeals		Fr.	Pr.	Figures of Speech		Fr.	Pr.
Logos	2	%8		Simile	1	%6.66	
Pathos	6	%24		Metaphor	4	%26.6	
Ethos	3	%12		Overstatement	6	%40	
Value appeal	12	%48		Rhetorical question	3	%20	

Rational appeal	2	%8	Understatement	1	%6.66
Total	25	%100	Total	15	%100

Table 1 shows that the value appeal is the most prominent argumentative appeal used by the universities in concern. The value appeal counts as 9 occurrences with 48%. This result indicates the focus on the values of the services presented by the universities rather than on the services themselves. Highlighting the values is a principle in offers that necessitates a concentration on the values that students can gain beyond the services. The other argumentative appeals are used with 8% logos, 24% pathos, 12% ethos and 8% rational appeal. This relatively less frequent use reflects the less influence of other appeals in terms of universities' offers .

Regarding figures of speech, the universities show a high use of overstatement with a percentage of 40% while the other figures show a lower frequency with 6.66 % simile and understatement, 26.6 metaphor, and 20% rhetorical questions. These results support the universities' attempts to give high value to their educational services .

Conclusions

The analysis revealed two conclusions concerning the research questions:

- 1 .The universities under investigation employ pragma-rhetorical strategies to entice international students to join their universities.
- 2 .The universities employ the value argumentative appeal more frequently with relatively less use of other appeals and overstatement is the most prominent figure of speech employed in the data analysed .

The above conclusions reflect the universities' tendency to concentrate on the high values they present in their educational systems provided for international students. It is logical to portray the high values that affect students to afford the cost, effort, and time paid when joining such universities.

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