Persuasive Language Strategies in Netflix's Tudum Promotion of Korean Shows

Balqis Sakinah binti Fisal, Sharifah shahnaz Syed Husain*, Nurhafeza Binti Mohd Akhir

Universiti Teknologi MARA

***Corresponding Author**

DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.102100209

Received: 02 September 2026; Accepted: 07 September 2026; Published: 13 October 2026

ABSTRACT

Tudum is the official editorial companion site of Netflix, where it publishes promotional articles for its content, including South Korean dramas which is one of Netflix's international categories with the fastest growing. Despite the popularity of both Tudum and Korean dramas, no previous study has examined the rhetorical and linguistic strategies that underlines Tudum's promotional articles or how these strategies engage readers. This study addresses that gap through a qualitative discourse analysis of 15 purposively sampled Tudum promotional articles for South Korean dramas. The objectives have guided the analysis including identifying the rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, and logos) present in the articles, categorising the linguistic devices used to construct these appeals while drawing on Chachanidze's (2026) integrated framework. The findings show that pathos were the dominant appeal, in which it was largely constructed through evaluative lexis, contrastive structures, and narrative framing. This was followed by ethos appeal, realised mainly through proper names, and institutional references, while logos appeared occasionally just to give brief factual information instead of extending the argumentation. The findings suggest that Tudum's promotional discourse prioritises on emotional investment more than logical or credibility persuasion to draw audience's attention toward South Korean dramas. It can also be concluded that the strategy that Tudum employs is more on layered emotional strategy since it shows that different linguistic devices can fulfil complementary functions in persuading the audience. Future researchers are recommended to investigate promotional discourse in various sub-genres of Korean film series, including thrillers, horror, historical, action and comedy. A direction that can be followed is to combine the analysis of texts with audience-based research.

Keywords: persuasive discourse, rhetorical appeals, audience engagement, Netflix Tudum, Korean drama

INTRODUCTION

Tudum is Netflix's core official supporting editorial website that advances the company's own promotional strategies (Netflix, 2021). The website was officially launched in 2021, with its launch timing perfectly aligned with the global fan event of the same name that Netflix rolled out in the same period. In its 2021 official announcement, Netflix defined Tudum as an exclusive space for users to explore the content they love in depth, and the company also released the platform's core content matrix (Netflix, 2021). By 2024, Netflix upgraded Tudum's positioning once again, stating that it is more than just a promotional website: it is an editorial hub that operates outside of the streaming service's main interface, working to maintain audience engagement and strengthen bonds with fans (Netflix, 2024). Among the various features of Netflix's Tudum platform, the promotional articles published by the platform are often overlooked by researchers. In reality, these articles are a core factor that influences viewers' content choices. Most of these articles follow a fixed format, integrating four core types of content: plot summaries, actor information, release details, and editorial comments. In the current streaming media environment, viewers must make choices among a massive volume of content, so these promotional texts carry critical value as an aid for their decision-making. This type of wording has long gone beyond simple information transmission: it can guide users' decisions and ultimately provide support for the platform's user engagement and commercial success.

As one of the fastest-growing international content categories under Netflix, the global popularity of South Korean dramas has made the persuasive function of their promotional slogans extremely worthy of academic research. A 2018 study by Ariffin et al. noted that the Korean Wave first gradually spread across Asia, then built an extremely strong influence in Malaysia, where South Korean dramas became the most popular form of entertainment among young local audiences. Ju's (2018) study attributed the global success of South Korean dramas to three core drivers: government support, improved production quality, and the rise of streaming platforms. Meanwhile, studies by Trolan et al. (2017) and Rafdinal et al. (2024) synthesized and proposed that highly adaptable elements including relatable storylines, family values, and romantic narratives jointly sustain the international popularity of South Korean dramas. The global surge in the spread of South Korean dramas is driving the academic community to attach increasing importance to the core role of persuasive language in cross-cultural international communication. A 2016 study of international advertising by Im and Gu shows that emotional experience appeals built with evaluative language, metaphors and narrative frameworks can shape audiences' perceptions and strengthen brand identities more effectively than purely informational content. In addition, global media discourse studies by Joaddan (2024), Olausson (2013), and Thakare and Sheikh (2026) point out that in international communication, rhetorical strategies must be adjusted to fit local cultures while maintaining a unified brand identity, and this type of persuasive language is the core mechanism that enables efficient communication between global media institutions and multicultural audiences.

Therefore, this study takes Netflix's promotional texts for Korean dramas as its core research object, and defines this type of text as persuasive discourse that possesses both rhetorical attributes and audience engagement. The three-part framework proposed by Aristotle where ethos (source credibility), pathos (emotional appeal), and logos (logical persuasion) remain as the mainstream analytical tool for research on persuasive communication. Studies by Torto (2020) on Ghanaian advertisements and by Firdous et al. (2023) on Pakistani advertisements both prove that this framework can be applied outside of Western contexts, which provides the rationality for applying it to the Malaysian setting. Although substantial body of research on Korean drama audiences, Netflix marketing, and persuasive discourse, very few have focused on the Korean drama promotional posts published on Netflix's Tudum platform. Hence this study aims to analyse how Netflix uses rhetorical and linguistic techniques to promote Korean dramas to Malaysian audiences.

Promotional discourse not only conveys basic product information, but its core nature is persuasive communication. A study by Sholikhah (2019) clearly demonstrates that advertising and promotional texts use carefully selected language strategies to influence audience attitudes and drive desired behaviors. While Bakhodirovna (2025) further notes that four types of language strategies, including word choice, can capture audience attention, build a positive brand image, and promote consumer engagement. Khaskhelly et al.'s (2026) study also verifies that two types of strategies, namely emotional appeals and narrative framing, can significantly affect consumers' engagement, brand recall, and decision-making behaviors. It is thus clear that the effectiveness of promotional communication depends not only on the content of the promotion, but also on the language strategies that carry that content. A study of digital advertising by Harahap (2025) only identified three persuasive strategies—emotional resonance, credibility building, and interactive appealing general online promotion scenarios, and did not cover the specific platform of Netflix. In another study of Hallyu (the Korean Wave) by Ju (2018) only focused on the global popularity, cultural influence, and audience acceptance of South Korean TV dramas, without addressing the official promotional language used for these shows. To date, no peer-reviewed study has specifically analyzed Netflix's Tudum promotional discourse platform, nor has it fully explored the rhetorical and linguistic strategies used in the platform's promotional articles for South Korean dramas. The academic community still has a clear lack of understanding of how Netflix's official promotions use language to build audience interest and shape public perceptions of South Korean TV dramas. Thus, this study is conducted to address this gap, specifically to identify the rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, and logos) employed in Netflix Tudum's promotional articles for South Korean dramas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The rise of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms

As streaming services continue to dominate the area of global media, the growth and adoption of OTT platforms have been a focus of much research. Existing research shows that OTT platforms have grown surprisingly fast

due to technology developments, shifting audience tastes, and developing content consumption behaviors. Murali and Nagaraj (2022) claimed a big increase in digital media consumption, which was influenced by broad internet access and the growing use of smart gadgets. Their findings also indicate that OTT services provide greater convenience and flexibility than traditional television which encourage people to convert to on-demand viewing. In a similar context, Triphathi (2023) conducted research on the impact of brand promotion on viewers of OTT streaming platforms. The quantitative research emphasizes that the majority of respondents prefer streaming services for entertainment due to its low cost, lots of content options, and convenience in usage accessibility. The study further highlights the importance of efficient brand promotion and platform visibility in speeding OTT adoption which was shown in how users are impacted not just by content availability but also by how platforms promote and market themselves. According to Yaqoub et al. (2023), the closures of many majority cinemas and restrictions in movements during the 2019 pandemic have an impactful effect on viewing habits of people where it drives many of them to use OTT platforms as the key entertainment providers. Further research suggests that user convenience, safety, and cost effectiveness were among the main factors that have been pushing the growth in OTT subscriptions during this crucial period. Thus, this transition has had long-term consequences as OTT platforms have been reinforced as a mainstream mode of consumption even after the pandemic.

Persuasive language in advertising

Research on persuasive language in advertising demonstrates a growing interest in identifying the specific linguistic mechanisms that drive consumer engagement and purchase intention. Findings note that persuasive language in digital advertising consistently clusters around emotional appeal, credibility-building, and audience interactivity (Harahap, 2025; Yusuf & Abas, 2024). Yusuf and Abas (2024) found some extra patterns which are exaggeration, cultural resonance, and informal register. These studies also apply almost an identical pattern of ethos-pathos-logos structure, since "emotional resonance", and "credibility" relate closely to pathos and ethos, while neither study identified a clear or almost similar logo theme in their findings. Persuasive language in digital and social media advertising is consistently organized around emotional and credibility appeal, and interactive functions indirectly assist to the relevance of Aristotle's appeals and Hyland's engagement markers as applicable lenses even outside of their original context. It was highlighted by Kayed et al. (2026) that cultural specificity where Jordanians advertisers favor linguistic strategies were aligned with local cultural values. However, these studies do not examine promotional text for entertainment or streaming content, which shows that although advertising language has been studied a lot in commercial contexts, existing gap yet to be studied in streaming platform writing especially on K-Drama content being marketed specifically to Malaysian readers.

Persuasive language in advertising promotes audience engagement across different genres. In Hyland's (2005) interactional metadiscourse model, engagement markers are used depending heavily on genre, culture, and communicative purpose although these markers consistently appear in the persuasion writing. A study conducted by Vojnović (2023) compared English and Serbian tourism websites, and they found that the English texts used engagement markers more frequently, producing a more direct and conversational tone, while the Serbian materials favored more towards using formal and polite language. Mainly both of these promotional texts lean on reader pronouns and directives, but the directions were used to encourage realistic actions such as asking the readers to visit a destination. In analysing research articles by Indonesian linguistic scholars, Afandi and Sutrino (2025) found that these writers have a strong preference for knowledge-based appeals and first-person plural pronouns to include reader in the communication process. Meanwhile, rhetorical structures were not presented or completely absent which most likely reflects academic writing's emphasis on formality and shared objectivity rather than direct, conversation engagement with the audience.

Netflix's Tudum

Netflix describes Tudum as its official companion site that is created to "help you find and fuel your fandom for the TV shows and movies you love" (Netflix, n.d.). This site features exclusive interviews, behind-the-scenes stories, bonus videos, and character description articles that extend the viewer's experience more than the main streaming platform. Users can sign in with their Netflix account so that Tudum content is personalized based on what they have previously watched and rated, which places the site as both an editorial hub and an extension of Netflix's recommendation system. The Tudum homepage itself invited users to "go behind the stream," which

gives them a hint that its main purpose is not simply listing shows, but increasing the connection with fans to Netflix originals through news, features, and storytelling that focuses on fan preferences (Netflix, n.d.). Tudum also plays a role as a global fan-event brand within the broader engagement strategy of Netflix. Netflix's official news reported on the big scale of the 2022 event as it successfully reached almost 950.7 million views across clips, trailers, and related content (Netflix, 2022). The success did not end on just one event since the 2023 livestream also managed to attract 78 million views and roughly 11,000 physical attendees in São Paulo, Brazil (Netflix, 2023). Even more, the coverage by industry describes Tudum as a really emotional and immersive fan experience for Netflix's enthusiasts which indicates that its success is not just based on view counts, but also through strong emotional reactions from attendees (Netflix, 2023). This suggests that Tudum works as a platform engagement instrument that links live events, social media, and the editorial site together to keep audiences emotionally connected to Netflix shows even between new releases. Despite Tudum's importance in Netflix's fan engagement strategy, no peer-reviewed discourse or linguistic research has yet examined the specific language used in Tudum's articles. Existing research on persuasive strategies and engagement markers mostly focuse on academic writing (Tikhonova et al., 2023), political speeches (Dichoso et al., 2022), and broadcast discourse (Zhang, 2022). However, none of these studies focused on on entertainment platform writing or streaming companion sites.

K-Drama popularity

Research on Korean Drama consumption consistently confirms not only of its popularity but also reasons for its popularity, the appealing content and effects on consumer behavior. Ariffin (2020) attributes K-drama' success in Malaysia to a mix of cultural relevance and deliberate industry effort. These dramas have connected with their viewers through universal themes such as family and love, while still showing respect to the local values including religious sensitivities that makes them different from Western or other Asian media ways in presenting their content. Ariffin (2020) also points to strategic factors, in which the dramas adopt affordable pricing yet with high production quality, and strong government support through organizations such as KOCCA, pointing out that Malaysian entertainment productions today lack a similar strategy as an effort to reach global audiences. This popularity is not just about casual viewing as it emerges as a deep and sustained engagement from the audience. Tengku et al. (2025) studies Malaysian K-drama binge-watchers, mostly millennials, and found that way of escaping, emotional connection, involvement in the story, and sharing with others are all the factors driving people to watch for long stretches and actively discuss what they are watching in the drama. The binge-watching habit itself exhibits that it is a form of engagement with Korean content. This engagement does not stop at viewing habits either where it also extends into real consumer behaviour. K-drama's popularity works on multiple levels which are the appeal of the content itself, sustained viewing engagement, and through real, and measurable effects on consumer behavior.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is guided by interrelated theoretical frameworks. The theories include Aristotle's rhetorical framework that is used to identify persuasive appeals and Chachanidze's (2026) integrated rhetorical-discursive framework for categorising linguistic devices in rhetorical appeal. Therefore, these theories will together provide a layered lens for examining persuasion in Netflix's Tudum promotional articles for Korean drama. Rhetoric is a term defined by Aristotle as "the ability to see the available means of persuasion" (Borchers, 2013). This theory has been proven to function well across very different types of communication. As an example, Sambaong et al. (2024) found that Filipino youth political speeches used more pathos (emotion) in cities and more logos (logic) in rural areas, while ethos (credibility) was used the least in both locations which indicate that the of appeal can change depending on the audience even with the same kind of speech. In contrast, Nelson et al. (2026), extended this theory on social media, arguing that Aristotle's framework can be applied on online promotional materials. The fundamentals of Aristotle's theoretical framework can be identified through three types: ethos (ethical proof), logos (logical proof), and pathos (pathetic proof) (Borchers, 2013). Ethos, as described by Torto (2020), is the representation of a communicator's character, credibility, and authority. Persuasion is achieved when the audience perceives the writer or speaker as truthworthy, as ethos functions to establish the communicator's good character. Thus, ethos works together alongside the other appeals as one of the three main tools of persuasion, and it will be especially powerful when discussing future or uncertain matters. Meanwhile, according to Herrick

(1997), logos refers to the use of logic in persuasion where writers usually apply logos by giving examples and drawing general conclusions from them. Torto (2020) explains it usually involves structured arguments, using either inductive reasoning (specific examples building toward a general idea) or deductive reasoning (starting from a general idea and applying it to a specific case). Logos can also use real examples and experiences to help the audience read a conclusion and acting based on logos is seen as acting intelligently (Torto, 2020). As for the third appeal, pathos indicates the emotional and cognitive impact a message has on its audience, influencing readers' feelings, judgements, and actions (Ramage, 1998). Writers employ pathos by appealing to emotions in order to evoke emotional responses (Torto, 2020). Aristotle categorised emotions into positive (calmness, trust, kindness), or negative (angry, fear, pity) and both can be used to influence the audience (Vivas-Peraza, 2022). This appeal works together with ethos and logos as audiences are less likely to accept a logical argument from an untrustworthy speaker, and even a solid argument may not inspire action without emotional appeal (Vivas-Peraza, 2022).

Chachanidze's (2026) builds on Aristotle's classic idea of ethos, pathos, and logos, but transforms the theory into more practical for analysing modern media writing. Instead of treating these three appeals as abstract ideas, Chachanidze breaks each down into specific and identifiable language techniques. Chachanidze categorized the first appeal of Aristotle's theory, which is ethos, as quantitative data, three-part structures, cause-and-effect language, and technical words. Meanwhile, pathos or known as the emotional appeal, can be identified by looking at the emotional word choice, metaphors, storytelling structure, contrast, and human-focused details. Ethos, on the other hand, has been categorised by Chachanidze through proper names, institutions, attribution phrases, careful wording, and formal references to indicate the credibility of a certain discourse. This fills a gap in older research, which tended to explain these appeals in theory rather than showing exactly how they appear in real texts (Chachanidze, 2026). Most relevant to this study, Anuarsham et al. (2020) applied Hyland's (2005) and Lakoff's (1975) models to a Malaysian Netflix entertainment article, finding that engagement markers were used far more than any other device, while hedges were rarely seen, suggesting that entertainment writers favor building a direct reader relationship and projecting confidence over cautious language. Given its shared Malaysian and Netflix-related context, this study offers strong supporting evidence for applying Hyland's model to analyse how Tudum's Korean drama articles construct reader engagement. Within the context of marketing in particular, rhetorical appeals have continuously shown up as the main persuasive tools. Al-Shboul et al. (2024) examined digital marketing discourse through Aristotle's framework together with Theory of Reasoned Action, found that persuasive communication integrates ethical, emotional, and logical appeals to shape audience thought and behavior in making decisions. Nasir et al. (2025) analyzed Pakistani social media advertisements, found that advertisers strategically combine ethos, pathos, and logos through devices such as metaphors, rhetorical questions, and appeals to authority in order to build credibility, evoke emotion, and construct logical reasoning within their targeted audience mind while also still adapting these strategies to meet expectations of the local culture.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research method to analyse the persuasive and lingusitic strategies used within the text of Netflix's Tudum promotional articles. The samples of this study were taken from Netflix's Tudum articles about Korean shows focusing on the textual element. The targeted sample consists of 15 articles from Netflix's Tudum website, covering 15 South Korean dramas between 2023 and 2026. Ahmed (2024) recommends a sample size of 15 to 30 texts for discourse analysis, making 15 texts an appropriate and well-supported starting point. He also emphasizes that sample size in qualitative research should be guided by the research objectives and the richness of the data rather than a fixed number. This means that 15 carefully selected texts can be sufficient as long as they provide enough depth to meaningfully explore the patterns relevant to the study's objectives. Furthermore, the period between 2023 and 2026 was selected because it reflects Netflix's major investment in Korean content following its 2023 announcement of a US$2.5 billion, during which South Korean content became the platform's most watched non-U.S. content and Tudum has played a central role in promoting these titles to global audiences (Cable News Network [CNN], 2023).

The research instrument of this study is a coding scheme, developed based on Aristotle rhetoric theory and Chachanidze's (2026) integrated framework, Aristotle framework was used to analyse the textual form of Netflix

articles for South Korean drama series. Herrick (2005) explains from the perspective of Aristotle that rhetoric is the art of persuasion where it can be identified using three key ways, ethos (credibility), pathos (emotion), and logos (logic). This highlights the importance of persuasion in communication, particularly for promotional purposes. Meanwhile, Chachanidze (2026) integrated conceptual framework to identify the persuasive elements in each Aristotle's rhetorical appeal that is used in contemporary media discourse. The strategies include quantitative data, tripartite structures, causal connectors, and technical vocabulary in logos rhetoric (Chachanidze, 2026). In pathos appeal, it shows that these media uses evaluative lexis, metaphorical expressions, narrative framing, contrastive structures, and human-centered descriptions as their strategies. The last appeal, ethos, uses proper names, institutional references, attribution verbs, modal expressions, and formal discourse markers (Chachanidze, 2026). Data analysis was analysed using qualitative discourse analysis to explore the persuasive appeals and its linguistic elements used within Netflix's tudum Korean drama articles.

This study's validity and reliability can be ensured as it applies theoretical frameworks that are established, systematic coding procedures, and consistency in analytical processes. Aristotle's rhetorical theory, integrated rhetoric strategies by Chachanidze (2026), and Hyland's (2005) interactional metadiscourse already provides strong construct validity, and the repeated analysis, transparent coding, and reflexive interpretation would enhance credibility and dependability of its findings. Additionally, intercoder reliability test (ICR) was adopted where an intercoder is involved as a second researcher to avoid biasness in the data. ICR is a numerical indicator of how well the coders would agree on how to code the same data while increasing the credibility and teamwork of qualitative research (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). After the coding procedures were done, a reliability test was assessed by using Cohen's Kappa, which is a statistical measure of quantifying agreement between intercoders. The values for Cohen's Kappa that are greater than 0.61 imply significant agreement between two coders (Cheung & Tai, 2021). The study obtained Cohen's Kappa values of 0.56 for main categories, and 0.51 for sub-categories, which indicate a moderate agreement between coders according to Fleiss et al. (2003). While higher values are preferred for critical judgements, moderate agreement is often considered as an acceptable value ("fair to good") in exploratory or interpretive research where coding involves subjective judgement and complex categories. Thus, given the interpretive nature of the discourse feature in this study, a moderate level of agreement was deemed sufficient to proceed with the analysis.

Presentation of Findings

Identification of rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, and logos) employed in Netflix Tudum's promotional articles for South Korean dramas.

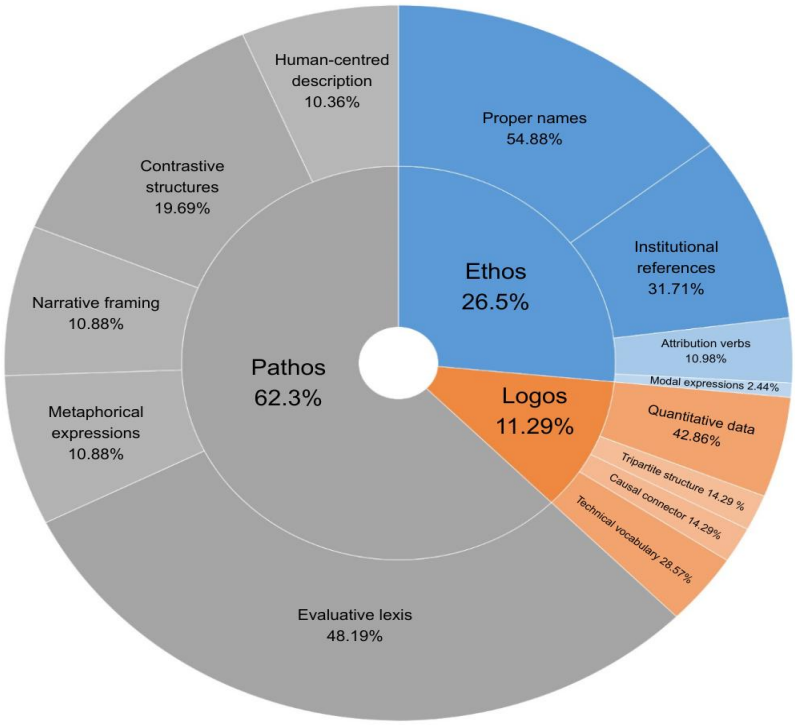


Figure 1: Rhetorical Appeal Frequency

Figure 1 describes the rhetorical appeal frequency found in the 15 analysed articles. It is revealed that all three appeals were incorporated in all articles. One appeal appears as a prominent persuasive strategy. Pathos, or emotional appeal has the biggest percentage, 62.3%, followed by ethos (26.5%), and logos (11.29). Within pathos, evaluative lexis (48.19%) is the most frequently used strategy that indicates Tudum mainly depends on emotionally charged language to shape reader's perceptions and encourage emotional engagement with the dramas. Other pathos strategies strategies, including contrastive structures (19.69%), narrative framing (10.88%), metaphorical expressions (10.88%), and human-centred descriptions (10.36%), further enhance the emotional appeal through creating tensions, character relatability, and vivid imagery. As for ethos appeal, credibility is largely reinforced through the recognition of actors, directors, and reputable institutions as Figure 3 exhibits proper names (54.88%) as the top utilized strategies, then followed by institutional references (31.71%). While the use of attribution verbs (10.98%) and modal expressions (2.44%) are used in smaller frequency in pathos appeal. Meanwhile, the most used linguistic strategy in logos is quantitative data (42.86%) with technical vocabulary (28.57%), causal connectors (14.29%), and tripartite structures (14.29%) serve as the supporting strategies that enhance the factual basis of promotional claims. Figure 3 provides a visual overview of the findings for research objective; the following sample extracts offer a more detailed illustration of the findings:

Extract 1: Pathos - K-Drama 1

*"He becomes **the bridge** between two hearts — and unexpectedly finds his own **hanging** in the balance."*

Extract 1 reflects on the pathos appeal usage which seeks to create a vivid experience for the audience in appealing to them emotionally and generates a sense of shared feeling or understanding with the characters (Lin, 2019). The emotional appeal here is achieved through the metaphoric expressions of "the bridge" and "hanging in the balance." The "bridge" metaphor presents the male protagonist as someone who connects two people emotionally, referring that he is playing a crucial role in bringing them together. Instead of just describing what is in the storyline, this figurative language highlights his emotional involvement in the relationship that allows the readers to empathise with his situation. Besides, the phrase "hanging in the balance" even more strengthens the emotional impact of the extract as it delivers uncertainty and vulnerability of the character. It also suggests that while the protagonist is focused on helping others to find happiness, his own emotions and romantic prospects are at risk. This eventually leads to a sense of suspense, as readers are left wondering whether he will achieve his own happiness or face disappointment. This expression evokes feelings of concern and anticipation to encourage readers to become emotionally invested in his journey.

Extract 2: Pathos - K-Drama 2

*"After a **ruthless villain** is **sentenced to death** by the Joseon-era king she serves, she **miraculously** wakes up in modern-day Seoul."*

Extract 2 extract draws the reader into an emotionally conflicted relationship with the protagonist from the very first line which is aligned with pathos' goal of connecting the readers with a specific intended emotion (Rapp, 2022). It is evident by the emotional pull that is achieved when the evaluative lexis "ruthless" and "miraculously," in which work together to construct different emotional responses, rather than feeling just one emotion. The word "ruthless" portrays the protagonist as morally blameworthy and encourages readers to view her with suspicion or disapproval. However, this negative impression quickly complicates things with her "sentenced to death" situation since it is a punishment that is severe enough to evoke sympathy despite her role as a villain. Meanwhile, the emotional shift continued with the adverb "miraculously," to give a signal that her transformation of unexpected survival into an event that feels extraordinary and destined. Instead of simply stating that she awakens in modern-day Seoul, the word suggests divine intervention of fate that creates feelings of relief, curiosity, and hope. This movement from condemnation to wonder encourages readers to become emotionally invested in the protagonist's future, despite her morally questionable introduction.

The second appeal that helps to evoke credibility, or it was known as **ethos appeal**. As can be seen in Figure 1 with the second largest pie after pathos appeal. While Aristotle initially defined ethos as the persuasive power caused by the speaker's character, but in modern media it was now reinterpreted as a socially produced and

discursively negotiated phenomena rather than a fixed feature (Chachanidze, 2026). In the analysis, ethos tends to cluster at specific points such as cast introductions, awards mention, and institutional or platform references, rather than being woven into the narrative just like the way pathos was used. This suggests that ethos functions more on building the reader's trust rather than persuading them through argument. Samples to illustrate ethos can be observed in the extracts below.

Extract 3: Ethos- K-Drama 1

"Kim Seon-ho and Go Youn-jung star in this rom-com where words aren't always enough."

Extract 3 presents the use of ethos which refers to an appeal based on credibility, authority, or trustworthiness (Rapp, 2022). As observed in the extract, ethos is established through the explicit mention of the lead actors, Kim Seo-ho and Go Youn-Jung, whose reputations and popularity within the Korean entertainment industry contribute to the drama's perceived value rather than providing the evidence of show's quality. Unlike the other cast lines in the dataset where their names were paired with prior credit, such as established drama titles, this sentence assumes the reader already recognizes both actors, showing a subtler and more confident form of borrowed authority since it treats their fame as no further explanation is needed. Hence, this sentence transfers the trust from the actor's existing reputations onto the drama itself which invites the reader to believe in the show's value because two well-known, well-liked performers are attached to it, not because any evidence of the story's merit has been offered.

Extract 4: Ethos - K-Drama 1

*"Hong Jung-eun and Hong Mi-ran — the Hong sisters — **are known** for making rom-coms in which opposites attract."*

Ethos is observed in Extract 4 as it attributes the writer's credibility to an existing reputation rather than the writer's own praise (Nelson et al., 2026). Naming the two writers individually, then collapsing them in "the Hong sisters," already turns two people into a recognizable brand within Korean entertainment, which is more likely fans would be familiar with the brand name. This extract adds a second layer of credibility by giving an attribution to their reputation using "are known for," to an industry's acceptance rather than from the writer's own opinion. This is to let the sentence make a strong claim while distancing itself from personally expressing the idea. The final phrase of "making rom-coms in which opposites attract," sharpens the claim further by naming exactly what they are known for instead of praising them in general terms. This makes credibility feel task specific since it is not just saying that the Hong sisters are talented, but it proves that they are the right writers for this kind of story which is a more targeted form of ethos than simple name recognition.

The third appeal, **logos** was the least observed as seen in Figure 1, with the smallest segment of the pie chart, and mostly identified as a supportive appeal. Most occurrences of logos were identified as presentation of factual information of the drama – genre, settings, or clarifying premises in the story – instead of function to convince the reader of anything. This suggests that these promotional articles hardly rely on logical or evidence-based persuasion, as compared to emotional or credibility appeals. This could be worth noting as a distinguishing feature of this specific genre, which is romance K-drama, since logos might be more prominent in genres that depend more on prestige/scale claims. For example, genres like action, thriller with big budget, mystery, and horror. Despite that, there are still a few significant examples of logical appeal among all 15 articles, which can be seen in the following excerpts:

Extract 5: Logos - K-Drama 3

*"At the 61st Baeksang Arts Awards, **When Life Gives You Tangerines received four honors**: **Best Drama**, **Best Screenplay** for writer Lim, **Best Supporting Actor** for Choi Dae-hoon, and **Best Supporting Actress** for Yeom Hye-ran"*

Extract 5 displays the example of logos appeal, which is persuasion through logical and factual, verifiable evidence to convince the audience (Torto, 2020). Within the sentence, there appears a countable, and verifiable

fact of "four honors" and followed by the list of awards "Best Drama, Best Screenplay, Best Supporting Actor, and Best Supporting Actress" as a form of evidence. Rather than only stating how many awards the drama received, it even names the exact category, the exact recipient, and the individual's role to avoid vague claims that may invite skepticism of the readers. Precise factual claim is one that some of these articles use as a logos strategy.

Extract 6: Logos - K-Drama 4

*"From Hometown Cha-Cha-Cha creators Yu Je-won and Shin Ha-eun, the romantic K-drama Love Next Door — **Netflix's No. 4 non-English language series** — stars Jung So-min as Bae Seok-ryu, a businesswoman who's returned to South Korea to get her life back together, and Jung Hae-in as Choi Seung-hyo, a prominent young architect."*

Extract 6 also demonstrates the use of logos through the phrase, "Netflix's No. 4 non-English language series." It is a subjective quality claim using numerical proof (ranking), basically making the reader think this show is popular or good. Ranking is a particularly efficient logo tool because it asserts measurable performance of views engagement in Netflix. Other than that, ranking implies comparison against a whole field of competitors, in this context placing this show as superior among other non-English shows. This shows that Tudum's copywriters do not simply report random numbers but shaping the frame carefully that aligns with how logos should be presented in advertising, to appeal to the audience rationally (Torto, 2020).

Therefore, the findings suggest Tudum's promotional articles for K-dramas follows a layered instead of balanced rhetorical structure, where pathos is the core persuasion tool, then ethos frames and legitimizes that emotional appeal by establishing who's behind it, and logos exists mainly to familiarize the reader practically rather than to persuade. This hierarchy appears as a consistent structure throughout these 15 articles by Tudum despite the differences in genre.

Categorization of linguistic strategies used to construct persuasive promotional messages

The linguistic strategies were categorized in each persuasive appeal (ethos, pathos, logos) according to Chachanidze's (2026) framework of Aristotelian rhetorical devices in contemporary media discourse. Figure 2 below illustrates the categories of linguistic strategies for pathos appeal.

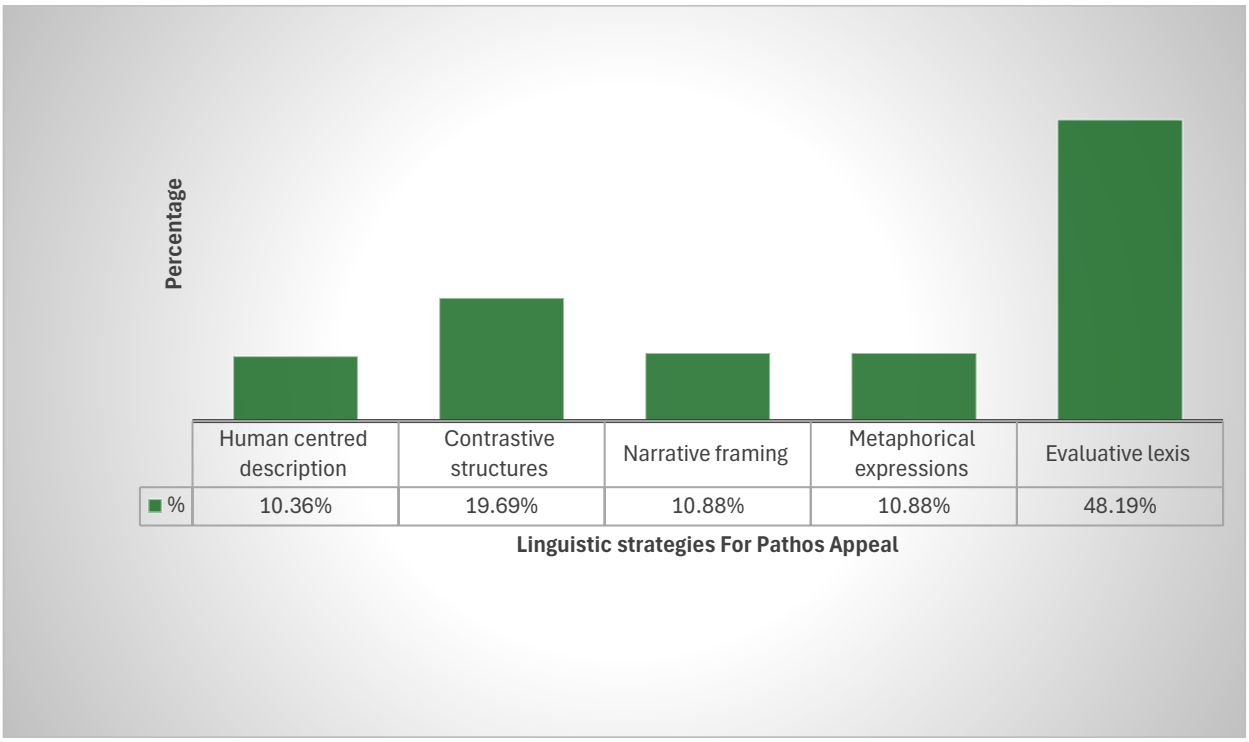


Figure 2: Linguistic Strategies for Pathos Appeal

Chachanidze's (2026) linguistic strategies of pathos, the emotional dimension of persuasion, categorised into five types: evaluative lexis, metaphorical expressions, narrative framing, contrastive structures, and human-centered description. Evaluative lexis, or also known as "lexical selection" or "lexical choices," was defined as a critical language mechanism for creating persuasion, particularly in establishing emotional framing (pathos) within contemporary media. In contemporary media, narrative framing is an important rhetorical tactic in achieving pathos using subtle linguistic and narrative choices rather than overt emotive language. Chachanidze (2026) explained, strategic contrast as a strategy for increasing emotional impact and creating cognitive and emotional dissonance in pathos-oriented discourse. Metaphorical expressions illustrate how pathos can be conveyed through figurative expression by activating cognitive and emotional schemas that shape audience interpretation, for example in the phrase "weaponizing winter." It increases pathos persuasion by establishing shared experiences, using contrasts, metaphors, and emphasizing human experiences that resonate with the audience. Chachanidze (2026) also explains on human-centred description where it is used primarily through pathos to evoke emotional engagement by emphasizing human experience, vulnerability, and the consequences of events which is often by highlighting personal narratives. Figure 2 illustrates the usage frequency of pathos appeal in Netflix's Tudum articles. It is evident that evaluative lexis (48.19%) has the highest usage in pathos, followed by contrastive structures (19.69%), narrative framing (10.88%), metaphorical expressions (10.88%), and human-centred descriptions (10.36%). Possible reasons to support the use of evaluative lexis are to promote anticipation and excitement, to appeal to audience's feelings and emotions to view the Korean drama or series.

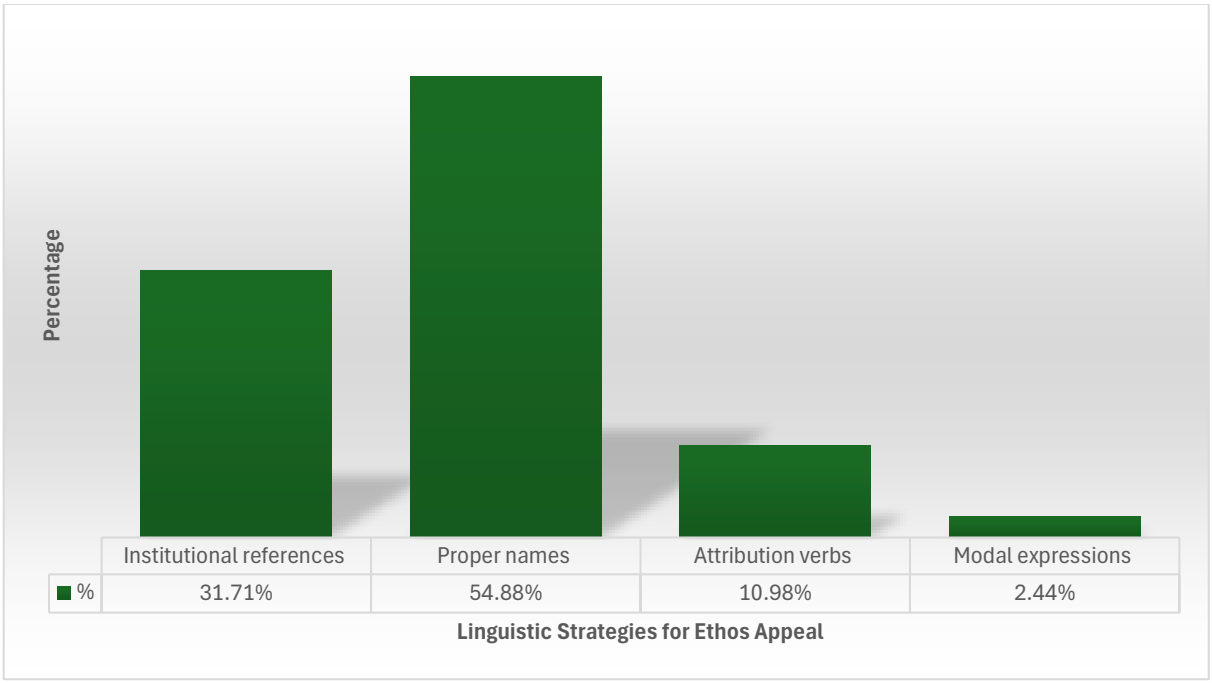


Figure 3: Linguistic Strategies in Ethos Appeal

Chachanidze's (2026) linguistic strategies of ethos, the credibility area of persuasion, which was divided into five types: proper names, institutional references, attribution verbs, modal expressions, and formal discourse markers.

As observed in Figure 3, proper names (54.88%) is the most used strategy in ethos, then followed by institutional references (31.71%). The use of proper names in the articles establishes credibility by linking the narrative with established sources of power, knowledge, the discourse legitimizes its claims, and enhances perceived authority which leads the reader to accept the material as credible as cited by Chachanidze (2026). Institutional references essentially shape ethos in media discourse by generating credibility, authority, and trust. It can be accomplished by mentioning established institutions, expert voices, and formal processes, which legitimize information and reinforce two-tiered concepts of personal and institutional credibility. While the use of attribution verbs (10.98%) and modal expressions (2.44%) are used in smaller frequency in pathos appeal. Meanwhile the existence of

formal discourse markers was not evident. Modal expressions were least used in the promotional persuasive writing as more informative information used and less need to assert possibility or uncertainty.

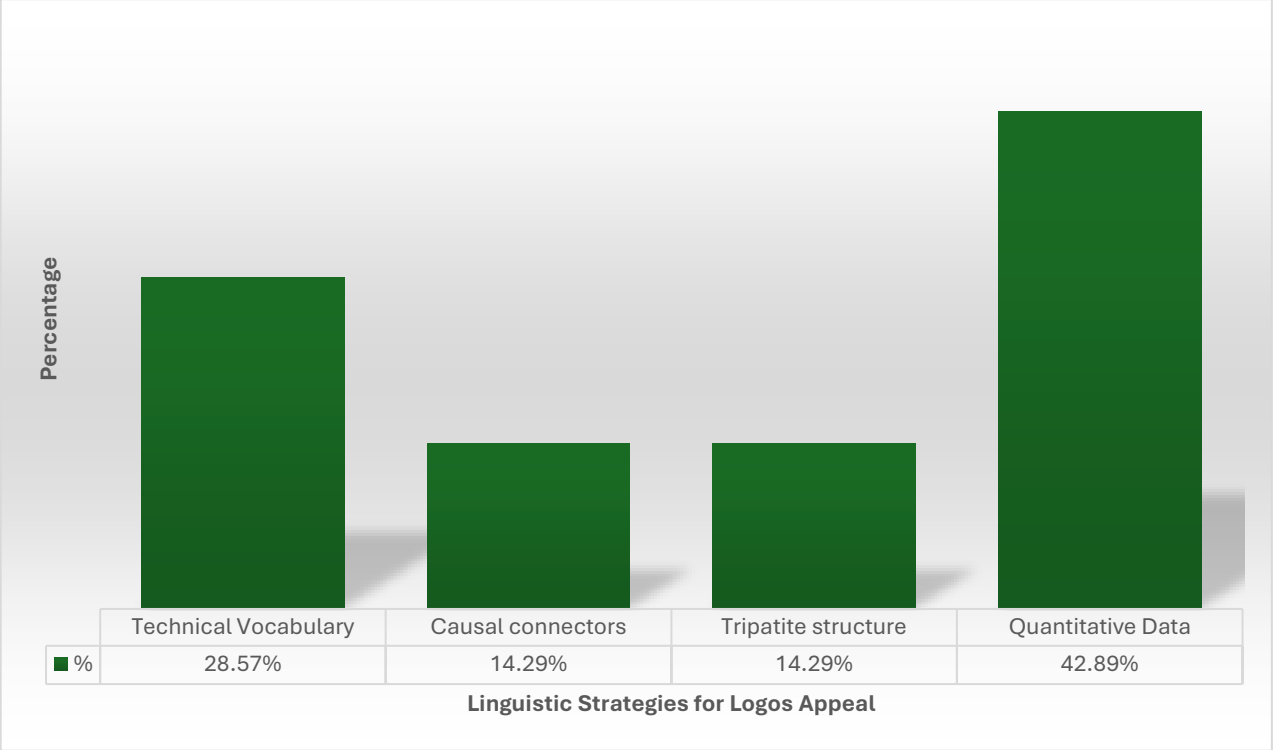


Figure 4: Linguistic Strategies for Logos Appeal

This figure illustrates the usage frequency of logos appeal in Netflix's Tudum articles. Logos used quantitative data (42.86%) as its most used strategy, while technical vocabulary (28.57%), causal connectors (14.29%), and tripartite structures (14.29%) serve as the supporting strategies that enhance the factual basis of promotional claims. The use of quantitative data contributes the most in the use of the linguistic strategy quantitative data evokes logos by carefully integrating statistical evidence and institutional reports to establish epistemic authority, backup statements, and improve the perceived impartiality of media discourse (Chachanidze, 2026). The use of the data can help to lead the reader's trust in the drama. While the use of technical vocabulary technical vocabulary is used in media discourse as a language realization of logos through combining specialized terms with factual facts and structured arguments, to prompt readers to investigate the shows within a structured and recognized framework instead of a non-defined and ambiguous story.

The findings of this research clearly exhibit that even when all three Aristotelian rhetorical appeals of pathos, ethos, and logos are present in Netflix Tudum's promotional articles, they are still not being employed in an equally. Pathos has emerged as the majorly used appeal where it was used for more than half of the identified instances, followed by ethos, while logos appeared only on occasional occurrences. This distribution shows that Tudum really depends on emotional engagement in its promotional writing more than logical or credibility persuasion. Pathos being the dominant appeals is consistent with previous studies on entertainment promotion. Saygın (2025) found that emotional appeal was the principal persuasive strategy in trailers that are highly viewed, since they deliberately construct emotions to attract audiences no matter what genre. Harahap (2025) argues on emotional resonance is one of the dominant linguistic strategies employed in digital promotional discourse because it strengthens audience connection and increases engagement with promotional content. Therefore, these findings suggest that Tudum's promotional writing reflects a broader pattern in entertainment marketing while emotional appeal functions as the main mechanism for attracting audience attention.

CONCLUSION

Besides contributing new knowledge, on streaming platform promotional discourse, the study also extends the existing rhetorical frameworks to a previously unexplored context. This study provides profound understandings

into the persuasive and audience engagement strategies employed in Netflix's Tudum promotional articles. The research concludes that Netflix's Tudum incorporates all persuasive levels to engage audience emotionally to promote Korean drama series. The findings of this study offer theoretical and methodological implications. The rhetorical and discourse theoretical frameworks can be combined into a single framework for analysis. While previously these frameworks have been used by other researchers in isolation in the analysis of different types of texts, including political speeches, the news media, and academic writing, this study demonstrates that rhetorical appeals, linguistic realization, and audience engagement can be analysed as layers of persuasion within the same promotional text. This integrated approach offers a new perspective for analysing persuasive discourse.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to express sincere appreciation and acknowledgement to Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA, for the support and resources in completing this research.

REFERENCES

1. Afandi, T., & Sutrisno, A. (2025). Engagement markers in Indonesian scholars' academic writing to establish rapport with readers. Journal on Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature, 13(2). https://ejournal.iainpalopo.ac.id/index.php/ideas/article/view/6292
2. Ahmed, S. K. (2024). Sample size for saturation in qualitative research: Debates, definitions, and strategies. Journal of Medicine Surgery and Public Health, 5, 100171. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.glmedi.2024.100171
3. Al-Shboul, O. K., Al-Khawaldeh, N., Alkhawaldeh, A., & Hamdan, H. J. (2024). Cognitive aspects of persuasion in marketing discourse: A cognitive linguistic study. Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 10(1). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381672504_Cognitive_Aspects_of_Persuasion_in_Marketing_Discourse_a_Cognitive_Linguistic_Study
4. Anuarsham, A. H., Rahmat, N. H., & Khamsah, M. a. N. (2020). Metadiscourse analysis of an online entertainment article. European Journal of Applied Linguistics Studies, 3(1). https://doi.org/10.46827/ejals.v3i1.187
5. Ariffin, J. T., Bakar, H. A., & Yusof, N. H. (2018). Culture in Korean drama towards influencing Malaysian audiences. International Journal of Innovative Research in Engineering & Management, 5(1), 10–14. https://doi.org/10.21276/ijirem.2018.5.1.3
6. Ariffin, J, T. (2020). Korean television drama in Malaysia: an analysis on Korean media strategy. In UUM Electronic Theses and Dissertation [eTheses] (Northern University of Malaysia). https://etd.uum.edu.my/8570/3/s93848-references.docx
7. Bakhodirovna, Z. D. (2025). Linguistic features of advertisement discourse. Excellencia: International Multi-Disciplinary Journal of Education, 3(1), 245–249. https://multijournals.org/index.php/excellencia-imje/article/view/3017/3479
8. Borchers, & Timothy, A. (2013). Persuasion in the media age. In Internet Archive. https://archive.org/details/persuasioninmedi0000borc_p5w7
9. Cable News Network [CNN]. (2023). Netflix to invest $2.5 billion in South Korea as K-content continues to dominate. CNN Business. https://edition.cnn.com/2023/04/24/media/netflix-south-korea-investment-intl-hnk
10. Cheung, K. K. C., & Tai, K. W. H. (2021). The use of intercoder reliability in qualitative interview data analysis in science education. Research in Science & Technological Education, 41(3), 1155–1175. https://doi.org/10.1080/02635143.2021.1993179
11. Chachanidze, Z. (2026). Aristotelian rhetoric in contemporary media discourse: A linguistic analysis of ethos, pathos, and logos. Science Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems, 9(6), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.56334/sei/9.6.6
12. Dichoso, D. B., Malenab-temporal, C., & Galutan, E. L., EdD. (2022). Interactional metadiscourse markers in computer mediated British parliamentary debate: A discourse analysis. International Journal of Advance Multidisciplinary Studies, 2(7). https://www.ijams-bbp.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/IJAMS-JULY-ISSUE-302-314.pdf

13. Firdous, T., Li, H. F., & Saleh, A. Y. a. A. (2023). The Aristotelian rhetorical theory: A framework for analyzing Pakistani beauty products advertising. Indian Journal of Mass Communication and Journalism, 2(3), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.54105/ijmcj.c1028.032323
14. Fleiss, J. L., Levin, B., & Paik, M. C. (2003). Statistical methods for rates and proportions. In Wiley series in probability and statistics. https://doi.org/10.1002/0471445428
15. Harahap, A. F. (2025). Words that work: A thematic study of persuasive language in online advertisements. Kajian Linguistik Dan Sastra.
16. Herrick, J. A. (1997). The history and theory of rhetoric: An introduction.
17. Hyland, K. (2005). Metadiscourse: Exploring interaction in writing. A&C Black.
18. Im, S., & Gu, J. K. (2016). A cross-cultural comparison of emotional appeals in advertising. Journal of Product Research, 34(2), 77–84. https://doi.org/10.36345/kacst.2016.34.2.007
19. Joaddan, K. (2024). Role of emotional appeals in international advertising campaigns in Cameroon. International Journal of Marketing Strategies, 6(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.47672/ijms.1831
20. Ju, H. (2018). The Korean wave and Korean dramas. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.715
21. Kayed, M. A., Al-Ajalein, M., Al-Smadi, M., & Ahmad, W. A. (2026). A linguistic analysis of persuasive language used on Jordanian advertisements in social media. Cogent Arts and Humanities, 13(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2026.2621637
22. Khaskhelly, F. Z., Hameed, N., & Zehra, S. M. (2026). The Psychological impact of language in persuasion and advertising. Journal for Social Science Archives, 4(1), 1080–1093. https://doi.org/10.59075/jssa.v4i1.544
23. Lin, W. (2019). Three modes of rhetorical persuasion. Sino-US English Teaching, 16(3). https://doi.org/10.17265/1539-8072/2019.03.003
24. Murali, K. V. V., Someswara Rao, & Nagaraj, K. V. (2022). Growth of over the top platforms: new challenge for conventional entertainment and advertising industry - A conceptual study. Journal of Positive School Psychology, 6(2), 349–356. https://journalppw.com/index.php/jpsp/article/view/1306/661
25. Nasir, D., Akhtar, N., Jamil, M., & Mazhar, M. (2025). Linguistic strategies through modes of persuasion:A textual analysis of Pakistani social media advertisements. Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL (JALT), 8(4), 937–951. https://doi.org/10.63878/jalt1428
26. Nelson, N., Hodgetts, D., & Chamberlain, K. (2026). From the agora to the algorithm: Aristotle's rhetoric as a theoretical framework for understanding social media persuasion. Theory & Psychology. https://doi.org/10.1177/09593543251407228
27. Netflix. (n.d.). What is Tudum? Netflix Help Center. https://help.netflix.com/en/node/123481
28. Netflix. (2021). Meet Tudum — your backstage pass to the Netflix Stories You Love - about Netflix. About Netflix. https://about.netflix.com/en/news/meet-tudum-your-backstage-pass-to-the-netflix-stories-you-love
29. Netflix. (2022). Tudum: a Netflix global fan event delights fans around the world - about Netflix. https://about.netflix.com/en/news/tudum-a-netflix-global-fan-event-delights-fans-around-the-world
30. Netflix. (2023). Tudum: a global fan event draws most views in Three-Year history - about Netflix. https://about.netflix.com/en/news/tudum-a-global-fan-event-draws-most-views-in-three-year-history
31. Netflix. (2024, March 11). About Tudum. Tudum by Netflix. https://www.netflix.com/tudum/articles/about-tudum
32. Olausson, U. (2013). Theorizing global media as global discourse. Diva Portal (Dalarna University Library), 7(17). http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:hj:diva-22290
33. O'Connor, C., & Joffe, H. (2020). Intercoder reliability in Qualitative Research: Debates and practical guidelines. International Journal https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919899220
34. Rafdinal, W., Setiawardani, M., Raharso, S., & Hardiyanto, N. (2024). Brand loyalty model for halal fashion brands: integrating quality-loyalty model, information sources and religiosity-loyalty model. Journal of Islamic Marketing, 15(12), 3543–3563. https://doi.org/10.1108/jima-08-2023-0244
35. Ramage, J. D. (1998). Writing arguments: A Rhetoric with Readings. Prentice Hall.
36. Rapp, C. (2022, March 15). Aristotle's rhetoric. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-rhetoric/
37. Saygın, E. P. (2025). Movie trailers as a marketing communication tool. OPUS Toplum Araştırmaları Dergisi, 22(4), 606–626. https://doi.org/10.26466/opusjsr.1693564

38. Samboang, M., Olandria, J. L., Ordonio, A., Zabate, K., Dogelio, R. M., Esgapo, R., & Elan, H. J. (2024). The interplay of Aristotle's rhetorical triangle in Sangguniang Kabataan political campaign speeches: A rhetorical discourse analysis. Zenodo (CERN European Organization for Nuclear Research). https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10830840
39. Sholikhah, I. M. (2019). Language of ads: Exploring persuasive strategies of promotional discourse. Prosiding Seminar Nasional Linguistik Dan Sastra (SEMANTIKS), 1, 741–751. https://jurnal.uns.ac.id/prosidingsemantiks/article/view/39787
40. Tengku, T. S. A., Mohd Azzaman Shariffadeen, Chan, T. J., & Murniadi, K. (2025, May 28). Antecedents of purchase intention of Korean consumer products: A study of Malaysian K-drama binge-watchers. Taylor's FSLM Journals. https://fslmjournals.taylors.edu.my/antecedents-of-purchase-intention-of-korean-consumer-products-a-study-of-malaysian-k-drama-binge-watchers/
41. Thakare, P. B., & Sheikh, N. S. (2026). Language choice in branding, advertising, and digital marketing: Implications for brand perception and consumer engagement. International Journal of Novel Research and Development, 11(2). https://ijnrd.org/viewpaperforall.php?paper=IJNRDJ001071
42. Tikhonova, E. V., Kosycheva, M. A., & Golechkova, T. Y. (2023). Establishing rapport with the reader: Engagement markers in the discussion section of a research article. Integration of Education, 27(3), 354–372. https://doi.org/10.15507/1991-9468.112.027.202303.354-372
43. Torto, R. T. (2020). Aristotelian rhetorical theory as a framework for analyzing advertising texts in the print media in Ghana. Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 10(3), 269. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1003.02
44. Tripathi, K. (2023). An impact and analysis of brand promotion on viewers of OTT platforms. International Journal of Science Engineering and Technology, 11(6), 6–10. https://doi.org/10.61463/ijnrefm.vol.1.issue1.102
45. Trolan, J., Chung, A., Han, H., Lee, J., Howard, K., Jang, G., Paik, W., Kim, M., Kim, E., Ryoo, J., Lee, S., Park, Y., Ravina, M., Shim, D., & Shim, D. (2017). A look into Korean popular culture and its tourism benefits. International Journal of Educational Policy Research and Review, 4(9). https://doi.org/10.15739/ijeprr.17.022
46. Vivas-Peraza, A. C. (2022). Engaging the public in science crowdfunding. VISUAL REVIEW International Visual Culture Review / Revista Internacional De Cultura Visual, 9(3), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.37467/revvisual.v9.3534
47. Vojnović, D. V. (2023). 'Experience Norfolk! Experience Fun!' vs. 'Doživi više od očekivanog' – A corpus-based contrastive study of reader engagement markers on the web. ELOPE English Language Overseas Perspectives and Enquiries, 20(1), 133–150. https://doi.org/10.4312/elope.20.1.133-150
48. Yaqoub, M., Jingwu, Z., & Ambekar, S. S. (2023). Pandemic impacts on cinema industry and over-the-top platforms in China. Media International Australia, 191(1), 105–128. https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878x221145975
49. Yusuf, A. H. S. M., & Abas, N. M. (2024). Exploring the impact of language in advertising on consumers' purchase intentions: A thematic literature analysis. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 8(10), 3560–3572. https://doi.org/10.47772/ijriss.2024.8090297
50. Zhang, M. (2022). Variation in metadiscourse across speech and writing: A multidimensional study. Applied Linguistics, 43(5), 912–933. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amac012