PERSUASIVE FUNCTION OF TOURISM DISCOURSE ON THE EXAMPLE OF 'VISIT ALMATY' WEBSITE

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Abstract. The increasing number of tourism-related websites has captured the interest of both linguists and communication professionals, motivating them to examine the persuasive functions embedded in the digital content designed to appeal to a global audience. These websites, operating within a corporate framework, have undergone a noticeable transformation in how they present promotional materials, increasingly relying on strategic, persuasive communication to influence potential tourists. In this context, the official tourism website serves not merely as an informational platform but as a tool of digital persuasion. The article focuses on exploring various persuasive approaches, strategies, and rhetorical tactics employed in online tourism discourse, using the "Visit Almaty" website. Through this analysis, the research aims to reveal how tourism promotion has evolved in its use of language and design to construct a compelling narrative that aligns with both corporate identity and local cultural values. Moreover, the study investigates the structure and layout of the website, analyzing how design elements and content organization contribute to effective information dissemination and brand portrayal. It highlights how the selection of words, images, and multimedia elements does more than promote a travel destination—they serve as cultural signifiers that encapsulate the city's unique social, historical, and cultural character. As such, these components provide rich ground for linguistic and communicative analysis. The results of the research show the importance of using persuasive function in tourism Internet discourse to attract the readers and visitors. The article's theoretical significance lies in its contribution to digital communication research, especially in tourism discourse, by revealing how language and design shape persuasive narratives. Its practical value is in guiding tourism marketing and web design through effective strategies that attract and engage audiences.

Keywords: persuasive effect, tourism discourse, methodology and models, strategies and tactics, official tourism webpage, website analysis, digital advertising materials, potential tourists.

Introduction

The persuasive function in linguistics and discourse in general is considered by scientists [1], [2], in different fields of knowledge in the study of speech effects.

V.A.Kolchevskaya [3] made a literature review of the category of persuasiveness in foreign linguistics. This persuasive category is considered as a variety of manipulation opposed to rational reasoning as a set of techniques aimed at strengthening arguments and as an integral part of the communicative strategy of the text ([4]).

The Oxford English Dictionary identifies persuasion as 'the addressing of arguments or appeals to a person in order to induce cooperation, submission or agreement'. Similarly, Lerbinger [5] defines persuasion as 'the manipulation designed to produce action in others'. Moreover, Halmari and Tuija [6] interpret the persuasion in regards to this research, giving the definition of this term as 'those linguistic choices that aimed at changing or affecting the behavior of others or strengthening the existing beliefs and behaviors of those who already agree, the beliefs and behaviors of persuaders included'.

Persuasiveness as one of the linguistic approaches, makes a conscious choice of specific discursive means (rational and emotional), which takes into account the situational behavior of the addressee in order to change the image of the addressee) [3]. If classical rhetoric was seen as the science of means of persuasion and diversity of linguistic influence on the audience V.E.Cherniavskaya [7] studies ways of formalizing communicative-pragmatic situations of persuasion, influence, manipulating the mind with language.

Persuasiveness is widely recognized as the foundational category and a primary phenomenon within the framework of the "new rhetoric." It exemplifies the verbal influence exerted by the speaker on the cognitive and emotional sphere of the listener, with the overarching aim of effecting a transformation in the listener's attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors. This process is not merely an incidental feature of communication but is viewed as a central act within the persuasive function of discourse. More specifically, it can be understood as a distinct and purposeful form of mental-speech activity, wherein language serves as the primary tool for shaping the recipient's thought processes and motivating changes in their actions or perspectives. Modern linguists consider persuasive communication and its strategies on the basis of various types of discourse: political, advertising, tourism, and academic. So, tourism discourse is discussed in the works of S.A. Pogodaeva [8], E. Manca [4]. Therefore, bilateralism, spontaneity, novelty, addressee and means of persuasion are taken into account in persuasive communication in tourism discourse [8], [4].

Firstly, the interaction of visual and linguistic tools for strengthening the persuasive effect forms the tourism discourse [3]. Secondly, tourism discourse

has the most persuasive impact on potential tourists, when we sell a product by describing a reality that is perceived by them as authentic and which can give them the illusion of really living holiday experience [9, p.21]. Thirdly, tourism discourse presents a combination of persuasiveness and information transmission [10]. Finally, Dann [11] depicts the tourism discourse being an instrument of social control by saying that: ……the language of tourism is a great deal more than a metaphor. Via static and moving pictures, written texts and audio-visual offerings, the language of tourism attempts to persuade, lure, woo and seduce millions of human beings and convert them from potential into actual clients. To conclude, tourism discourse combines both verbal and visual communication, which includes the language, images and sounds that are strategically mixed together to inform, attract and persuade the potential tourist.

For this reason, the analysis described in this volume takes into account both visual and linguistic features of one official promotional website of Kazakhstan https://visitalmaty.kz.

Materials and methods

Hadina Habil and Hanita Hassan [12] consider two main approaches to discourse analysis: firstly, the emphasis is on the textual material, including lexical, grammatical and rhetorical features. On the other hand, the analysis is concentrated on the extra-textual communicative situation. However, E. Manca [4] suggests identifying tourism promotion strategies on the website using the following methodologies and models: Halliday's systemic functional grammar, linguistic approach, AIDA model. In addition, V.A. Kolchevskaya [3] suggests using communicative strategies of persuasion that take into account not only the communicative goal, but also the tactics (techniques) of its implementation: speech (communicative) tactics, identification tactics, generalization tactics and tactics of using factual information. Moreover, our domestic scientist Kurkimbaeva A.M. [13], studying the posts of travel bloggers on the social network Instagram, presented several new communication strategies and tactics in the field of tourism discourse. Then, together with other researchers [14], the scientist continued to work in this direction, studying the communicative strategies and communication tactics used by bloggers in travel blogs. According to the authors, the most frequently used communicative strategies in travel blogs are the strategy of self-representation, the strategy of positioning a tourist destination, the strategy of cooperation, the strategy of persuasion. This research highlights the personal nature of the blog genre within tourism discourse, which depends on building a relationship between writer and reader to function effectively. In other words, the moves described in their work provide important insight about how writers build a sense of trust with readers when presenting a location as a potential destination [14].

As for the AIDA model, it contains a number of persuasive characteristics and is defined as attention, interest, desire and action. This model is applied in various types of discourse and can also be implemented in tourism discourse, since the messages expressed in tourist content also have an advertising incentive. In this case, the language of persuasion should capture the attention of the reader and potential tourists. To generate interest, the text context (advertising material) must be deeply worked out, accompanied by the benefits of immediate action. Moreover, the advertising material must provide supporting evidence to motivate potential tourists to want to buy a product or service. Finally, the website's advertising materials must use appropriate procedures to entice and persuade visitors [11].

The next phase of our research involves the identification and analysis of systemic functional grammar and visual grammar. Currently, the systemic functional linguistic approach is primarily used in language education and various discourse analysis contexts. This approach analyzes texts from four main perspectives: context, semantics, lexical-grammar, and phonology. Systemic functional grammar specifically outlines three levels of language structure: discourse-semantics, lexical-grammar, and phonology. Additionally, it identifies distinct subsystems within both the lexical-grammar and discourse-semantics levels that interact with contextual factors to produce generalized meanings. These include experiential meanings (covering processes, participants, and circumstances), interpersonal meanings (focusing on mood and modality), and textual meanings [15].

Results

As outlined in the methodological review, there exists a diverse array of persuasive strategies employed in the translation of digital content on websites. The outcomes are examined and juxtaposed from two distinct perspectives: linguistic and cultural. The digital promotional materials are scrutinized to assess whether the promotional strategies implemented by translators have modified the final product to align with the particular nuances and expectations of the target language and culture. This analysis not only seeks to determine the extent to which these strategies have influenced the adaptation of the content in order to resonate with the specific contextual and cultural dynamics of the receiving audience but also aims to explore the broader implications of these adjustments on the overall effectiveness and authenticity of the communication. In doing so, it considers how the interplay between language, culture, and promotional intent may shape the consumer's perception, engagement, and response to the translated materials.

Discussion

Firstly, the research on the Visit Almaty website underscores several key persuasive strategies that effectively engage potential tourists. Authors like Kolchevskaya [3] and Manca [4]emphasize the importance of combining linguistic and visual elements, which is evident in the use of adjectives, superlatives, and culturally resonant imagery that evoke strong emotional responses. Terms such as "fascinating," "beautiful," and "spiritual" are strategically chosen not only to promote tourist attractions but also to reflect the cultural and social identity of Almaty.

The research also highlights the frequent use of generalization and concretization tactics [3] to enhance the persuasive impact. These approaches provide broad descriptions of tourist offerings, followed by specific details to stimulate interest. Visual components, including images of Almaty's landmarks and experiences, further amplify this effect by offering an immersive glimpse into the destination.

The application of the AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action), as discussed by Ferreira [10], is evident throughout the website, with captivating language and effective calls to action. Overall, the findings suggest that Visit Almaty employs a successful blend of linguistic and visual techniques to appeal to a global audience while aligning its promotional strategies with local cultural values and identity.

The findings of this research demonstrate the elements of tourism discourse used by the Tourist Information Center on the VISIT ALMATY website: temptations, attractions, shopping centres, restaurants, entertainment, where to go, a city map, Tiketon awards, weather forecast, and currency exchange.

Communicative tactics implemented in the space of a tourist site reflect the goal of the information strategy – to introduce the visitor to the tourist attraction by presenting the webpage in the most attractive form.

The fundamental factor in achieving the objective of conveying positive information lies in the strategic use of identification tactics. It is essential that a tourist can effortlessly recognize the symbols or logo associated with the recipient. A company's logo assumes a pivotal role in embodying the organization's identity, serving as a visual representation of its brand image and values. In essence, the logo functions not only as a symbolic marker but also as a distinctive signifier of the company's presence and character within the marketplace. A specially designed logo, promoting VISIT ALMATY, is extensively used in all types of material of the website pages https://visitalmaty.kz. Figure 1 illustrates the logo of VISIT ALMATY which has been produced as a badge distributed by Tourist Information Centre.

Figure 1 – The official logo of the Almaty Tourist Information Centre

The same logo has been used by the Almaty Tourist Information Centre (Visit Almaty) together with UNWTO within the framework of the implementation of «the Concept for the Development of the Tourism Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2023» and the World Tourism Programme.

Figure 2 – The official logo of VISIT ALMATY, introduced by the Tourist Information Centre

The prospective tourists are enticed with the phrase "Touch the great history of the city", that is placed at the very top of tourism webpage designed by the Almaty Tourist Information Centre (Figure 3).
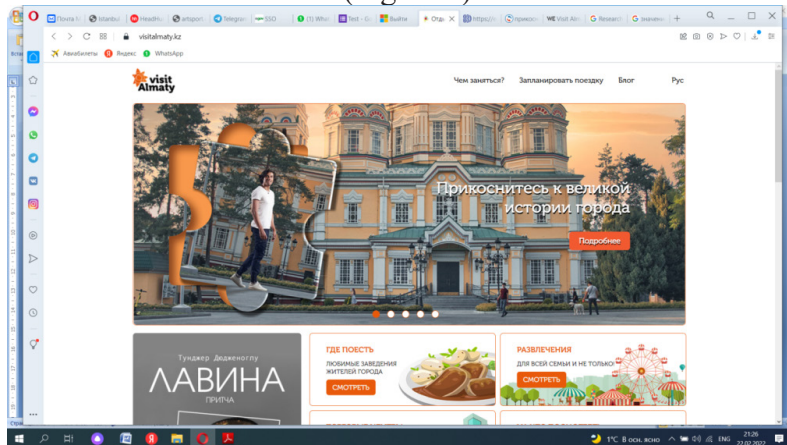

Figure 3 – The front page of the Visit Almaty website

The text written in **Enticement Section (**by clicking the button 'in details): Museum ⟹ The museums of the **beautiful** city of Almaty: It's a **fascinating** world of **cultural** and **spiritual** heritage.

Apparently, the words in bald indirectly signify the values mentioned above, which are beautiful, fascinating, cultural and spiritual. These words can cause excitement in readers or prospective tourists. Readers are believed to be fascinated by the cultural heritage, as this page provides the list of various museums, located in Almaty (Figures 4a and 4b).

The purpose of the *generalization tactics* in our web page is to show the visitor's awareness of all elements of tourist products. Generalization tactics are implemented using two means, which in the context of the tourist Internet discourse become persuasive: 1. the use of adjectives with positive connotations or superlatives; 2. the use of enumeration.

Adjectives play a prominent role in the tourism discourse since they describe the qualities of the destinations. In this way, they can influence the attitude of the reader, which is the reason why we have taken under consideration in our analysis of persuasion techniques. The use of positive adjectives is a recurrent method that the local authorities of Almaty have made use of to highlight the qualities of their destinations. Moreover, wanting to advertise the city's attractions, they use the most frequently used adjectives in gastronomic discourse: national, exciting, delicious, original, stylish, and convenient. The adjectives, describing the flavor and texture of the food, official webpage wish to emphasize their multicultural dishes that refer to the place of origin (Figures 5a, 5b). In addition, the official webpage VISIT ALMATY demonstrates a frequent persuasion strategy, applying much more adjectives in the shopping sector and places to go: large-scale, modern, entertaining, airy, unique, magnificent, and etc. (Figures 6a, 6b).
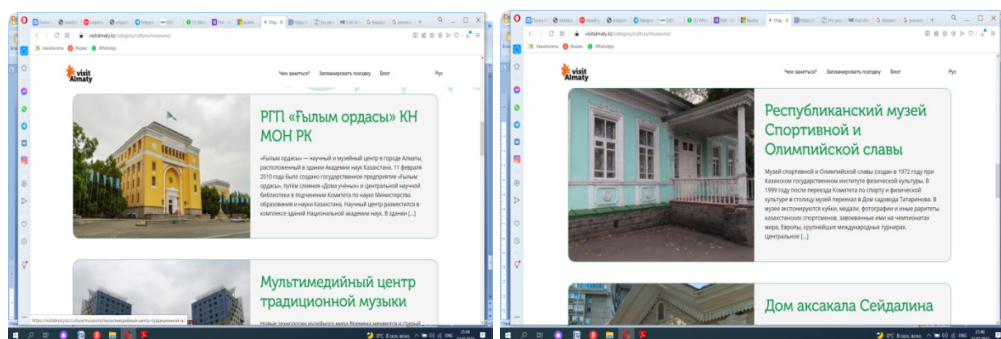
Figures 4a, 4b – Cultural heritage of Almaty
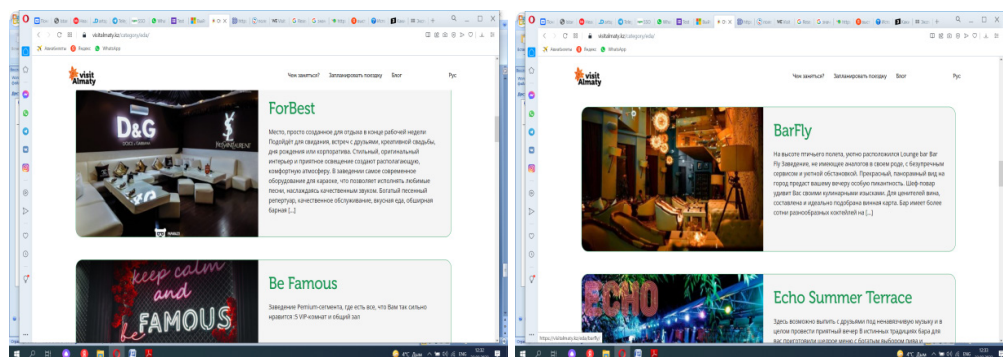
Figures 5a, 5b – The peculiarities of the Kazakh national cuisine
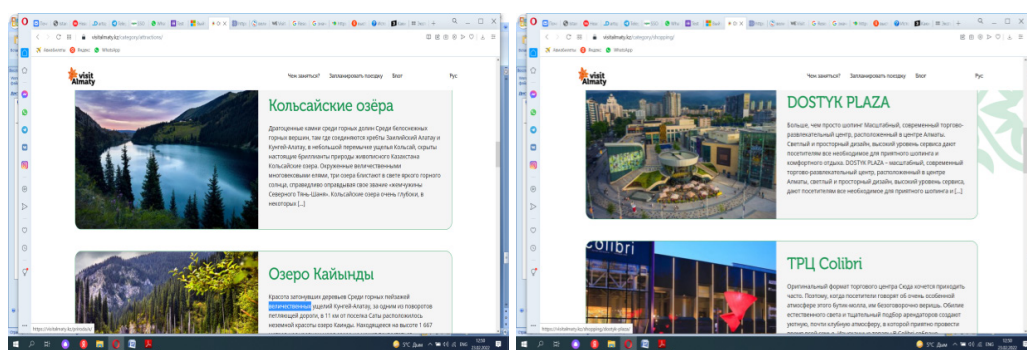
Figures 6a, 6b – Shopping and Places to visit

In addition, while working on this section, the Tourism Information Centre also uses the superlative degree of some adjectives to give a connotation deeper meaning to the significant experiences that tourists will have if they decide to visit these destinations. Some of the most common superlative adjectives are included in the description of shopping, popular and most exciting attractions in Almaty: best, most exciting, most popular, and biggest.

As we see, all the superlative adjectives have a lower usage rate than their corresponding positive adjectives. However, since the messages of official webpages wish to portray their city as a better place than the others, they apply the superlative 'the best' in order to persuade tourists to choose them instead of the others.

The words in the headlines and subheadlines are carefully chosen to take into account the context of the museum, as this is critical to the success of the advertisement in creating an exciting feeling. In other words, discourse has the potential to create a strong sense of impact which in turn will lead to action Goodwin and Spittle state that "discourse is a way of doing as well as a way of representing…people can influence each other and the world by using discourse (2002).

The easiest way to lose visitors' attention is to bore them with repetition. Tourism advertising is vital to helping the tourism industry attract tourists both locally and internationally. Undoubtedly, tourism advertising plays a key role to entice the customer (tourist). Tourism is not technically a product. It is intangible, so unlike products, industries cannot sell it to their customers. So industries sell the destination based on the imagination of customers.

The tactic of using factual information is used to provide information about tourist facilities and services, explain the concept specific to the tourism industry, and contribute to the persuasiveness of the statement. The webpage Visit Almaty uses objective information about the city attractions. Recognizing the importance of diversity, the Tourist Information Centre deliberately highlights the city's extreme contrasts, for instance, offering mountain routes, 360 VR tours and 100 entertainment options, from car racing to paragliding (Figures 7a and 7b).
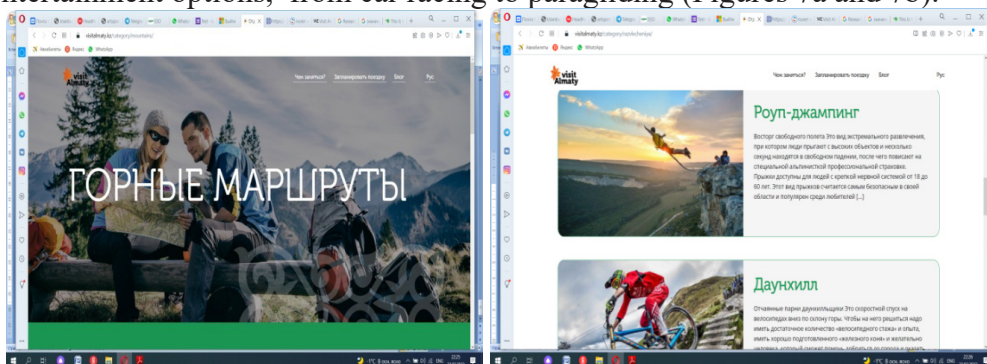
Figures 7a, 7b – Mountain routes and entertainment

Tourism destinations are positioned as 'Almaty is the city of 4 seasons' (Visit Almaty). Below, are samples of various types of destinations that potential tourists might visit.
• Altyn Emel National Scenic Park
• Singing Dunes
• Kolsay Lakes
• Kaiyndi Lake
• Charyn Kanyon
• Big Almaty Lake

The digital content of the Visit Almaty website offers a wide range of tourism products containing a variety of offers for potential customers, and this diversity needs to be differentiated and specified.

To implement the concretization tactics, we use creolization tools - design techniques that include graphic means of emphasizing information, compositional solutions, fonts, etc., which represent additional clarifying information (photos) aimed at creating a persuasive effect.

The diversity of tourist attractions is also displayed through images. Visual imagery proves to be one of the persuasive strategies of tourism discourse in promoting Almaty by depicting a variety of tourist destinations and activities that suit visitors with different needs or interests (Figure 8).
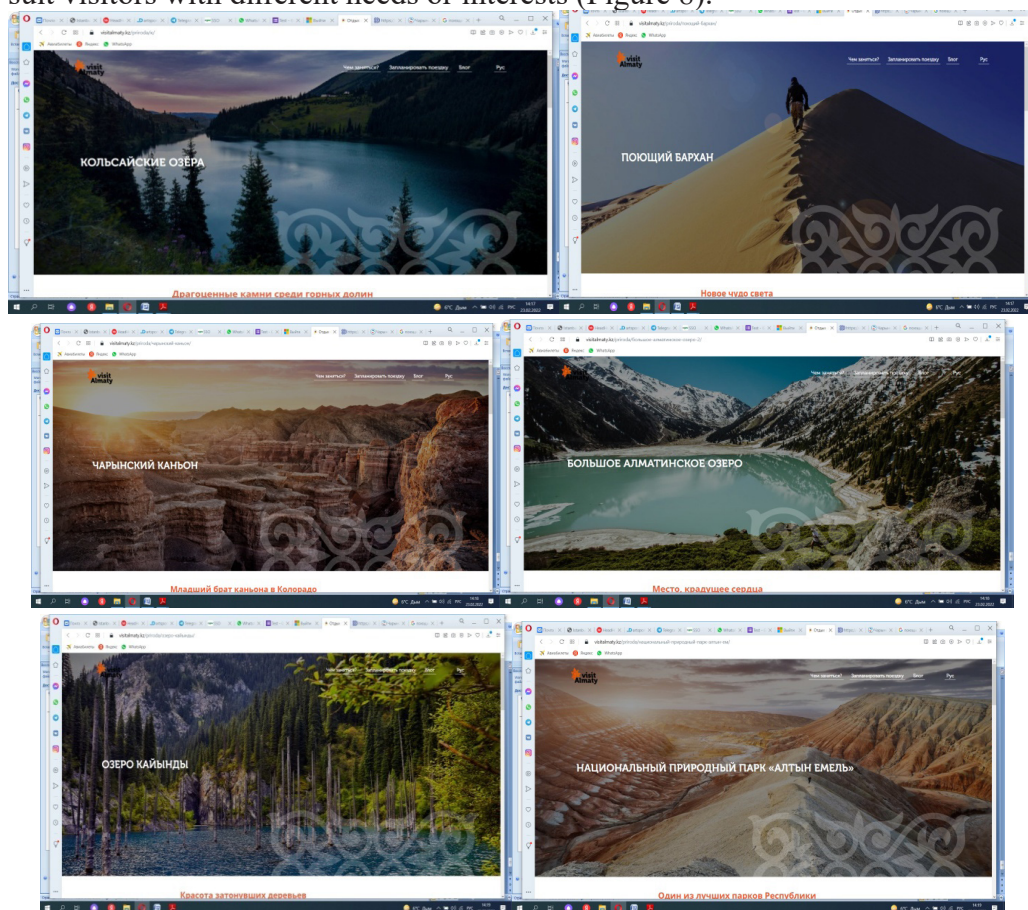

Figure 8 – Various tourist attractions presented through images

The Visit Almaty website displays three criteria which are impressiveness, entertainment and pleasure as a means of attracting tourists with different interests.

Thus, the tactic of concretization help to highlight the information necessary for the trip and is implemented through the repetition of lexical means, as well as through visual and graphic means that focus the tourist's attention on the most important information.

The tactics of identification, generalization, factual information and concretization in the structure of the communicative strategy of information are persuasive tactics through the use of linguistic and visual means.

Conclusion

The overarching aim of this article was to examine the persuasive function within tourism discourse, with a particular focus on the Visit Almaty website as an example. In the concluding section, we have thoroughly analyzed the theoretical framework, the methodological approach, and the empirical research conducted throughout the article.

The various persuasive techniques employed in the discourse play a significant role in shaping the emotional tone of the content, fostering the creation of a positive and appealing image of the destination or location presented by the Tourist Information Centre. These strategies are carefully crafted with the specific target audience in mind, ensuring that the message resonates with the intended recipients and motivates them to engage with the destination.

Furthermore, the research findings underscore the distinctive linguistic styles and lexical choices characteristic of tourism discourse. The use of particular discourse strategies and tactics serves not only as a means of self-presentation but also as an essential tool for enhancing the persuasive power of the tourism webpage. By strategically incorporating these techniques, the content is designed to appeal to the emotional and cognitive responses of potential tourists, ultimately guiding their perception and decision-making process. These elements contribute to the construction of a compelling narrative that aligns with the promotional objectives of tourism communication, demonstrating the crucial intersection of language, persuasion, and audience engagement in the digital tourism landscape.

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"VISIT ALMATY" САЙТЫНЫҢ МЫСАЛЫНДАҒЫ ТУРИСТІК ДИСКУРСТЫҢ СЕНДІРГІШ ФУНКЦИЯСЫ

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Андатпа. Туризмге қатысты веб-сайттардың көбеюі лингвистердің де, коммуникация мамандарының да қызығушылығын тудырады, оларды жаһандық аудиторияны тартуға арналған цифрлық мазмұнға негізделген сендіру функцияларын зерттеуге шақырады. Корпоративтік құрылымда жұмыс істейтін бұл веб-сайттар әлеуетті туристерге әсер ету үшін стратегиялық, сенімді байланысқа көбірек сүйене отырып, жарнамалық материалдарды ұсыну тәсілінде айтарлықтай өзгерістерге ұшырады. Бұл тұрғыда ресми туристік сайт тек ақпараттық платформа ғана емес, сонымен қатар цифрлық сендіру құралы ретінде де қызмет етеді. Мақалада «Visit Almaty»веб-сайтын пайдалана отырып, онлайн-туристік дискурста қолданылатын сендіру тәсілдері, стратегиялары мен риторикалық тактикалары қарастырылады. Осы талдау арқылы зерттеу қолтаңба стиліне де, жергілікті мәдени құндылықтарға да сәйкес келетін тартымды баяндау жасау үшін тіл мен дизайнды пайдалана отырып, туризмді ілгерілетудің қалай дамығанын анықтауға бағытталған. Сонымен қатар, зерттеу веб-

сайттың құрылымы мен орналасуын қарастырады, дизайн элементтері мен мазмұнды ұйымдастыру ақпаратты тиімді таратуға және брендті ұсынуға қалай ықпал ететінін талдайды. Онда сөздерді, суреттерді және мультимедиялық элементтерді таңдау тек туристік бағытты ілгерілетуге ықпал етпейтіні атап көрсетілген — олар қаланың ерекше әлеуметтік, тарихи және мәдени сипатын көрсететін мәдени рәміздер ретінде қызмет етеді. Осылайша, бұл компоненттер лингвистикалық және коммуникативті талдауға бай негіз береді. Соңында, мақалада веб-сайттың коммуникативті ерекшеліктерін талдауға арналған әдіснамалық тәсілдер мен теориялық негіздер жиынтығы бар. Осылайша, ол цифрлық ортадағы туристік дискурстағы мәдениет пен коммуникация арасындағы байланысты ғылыми зерттеуге бағытталған. Зерттеу нәтижелері оқырмандар мен келушілерді қызықтыру үшін туристік Интернет-дискурста сендіру функциясын қолданудың маңыздылығын көрсетеді. Мақаланың теориялық маңыздылығы оның Цифрлық коммуникацияны зерттеуге қосқан үлесінде, әсіресе туристік дискурста, өйткені ол тіл мен дизайнның тартымды әңгімелерді қалай қалыптастыратынын ашады. Оның практикалық құндылығы - бұл туристік маркетинг пен веб-дизайнға аудиторияны тартудың тиімді стратегияларын қолдануға көмектеседі.

Тірек сөздер: сендіру әсері, туристік дискурс, әдістеме мен модельдер, стратегиялар мен тактикалар, ресми туристік сайт, веб-сайтты талдау, сандық жарнамалық материалдар, әлеуетті туристер

УБЕЖДАЮЩАЯ ФУНКЦИЯ ТУРИСТИЧЕСКОГО ДИСКУРСА НА ПРИМЕРЕ САЙТА 'VISIT ALMATY'

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Аннотация. Растущее число веб-сайтов, связанных с туризмом, привлекает интерес как лингвистов, так и специалистов по коммуникациям, побуждая их изучать функции убеждения, заложенные в цифровом контенте, предназначенном для привлечения глобальной аудитории. Эти веб-сайты, работающие в корпоративной структуре, претерпели заметные изменения в том, как они представляют рекламные материалы, все больше полагаясь на стратегическую, убедительную коммуникацию для воздействия на потенциальных туристов. В этом контексте официальный туристический сайт служит не просто информационной платформой, но и инструментом цифрового убеждения. В статье рассматриваются различные подходы, стратегии и риторические тактики убеждения, используемые в онлайн-

туристическом дискурсе, с использованием веб-сайта «Visit Almaty». С помощью этого анализа исследование направлено на то, чтобы выявить, как развивалось продвижение туризма с использованием языка и дизайна для создания убедительного повествования, которое соответствовало бы как фирменному стилю, так и местным культурным ценностям. Кроме того, в исследовании рассматриваются структура и макет веб-сайта, анализируется, как элементы дизайна и организация контента способствуют эффективному распространению информации и представлению бренда. В нем подчеркивается, что выбор слов, изображений и мультимедийных элементов не просто способствует продвижению туристического направления — они служат культурными символами, отражающими уникальный социальный, исторический и культурный характер города. Таким образом, эти компоненты предоставляют богатую почву для лингвистического и коммуникативного анализа. Наконец, статья включает в себя комбинацию методологических подходов и теоретических основ для анализа коммуникативных особенностей веб-сайта. Таким образом, она направлена на научное исследование взаимосвязи между культурой и коммуникацией в туристическом дискурсе в цифровой среде. Результаты исследования показывают важность использования убеждающей функции в туристическом интернет-дискурсе для привлечения читателей и посетителей. Теоретическая значимость статьи заключается в ее вкладе в исследования цифровой коммуникации, особенно в туристическом дискурсе, поскольку она раскрывает, как язык и дизайн формируют убедительные нарративы. Ее практическая ценность заключается в том, что она помогает туристическому маркетингу и веб-дизайну использовать эффективные стратегии привлечения аудитории.

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