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A Contrastive Analysis of Liwc and Rhetorical Devices in Airlines' Advertisements for Frequent Flyer Programs

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Abstract

This study employs text analysis to investigate and compare the use of Aristotelian rhetorical (ethos, logos, and pathos) and Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) categorized into four language variables: clout, analytical thinking, authenticity, and emotional tone in frequent flyer program (FFP) advertisement between the full-service and low-cost airlines on the Skytrax website. The population consists of 100 airlines recognized as the world's best in 2023. A purposive sampling technique was used to reduce the number of airlines to thirty-six which was then divided into two groups: eighteen full-service airlines and eighteen low-cost airlines. The Aristotelian rhetorical devices and the LIWC program were used as research instruments. To analyze the data, percentages were used, and the item objective congruence (IOC) score rating from three doctoral-degree holders in linguistics was implemented to ensure reliability. The findings reveal that full-service airlines placed emphasis on pathos, ethos, and logos, respectively, while low-cost airlines highlighted logos, pathos, and ethos, in a respective order. The results of the LIWC analysis show that the FFP advertisements of full-service airlines scored higher in clout, analytical thinking, and authenticity than those of low-cost airlines. However, both types of airlines scored equally in terms of emotional tone. Full-service airlines employed more formal and logical language to establish an exclusive experience and inspire confidence, while low-cost airlines favored straightforward and easily comprehensible sentence structures to foster a sense of opportunity in passengers who might want to participate in their FFP programs.

Keywords: *Rhetorical Devices, Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC), Persuasion, Advertisements, Airlines, Frequent Flyer Programs*

1. Introduction

Airline business plays a significant role in fostering the expansion and advancement of the global economy. In recent years, the global travel and tourism sector has experienced substantial expansion, with airlines being the primary contributors to the industry's success. In Thailand, the airline business also serves as one of a unique group of five S-curve industries that aim to boost the national economy and move the country away from the middle-income crisis (Banmairuoy et al., 2022). In light of these facts, the Office of the National Higher Education Science Research and Innovation Policy Council has recently introduced the notion of focusing human resources efforts on a novel collection of five S-curve industries. These industries are biofuels, bio-chemicals, digital, aviation, logistics, wellness, medical devices, automation, and robotics (Ministry of Industry, 2016). Moreover, it is undeniable that aviation is included in the national plan as a means to help raise the country's economic status.

As the number of passengers increases worldwide, it affirms the significant role of aviation. According to a 2023 study by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), approximately 2% more passengers would be flying in the first quarter of 2024 than there were in 2019. Airlines anticipate stable operating profits through 2023 (International Civil Aviation Organization, 2023). With this rapid passenger growth, the level of competition within the airline industry has increasingly intensified from 2012 to 2023; there were 0.72 million flights, a 59% rise from those in 2022, and this favorable trend is predicted to continue until 2024 (Aeronautical

Radio of Thailand Ltd., 2023). While acceptable service standards may be considered the minimum prerequisites for airline loyalty, research has shown that frequent traveler programs, air flight price levels, and in-flight service frequency all have a significant impact on customer retention (Suzuki, 2007). As a result, loyalty programs, also known as frequent flyer programs (FFPs), have been employed as a marketing strategy to retain customers. By encouraging repetitive purchases, these programs have assisted airlines in increasing their sales revenue (Fruend, 2017).

Despite the extensive range of loyalty programs and schemes available, they can be broadly characterized as initiatives that incentivize repeat purchases by consistently providing rewards for devoted customer behavior. In addition, FFPs provide tangible and intangible incentives to customers who demonstrate loyalty; one of which are complimentary flights. After accumulating and using a sufficient number of service points as travel miles, passengers are eligible to redeem their points for free flights (Wever, 2017). In this context, incorporating rhetorical devices and linguistic assets into airline branding, trademarks, and identities is crucial for appealing to airline consumers and reinforcing the airline's reputation and stability (Ferrer, 2022). Moreover, an advertisement's efficacy is determined by its ability to persuade. In order to accomplish this, it is critical that advertisements employ rhetorical devices to attract potential consumers (Zulkipli, & Ariffin, 2019).

It is imperative that persuasion be commonly used in both verbal and written communication. Utilizing both passion and logic in writing can effectively convey a persuasive message. Persuasive writing is a type of non-fiction writing that involves a deliberate selection of words, constructing logical arguments, and creating a coherent summary. Engaging in this form of writing can help writers formulate precise justifications for their viewpoints and provide opportunities to investigate data about their beliefs (Isai et al., 2020). Rhetoricians believe there are many ways to express a proposition; as such, the writer will have the greatest impact on persuading the audience. For this reason, when the primary objective is persuasion, the rhetorical perspective asserts that the conveyance of a proposition may hold greater significance than its message (Tuan, 2010).

Substantial research has examined the effects of rhetorical devices across several disciplines and in the field of airline industry. Tiansoodeenon et al., (2023) investigated the need for communicative competencies in Thailand's hospitality sector, as well as the challenges associated with using English in the industry. The findings indicated that interactional competency is the most critical factor in the hospitality industry. Ferrer (2022) examined the rhetoric and language used in low-cost carriers' COVID-19 slogans. The findings identified phonetic, syntactic, and semantic devices. Furthermore, the analysis of the slogans revealed the incorporation of social factors, indicating that diverse carriers utilize sociocultural elements to establish a presence both locally and globally. Amjad, and Hashmi (2023) analyzed the utilization of Aristotle's rhetorical strategies, i.e., logos, ethos, and pathos, in digital marketing brand slogans to persuade consumers and found that pathos was the most-utilized element to appeal to customers. Laosrirattanachai (2018) investigated the frequently used words and keywords found in airline industry advertising slogans. Moreover, the slogans were analyzed by using the ideation metafunction. The findings revealed that most business-class slogans consist of three-word sentences with the keywords of fly, of, your, to, and airline. Participants were the most commonly employed components of the ideational metafunction, followed by situations and processes.

However, there has been little research in which Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) and rhetorical devices were applied in the analysis of FFP advertisements. Therefore, this study compares and contrasts the use of linguistic features and rhetorical devices in FFP advertisements of full-service and low-cost airlines. The findings of this study could benefit the field of education by teaching learners how to use language effectively for persuasion and enabling them to analyze the variations in the rhetorical and linguistic techniques employed by different types of airlines to appeal to distinct target customers.

1.1 Literature Review

1.1.1 Rhetorical Devices

According to Enos (1991), rhetoric is the skill of identifying and utilizing the most effective methods of persuasion in a given situation. The three crucial persuasive appeals described for effectively influencing an audience are ethos, logos, and pathos, which relate to the speaker's credibility, the audience's emotions, and the logical reasoning behind the message. The next paragraphs provide a full explanation of their fundamental characteristics.

Logos refers to the application of logic and reasoning in persuasion. It involves deductive and logical reasoning, which will be examined, along with an analysis of what contributes to a compelling and successful rationale for supporting claims. In other words, logos is a form of persuasion that relies on reasonable reasoning and evidence presented inside the speech itself (Demirdöğen, 2010). According to Higgins, and Walker (2012), logos appeals to reason, emphasizing the importance of the clarity and quality of the argument. As a result, speakers use logos to support their position by presenting precise and unbiased information, and they must offer sufficient pertinent examples to support a statement, make deductions from existing information, and use credible evidence such as expert testimonies, definitions, statistics, and literal or figurative analogies (Aziz, 2022).

Ethos, or ethical appeal, refers to the appeal to the writer's individual traits and encompasses the speaker's credibility and expertise on the subject, both of which are instrumental in earning the audience's trust (Demirdöğen, 2010). Ethos is categorized into two parts: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic refers to the speaker's character and experience, whereas intrinsic influences the speaker's style (Ko, 2015). Delivering a speech in a manner that convinces us of the speaker's credibility leads to persuasion (Aziz, 2022). Establishing credibility and likability as an author is a key aspect of effective argumentation, where a writer or speaker positions themselves as an authority on the subject, who is deserving respect. Therefore, ethos relates to the speaker's character, reputation, and expertise on the issue, influencing the audience's level of trust in the speaker.

Pathos is an emotional appeal that aims to influence the audience's emotions and attitude (Demirdöğen, 2010). Pathos convinces through emotions such as security, love, guilt, greed, pity, joy, wrath, insult, empathy, fear, and confusion. A proficient persuasive writer must be able to identify the appropriate emotion to evoke, considering factors such as the audience's social status, age, and other relevant traits (Mshvenieradze, 2013). Moreover, Aristotle focused significantly on emotions such as anger, fear, love, and pity because such emotions are potent enough to potentially disrupt the audience's logical decision-making. Emotions often influence our decisions and judgments. Touching the emotions of listeners can powerfully influence their political opinions and subsequent actions. The speaker should employ emotional language, forceful words, and valid examples, and talk with authority and conviction (Demirdöğen, 2010).

It is evident that rhetoric is present in all forms of communication and is fundamentally centered around persuasion. Aristotle claimed that the effectiveness of rhetoric is determined by the relationship between ethos, pathos, and logos, which are present in all forms of communication and are centered around persuasion. According to Michalik, and Michalska-Suchanek (2016), implementing rhetorical tones through a suitable channel and manner can help the speaker or informant establish trust with the audience, leading them to support the presented points and arguments, thereby influencing their decision-making. They stress that advertising involves creating a compelling argument for the target audience while also delivering information in a manner that corresponds with the emotions of all individuals. Moreover, Tom, and Eves (2012) assert that rhetorical devices, which are language qualities, can be used to craft slogans or commercial texts. Therefore, rhetorical devices can serve as effective tools to enhance commercials and engage the target audience.

1.1.2 Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC)

It is believed that language serves as a mediator, reflecting our social standing and identities. Furthermore, we often utilize language to express our innermost thoughts and emotions in a manner that others can understand (Tausczik, & Pennebaker, 2010). Social, clinical, personality, and cognitive psychologists utilize the words we use through language lenses to gain insight into human behavior, establishing a strong relationship with psychology. However, the attempt to examine human cognition through an emotional essay, for example, is limited, as it relies exclusively on subjectivity. It is simple to see the difficulties and congruence that people face in reaching a mutual agreement. Consequently, researchers at the University of Texas at Austin developed the LIWC software system, which provides a psychological underpinning based on the notion that internal cognitive or emotional states influence language use (McHaney et al., 2018; Neal, 2016). For this reason, we decided to explore the LIWC to analyze commercial advertisements.

Basically, LIWC consists of two main components: the processing component and the dictionaries (Tausczik, & Pennebaker, 2010). It functions as a data processing system; moreover, it can load almost any type of text. During the processing step, LIWC does a comparison between each word in the input file(s) against a preloaded dictionary of words (McHaney et al., 2018). Afterwards, it presents the data as the ratio of words in a specific text that fall into each group (for instance, personal pronouns account for 17% of the text's words)

(Ferreira et al., 2023). The majority of LIWC output variables represent the proportion of total words in a given text. For instance, the analysis states that the count of positive emotions in a blog is 4.20, which indicates that 4.20% of the words in the blog were terms expressing joyful emotions. The software then uses this classification to come up with four short language variables: clout (Kacewicz et al., 2014), analytical thinking (Pennebaker et al., 2014), authenticity (Newman et al., 2003), and emotional tone (Cohn et al., 2004). In the following sections, the attributes of each summary language parameter are identified.

Clout, as measured in text analysis, reflects an author's perceived social status or confidence that people have in them (Pennebaker et al., 2015). For this reason, clout is the measure of one's social standing, self-assurance, or ability to lead, as demonstrated by their communication skills. Researchers derived the Clout algorithm from a series of studies in which individuals participated in interpersonal interactions (Kacewicz et al., 2014). This is based on research showing that powerful individuals use more first-person plural pronouns ("we") and social words, suggesting a focus on the collective (Jordan et al., 2019; Kacewicz et al., 2014).

Analytical thinking is based on various categories of function words. It aims to measure the extent to which individuals employ vocabulary that indicates formal, logical, and hierarchical methods of thinking (Pennebaker et al., 2014). Specifically, individuals with lower analytical thinking abilities often express themselves and engage in cognitive processes using a more instinctive and subjective type of language. People often perceive languages with lower analytical thinking scores as less strict and more personal, thereby creating a friendlier impression. According to Jordan et al., (2019), analytical thinking is most apparent when individuals use articles to represent concepts and prepositions to show the relationships between these concepts.

Authenticity in text analysis reflects honesty and personal disclosure (Pennebaker et al., 2015). When people express themselves in an "authentic" or truthful manner, they tend to communicate more naturally without consciously regulating or censoring their speech. Researchers initially developed the authenticity algorithm by inducing individuals to either tell the truth or deceive (Newman et al., 2003), and by compiling subsequent studies on deception (Pennebaker et al., 2014). Unscripted dialogues between intimate acquaintances or influential figures, free from societal norms, sometimes characterize texts that exhibit a high level of authenticity.

Emotional tone in text analysis is captured by a single score combining positive and negative emotions (Cohn et al., 2004). LIWC incorporates positive tone and negative tone dimensions, but the tone variable combines these two dimensions into a single summary variable. The technique was designed so that a greater numerical value corresponds to a more positive sentiment. Scores above 50 indicate a positive tone, while those below 50 reflect negativity, including anxiety, sadness, and anger (Pennebaker et al., 2015; Robertson et al., 2021). A score of 50 suggests a completely neutral tone.

1.1.3 Frequent Flyer Programs (FFPs)

Competition among airlines provides air travelers with a variety of options, but fundamentally, the services supplied are identical: carrying passengers between destinations. The only variation is in the product or service, such as aircraft type, number of stops or connections, departure time, and arrival time, among other factors. For this reason, airlines strive to offer competitive advantages, provide exceptional brand value to customers, and build lucrative customer connections (Chen et al., 2019). In addition, an airline benefits more from building and maintaining long-term connections with customers through FFPs than from acquiring new customers, as these passengers develop emotional, more long-term loyalty to the airline companies (Rafiq et al., 2013).

FFPs and loyalty programs, also known as frequency reward programs, loyalty cards, advantage cards, or loyalty schemes, allow passengers to receive awards for their loyalty to the airlines. Lee et al., (2014) suggested that the loyalty programs aim to attract, retain, and improve business and customer relationships. FFPs are comprehensive systems of customized marketing strategies and communications that provide both concrete (such as discounts or gifts) and abstract (specialized services, prestige, or presents) incentives. Furthermore, FFPs aim to strengthen airline-traveler ties by offering passengers rewards, encouraging ongoing marketing interactions, ensuring consumer loyalty, and collecting customer information and data. FFPs generally offer benefits such as complimentary tickets or flights, reduced rates for car rental, exclusive promotions, discounted hotel stays, extra baggage allowance, access to airport lounges, and priority reservations, among other advantages. These benefits encourage travelers to stick to one airline, reducing the risk of passengers' switching to other airlines while improving the airline's value proposition.

2. Objectives

- 1) To investigate the use of rhetorical devices and LIWC in airlines' advertisements for frequent flyer programs.
- 2) To compare the use of rhetorical devices and LIWC in airlines' advertisements for frequent flyer programs.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a contrastive analysis that involved a comparable corpus of two levels: rhetoric and LIWC. Data from the Skytrax website, a well-known platform that ranks airlines in many categories, including best airline, best business airline, and best cabin staff members, were compiled to form a corpus-based approach. Figure 1 below illustrates the study's research design.

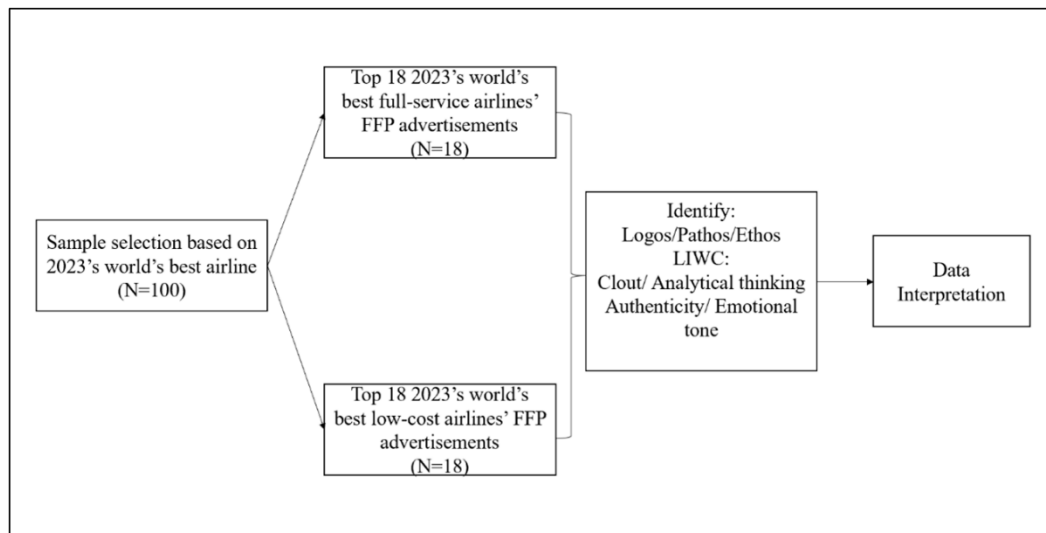


Figure 1 Research design

The first stage of this study was identifying the sample. The corpus study involved examining the advertising of frequent flyer programs between the top twenty full-service and low-cost airlines. The sample selection criteria were determined based on their reputation and international ranking on the Skytrax website. Next, FFP text advertisements were compiled from the airlines' official websites under the frequent flyer program section in August 2024. Only the most significant elements of the advertisement on the initial page of the frequent flyer program section were selected, while explanations, background information, member tiers, and formal application details were excluded. Finally, the texts were evaluated, classified according to LIWC and rhetorical devices, and finally interpreted.

3.2 A Corpora Compilation

The study population comprised 100 airlines recognized as the world's finest in 2023. Using a purposive sampling technique, we selected thirty-six airlines and divided them into two groups: the eighteen best full-service airlines and the eighteen best low-cost airlines. All eight five-star airlines, which ranked in the top 11 of the world's best airlines in 2023, were included in the full-service category. We selected the remaining ten full-service airlines based on their ranking. The top 100 airlines of 2023 included all low-cost airlines, so we chose the eighteen with the highest rankings.

The corpora compilation of the FFP advertisements of both types of airlines published in August 2024 was used for analysis. To conduct a preliminary selection of the text, the following criteria were used. First, the airlines must be recognized as being among the world's best airlines according to Skytrax's criteria. Second, eighteen airlines from each category of the 2023 world-best-rankings were selected. Third, the number of tokens

in the FFP advertisements is limited to 20. Fourth, only the boldface or salient texts in the FFP advertisement section on the website were selected. The corpus size of the FFP advertisements is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 FFP advertisement corpus size

	Full-service Airlines	Low-cost Airlines	Total
Texts	18	18	36
Words	172	186	358
WPS (word per sentence)	10.75	8.09	18.84
Big words (words longer than 6 letters)	19.77	25.27	45.04

Table 1 displays the number of texts, the word count, the average word count per text, and the words longer than six letters used in the test. The word count of full-service airlines is 172, which is lower than that of the low-cost airlines (186). The total number of texts is 358 tokens. The full-service airlines have a mean word per sentence 10.75, which is higher than the low-cost airlines by 2.66. However, the low-cost airlines use more long words (words longer than 6 letter) at 25.27, which is more than those of full-service airlines (19.77).

3.3 Research Instruments

The three Aristotelian's rhetorical modes namely logos, ethos, and pathos, and LIWC were used as research instruments to analyze the FFP advertisement texts in both categories. LIWC was used to quantify four language variables namely, clout, analytical thinking, authenticity, and emotional tone.

3.4 Data Collection

The advertisements for FFPs were collected from the official websites of each airline in August 2024. First, all content listed in the advertisements for frequent flyers or loyalty programs was gathered. Next, any words containing explanations about how to apply, benefits, and member tiers were eliminated. Finally, only salient features, usually presented in boldface on the front page under the frequent flyers or loyalty program, were selected for data analysis.

In accordance with ethical considerations, the Research Ethics Office of Ramkhamhaeng University approved the proposal for this study. This is to ensure that the procedure for data collection adheres to all necessary formalities.

3.5 Data Analysis

In order to address the first research objective, the data were analyzed in accordance with Aristotle's rhetorical devices by three doctoral-degree holders in linguistics for inter-coding reliability. The IOC calculation score rating was implemented. Items are considered to have content validity if they receive a mean score between 0.5 and 1.00. Conversely, items with average scores below 0.5 are considered invalid and inappropriate and necessitate revision. After the inter-coders achieved an agreement of 85%, the conclusions regarding the rhetorical figures were documented. To show the comparison between the use of rhetorical devices and LIWC analyses between the two types of airlines, the percentages were used.

4. Results

The number of times that Aristotle's rhetorical devices were used in the FFP advertisements of full-service and low-cost airlines is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 The use of rhetorical devices in FFP advertisements by both types of airlines

Airlines	Ethos		Pathos		Logos		Total	
	Texts	%	Texts	%	Texts	%	Texts	%
Full-service	4	22.22	13	72.22	1	5.56	18	100
Low-cost	1	5.56	8	44.44	9	50	18	100

Table 2 presents the contrastive analysis of the FFP advertisements for full-service and low-cost airlines. It is evident that full-service airlines use pathos the most in their FFP advertisements (72.22%) whereas low-cost airlines place emphasis on logos (50%), which is slightly higher than pathos, by 5%. The most distinctive difference between the use of rhetorical devices by the two types of airlines is that the full-service airlines exercise ethos as a secondary rhetorical device, while the low-cost airlines utilize only 5.56%, which is almost four times as low as the full-service airlines. However, low-cost airlines include logos 50% of the time, which is considerably higher than that of the full-service airlines (5.56%).

To address the first research objective, a comprehensive analysis of each airline's use of the rhetorical devices is presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Details of rhetorical device analysis of each airline

Full-service Airlines			
Airlines	FFP advertisements	Rhetorical device	Tokens
Singapore Airlines	More miles, more rewards, more reasons to join	Ethos	8
Qatar Airways	Experience a limitless world of privilege.	Pathos	6
All Nippon Airways	The more you fly with us, the better it gets!	Ethos	10
Japan Airlines	Leap from loyalty to luxury.	Pathos	5
Cathay Pacific Airways	Life elevated with Cathay	Pathos	4
EVA Air	Earn Miles, Fly More	Logos	4
Korean Air	As a SKYPASS frequent flyer, we want you to know just how special you are to us.	Pathos	17
Hainan Airlines	Fly Your Dreams. Fortune Wings Club will provide you with a more sincere service and warm company!	Pathos	17
Asiana	Asiana Airlines Asiana welcomes you! Embark on an exciting journey with Asiana.	Pathos	12
Garuda	Unlock Rewards as You fly: Make Every Miles Count!	Ethos	9
Emirates	Open up a world of rewards every time you travel.	Pathos	10
Turkish Airlines	Welcome to the privileged world of Miles & Smiles!	Pathos	9
Air France	Today is a good day to start getting rewarded.	Pathos	9
Swiss Air	Take off into the world of earning miles and points	Pathos	10
Etihad Airways	Enjoy unique rewards and benefits along with a world of opportunities to earn and spend your miles with Etihad Guest.	Pathos	20
Iberia	The journey of pleasure starts here.	Pathos	6
Fiji Airways	Enjoy exclusive member benefits every time you fly.	Ethos	8
Vistara	Get more of what you love, with Club Vistara!	Pathos	9
Low-cost Airlines			
Air Asia	Loyalty has its perk!	Pathos	4
IndiGo	Savour and save. Up to 40% when you book through 6E Treats	Logos	12
Flynas	Being a member of nas miles gives you access to exclusive rewards & benefits tailored just for you.	Pathos	17
Southwest Airlines	Earning on every flight? That's the point!	Logos	8
Jet2.com	Nothing beats the Jet2 experience with myJet2 account.	Pathos	8
WestJet	The more you travel, the more benefits you could earn.	Logos	10
EasyJet	Frequent flyer? Save time and money. EasyJet Plus annual membership is just £215.	Logos	13
Vueling Airlines	Whether you travel a lot or a little, we've made this club for you.	Pathos	15
Jetstar Airways	Travel perk you'll want to write home about!	Pathos	9

Low-cost Airlines			
Airlines	FFP advertisements	Rhetorical device	Tokens
Flydubai	It's easy to become a member of Emirates Skywards.	Logos	10
Eurowings	Enjoy these benefits now with my Eurowings. Plans can change. Stay flexible with my Eurowings.	Pathos	13
Wizz Air	Join now and elevate your travel experience.	Pathos	7
Air Arabia	Discover Air Rewards. The Most Generous Loyalty Program in the Region	Ethos	11
Citilink	Register Linkmiles now! Get welcome bonus 1,000 miles.	Logos	8
Norwegian	Norwegian's loyalty programme gives you cheaper and even better trips. Plus, it's free.	Logos	16
Airblue	Earning and redeeming miles is now easier than ever.	Logos	9
Onur Air	Join KONnectibles, our loyalty program. Earn and collect points for your next flights.	Logos	13
Jazeera Airways	Your gateway to a world of exclusive benefits and savings.	Pathos	10

Table 3 provides a detailed analysis of rhetorical devices used by both full-service and low-cost airlines. Despite the common use of pathos by both airline types, the expressions employed to establish credibility are unique. The full-service airlines trigger the emotional responses from their passengers by emphasizing comfort, exclusivity, and a desirable lifestyle, as in the expression through words such as “limitless”, “privilege”, and “luxury”. However, the low-cost airlines provoke their passengers’ emotions by highlighting the additional benefits and a sense of being rewarded by the program. The word “perk” which implies the additional benefits and desirables beyond the basic flying experience, is used in the advertisements of Air Asia and Jetstar Airways.

Nevertheless, it is evident that full-service airlines used ethos to entice customers to join their FFP by trying to increase the trust they have in both the program and the airline itself. For instance, the phrase “more miles and more reward” does not explicitly highlight the benefit, but it conveys the airline’s confidence in the value of their program. In contrast, Air Arabia, the only low-cost airline using the ethos “the most generous loyalty program in the region,” highlights the superior rewards when compared with its competitors. While full-service airlines place a greater emphasis on ethos, low-cost airlines provide a clear and direct statement of their benefits, including discounts, rewards, and financial value. Their advertisements use words like “save,” “earn,” and “free,” while EVA Air, the only full-service airline using logos, presents a cause-and-effect relationship that clearly outlines the main benefits of the FFP program.

To address the second research objective, Table 4 illustrates the findings of the LIWC analysis, which include the clout, analytical thinking, authenticity, and emotional tone used in the FFP advertisements.

Table 4 Results of LIWC analysis

Airlines	Clout (%)	Analytical thinking (%)	Authenticity (%)	Emotional tone (%)
Full-service	97.92	87.59	66.63	99.00
Low-cost	81.44	58.24	54.95	99.00

Table 4 summarizes the LIWC program’s calculation with regard to the FFP advertisements of full-service and low-cost airlines. Overall, the findings indicate that full-service airlines’ FFP advertisements have a higher percentage in three domains clout, analytic thinking, and authenticity while both types of airlines exhibit the same level of emotional tone, at 99%.

Figure 2 illustrates the words used in each LIWC domain of the FFP advertisements.

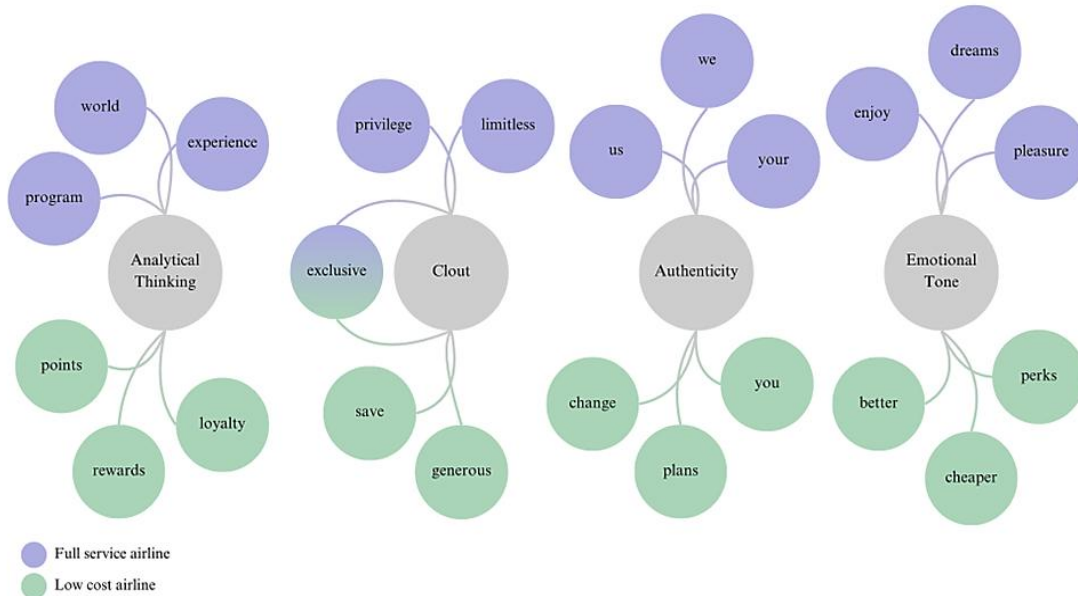


Figure 2 Tree diagram of words used in each domain in the LIWC program

Figure 2 illustrates how full-service airlines employed terms like “world,” “experience,” and “program” to demonstrate analytical thinking, a concept often associated with formal, logical, and hierarchical methods of thinking. In contrast, the FFP advertisements of low-cost airlines used words such as “loyalty,” “rewards”, and “points” to indicate analytical thinking. Both types of airlines used the word “exclusive” to convey their perceived social status, authority, or confidence, while some full-service airlines used the words “privilege” and “limitless” in their FFP advertisements, and low-cost airlines used the words “save” and “generous.” To indicate authenticity, full-service airlines preferred to use the words “we”, “us”, and “your” to reflect honesty and personal disclosure, while low-service airlines preferred to use the words “you”, “change”, and “plans” to focus on the benefits while maintaining a slightly more personal tone. Finally, the full-service airlines used the words “pleasure”, “enjoy”, and “dreams” to capture passengers’ emotions, while the low-cost airlines tend to use the words “perks”, “cheaper”, and “better” for the same purpose.

5. Discussion

It is evident that the full-service airlines utilized pathos, ethos, and logos, respectively, while the low-cost airlines placed emphasis on logos, which is 5% five percent higher than pathos, and ethos ranked the lowest. The low-cost airlines used ethos only 5% of the time which contrasts with 22% of full-service airlines. In contrast, Ferrer’s (2022) examination of the rhetorical appeal of low-cost carriers’ slogans reveals that they primarily use pathos, which focuses on provoking the passenger’s emotion and psychological state, to persuade potential passengers to join their loyalty program. Specifically, Ferrer found that pathos was the most common (53%), followed by logos (30%) and ethos (16.7%). Furthermore, this aligns with the findings of Amjad, and Hashmi’s (2023) study, which analyzed the strategies employed in digital marketing brand slogans to influence consumers. The results revealed that pathos was the most-utilized element to appeal to their customers.

The major difference in the use of rhetorical modes was that the full-service airlines attempted to create their credibility by using ethos nearly four times more than the low-cost airlines. Full-service airlines leverage their reputation for quality and luxury in their advertisements, demonstrating their reliability and trustworthiness. In contrast, the low-cost airlines utilized logos to persuade their customers almost ten times more than the full-service airlines. This was consistent with Ferrer (2022), who concluded from his study that even though they used pathos to appeal to their passengers’ emotions, the use of logos remained intuitive. Low-cost airlines prioritized the benefits and financial value of membership as a means of persuading their passengers (Aziz, 2022), as opposed to relying on the popularity and credibility of the airline by mentioning its name in their advertisements.

According to the LIWC analysis, it is evident that the FFP advertisements of the full-service airlines are higher in clout, analytical thinking, and authenticity than those of the low-cost airlines. Moreover, the full-service airlines have a much higher score in the analytical thinking domain than the low-cost airlines, while both types of airlines have the same score in the emotional tone. In terms of clout, which reflects an author's perceived social status or confidence (Pennebaker et al., 2015), the intention of full-service airlines was apparently to convey a sense of confidence and expertise by employing the terms "privilege," "luxury," and "limitless," in their FFP advertisements while low-cost airlines preferred to increase their authority by incorporating phrases such as "save" and "generous." Nevertheless, both types of airlines employed the term "exclusive" to convey an inclusive language. This is because the full-service airline emphasized their ability and projected confidence, while the low-cost airlines focused on travelers, with less emphasis on authority. This is in line with Chen et al., (2019), who argued that airlines attempted to provide exceptional brand value to customers and build lucrative customer connections.

In the domain of analytical thinking, which aims to measure the extent to which individuals employ vocabulary that indicates formal (Pennebaker et al., 2015), logical, and hierarchical methods of thinking, both types of airlines relied heavily on emotional appeal rather than logical reasoning in their FFP advertisements. Full-service airlines used slightly more complicated language, but they remained emotionally focused. For instance, the phrase "Unlock rewards as you fly: make every mile count!" exhibits complexity, yet it effectively engages passengers to participate in the program. Furthermore, some of the FFP advertisements of the full-service airlines included the words like "experience", "world", and "program" to indicate analytical thinking. Conversely, low-cost airlines used language that was more straightforward and direct, with a practical emphasis; for example, "Earn and collect points for your next flight" has a simple and straightforward sentence structure with commonly emphasized words such as "loyalty", "rewards" and "points". This contradicts the study of Ferrer (2022), who explored the slogans of low-cost airlines. Ferrer's findings revealed that the slogans of low-cost airlines used more complex linguistic features to create a strong impression on their passengers when they focused on the meanings.

It is evident that the full-service airlines used more formal language, limited personal pronouns, and focused on passengers' benefits after participating in the program. The sentence "Leap from loyalty to luxury" demonstrates the use of more complex language. On the other hand, the low-cost airlines used simple and more direct language. For instance, they frequently addressed the passengers directly using the personal pronoun "you." Furthermore, they also favored using language that conveys a personal touch, as exemplified by phrases like "plans can change" or "it's simple to become a member." Given the words used to indicate authenticity, both types of airlines shared common pronouns such as "you", "your", "us", and "we". This is consistent with Laosirattanachai's (2018) study, which analyzed airline businesses' slogans using ideational metafunction. In that study, the pronouns "your," "you," and "we" were among the most frequently used keywords in the airline business class slogans.

Regarding the emotional tone, both types of airlines heavily emphasized positive words in their FFP advertisements. Full-service airlines used emotional words such as enjoy, dreams, and pleasure, while low-cost airlines used words like better, cheaper, and perks. The primary difference between them is that full-service airlines strived to generate excitement and prioritized positive experiences for their FFPs, as exemplified by the statement "Leap from loyalty to luxury." This sentence conveys a sense of becoming an elite member after participating in the FFP. In contrast, the low-cost airlines placed emphasis on the sense of opportunity to become their members, as illustrated in the sentence "Whether you travel a lot or a little, we've made this club for you.". This line suggests an invitation to join the FFP with limited conditions. This is in line with Rafiq et al., (2013), who stated that airlines attempt to develop emotional loyalty to acquire new customers and maintain long-term connections.

6. Conclusion

This study was conducted to provide a contrastive analysis of rhetorical devices and LIWC features in FFP advertisements from eighteen full-service airlines and eighteen low-cost airlines, all ranked among the world's best airlines in their category according to Skytrax rankings. This study's findings reveal that full-service airlines prioritized pathos, ethos, and logos, while low-cost airlines focused primarily on pathos, which was almost 5% higher than logos. Moreover, the LIWC findings reveal that advertisements from full-service airlines scored higher in clout, analytical thinking, and authenticity compared to those from low-cost airlines.

According to this study, full-service airlines used their reputation for quality and luxury in their marketing to demonstrate their reliability and trustworthiness, whereas low-cost airlines relied more on logos to persuade customers than full-service airlines do. In the FFP commercials, full-service airlines stressed their skills and radiated more confidence than low-cost airlines, which concentrated largely on their passengers. Furthermore, full-service airlines used more formal and logical language in order to create a positive experience, whereas low-cost airlines used simpler language with a less sophisticated structure, including some personal touches to encourage passengers to participate in their FFP programs.

7. References

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