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TEACHING MARKETING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE AND PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE PERSPECTIVE

ENSINANDO MARKETING EM ESCOLAS SECUNDÁRIAS: UM DISCURSO CRÍTICO E FILOSOFIA DA PERSPECTIVA DA LINGUAGEM

ENSEÑANZA DEL MARKETING EN LA EDUCACIÓN SECUNDARIA: UNA PERSPECTIVA DE ANÁLISIS CRÍTICO DEL DISCURSO Y FILOSOFÍA DEL LENGUAJE

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ABSTRACT: This study analyzes marketing education in secondary schools from a language-centered perspective, viewing marketing as discourse in which students craft messages, negotiate meanings, and position audiences. Using speech-act theory, pragmatics, critical discourse analysis, and multimodal analysis, the research examines how classroom tasks and campaign simulations activate pragmatic resources, stance markers, and visual-verbal coordination. A mixed-methods design combined a survey of 40 students with lesson observations and artefact analysis. Results show that students appreciate interactive and collaborative activities but remain unsure about applying their knowledge beyond school, indicating transfer gaps. Linguistic analysis identifies frequent use of hedges, boosters, politeness strategies, Toulmin-style arguments, and metaphorical slogans aligned with visuals. The study recommends micro-interventions such as copy labs, stance editing, argument mapping, and visual-verbal checks, alongside partnerships with real clients. It concludes that explicit attention to linguistic resources improves learning, strengthens ties with applied linguistics, and prepares students to use language responsibly and effectively in marketing.

KEYWORDS: Marketing. Education. SWOT analysis. Teaching methods. Applied linguistics.

RESUMO: Este estudo analisa o ensino de marketing no ensino médio a partir de uma perspectiva linguística, considerando o marketing como um discurso no qual os alunos elaboram mensagens, negociam significados e posicionam o público. Utilizando a teoria dos atos de fala, a pragmática, a análise crítica do discurso e a análise multimodal, a pesquisa examina como as atividades em sala de aula e as simulações de campanhas ativam recursos pragmáticos, marcadores de posicionamento e a coordenação visual-verbal. Uma metodologia mista combinou um questionário aplicado a 40 alunos com observações de aulas e análise de artefatos. Os resultados mostram que os alunos apreciam atividades interativas e colaborativas, mas permanecem inseguros quanto à aplicação do conhecimento adquirido fora da escola, indicando lacunas na transferência da aprendizagem. A análise linguística identifica o uso frequente de atenuadores, intensificadores, estratégias de polidez, argumentos no estilo Toulmin e slogans metafóricos alinhados com recursos visuais. O estudo recomenda microintervensões como oficinas de redação, revisão de posicionamento, mapeamento de argumentos e verificações visual-verbais, além de parcerias com clientes reais. Conclui-se que a atenção explícita aos recursos linguísticos melhora a aprendizagem, fortalece os laços com a linguística aplicada e prepara os alunos para usar a linguagem de forma responsável e eficaz no marketing.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Marketing. Educação. Análise SWOT. Métodos de ensino. Linguística aplicada.

RESUMEN: Este estudio analiza la enseñanza del marketing en la educación secundaria desde una perspectiva lingüística, considerando el marketing como un discurso en el cual los estudiantes elaboran mensajes, negocian significados y posicionan al público. Utilizando la teoría de los actos de habla, la pragmática, el análisis crítico del discurso y el análisis multimodal, la investigación examina cómo las actividades en el aula y las simulaciones de campañas activan recursos pragmáticos, marcadores de posicionamiento y la coordinación visual-verbal. Una metodología mixta combinó un cuestionario aplicado a 40 estudiantes con observaciones de clases y análisis de artefactos. Los resultados muestran que los estudiantes valoran actividades interactivas y colaborativas, pero siguen inseguros respecto a la aplicación del conocimiento adquirido fuera de la escuela, lo que indica brechas en la transferencia del aprendizaje. El análisis lingüístico identifica el uso frecuente de atenuadores, intensificadores, estrategias de cortesía, argumentos en el estilo de Toulmin y eslóganes metafóricos alineados con recursos visuales. El estudio recomienda microintervenciones como talleres de redacción, revisión de posicionamiento, mapeo de argumentos y verificaciones visual-verbales, además de alianzas con clientes reales. Se concluye que la atención explícita a los recursos lingüísticos mejora el aprendizaje, fortalece los vínculos con la lingüística aplicada y prepara a los estudiantes para utilizar el lenguaje de manera responsable y eficaz en el marketing.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Marketing. Educación. Análisis SWOT. Métodos de enseñanza. Lingüística aplicada.

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INTRODUCTION

Marketing education in secondary schools faces several challenges that impact the quality of education and students' readiness for the workforce. The primary issue is outdated curricula that fail to reflect modern trends, such as digital marketing, content marketing, and influencer marketing. Traditional teaching methods, focused on memorising theory, are insufficient for developing practical skills, such as creating marketing campaigns, analysing consumer behaviour, or managing social media.

Insufficient technological equipment in schools prevents the effective use of digital tools, which are essential for successful marketing strategies today. Students should work with tools such as Google Analytics, SEO, PPC advertising, or email marketing to gain experience that is relevant to their practice. Another challenge is students' low motivation, which is often caused by non-interactive teaching methods. The introduction of gamification, project-based learning and simulations of real marketing situations can significantly increase their engagement and interest.

Modern marketing strategies are closely linked to online advertising and personalised communication, so teaching should also focus on data analysis and consumer behaviour. Problem-based learning, such as SWOT analysis, enables students to apply theory to real-world situations and develop strategic thinking. Connecting with practice through internships, excursions, and cooperation with marketing experts is essential for students' adequate preparation. In addition, stronger collaboration with parents and local communities may reinforce the perceived value of marketing education, demonstrating to students that the subject is not isolated but is tied to everyday consumer choices and civic responsibilities.

To be effective, marketing education must reflect current trends that support critical thinking, creativity, and digital literacy. Combining theory with practice is key to ensuring that students can apply their knowledge in the dynamic marketing and business environment. This also implies the need for continuous professional development of teachers, who must keep pace with fast-changing technologies and communication practices. Without regular training and curricular updates, the risk remains that teaching will lag behind industry needs, leaving graduates underprepared.

We conceptualise marketing education as inherently language-based: students learn to design messages, negotiate meanings, and position audiences through discourse. This framing aligns pedagogy with the philosophy of language, treating marketing as communicative action that enacts commitments and frames social relations (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). Accordingly, we emphasise core linguistic competencies—performing speech acts (assertives, directives, commissives, expressives), managing face and politeness in brand voice (Brown & Levinson, 1987), calibrating stance and engagement (Hyland, 2005) structuring arguments (Toulmin,

1958; Peralman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969) and coordinating verbal and visual meanings in multimodal artefacts (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing education in secondary schools is a dynamically developing area of pedagogy that reflects constantly changing market conditions, technological progress and new didactic approaches. The theoretical foundations of marketing are essential to economic education, while its teaching requires linking theory with practical experience. In this study, we rely on available professional resources and research that analyse methods and approaches to marketing education, their effectiveness and current challenges (Ramseeok-Munhurrun et al., 2010). The marketing education in secondary schools includes the historical development of marketing, teaching methods, organisational forms of teaching and the application of problem-based learning.

Marketing, as a scientific discipline, has evolved from its origins in the form of barter trade in ancient times to the formation of business strategies during the period of industrialisation, and now to current digitalised marketing (Sefko et al., 2023). In the context of education, marketing entered the school curriculum in the second half of the 20th century, and its teaching was initially oriented towards classical methods of explanation and memorisation of basic principles (Majerova et al., 2021). Today, however, the emphasis is placed on active educational methods that support analytical thinking and solving real marketing situations.

One of the primary challenges of teaching marketing in secondary school is selecting effective teaching methods. Manak and Svec (2003) define a teaching method as an organised system of teaching activities of the teacher and the student's learning activities to achieve set learning goals. The most commonly used methods include frontal teaching, discussion, heuristic, and problem-based teaching. In marketing, the project method is also often employed, allowing students to work individually or in groups on specific marketing strategies and campaigns (Kubickova et al., 2025).

The specifics of marketing education in secondary schools lie in the interdisciplinary connections with other subjects, such as economics, computer science, and psychology. Prucha, Walterova and Mares (2003) state that the effectiveness of education depends on a combination of different methods and an individualised approach to students. Group teaching and cooperative learning allow students to collaborate and share ideas, strengthening their ability to solve complex marketing tasks (Manuel & Amade, 2024). Technology also plays a significant role; digital tools, online marketing platforms, and social media provide new, interactive, and experiential learning opportunities.

Beyond its pedagogical and practical dimensions, marketing education can also be examined through the lens of the philosophy of language and critical theory. Marketing discourse, both in the classroom and in professional practice, operates not only as a vehicle for conveying information but also as a performative act that shapes identities, social relations, and consumer behaviour (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). From a speech act perspective, the language used in advertising, branding, and market research does more than describe products – it enacts commitments, creates expectations, and influences perceptions.

Critical theory provides tools for examining the power structures embedded in marketing communication, revealing how language can both reinforce and challenge dominant ideologies (Habermas, 1984; Fairclough, 2010). In the context of secondary education, this approach encourages students to develop metalinguistic awareness, enabling them to critically analyse persuasive texts, detect ideological framing, and understand the ethical implications of communicative strategies. Such integration aligns marketing education with broader scholarly debates on meaning, reference, and the socio-political functions of language, thus bridging applied business training with the theoretical concerns central to contemporary language studies.

The use of problem-based learning in marketing education is emphasised by Skalkova (2007), who points out that such an approach supports creative thinking and develops students' decision-making skills. In marketing education, problem-based learning can be applied through analysing real business cases, simulations of market situations and SWOT analyses. SWOT analysis is a valuable tool, as it enables students to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the company, as well as opportunities and threats, which helps them understand strategic planning and competitiveness in the market (Silva & Tavares, 2022).

An essential aspect of marketing education is the integration of digital marketing into the curriculum, as marketing constantly evolves, and new technologies bring innovations that must be considered in the educational process. The digital environment allows the use of marketing tools such as Google Analytics, PPC advertising, SEO optimisation and email marketing. Therefore, marketing teachers must constantly update their knowledge and adapt their teaching to new trends.

Connecting theory with practice is a key factor in effective marketing education. Schools should cooperate with companies and practitioners to organise internships, workshops and lectures with marketing professionals (Vartiak et al., 2024). Such a connection supports students' practical skills and helps them understand how marketing works in a real business environment (Greaves et al., 2023). Experience gained through practical activities is invaluable in preparing for future careers and increases graduates' chances in the labour market. In conclusion, it can be stated that teaching marketing in high school necessitates constant adaptation

to evolving market conditions and technological advancements (Saniuk et al., 2023). Practical education in this area must combine theoretical knowledge with practical experience and use modern teaching methods. Interactive approaches, connection with practice and integration of digital tools are essential for preparing students for successful employment in marketing and business (Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2024).

Pragmatics offers tools to analyse meaning beyond the literal. Grice's cooperative principle and conversational implicature explain how advertising suggests more than it explicitly states (Grice, 1975) while Brown and Levinson's politeness theory illuminates how brand voices manage face, mitigate imposition, and foster rapport with consumers (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Critical discourse studies examine how ideology and power circulate through marketing texts. Foundational work by van Dijk (2008) and Wodak and Meyer (2015) demonstrates how discourses legitimise social positions. Gee (2014) demonstrates how discourse practices shape identities and participation in communities; these perspectives position school marketing projects as sites for cultivating critical language awareness (Fairclough, 2010).

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) treats language as a resource for making meaning in context. The research emphasises the importance of cohesion, transitivity, and interpersonal systems, which can be explicitly taught to help students craft compelling written copy and presentations. Complementarily, metadiscourse research clarifies how writers/speakers signal stance and guide audiences (Hyland, 2005).

Classical and contemporary rhetoric further inform persuasive design. Aristotle's appeals (ethos, pathos, logos) remain relevant for campaign architecture, while Toulmin (1958) and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) provide models for analysing claims, evidence, and warrants. In marketing classrooms, such frameworks support transparent reasoning and ethical persuasion (Fairclough, 2010).

Semiotics and multimodal discourse analysis explain how images, layout, and typography co-construct meaning with language. Barthes (1977), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), and Forceville (1996) reveal how visual grammars and metaphors organise perception—knowledge that is crucial when students design brand identities, social posts, and pitch decks. Metaphor theory underscores how conceptual mappings structure consumer understanding (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Ultimately, language plays a crucial role in social positioning and the exercise of symbolic power. Bourdieu's account of linguistic capital clarifies how specific ways of speaking index legitimacy and authority in markets (Bourdieu, 1991) while frame analysis shows how communicative cues organise experience (Goffman, 1974).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The paper aims to identify the specifics of marketing education in secondary schools, analyse its current status, determine the effectiveness of teaching methods, and examine students' attitudes towards the subject. The research focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of various teaching methods and the use of digital tools in education, as well as examining the attitudes of students and teachers towards marketing teaching. The practical part of the research involves applying the acquired knowledge to a specific secondary school, allowing for a comparison of theoretical approaches with real-world practice and identifying factors that influence the success of marketing teaching.

The research methodology includes a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The primary research method employed was a questionnaire survey among students to gather data on their perceptions of marketing and its potential contribution to their future careers. The results of the questionnaires were subsequently processed into graphs and analysed using SWOT analysis, which helped to identify the strengths and weaknesses of marketing teaching at a specific school.

In addition to pedagogical and observational approaches, the study also adopted an interpretive lens informed by the philosophy of language and critical theory. This perspective guided the analysis of classroom discourse, focusing on how communicative acts within marketing lessons functioned performatively to create, reinforce, or challenge certain narratives and identities (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). Attention was given to how students' marketing presentations, group discussions, and project pitches enacted specific speech acts—such as commitments, evaluations, and persuasive appeals—and how these acts reflected broader ideological framings (Fairclough, 2010). By integrating this analytical layer, the methodology not only captured cognitive and procedural learning outcomes but also examined the socio-discursive dimensions of marketing education.

In addition to the questionnaire survey (Foret, 2008), observations were made during marketing lessons. This method enabled the monitoring of interactions between teachers and students, the application of teaching methods, and the evaluation of different approaches in explaining marketing concepts. Problem-based learning was identified as an essential tool for improving students' analytical and decision-making skills, with teachers presenting real marketing situations for them to solve.

Another method employed was document analysis, which involved examining curricula, study materials, and available teaching resources to assess the relevance and comprehensiveness of marketing teaching content in secondary schools. A comparative analysis with other educational programs was also crucial in identifying differences in the approach to teaching marketing in different schools.

The research results provide a comprehensive view of marketing education in secondary schools, enabling the formulation of recommendations to enhance educational methodology, with a focus on the use of interactive teaching methods, digital technologies, and practical applications. The research also identified the need to improve student motivation through more significant involvement in practical projects and simulations, increasing their engagement and better preparing them for future professional challenges.

We adopted a mixed-methods design centred on a classroom case at a secondary school where marketing is taught within an applied economics track (Garbarova & Vartiak, 2024). The quantitative component consisted of a questionnaire survey administered to 40 second and third-year students, capturing their attitudes toward the subject, perceived relevance, and preferred learning activities. The qualitative component consisted of non-participant observations of marketing lessons and the collection of student artefacts (campaign briefs, presentations, and promotional copy) for analysis. The goal was to integrate attitudinal data with a close examination of how students actually use language in marketing.

The questionnaire included closed-ended items on satisfaction, motivation, and perceived transfer of knowledge to real-world contexts, alongside open-ended prompts that invited students to describe what made lessons engaging or not (Garbarova & Vartiak, 2021). Observations focused on interactional patterns (e.g., who speaks when and how), the framing of tasks, and the language resources students mobilised in group work and pitches. Artefacts were gathered at the end of project cycles and anonymised.

To foreground language, we applied a three-layer analytical lens. First, pragmatics: we identified speech acts (assertives, directives, commissives, expressives), pragmatic markers associated with stance (hedges such as ‘might’ and ‘perhaps’; boosters such as ‘definitely’), and politeness strategies in calls-to-action (e.g., inclusive pronouns, positive evaluation, mitigated directives) (Austin, 1962; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Searle, 1969).

Second, discourse and rhetoric: we mapped rhetorical moves and genre structures across pitch decks and campaign briefs (problem–solution–benefit patterns; claim–evidence–warrant sequences), as well as metadiscourse features that guide audiences (frame markers, engagement markers) (Hyland, 2005; Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969; Toulmin, 1958). Third, multimodality: we examined how copy and visual design worked together via composition, salience, and visual metaphor (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006; Garbarova & Vartiak, 2024; Jankalová & Vartiak, 2016).

We developed a compact codebook oriented to classroom use. For pragmatics, codes included ASSERT (assertives), DIRECT (directives), COMM (commissives), and EXPR (expressives), plus subcodes for hedges (HEDGE) and boosters (BOOST). For discourse-rhetorical organisation, we coded PROB (problem), SOL (solution), BEN (benefit), CLAIM, EVID (evidence),

and WARRANT; metadiscourse codes included STANCE and ENGAGE. For multimodality, we used COMP (composition), SAL (salience), and METAPHOR (visual metaphor). Two researchers piloted the codebook on a small sample of artefacts, discussed divergences, and refined definitions to reduce ambiguity.

Given the modest corpus and the study's pedagogical aim, reliability procedures were pragmatic rather than exhaustive. We employed analyst triangulation by having two coders independently code 20% of artefacts drawn across projects, discussing discrepancies to reach consensus. We also maintained an audit trail of analytic memos, linking codes to excerpts. Convergent validity was pursued by comparing patterns observed in artefacts and presentations with cues in classroom interaction (e.g., when a teacher prompted justification, we often observed an increase in CLAIM–EVID–WARRANT structures in the next draft).

Following coding, we produced descriptive summaries of resource use across teams (e.g., frequency of hedges/boosters; standard CTA constructions) and assembled exemplar extracts that illustrated recurring patterns. For instance, a typical CTA combined an imperative with positive evaluation and an engagement marker ('Discover our new collection—crafted to last')—a polite directive softened by inclusivity and benefit framing. Copy frequently deployed conceptual metaphors of JOURNEY and GROWTH ('your path to confidence'; 'grow with us'), aligning with imagery that positioned the consumer as an agentic protagonist (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

The survey was anonymous, participation was voluntary, and no sensitive personal data were collected. Parental awareness and school administration approval were obtained for the classroom observations; all student artefacts were anonymised before analysis. The study complied with applicable institutional and national guidelines for educational research.

RESULTS

The research focused on the specifics of marketing teaching in high school. It provided a comprehensive view of the current educational process, students' perceptions of the subject, identification of strengths and weaknesses in education, and suggestions for improvement. The results were obtained through a questionnaire survey, SWOT analysis and direct observation of the teaching process.

Students' perception of the marketing subject

The questionnaire survey, attended by 40 second-year and third-year students, revealed that 52.5% of respondents were satisfied with the marketing teaching, 32.5% were unable to take a clear position, and 15% of students expressed dissatisfaction.

When evaluating the subject on a scale from 1 to 10, the average number of points was most often awarded (5 points were awarded by 27% of students). The maximum rating of 10 points was granted by 14% of respondents, while 7% of students rated the subject with only 4 points.

Bulleted lists look like this:

- First bullet;
- Second bullet;
- Third bullet.
-

Numbered lists can be added as follows:

1. First item;
2. Second item;
3. Third item.

Strengths of marketing teaching

One of the main positive aspects of marketing education was the opportunity for practical activities, where students could develop marketing strategies for authentic products. The presentation of the curriculum through visual aids, especially PowerPoint presentations, which made it easier for students to understand and remember important concepts, also proved to be effective.

From a philosophical perspective on language, these activities also demonstrated how marketing discourse functions performatively, shaping not only consumer perceptions but also students' own communicative identities (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). Observations during lessons indicated that when students engaged in creating and presenting campaigns, they were not merely applying marketing theory—they were enacting speech acts that committed them to certain persuasive stances and narratives. This performative engagement aligns with critical theory insights, as it makes visible the ways language constructs and transmits values, ideologies, and social roles within the learning environment (Fairclough, 2010).

Another advantage was the opportunity for team cooperation, where students could assist one another in solving marketing tasks. This teaching method fostered critical thinking

and enhanced the motivation of students who actively engaged in the learning process. Collaborative work also fostered the development of essential soft skills, including negotiation, leadership, and conflict resolution, which are highly valued in both academic and professional contexts.

Group-based projects allowed students to experience different roles—such as creative designer, copywriter, or strategist—mirroring the roles of professional marketing teams. This not only improved their understanding of the subject but also strengthened their confidence in communicating ideas to diverse audiences. Moreover, peer-to-peer learning created a supportive environment in which weaker students could benefit from the insights of stronger ones, leading to more inclusive and equitable outcomes.

All authors contributed to this research Weaknesses and challenges of marketing teaching

The research revealed several problems that hinder the effective teaching of marketing. One of the main problems is low student motivation—up to 42.5% of respondents stated that they would not recommend marketing to their classmates, with the most common reason being a lack of interest in this area.

Low motivation often stems from the perception that marketing is overly theoretical, repetitive, or detached from students' everyday experiences. Without clear connections to practical outcomes, learners may struggle to recognise the value of the subject for their future careers. In some cases, this lack of motivation was compounded by limited exposure to innovative teaching approaches such as gamification, project-based learning, or real-world case simulations, which have been shown in other studies to increase engagement and enthusiasm.

Another problem was the insufficient connection between theoretical knowledge and its application in a real business environment. As many as 62.5% of students were unable to assess whether they would apply the acquired marketing knowledge in the future, indicating a need for greater emphasis on the practical aspects of teaching. This gap reflects a broader challenge in secondary education: ensuring that subjects are not taught in isolation but linked to authentic contexts. The absence of collaboration with businesses, guest lectures, or field visits reduces opportunities for students to witness how marketing principles operate in practice. As a result, classroom instruction risks being perceived as abstract rather than professionally relevant. Addressing these weaknesses requires a stronger integration of practice-oriented tasks, the inclusion of up-to-date digital tools, and continuous dialogue with practitioners to ensure that school curricula align with current labour market expectations.

SWOT Analysis of marketing teaching

Based on the research results, a SWOT analysis was conducted, which identified the following facts:

- **Strengths:** visual aids, interactive teaching methods, practical activities, and simulations of real marketing situations. These elements create a more dynamic learning environment, allowing students to engage directly with content instead of passively memorising theory. Practical simulations in particular encourage experiential learning, which supports both motivation and retention of knowledge;
- **Weaknesses** include low student motivation, a lack of connection with business practice, and limited use of modern marketing tools. The absence of consistent exposure to professional contexts and digital platforms reduces the perceived relevance of marketing education. Without visible career pathways, students are more likely to dismiss the subject as secondary to other disciplines;
- **Opportunities:** real companies are interested in cooperation and the development of digital marketing tools. Schools could capitalise on this by building partnerships that bring authentic projects, mentorship, and internships into the classroom. The rapid growth of digital marketing also opens possibilities for integrating cutting-edge tools, such as social media analytics, content management systems, and AI-driven campaign platforms;
- **Threats:** students lack interest in business and marketing education, as well as the expense of technological equipment. Limited funding for hardware and software restricts schools' ability to modernise their curricula. In addition, broader societal trends that undervalue vocational or applied subjects may reinforce disinterest, making it challenging to sustain robust enrolment in marketing programmes.

Overall, the SWOT analysis suggests that while schools have a foundation in interactive teaching methods, the key to success lies in transforming weaknesses into opportunities—particularly by leveraging partnerships with businesses and ensuring access to digital tools that mirror real-world practices.

Recommendations for improving teaching

Based on the results obtained, recommendations were formulated for improving marketing teaching:

- Expanding practical activities: more case studies, simulations and team projects that will allow students to apply theoretical knowledge in practice. Practical assignments should be designed to mirror real business scenarios, such as developing a marketing plan for a local company or analysing consumer behaviour in digital environments. These activities help students understand the relevance of marketing concepts and foster transferable problem-solving skills;
- Involving digital tools: using marketing software such as Google Analytics, SEO tools, and PPC campaigns is essential for effective marketing today. Schools could begin by integrating free or educational versions of such platforms, giving students hands-on experience with analytics dashboards, keyword planning, and campaign optimisation. This would align school curricula with the skills employers currently demand;
- Cooperation with companies: organising excursions, internships and lectures by experts so that students gain real experience in marketing practice. Partnerships with local businesses or start-ups can bring authenticity to the classroom and demonstrate to students how marketing strategies are applied in various industries. These collaborations could also lead to joint projects, where students create campaigns that are tested in real settings;
- Student motivation: introducing innovative pedagogical methods such as gamification, team competitions and simulated marketing campaigns that could increase students' interest in the subject. In addition, linking assignments to students' everyday digital practices—like analysing influencer strategies on Instagram or designing TikTok campaigns—could enhance engagement and demonstrate marketing's relevance in their daily lives.

DISCUSSION

The research results provided a comprehensive view of secondary school marketing teaching. While students appreciate the practical activities and interactive teaching methods, there is room for improvement, particularly in relation to the real business environment. A key recommendation is to modernise teaching, increase the use of digital tools and strengthen cooperation with the business sector, thereby increasing the subject's attractiveness and preparing students for the real challenges of the marketing environment.

Linguistically, student campaigns frequently deployed intensifiers (e.g., truly, absolutely), evaluative adjectives (e.g., premium, sustainable), hedges (e.g., might, could), and boosters (e.g., definitely) to calibrate certainty and stance (Hyland, 2005). Calls-to-action were

commonly realised as directives with softened politeness (Discover more, Try it today), consistent with positive face wants (Brown & Levinson, 1987). These linguistic strategies reflect not only students' intuitive grasp of persuasive language but also their implicit awareness of how rhetorical force can be modulated to balance persuasion with politeness. Such findings highlight the potential of drawing students' attention to these patterns explicitly, thereby enabling them to reflect on their rhetorical choices and develop greater communicative control.

Narrative framings—problem–solution–benefit and hero/guide scripts—organised pitch decks; argumentation typically followed Toulmin-like patterns (claim + reason + example), even when not taught explicitly. This suggests that students, when tasked with designing marketing campaigns, gravitate toward established persuasive structures that resonate with cultural expectations of rational justification and storytelling. Visuals worked with copy through compositional hierarchy and salience, consistent with multimodal design principles (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). The integration of text and image was not always seamless, but students demonstrated an emerging capacity to coordinate verbal and visual modes to reinforce key messages.

These observations suggest that making such linguistic resources explicit—through short “copy labs,” metaphor-mining exercises, and stance-editing workshops—can strengthen both persuasive quality and critical language awareness without excessive curricular load. In practice, teachers could implement micro-tasks where students identify hedges and boosters in sample advertisements, reframe calls-to-action with different politeness strategies, or map the argument structure of a campaign pitch. Such exercises would not only enhance technical skills in marketing communication but also cultivate broader metalinguistic awareness, enabling students to interrogate the persuasive techniques they encounter in everyday media critically.

Moreover, embedding explicit linguistic analysis into marketing education supports ethical reflection. By examining how intensifiers or metaphors influence consumer perception, students can be guided to consider the ethical implications of their choices—such as the difference between responsibly highlighting product benefits and manipulating consumer vulnerability. This aligns with broader educational goals of fostering responsible citizenship and critical literacy.

Finally, these findings suggest avenues for curricular innovation. Teachers could collaborate with linguists or communication specialists to design interdisciplinary modules that blend marketing strategy with discourse analysis. Digital tools, such as corpus software or AI-based text analysers, could be incorporated to provide students with immediate feedback on their linguistic choices, further linking classroom practice to professional contexts. Such innovations

would prepare students not only as effective marketers but also as reflective communicators, capable of navigating the complex discursive landscapes of contemporary business.

CONCLUSIONS

Research on marketing education in secondary schools has provided valuable insights into the current state of education in this area and has indicated possible directions for its improvement. The analysis of the results reveals that while most students perceive marketing education as valuable, there is still room for improvement, particularly in practical application and enhancing student motivation. The questionnaire survey revealed that students appreciate interactive teaching methods, such as presentations, case studies, and group projects. There was great interest in practical activities where participants could apply marketing strategies to real-life situations.

On the other hand, a significant part of the respondents stated that the teaching still focuses mainly on theory. At the same time, there is a lack of a greater connection with practice and digital marketing tools. The identified weaknesses primarily include low student motivation and uncertainty about applying marketing knowledge in the future. Several respondents expressed doubt about whether the knowledge gained would be relevant to their careers. This highlights the need to strengthen the practical aspects of teaching and demonstrate the direct applicability of marketing strategies in real-world settings.

Key recommendations for improving teaching include introducing more interactive and practical activities, such as business simulations and collaboration with actual companies, as well as expanding the use of modern marketing tools, including social media, SEO optimisation, and analytical software. An essential part of improving teaching is increasing the involvement of practitioners who could familiarise students with current trends and requirements in the labour market. Moreover, creating opportunities for cross-curricular integration—for example, linking marketing with ICT, foreign languages, or social sciences—may help students to see the broader relevance of marketing knowledge and develop transferable skills. School–industry partnerships could be formalised through structured internships or mentorship schemes, offering students a clearer view of how classroom learning translates into professional contexts.

Viewed through the lens of the philosophy of language, the research findings also reveal that marketing education is not merely the transfer of business knowledge but a site where language actively constructs meaning, identities, and social relations. Students' engagement in persuasive discourse—whether in simulations, case studies, or project work—constituted performative acts that both reflected and shaped their understanding of marketing practice. From a critical theory perspective, this underscores the potential of marketing education to

foster reflexivity about the ideological and ethical dimensions of professional communication, preparing students not only as competent practitioners but also as critical and responsible language users.

Overall, although marketing teaching in secondary schools has undergone some changes in recent years, there are still areas that require further modernisation. Focusing on practical application and linking it to the actual market environment can significantly increase the subject's attractiveness while ensuring that students acquire skills that enable them to apply themselves effectively. The research results indicate the need to strengthen the practical aspects of teaching, modernise teaching methods, and actively involve students in the learning process. Ultimately, adopting a balanced model that combines theoretical foundations with language-aware, practice-oriented pedagogy could contribute to producing graduates who are both capable marketers and reflective communicators in society.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study is limited by its single-site focus and modest sample size ($N = 40$), which constrain the generalizability of the quantitative findings. Observational and artefact data were collected in a specific curricular and cultural setting, and patterns may differ in schools with different timetabling, resources, or assessment regimes. Conducting replications across a range of schools with different socioeconomic contexts and institutional priorities would strengthen the evidence base and enable meaningful comparisons of diverse pedagogical approaches. Likewise, international comparative studies could highlight cultural differences in how marketing discourse is taught and appropriated, shedding light on whether the pragmatic and rhetorical patterns observed here are universal tendencies or context-specific practices.

The discourse-analytic coding was designed for pedagogical utility rather than exhaustive coverage. While analyst triangulation and memoing support interpretive rigour, more formal reliability estimation on a larger corpus would be desirable. Future research could expand the codebook to incorporate additional pragmatic resources (e.g., irony, humour, indirectness, or multimodal alignment in digital platforms) and test rubrics across diverse marketing tasks. Employing digital corpus methods could also enable larger-scale quantitative analysis of student texts and presentations, making it possible to track developmental trajectories more systematically.

Although we note promising links between explicit language instruction and campaign quality, causal claims cannot be made. Controlled classroom interventions that compare language-focused microtasks against business-as-usual instruction would clarify effect sizes and transfer. Additionally, mixed-methods experimental designs could investigate whether

targeted metalinguistic interventions lead to measurable improvements in both persuasive quality and critical awareness of discourse.

Finally, longitudinal tracking could observe whether metalinguistic gains persist and translate to later academic or workplace settings. Following students beyond secondary school—into higher education, vocational training, or early employment—would help determine whether competencies cultivated in marketing classrooms endure and contribute to professional communicative effectiveness. Such longitudinal work could also examine how students' attitudes toward marketing evolve, and whether early exposure to language-focused pedagogy influences ethical sensitivity in real business contexts. Together, these avenues suggest that future research should combine breadth, depth, and duration to build a more comprehensive picture of how marketing education influences both linguistic practice and learner identity.

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Participation in this study was entirely voluntary. Before data collection, all student participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to decline or withdraw at any time without consequence. The questionnaire survey was anonymous, and no sensitive personal information was requested. Classroom observations and the collection of student artefacts (e.g., campaign briefs, presentations, promotional texts) were conducted with the approval of the school administration and with parental awareness, in accordance with institutional and national educational research guidelines. All artefacts were anonymised before analysis to protect participants' identities. By completing the survey and participating in classroom activities, students provided their informed consent for the use of anonymised data in research and publication.

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Ethical approval: The study adhered to institutional and national guidelines for research in educational settings. Student participation in the questionnaire was voluntary and anonymous; no sensitive personal data were collected. Classroom observations and the use of student artefacts were conducted with school approval and with appropriate parental awareness in line with local regulations. All artefacts were anonymised before analysis. Any additional approvals required by the authors' institutions were sought in accordance with internal policies.

Data and material availability: Anonymised questionnaire items, the coding framework, and exemplar excerpts are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request and can be provided as supplementary material at publication.

Authors' contributions: Conceptualisation, L.V. and J.F.; methodology, D.C.; software, J.F.; validation, J.F.; formal analysis, L.V.; investigation, M.G.; resources, M.G.; data curation, J.F.; writing—original draft preparation, L.V.; writing—review and editing, D.C.; supervision, L.V.; project administration, M.G.; funding acquisition, J.F. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript. Authorship must be limited to those who have contributed substantially to the work reported.

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