

Summary of the doctoral thesis entitled: *(De)construction of the linguistic reality in handbooks for sellers*

The purpose of this paper is to identify the characteristics of the „Handbook for sellers”, which appears to be an apparent educational tool as a result of the analysis. Twenty sales handbooks written by thirteen authors, representing different professions but using similar mechanisms to increase sales of their products, were examined. These include psychologists and educators, sales and management practitioners, bloggers, advertisers and motivational speakers. Other criteria for the selection of authors of publications are recognition and popularity in the mass media and social media, conducting training in sales, public speeches, as well as the use of various media to advertise their products and build their own image.

The dissertation is divided into three chapters: the first consists of six subchapters and includes theoretical considerations. It presents the cultural conditions of modern forms of consulting. Then an attempt is made to define the handbook itself for sellers and include it in a form of a certain genre frame. Particular attention is paid to the narrative category of the sales process, indicating the mechanisms that occur simultaneously in the language and the world of technology.

The construction of the second chapter – the analytical part of the work – was inspired by Janina Labocha's research, for whom text, utterance and discourse are inseparable components of the method of description in the process of language communication, without which it is impossible to fully analyze and interpret the selected phenomenon. Therefore, the second chapter is divided into three separate and equivalent modules: the “field of text”, the “level of expression” and “discursive space”.

Each has a three-part structure, and so using hermeneutical deconstruction of the text in the first module, attention is focused on the delimitation signals of the beginning and end, as well as on the titles of the chapters of the studied publications, as elements occupying strategic positions. The separation of single particles-signals and their attendance analysis, resulting from Teresa Dobrzyńska's research, allowed for the creation of a certain framework of the mentioned sub-genre, which has analogous structural elements with those used in trade conversation.

The module covering the “level of expression” confirms the thesis that the communication strategy adopted by the authors is based not so much on presenting solutions as on encouraging the purchase of their own products (participation in trainings, lectures, public speeches, etc.). To this end, the authors take on different roles and communication styles, becoming interchangeably a friend, mentor, parent, protagonist, etc. for the reader. The handbook itself, built according to the Propp model of a fairy tale, takes on the shape of a “fictional biography”, in which the author is a central figure, while the reader, as a faithful companion, participates in a quasi-educational journey.

The last part of the research (“discursive space”) concerns the “accompaniment” of handbooks divided into “verbal interface” and “visual”, i.e. the verbal and iconographic layers respectively. Semiotic analysis of paratextual cells on the covers and inside the books themselves.

The third chapter (“post-linear dimension of the handbooks”) provides a summary and conclusions. The introduced “rhizome figure” allows looking at the handbooks as a single knot, directing to the next parts of a larger structure – stories, sales process, creation of own brand, etc. Simultaneously, the guide itself is a rhizome with a diversified structure full of links and hyperlinks to author's offer. In the social dimension, it is a strong tool of influence, thanks to which their creators consciously and deliberately commercialize their knowledge to strengthen their business position by building around them and maintaining a community of faithful and devoted enthusiasts, as well as taking care to maintain a constant, but not imposing, asymmetry of the mentor-pupil relationship (respectively: author – recipient).

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