Eötvös Loránd University of Sciences

Faculty of Humanities

Theses of dissertation

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BUSINESS RHETORIC – CLASSICAL RHETORIC PERSUASION TECHNIQUES AND NEW SALES TECHNIQUES IN COMPARISON-

ELTE Doctoral School in Linguistic Sciences

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Budapest, 2016
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1. Introduction and Objectives

Rhetoric in teaching and research has undergone major changes in Hungary over the past 30 years. It has returned again to secondary schools, higher education and has become a compulsory subject in many universities and it is an optional subject for students in several institutions. The ELTE has already carried out - Aczél Petra - the first rhetorical Doctor in 2003 (Adamikné 2015).

According to Adamikné (2014) the translation of the classical works was a major step in the Hungarian rhetoric research. The first summarizing book was an academic textbook ‘Rhetoric’ by Tamás Adamik–A.Jászó–Anna Aczél Petra then a few years later Tamás Adamik edited the Rhetorical Lexicon. Useful studies were published by Hungarian rhetoric researchers without completeness Petra Aczél, Géza Balázs, Attila Nemesi, Imre Wacha, Bencze Lóránt, Flórian Tremmel, Judit Raátz, Zoltan L. Simon etc.

Among the researchers are listed above Raátz Judit published researches which are relevant for this thesis: Rhetoric and Negotiation Techniques (Raátz 2010), and Rhetoric and Business Communications (Raátz 2015). The main purpose of Raátz’s (2015) study was the comparison of the elements of modern negotiation stages and the classical rhetoric related to the preparation of the speech. It stated that "studies of modern business operation gain useful and applicable advice, by studying the writings the masters of classical rhetoric " (Raátz 2015: 326)

The dissertation will examine the common parts of the classical rhetoric and a narrow part of the business communications: the personal retailing. I compare the classical persuasion techniques and the new types of influential techniques. The ancient technique of persuasion means the devices which are formed from 330 BC. to the end of the first century and are left to us in books, as Aristotle's Rhetoric, Cornificius’s Rhetorica ad Herennium, ( Rhetoric: for Herennius), De invention and On the Orator by Cicero and Quintilian's Institutes of Oratory.

Under the new type of influence techniques I mean the persuasion and influence devices which are left to us from the 19th century till nowadays, in Cialdini's Influence: Science and practice, McGuire’s The probabilogical model of cognitive structure and attitude change and in Brehm’s worldwide known essay: Explorations in Cognitive Dissonance.

The dissertation summarizes the definitions, systems and topics of classical rhetoric, based on the special literature. I deal with the rhetoric changes, new possibilities and frontiers of the science. I conclude the business communication and definitions of financial products and opportunities, as well as I examine personal sales as a rhetorical situation. In Chapter 3, I
compare the rhetoric and business communication, in order to get closer to determine business in rhetoric. In addition, I present one of my researches, which certifies that the male and female population of Hungary is thinking about rhetoric similarly.

The doctoral thesis aims to investigate the relevance of persuasion techniques in Hungary in connection with the personal sale of financial products; and pointing out that the classical rhetorical techniques are incorporated into practice and help efficient sales.
2. Materials and methods, subjects for experiments

2.1. The aims and hypotheses of the dissertation

The direct sale has a rather negative perception of Hungary: dozens of newspaper articles, online forums are dealing with how people were cheated in this way of sale, and if the question arises in direct conversation even without personal experience it is declared negatively. In my opinion, there are two reasons of it. On the one hand it is based on the countless products and services of really poor quality. On the other hand it is a technical problem: the violent, aggressive (forcing) sales technique. My thesis is not aiming to examine these aspects and causes in detail, they only serve as a primer idea.

In my view, the success of direct sales is not primarily determined by the product, because a lot of advantages of the products can be seen or proven later, but the effectiveness of the sales. In my point of view the forced sale can be prevented by effective influencing technical means.

But the technique you should use depends on the products intended for sale. The dissertation's hypothesis is that the personal sale of financial products have unique, special factors which influence the success of persuasion. The paper therefore seeks to determine what features characterize the personal sale of financial products.

In my dissertation I studied the influence of technical activities listed below:

1. The peculiarities of financial products’ personal sales in Hungary.
2. Building on fear in financial products’ personal sale
3. Building on increasing the fear in financial products’ personal sale.
4. Examination of the principle of reciprocity in financial products’ personal sale – significance, unexpectedness, personalization.
5. Arguments against the own interest in financial products’ personal sale.
6. The use of humor in financial products’ personal sale.
7. Using the technique of implantation in people during the financial products’ personal sale.

The selection of techniques is chosen on the basis I met in business transactions and the methods and techniques which I have built in my own model.

The research is expected to introduce practical options of persuasion technique in financial products’ personal sale, to decrease violent sales.
I point out that the classical rhetorical techniques are incorporated into practice and help efficient sales. In addition, the study highlights the lack of references to ancient thinkers, to help the recognition of the classic rhetoric in the 21st century. I could not find anything available in Hungary that examines this aspect of personal selling of financial products in Hungary. This paper intends to offer that.

2.2. Materials and Methods

In my thesis I introduce a series of seven experiments according to the preceding paragraph. I present the general characteristics and the conditions of the experiment in this section, but, as we shall see, different conditions has been applied in each topic, so the hypothesis, test material and the method for each experiment has been separately described.

Timing

The experiments were conducted in parallel with my studies, partly with gender research as well. That is the reason why not every experiment shows the results of male and female respondents separately after examining the results of gender researches it did not consider appropriate to divide by sex. The order of the experiment does not follow chronological but logical order.

Applied tools

I used online and paper-based questionnaires and tasks in the experiments or when the test procedure itself needed a personal assistant, where I organized a closed discussion group (Table 1). The online questionnaire is available on a free, unique interface, I used online tools to deliver them: I used the opportunities provided by social media and using my personal contacts I used topical newsletters to reach people who receive them. I passed and asked to fill out the paper-based questionnaires, or in the cases which claimed widespread dissemination I asked for help. When the questionnaires were handed out I gave a short introduction on the topic, the significance of the research to my colleagues, and I checked the most important information. I would like to gratefully thank them for the assistance.
**Topic of the experiment and Tools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The peculiarities of financial products’ personal sales in Hungary.</td>
<td>online questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building on fear</td>
<td>online and paper-based questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building on increasing the fear</td>
<td>online and paper-based questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principle of reciprocity</td>
<td>online and paper-based questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arguments against the own interest</td>
<td>online and paper-based questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The humor</td>
<td>personal interview and questionnaires on paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The implantation technique</td>
<td>personal interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1*

**2.3. Methods of measurement**

During the research, a variety of measurement methods were used, a description of the specific details, explanation of the relevant section is located in a chapter of the thesis a general summary is introduced here. (see Table 2).

**Topic of experiment, type of experiment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Type of experiment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The peculiarities of financial products’ personal sales in Hungary.</td>
<td>Likert scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building on fear</td>
<td>Closed questions, Osgood scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building on increasing the fear</td>
<td>Closed questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principle of reciprocity</td>
<td>Closed questions, Osgood- scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arguments against the own interest</td>
<td>Multiple choice questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The humor</td>
<td>Closed and open questions, Osgood-scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The implantation technique</td>
<td>Osgood scale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2*

The personal sales success depends on many factors, - the products themselves, the acquaintances, the salesperson’s likability – but this paper examines the technical and methodological part: what kind of influential techniques can work in practice so that the result
should not distort the salesperson. Therefore, the tasks and questions were designed not to depend on the individual participants’ likability: that’s why – apart from the examination of humor and implantation techniques – I handed out pre–written texts. In case of “The new type of financial product sales techniques and verify their operation ”was particularly important that the expert should be "faceless”, so this research was carried out exclusively on online tools.

As the table above shows, open and closed questions and Likert- and Osgood scale were used.

Likert scale was used when the answer could be placed in a "completely agree – absolutely did not agree" - type scale. I gave the ‘The new type of financial product sales techniques and verify their operation’ experiment a 5 degree of unparalleled scale, with the aim that all means should be possible median is the choice of the experiment subjects, because in this case it is also suggestive information.

Osgood scale is used to measure the credibility and likability.

2.4. Age Groups

The people tested, in experiments were mixed age groups, I decided on the basis of the subject, it is worth examining what age group they belong (Table 3)

‘The peculiarities of financial products’ personal sales in Hungary’ and "The role of humor" research my goal was to involve the widest possible circle, so I did not differentiate on age.

The building on fear and the implantation technique research aimed active solvent adults, because it was an important point here is that the participants' “fear for what could be ”, have their own experience in relation to the damage resulting from the use of apartments. The younger age group was considered, not to have separate households, and therefore they were not included in this sample.

The "principle of reciprocity" and " arguments against the own interest " theme, it was important that who were involved in it, were expected to have no or little experience in the direct selling of financial products. 18-24 years old, college students are not likely to have, since the absence of their own financial resources are not counted target group.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Number of people</th>
<th>Age group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The peculiarities of financial products’ personal sales in Hungary.</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>18–70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building on fear</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>25–60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building on increasing the fear</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>nr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The principle of reciprocity</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>18–24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arguments against the own interest</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>18–24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The humor</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>18–70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The implantation technique</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>25–60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3
3. The structure of the thesis

In Chapter 1 of my thesis, I summarized the definitions, systems and topics of classical rhetoric, based on the special literature. They pointed out that the central concept of persuasive rhetoric is not the way of speaking, but the reasoning, the argumentation and that has initially formed the conviction of three modes: story and logic (logos), moral or ethical (ethos) and words psychological or physiological (pathos). I found that the classical rhetoric of the ancient people used practical reasoning, and this is sometimes called probabilistic reasoning. I called the attention to the fact that the ancient rhetoric has built up a system of four topics: 1. the legal regulation of the pleadings; 2 the types of oratory; 3, the parts of the oratory; 4. the tasks of the speaker. I touched the changes of the rhetoric, new opportunities (gender rhetoric) and the frontiers of this science.

In the second chapter I summarized the definitions of business communication, finding that the business communication has specific features. I also pointed out in particular that the primary purpose of the business communication is giving information and influence people. I called the attention to the fact that you may want to refer to the ancient concepts of rhetoric, and take into account the statements of the classical speakers. I examined the concept of financial products and noted that although the financial products are compared and sold by growing number of Internet portals, the salesperson still has an important role in the sale of financial products. Therefore, I summarized the statements of the researchers from the personal sale and found that in personal retailing it is crucial to build trust and an informed retailer. At the end of the second chapter I examined the personal sales as a rhetorical situation.

In the third chapter of the dissertation I compared rhetoric and business communication and highlighted the fact that the philosophy of the ancient rhetoric is used to this day in many aspects, to determine business communication. I tried to formulate business rhetoric, based on these facts and I discussed the ethical aspects as well. I realized that – in my opinion – it is worth examining if business rhetoric has undergone any changes in terms of behaviour or not, and that the provided information is true or not. The manipulation itself is not a problem of in terms of business rhetoric. It does not belong to the business rhetoric, if the statement is not true.

In Chapter 5, I presented my research. As it demonstrated most of the research I have done, there is actually measurable effect in personal selling of financial products and it is showing measurable difference in attitude towards other objects. A reason may come from
any previous experience. According to Blanton-Eijnden Stuart (2001), during persuasion, and influence the key is the receiving party’s prior experiences and opinions. The rhetor should measure the public’s perception of social norms.

The previously cited Vohs (2011) research in which symbols associated with money raised the "selfishness" in the receivers of the research can be explained by some earlier social norms approach.

As it is shown in research covered in chapter 5.1 can be read many times it depends on the culture which technique is effective in personal selling. So – as Aristotle and Perelman also stressed – it is pivotal to map the receiver’s values, previous experiences prior to argue. Looking at the aspects of the present paper, for example – as the research also revealed – when it comes to financial matters, it is less effective – among Hungarians over 40 years – focusing of the future regret technique. Many other information – in addition to the receiver’s age – is worth knowing of course: if they have ever had negative experience with financial institutions, if they know somebody who had and the kind of the relationship they have with them, etc However, the mapping of the receiver’s values alone does not mean that we successfully change the behavior, thinking and emotions of the receiving party. In addition to, the speaker has no effect on the previous experience it has to be treated as a fact.

The changing of the existing thoughts and emotions are discussed in Chapters 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7 of the dissertation. The principle of reciprocity, humor and building on fear confirmed that the emotional attitude of the receiving party can be changed. Research 5.2. revealed that it is worth building on fear in order to facilitate the decisions in the financial field, but there must be clear plans for the customer about what to do to avoid the trouble, and solve the problem. Research has shown that if there are no solutions by the source, it can underestimate the threat. The fear may be stepped up – see Section 5.3. research – that is, the enhancement of illustration and can be made more effective if it senses it and you can make "quantification" – specifies the amount of HUF express – is used during the sale.

Also I highlighted that the likability, (pathos) and credibility (ethos) may be increased if the receiving party is provided with personalized advice (see 5.4. research). Research 5.5. has shown that customers were measurably affected when – during selling financial products – arguments against or near the own interest, or subject to claims and to measure the difference between cons of topics. Research has shown that when the retailer draws attention to their financial loss is more effective than they refer to other (administrative time) arguments.
Research 5.6. has shown that the use of humor, and wit increase credibility and can build likability (both pathos and ethos).

The 5.7. research covered by this chapter, revealed clearly: in order to achieve change in the receiver, it is not enough, to map their existing values, experience, not enough to change their feelings and the way of their thinking, because the receiver's decision can also be influenced when the speaker is not present. In chapter 5.7. it turned out that on financial themes, extremely high proportion of the product was not chosen by the test subjects, in case the source used the implantation technique.
4. Scientific results, theses

These theses can be formulated based on the results.

Thesis 1: The financial products have measurable characteristics in personal selling in the Hungarian population. The result of the research made among Hungarians shows that when it comes to financial matters, it is less effective – among Hungarians over 40 years – focusing of the future regret technique.

Thesis 2: The building on fear in the personal sale of financial products is effective, but just in case, if we show the receiving party solutions which can solve the problem. If we do not show a solution we underestimate the threat. It is worth illustrating the loss with numbers.

Thesis 3: You can increase the credibility with increasing the number of financial advice without direct interest, the personalized free advice is not only increases credibility, but likability as well in the receiving party.

Thesis 4: Arguing for their own interests decreases credibility, but in the personal sale of financial products arguments against the own interest increases the source's credibility only a little bit.

Thesis 5: The hypothesis – that the agent's professional credibility will be reduced by using humor, in addition to that it increases likability – has not been confirmed. Research has shown that wit increases credibility.

Thesis 6: Implantation technique is exponentially effective in the personal sale of financial products. Therefore it is crucial to incorporate the technique in the personal sale of financial products practice.
5. Conclusions

The results of the research suggest that when someone wants to control someone else we have to consider three contexts in the aspect of the receiving party.

1. (B) What past experience, what kind of value system they have, what features can be justified in the particular culture on that attitude object.
2. (D) The source – when they are present – how they can influence the listener's emotions and thoughts.
3. (A) What influences the receiving party when the speaker is no longer present (if there is no immediate decision, purchase) (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before (B)</th>
<th>During (D)</th>
<th>After (A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The receiver’s values, experience</td>
<td>Changing of the receiver’s emotions and thoughts</td>
<td>To prepare the receiver to the reaching effects (if there is no immediate decision)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1 The peculiarities of financial products’ personal sales in Hungary

1. Grasping the attention
2. Understanding and 3. Acceptance

Table 1

*BDA complex models of persuasion techniques*
Meanwhile, the source must take care about realizing the process discussed in Chapter 3.3.,

1. grasping the attention 2. understanding 3. acceptance 4. keeping 5. behaviour

One of the easiest ways to grasp attention is to ask questions from the receiver about their previous experience and values, etc.

It can be used to know what before the meeting was. It represents the "before" part of the model.

In the "During" section, it is essential to make sure that the receiver understands the message of the source, and after that the right persuasion technique can be chosen. There is the source’s possibility to change the recipient's emotions and thoughts at this stage.

As the research has revealed the receiver’s decision can also be influenced when the speaker is absent, and therefore without keeping the sale will not be successful. Finally, the last component of the process model – which is designed from the beginning by the source is a change in the recipient’s behavior.
6. Summary of the used literature


7. Publications on the topic of the thesis


