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Public Relations and the Job of Representation

This paper attempts to explain the reflexive framework of an educational program: the clarification of a study on the professional use of language.

Many kinds of training exist for the professions of communication. In Roubaix, the Institut Universitaire Professionnalis  "Infocom" offers "general training in communication". We are considering professional training in communication here as not only a matter of tools and techniques: the development of language abilities requires one to think about the forms of communication, the moments, the themes and the difficulties. Such a position is not new. Professional difficulties remain to be identified and conceived. Our proposal: within difficult language situations, a person in charge of communication is bound professionally to represent "his" company. But what does "to represent" mean? What does the job of representation consist of in a "public" framework, one of public relations (relations in public, with the public)? By analyzing this situation, the social spaces where professionals construct these representations, the relationship between the person in charge of public relations and this "one's self" which is the company, the trainer can obtain a "strategic" perspective and propose linguistic protocols and exercises.

Among all the documents in which a project of the public representation of a company can be found, we have concentrated primarily on a literary or journalistic "genre": the portrait. An analysis of texts will make locating some of the themes possible for those who are professionally confronted with the job of presenting another.