

“What is on the menu today?”: A critical discourse analysis of the best-selling cookbooks from lifestyle gurus and celebrity chefs in Flanders

**Viktor Proesmans**

Ghent University

**Nelleke Teughels**

KU Leuven

**Iris Vermeir**

ghent university

**Maggie Geuens**

Ghent University

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## **Abstract**

Food writings have changed tremendously over the years. Traditional cookbooks have largely been replaced by hybrid, edutaining cookbooks authored by celebrity chefs and more recently lifestyle gurus. To get a better insight in how popular cookbook authors persuade consumers, we conducted a critical discourse analysis on 18 of the best-selling cookbooks in Flanders (Belgium), published in 2008-2019. Using the three-dimensional framework of Fairclough, we analysed how the discourse changed over time, which persuasion techniques authors use, what they proclaim, and how the discourse relates to society. Modern cookbooks not only provide information, but also aim to inspire and entertain using a direct, personal discourse. Celebrity chefs, for example, emphasize shared values, tradition, and the fun of cooking, whereas lifestyle gurus provide life advice focusing on postmodern values like moral choice, achievement, fulfilment and personal responsibility.

**Keywords:** *Cookbook; Celebrity chef; Lifestyle guru*

**Track:** Transformative Consumer Research