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**INVESTIGATION OF CURRENT JOURNALISTIC GENRES: A RHETORICAL-
STYLISTIC TEXT ANALYSIS**

DOCTORAL THESIS SUMMARY

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I. The aim of the study

The subject of the dissertation is the presentation of the stylistic and rhetorical changes in journalistic text types between 2000 and 2011. The basic function of the press is to give account of phenomena and events, as well as to explain them, thus promoting their correct interpretation and the formulation of a proper standpoint on the issues. From the innumerable events happening in the world the media transmits only a limited number of information. The selection among various information raises the question of how the press reconstructs reality. This is to be demonstrated by the analysis of press announcements concerning parliamentary elections in Hungary between 2000 and 2011 and the reports about the year-evaluation speeches. The purpose of the study is to reveal the elements the press uses to rhetorize, emphasize and create the “reality” of significant events within the selected time span. I intend to demonstrate this on the selected corpus using rhetorical, stylistic, visual rhetorical and textological methods.

This kind of systematic examination of daily papers may provide information that are not included in the content explicitly, only in the coding, editing and display of messages, that is, in a hidden way. The question is, how and to what extent the press informs the reader about the topical issues by way of selection and the use of visual means. Along with answering the central questions, it can also be observed whether political texts contain the means of expression and the structural units of classical rhetoric.

II. Applied methods and sources

In order to achieve the research aim as comprehensively as possible, I chose two larger corpora within the selected time span. In the first larger unit of my paper, I put the press announcements about the two parliamentary election rounds under genre analysis. I examined the issues of the four national daily newspapers that report on the results of both parliamentary election rounds in detail. This was the only topic that recurred cyclically on the columns. I processed the entire issues published at the time of parliamentary elections using the method of content analysis. In doing so, I examined the extent to which daily newspapers deal with

certain events. The titles of the articles included in the analyzed corpus are also listed in the form of a table.

The basic question of the survey is how many articles discuss the topic, what journalistic text type they belong to, in which column they appear, and which topics related to elections are dealt with by the individual daily papers. The examination extends to the visual rhetorical analysis of the corpus. In doing so, I examine the titles, subtitles and typographic display of the articles on elections. In this way, the set of visual means used in the selected press organs and its changes can also be traced. Through the analysis of the newspapers issued on the occasion of the six parliamentary elections, the changes in the structure of the daily papers can be demonstrated, as well. The comprehensive analysis of daily papers provides an insight into the method of agenda-setting of newspapers.

The other part of the corpus covers a relatively new political event discussed by the press with great emphasis, the year evaluation, and the journalistic writings about it. The annual state evaluation speech is a relatively new technique of the communication of the political elite. This new public rhetorical genre appeared in our country at the end of the 20th century. From the selected time span I highlighted the years in which the representatives of both political sides held year evaluation speeches. In these speeches the Hungarian political actors followed the pattern of the 'state of the union'-speeches of American presidents.

The genuine texts of the selected year evaluation speeches did not appear in print in all cases. I found the sources in the on-line video archives of Duna Televízió and HírTV and in the sound archive of Inforádió. In order to carry out the rhetorical analysis, the records of the speeches had to be cast in a printed form first. I transcribed the speeches on the basis of the audio materials myself.

I analyzed the political speeches and journalistic texts issued after the regime change from a textological point of view in addition to rhetorical, stylistic and linguistic methods. In the course of the rhetorical examination, I applied the method of classical rhetorical analysis, because this way the texts can be explored in their entirety.

The second major unit of the dissertation contains the rhetorical-stylistic analysis of the right- and left-wing political year-evaluation speeches from 2003, 2005 and 2010 and the reports on them. The year 2003 was included in the study because it was the first year in which the year evaluation speeches of both political sides were issued. This way of selecting the

speeches allowed a politically independent objective approach. I followed the same principle selecting the annual evaluation speeches of the other two years, because in these years the representatives of both political sides voiced their view. In 2005, as a result of the political change, a new leader of the left wing evaluated the given year, that is why I found it important to analyze this speech. In 2010, I examined the current speeches of the speakers analyzed in 2005. The selected speeches became interesting from the point of view of the analysis because of the change in the place of their presentation.

Within the examination of the journalistic appearance of the speeches, I analyzed and compared the writings of all four national daily papers. In the course of the rhetorical analysis I examined the structure of the speeches and the journalistic texts first. This could be followed by a detailed analysis of how elocution is carried out in the speeches and the journalistic texts. During the stylistic analysis, the implementation of language norms, accurate formulation and the adequate use of words had to be considered, as well. In addition to the stylistic and linguistic formulation, I also examined how persuasion can be achieved by using rhetorical devices. The analysis of the reports which appeared in the four national daily papers can demonstrate the characteristic features of the genre and how the press presents the topic of year evaluations.

I consider the rhetorical analysis of the visual information of the press important both in the case of the journalistic writings about parliamentary elections and in that of the reports on the year evaluation speeches. In the course of the visual rhetorical analysis of the reports on the year evaluation speeches, I examined the press photos and the relationship between the captions and the pictures. The analysis reveals that the press deliberately guides the reader's view not only by the selection and the wording of the news but also by the selection of pictures. During the verbal and visual analysis of the reports, one can observe what the newspapers highlight and what they deliberately keep back about a certain topic. As a result of this, the functions of press photos may also become obvious.

The examination from a textological point of view became necessary because of the emergence of on-line press. I examined the correspondences and differences in the corpora of the printed articles of the four national daily papers and their on-line versions. Carrying out the survey gave an answer to the question of how the texts read on-line by members of the information society to gain information are structured and to what extent this influences their

opinion.

Due to the diversity and the manifold interpretability of the topic, an objective method was also needed, by which the basic hypotheses could also be proved in a non-empirical way. This method is stylistic statistics. The quantitative method makes it possible to compare the characteristic features of the journalistic language of the periods under analysis. The objective figures and data provide enough guidance and factual evidence to observe and analyze the changes in journalistic language as well as to draw conclusions.

In my paper I used the examination methods of text analysis that can be applied to all text types along the same principles despite their diversity and special characteristics and that best fit the corpus and retain the objectivity of the examination.

III. The result of the study

The analyzed corpus made it necessary to describe the information society in our country, in which the press operates, before revealing the result of the examination. I also had to touch upon the social changes that had taken place before the texts of the corpus were written. I summarized the most important characteristics of the political and state structure of Hungary.

The analysis of the journalistic writings published on the occasion of the six parliamentary elections made it possible to trace the change in the significance of certain topics and the selection mechanism of the newspapers.

Elections are a highlighted topic in the press, but as its novelty recedes, these articles are gradually relegated to the background on the columns of daily papers. Considering the number of the articles, the topic under examination raises great interest, and also plays an important part in people's lives. Concerning elections, a discrepancy can be observed between the parties as well as the daily papers in the selection and the wording of the topics. In the case of identical topics in all four daily papers, wording and typographic display remained a specific feature of the newspapers.

The typographic changes of journalistic genres became documentable by this examination. The rhetoric of vision plays an important part in the press. The visual means help highlight the structural elements of the message expounded by the journalistic writings. So I primarily

examined the set of devices used in editing and arrangement. Having completed the rhetorical analysis of vision, it can be stated that the visual devices of the press aim at the conviction of readers and the guidance of their attention. The study covering several years also presents the changes in the form and editing of the four national daily newspapers. The direction of the change confirms the tendency of tabloidization.

The study also demonstrates that not only longer reports can have great impact. By using borders and photos and by the wording of the titles, short news can have at least as great agenda-setting effect as longer articles. The examination proves that the place of appearance in the newspapers and the length of the articles as well as their visual appearance have an influence on the highlighting of the topics. In accordance with the hierarchy and inner arrangement of daily papers, the most emphatic issues, which are in the focus of public interest, usually appear on the front page. As for the topic of elections, it is also to be observed that daily papers use various emphasizing techniques to guide the reader's attention to certain information, while a lot of other information remain in the background. So daily newspapers focus the attention primarily through the selection among the issues and regarding the selected issues, by the use of typographic elements and photos.

Chapter five of the dissertation contains the rhetorical, stylistic and quantitative analyses of year evaluation speeches.

The stylistic features of the year evaluation speeches as a new communication genre in Hungary have changed in the course of time, according to the place of their presentation. In the year evaluation speeches given in the Parliament there are fewer complicated and multiply complex sentences, because the speaker is bound by the time frame as well as the place. In the texts of year evaluation speeches held at other political events, the use of longer, more complex sentences is characteristic of both the right and the left wing, which can also be ascribed to a wider time frame.

Each of the year evaluation speeches contains the defining features of the genre. In each speech of all three speakers, there was a contentual evaluation, policy-setting, which also involved campaign elements, and comments on the activity of the other political wing. These elements partially determine the build-up of the speeches, and at the same time, they allow the discussion of further topical issues characteristic of the given year. However, it was possible to define the most important topics of year evaluation speeches. All three speakers centered their

most important messages around ideological-cultural, social welfare and economic topics. The message organized around the aforesaid topics is edited by the speakers in accordance with the rhetorical units. The parts of speech of the antique tradition can be found in the year evaluation speeches. The most voluminous part of the text contains the elaboration of the topic and the argumentation. The first part of the speech is usually oriented at the listener. This part of text is short in the case of all three speakers. In the argumentation, the speakers justify their point of view and also refute opposing views. In these speech parts, the aforementioned ideas are emphasized by rhetorical figures of speech. In the speeches under analysis it happened several times that the speaker, instead of giving a summary, introduced a new topic in the closing part. This way of closing in the speeches of the modern age may rouse the audience to more action and further thinking.

These political texts can also be defined according to the expression of the values owned or expropriated by the given political wing. This is the category of value rhetoric. In the case of the analyzed texts, however, I found that these value categories cannot be separated sharply. Both political sides use the value category of the other.

The quantitative results of the annual evaluation speeches suggest that the speeches of the two left-wing speakers from 2003 and 2005 have the lowest indicator of structuredness. The reason for this may be the determining effect of the setting of the speech. The ratio of sentence units to whole sentence in the speeches of the right-wing speaker is quite balanced in all three cases, which is explicable by his individual style and the invariability of the circumstances under which the speeches were delivered. The length of the sentences can be considered average, which is a characteristic of live speech. The data of the two aforementioned speeches of the two left-wing speakers show a divergence from the data of the other speeches in this respect, as well. The wording in shorter sentences may be due to the tight time frame of speeches given in Parliament. The speeches before the National Assembly were more defined, of stricter form, while for other places a less formal tone was characteristic.

In chapter 6, I analyzed the reports of the four national daily newspapers about the year evaluation speeches using rhetorical, stylistic, quantitative and textological methods. The examination of the journalistic writings provided the following results.

The antique rhetorical text units can be identified in the text of the reports as well as in those of the year evaluation speeches. These unfold in a shorter form in accordance with the

characteristics of reports as a genre. The reports appear in two parts: on the front page and on the inner page. This way of editing is attention-arousing in itself, so these topics play an important part on the columns of the newspapers. The arousing of the reader's interest is achieved by the combination of the title of the reports, its typographic display and the use of pictures. In rhetorical speeches, the arousing of interest and the defiance of indifference belong to the functions of the introductory part according to the antique tradition. In the reports, this function is realized by the title. It is significant, which sentences and information from the speeches appear in the title. The titles usually contain a well-sounding sentence or a recurring element of the speech. They are taken partly from the peroration or the introduction of the speech and thus have high emotional charge.

The titles, captions and the introductions on the front page contain the main content elements of the report which are enlarged upon in the text of the report. The proposition of the reports involves the emotionally charged statements from the beginning and the closing the speeches. So reports contain the announcement of the topic as a rhetorical speech part.

Due to their shorter extent, journalistic texts have a different system of argumentation than year evaluation speeches. Although we can trace the presence of various arguments in the texts, they are not elaborated as thoroughly as in rhetorical speeches. The majority of the reports adopts the elements of rhetorical argumentation. Only in a few cases could we find an individual argumentation system of the journalist's. In the closing part, some of the reports describe the finishing of the event, while others sum up the closing thoughts of the rhetorical speech. The emotional charge of the thoughts in the peroration of the speech is preserved by their appearance in the closing of the report. The reference to the finishing of the event at the end of the report does not contain emotional influencing. This solution suggests credibility to the reader.

In accordance with the characteristics of reports as a genre, the writings reflect the rhetorical use of language, and retain the ideological and political vocabulary of opinion language. The numerous quotations in the writings retain the sentence structures and figures of speech that are characteristic of the speakers. As a result, the elocution of the rhetorical speech also appears in some reports. The deliberate usage of the metaphors used in year evaluation speeches can also be observed in the writings of the national daily papers.

The value categories in the annual evaluation speeches reappear in the text of the reports, as

well. Like in the analyzed speeches, the applied value categories are not separated sharply in the reports, either.

The rhetorical analysis of the press photos suggests that it is usually the speaker and the circumstances of the speaking situation which get special emphasis regarding the event of the year evaluation. Visual manipulation can be detected in the selection of pictures and in choosing their size. The examined photos can only present a part of reality. However, it can also be stated that the pictures of daily newspapers altogether create the reality of the events of year evaluation. Based on the analysis of the press photos it can be established that the selection of photos is a conscious and deliberate editing process. The texts of the reports as well as the pictures are the results of selection from a particular point of view.

The textological analysis revealed the way the press had presented and compiled the reality of events. I recorded the differences between traditional and on-line writings. The changes in the title of the articles and the deletions and interlinings in the text body can be conceived as parts of the technique of manipulation. I highlighted the discovered differences in the texts of the reports, they are included in the appendix.

The statements made about the journalistic writings are supported by the results of quantitative stylistics, as well. The quantitative data of the reports also suggest that the writings contain a lot of information in a small compass according to the genre criteria. Due to the specific sentence patterns and wording and the use of quotations, reports on the year evaluation speeches contain much more complex sentences than the speeches. The data on the average length of sentences are similar to those of the speeches, which confirms the character of living language. The few protuberant data suggest that some reports condense a lot of extra information in relatively short writings.

From the results of the quantitative analysis, one can also deduct the characteristic features of the daily papers. The balanced data of Magyar Nemzet and Népszabadság indicate that these two newspapers stick to the traditions most and strive to observe genre boundaries when reporting on the events. The results of Népszava do not show a significant difference from those of the former two newspapers. Népszava endeavors to keep up with and adapt to the readers' expectation, so it strives to edit the articles with proper proportionality. In the case of Magyar Hírlap, the fluctuation of the data can also be explained by the constant transformation, which could be detected during the column analysis. In the case of all four

daily newspapers, a continuous change can be observed, which was confirmed by the data and the documentation of the changes in their image.

On the basis of the analysis of the selected corpus, one can get a picture of the characteristics of public life today reflected by a new genre and also of the journalistic genres that report on year evaluation speeches. In the case of both corpora, I identified the rhetorical structural units and the applied rhetorical-stylistic devices. The rhetorical-stylistic devices characteristic of certain speakers and political wings could be determined, in this respect, one can recognize certain correspondences. During the analysis, the argumentation system and the structure of the speeches and journalistic writings became observable. I found evidence that the texts of our age follow the rhetorical tradition in their build-up, and the study also revealed which elements are present in an altered form.

The results of the study proved that through the selection of news and press photos, the press reflects only certain elements of reality. The placement of journalistic texts on the pages, as well as the usage of rule and pictures also shows that the daily papers emphasize or suppress various statements according to their views. The data derived from the qualitative analysis confirmed the findings gained from the survey.

In my dissertation I endeavored to carry out a multifaceted research to present the phenomena and the changes of the corpus within the examined time span as vividly as possible. It was my intention to prove the observations about the character of the political press from various aspects using a variety of methods.

IV. Possible utilization of the research

By its interdisciplinary character, the study can be of interest in the fields of political and social science, modern rhetoric and stylistics. The research findings can be applied in secondary and tertiary education as well as in the training of journalists. The analysis of the texts of the modern age provides the possibility for making rhetorical learning more varied and interesting both for students and all those interested.

Further on, the findings of the dissertation will be comparable to the results of new research areas not yet discovered. Speeches delivered at festive events and general assemblies after the

regime change and the articles of national daily newspapers reporting them can also be examined with the methods applied in the study. Such analyses could be organically linked to the research work carried out so far. Reports on festive events are very suitable for the examination of selection, style and rhetoric. This research material provides an opportunity to present the genres of 21st century Hungarian political speech and journalistic writing. The analysis also reveals the changes in society and language usage.

V. List of Publications Related to the Thesis

Publications

KÖKÉNYESI Nikoletta, *A közéleti beszéd újabb műfaja, az éwertékelő beszéd és annak sajtóbeli tükröződése*, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Beregi Szemle: társadalomtudomány, irodalom, művészet: a megye önkormányzatának folyóirata, Nyíregyháza, 2014/1, 62–73.

KÖKÉNYESI Nikoletta, *Sajtónyelvi szövegek értelmezési lehetőségei = Versében él*, szerk. Dr. KECSKEMÉTI Gábor, Dr. GRÉCZI ZSOLDOS Enikő, Miskolc, Bíbor Kiadó, 2011, 214–221.

KÖKÉNYESI Nikoletta, *Kvantitatív módszerek alkalmazhatósága sajtónyelvi szövegek stilisztikai elemzésében*, Nyr., 2011/1, 48–64.

KÖKÉNYESI Nikoletta, *Filológiai és szövegstilisztikai eljárások a sajtónyelv retorikájának vizsgálatában =Doktoranduszok Fóruma Bölcsészettudományi Kar szekciókiadványa 2010. november 10.*, szerk. CSÓTAINÉ DR. BÁRCZY Klára, FEKETÉNÉ PÁL Enikő, Miskolc, Miskolci Egyetem Tudományszervezési és Nemzetközi Osztály, 2011, 45–53.

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KÖKÉNYESI Nikoletta, *Sajtónyelvi korpusz kvantitatív vizsgálatának médiaelméleti háttere* = *Doktoranduszok Fóruma Bölcsészettudományi Kar szekciókiadványa 2009. november 5.*, szerk. SZŐKE Kornélia, Miskolc, Miskolci Egyetem Tudományszervezési és Nemzetközi Osztály, 2010, 49–52.

KÖKÉNYESI Nikoletta, *Kvantitatív módszerek alkalmazhatósága sajtónyelvi szövegek stilisztikai elemzésében* = *Doktoranduszok Fóruma Bölcsészettudományi Kar szekciókiadványa 2008. november 13.*, szerk. SZŐKE Kornélia, Miskolc, Miskolci Egyetem Tudományszervezési és Nemzetközi Osztály, 2009, 15–18.

KÖKÉNYESI Nikoletta, *Ne „vekáljuk” az olvasót!*, *Édes Anyanyelvünk*, 2009/5, 12.

Presentations

KÖKÉNYESI Nikoletta, *Filológiai és szövegstilisztikai eljárások a sajtónyelv retorikájának vizsgálatában*. *Doktoranduszok Fóruma Bölcsészettudományi Kar* 2010. november 10.

KÖKÉNYESI Nikoletta, *Sajtónyelvi korpusz kvantitatív vizsgálatának médiaelméleti háttere*. *Doktoranduszok Fóruma Bölcsészettudományi Kar* 2009. november 5.

KÖKÉNYESI Nikoletta, *Kvantitatív módszerek alkalmazhatósága sajtónyelvi szövegek stilisztikai elemzésében*. *Doktoranduszok Fóruma Bölcsészettudományi Kar* 2008. november 13.