

# LINGUISTICS AND RHETORIC – RECIPROCAL PERCEPTION

In the Antiquity rhetoric was defined as the art of convincing argumentation. It was concerned with texts which were applied in their oral form in public language use. Political, legal and occasional speeches were presumed to be the form of expression of ancient Greek democracy.

Both rhetoric and linguistics consider language as the means of communication and the focus of interpretative efforts is in both cases the purposeful use of rhetoric as the tool of human beings.

The rhetorical orientation of the linguists of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was depicted by Klaus Semsch in a way that is typical for literary scholars: 'Für den engeren Bereich der Literaturwissenschaften brachte die Beschäftigung mit der Rhetorik eine verständliche, wenn gleich voreilige Annäherung mit dem Forschungsinstrumentarium der Linguistik mit sich. Für die Formalisten und insbesondere für den frühen Strukturalismus war das rhetorische Interesse gleichbedeutend mit der Lust an der Entlarvung ubiquitär diskursimmanenter Rhetorizität der Wissenschaften, auf die man mit den als exakt geltenden Mitteln linguistischer Analyse antworten wollte' (Semsch 1999: 4)<sup>1</sup>. But at the same time Semsch notices a different tendency, which can be treated as a kind of reaction against excessive formalization of linguistic study: 'Das allgemeine Interesse der aktuellen Geisteswissenschaften an der Rhetorik stützte sich seit den wegweisenden Studien von H. Plett und K. Dockhorn (1968)<sup>2</sup> in erster Linie auf die Hoffnung, in der Redekunst ein regulatives Instrumentarium für die Ablösung eines allzu positivistischen Wissensverständnisses in den humanen Wissensdisziplinen gefunden zu haben. Hier ging es darum, an ein Wissen zu erinnern, das die reaktivierte Erkenntnis der Vorläufigkeit der Vernunft gegen die Übermacht ‚rationaler‘ Denksysteme in quasi dialektischer Attitüde (respektive als Gegendiskurs) zu stützen vermochte' (Semsch 1999: 2-3).

However, this remark requires a necessary complementation which provides

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1. Semsch, Klaus (1999), *Abstand von der Rhetorik. Strukturen und Funktionen ästhetischer Distanznahme von der ‚ars rhetorica‘ bei den französischen Enzyklopädisten*, Hamburg.

2. Semsch means here the following books of both authors: Dockhorn, Klaus: *Macht und Wirkung der Rhetorik. Vier Aufsätze zur Ideengeschichte der Vormoderne*. Bad Homburg 1968 and Plett, Heinrich F.: *Einführung in die rhetorische Textanalyse*. Hamburg 1971.

a possible explanation of the existing and even rising interest of the linguists in the art of rhetoric. In one of his publications, Josef Kopperschmidt makes the following diagnosis: ‘Das heutige theoretische (...) Interesse an Rhetorik beruht auf der Aktualität der rhetorikimmanenten Voraussetzungen der Rhetorik. (...) Das aktuelle theoretische Interesse an Rhetorik beruht auf der Aktualität der rhetorikimmanenten Anthropologie bzw. allgemeiner gesagt: auf der Akzeptabilität dessen, was die Rhetorik vom Menschen zu wissen behauptet’ (Kopperschmidt 1999: 10)<sup>3</sup>.

What can discourage from rhetorical theory is its apparent complexity and alleged interpretative empty spaces, which are left open by rhetorical methodology. Luckily, rhetoric offers no simple, ready-made answers to questions regarding the nature of the analyzed communicative act, which is understood as an autonomous, multi-dimensional, dynamic occurrence.

Rhetoric has always been practice-oriented and interested in questions regarding the principles of appropriate, conscious and purposeful structuring of interaction by communication partners who have relevant knowledge and skills at their disposal and who, thanks to their experience, are able to project specific communicative situations and modify the current ones according to their intentions.

Rhetoric deals with the pragmatics of human communication. The human being, equipped with his or her experience, applies specific communicative means in order to realize his or her goals and react optimally to impulses, according to his or her own appraisal.

In the present volume, the relations between rhetoric and linguistics are analyzed by Jakub Z. Lichański and Walther Kindt. Kindt understands the process of natural communication as a domain in which the persuasive function of language is realized by means of argumentation. Lichański presents the 19<sup>th</sup>-century researcher and proponent of rhetoric, Emil Richard Volkmann. Even though in his texts Volkmann does not speak of linguistics as a discipline which can appear in rhetorical contexts, linguistic dimensions are noticeable in his work.

In her paper, Cordula Schwarze proves that the tripartite argument model should be extended to the pentamerous sequence-schema of argumentation for natural communication. The example used in the present article – a conversation

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3. Kopperschmidt Josef (1999), Zur Modernität der Rhetorik. In: Annette Mönnich (ed.), Rhetorik zwischen Tradition und Innovation. München, Basel, 10-17.

involving a conflict between a mother and her daughter – is investigated using conversational analysis.

Not only everyday communication offers evidence for the existence of various means and techniques of persuasion. Also scholarly discourse involves rhetorical or even sophisticated argumentation, which according to Iwona Bartoszewicz questions the frequently encountered popular opinion regarding the exactness of scholarly elucidation.

Rafał Jakiel attempts to comment on the audience-related issues, addressed by the rhetorical theory and practice. The audience is considered to be the central component of interaction, determining the course of rhetorical communication. The author proves successfully that the aesthetic expectations and beliefs of the readers of translated texts play an important role in the process of translation.

The aim of the principles of the fine speech, formulated in the framework of the *virtutes elocutionis*, is to optimize the impact of a rhetorical text. Artur Tworek underscores here the role of the verbal and particularly phonetic components of the communicated meanings. The correct use of these components, resulting from the knowledge of specific norms and from the careful observation of linguistic phenomena in authentic situations, ensures the language user's perlocutionary success. However, according to Tworek, the way phonetic phenomena are presented in the latest rhetorical literature is superficial and not sufficiently supported by research theory.

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*Volume Editor*