

Summary

This PhD dissertation addresses the phenomenon of rhetorical questions in political speeches. The essential purpose of the paper is to examine the illocutionary potential of rhetorical questioning, to show how it is possible to use their potential to affect the audience in speeches, and to demonstrate differences in the forms and realization of rhetorical questions.

The main purpose of the dissertation is to classify rhetorical questions based on the relationship between linguistic realization of such questions and the speaker's intention, i.e. hidden meaning of rhetorical questions. Meibauer's (1986) and Bąk's (2012) typologies are the starting point for the classification proposed in the paper.

Following the presentation of the analysis results, a brief summary of how the objective was investigated is provided, and thus the question is answered whether the intention of a person asking rhetorical question – regardless of whether it is clear or secret – is going to directly or indirectly affect the audience. As a result, it was proved that the use of rhetorical questions, and thus their illocutionary potential, has an impact on the audience depending on the speaker's motifs, intentions as well as contextual factors and the so-called rhetorical determinants described herein.

Based in the collected material, various functions of rhetorical questions were presented. These functions include, for example, controlling emotions, making suggestions, increasing the meaning of words, instructing, manipulating the audience, and others.

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