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THESES OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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The argumentation culture of contemporary Hungarian youth

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1. Introduction

The theory and practice of rhetoric has been in the common domain of knowledge since antiquity. While anyone with a general education and certain level of sophistication desires this treasure, only a few equipped with the necessary skills and competences are dedicated to the scholarly exploration of the discipline. It is beyond doubt that classic oratory has enjoyed a renaissance in the 20-21st century in Hungary. The publication of the Hungarian version of classic rhetorical works¹, in the post-Millennial era provided much needed momentum for further research, while an increasing amount of foreign and domestic² research results³, including summaries, and rhetorical theory analyses have become available at the same time. Demonstrated by such initiatives as the launching of the conference titled *Rhetoric in Society, Society in Rhetoric* in 1999 rhetorical theory and rhetorical practice began to flourish in Hungary. The subsequent arrangement of the *Lajos Kossuth national oratory competition for students of higher education institutions* coincided with the rising scientific and educational significance of the discipline as rhetoric instruction became incorporated in public and higher education curricula. Several training schemes in rhetoric were launched including the program of the St. Ignatius Scholarly Association starting in 1999. Furthermore, in order to find good young public speakers along with rhetorical courses several competitions were launched by public and higher education institutions, municipal governments, and professional associations as demonstrated by the national József Eötvös rhetorics competition for 9-11th grade secondary school students⁴.

It is to be welcomed that the development and improvement of the argumentation technique and debate culture of students have become a priority of public education again. The expression of the student's own opinion in a coherent manner is one of the requirements expected from 1-4th grade students according to the current *National Core Curriculum*⁵, while 5-6th graders are supposed to defend their own positions with specific arguments. Furthermore 9-12th grade students have to cooperate with each other in group discussion and disputes along with recognizing manipulative intentions, fallacious conclusions, and unsubstantiated judgments. Today's young generation, Generation Y born

¹ In the order of publication CHR; Arisztotelész, *Rétorika; Szónoklattan*; CÖM

² ADAMIK – A. JÁSZÓ – ACZÉL, *Retorika* (Rhetoric); ÚR; RL; ADAMIKNÉ JÁSZÓ 2012; KMR

³ In the order of publication CORBETT – CONNORS 1965/ 1999; BITZER 1968; PERELMAN 1982.

⁴ vide <http://www.eotvos-verseny.hu> (2015 Sptember 4) 110/2012 (VI.4)

⁵ 110/2012 (VI.4) Govt. decree on the issuance, introduction, and application of National Core Curricula

between 1976/1980 1982-1995 and Generation Z born after 1996⁶, must be introduced to the science of speech and rhetoric, interpreted in a narrow sense as the discipline of good speech, and as the theory of fiction in a broader context. In order to enable teachers to fulfill this goal teacher training programs of the future must include mandatory subjects on argumentation technique and logic at the foundation tier. This task, however, is up to experts involved in the elaboration of the Qualification Framework for teacher training, the respective program directors, and the developers of higher education sample curricula.

It has been proven that the average, global standard of texts written by students does not change in reference to age after the 6th grade⁷. In order to remedy the situation both educational theorists (researchers) and practitioners (teachers) have proposed the improvement of the composition skills of public and higher education students. Recognizing the importance of the improvement of composition and text production skills⁸ educational requirement criteria⁹ in effect support such aspirations. The periodical assessment of student's composition skills is crucial as the results of the respective analyses outline the major objectives of developmental plans. The present thesis provides a survey of attempts at assessing the composition and text production skills¹⁰ of Y generation students. The main objective of this treatise is to provide an overview of the composition skills of public and higher education students. The primary focus is on the assessment of the composition skills of the abovementioned Y and Z generations, which along with first hand experiences provides the foundation of the main hypotheses.

⁶ The chronological definition of the generations differs according to researchers.

⁷ MOLNÁR – VIDÁKOVICH – CS. CZACHESZ 2001: 24–30.

⁸ According to the experts of the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) composition or text production skills can be defined as "a combination of linguistic, reasoning, cooperation abilities and reading and writing technique skills for the solution of communication tasks in order to enable the sender to influence the receiver via the respective written statement." (KÁDÁRNÉ FÜLÖP 1990: 19).

⁹ 110/2012. (VI. 4.) Govt. decree on the issuance, introduction, and application of the National Core Curriculum: Supplement 3 of 51/2012. (XII. 21.) Ministry of Human Resources decree on the issuance and approval of framework curricula, 40/2002. (V. 24) ME Decree on the detailed requirements of maturation or graduation from secondary schools, 15/2006. (IV. 3.) ME Decree on the Qualification Framework for undergraduate and post-graduate MA programs.

¹⁰ While the first national Kossuth oratory competition was announced for the full time students of teacher training institutions, students majoring in law along with all young people between ages 18-30 could participate in the second event. In other words since 2000 people born between 1969-1981, that is members of Generations X and Y were invited. Between 2002-2013 altogether 49 secondary school students, mostly members of Generation Y competed with their counterparts of ages 18-30. Furthermore, members of Generation Z, that is those who became 18 in the given year could compete in 2014. While a generation change can be discerned in the past 15 years, most participants in the period under examination belonged to Generation Y.

1.1. The outline of the dissertation

The dissertation includes seven chapters. In the first, introductory section the problem and respective objectives, the actual topic, the applied methods, and specific hypotheses are presented. In Chapters Two-Four we introduce the topic of our research, the attendant objectives, results along with presenting the main theses. We focused on the rhetorical situation, the structure, the sources of arguments and the respective arguments and the linguistic tools promoting presence in the rhetorical achievements of the representatives of the Y and Z generations. We provide several examples for the given rhetorical phenomena, while in Chapter Four we offer the complex rhetorical analysis of 11 speeches based on the newer versions of previous analyses. In Chapter Five we make recommendations for teachers to promote the efficiency of the argumentation skills of today's youth. The research and its results can be especially useful for scholars exploring the practice of argumentation and teachers of Hungarian language and literature as well since the respective results can be incorporated into the methodology of teaching argumentation. Chapter Six includes the respective professional literature consulted along with the publications and presentations relevant to the topic of the treatise. Chapter Seven contains the listing of the figures and supplements introduced in the dissertation.

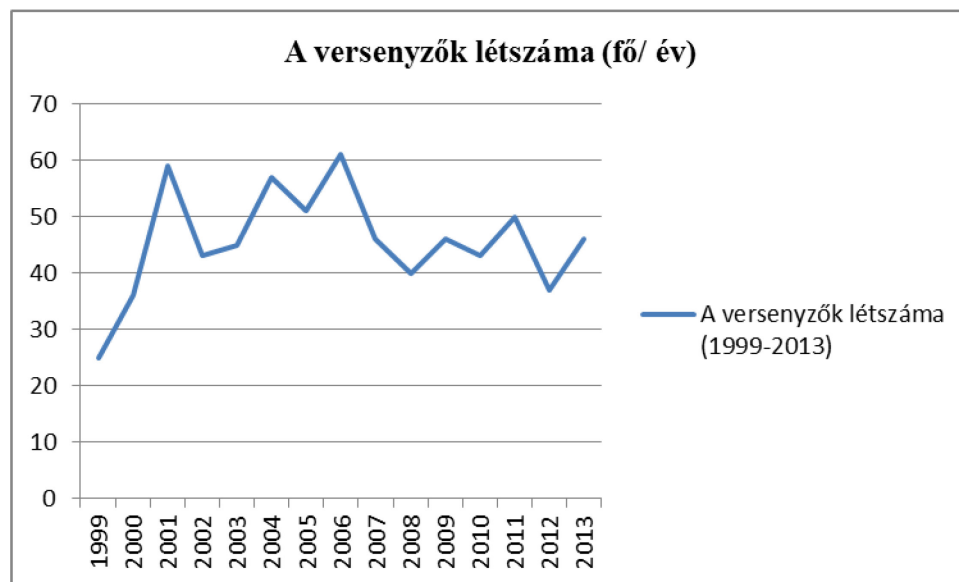
1.2. Research sample and methodology

We believe that in Hungary today more and more young people would like to make a living from public speaking without receiving the required adequate preparation. Having identified this need and driven by the goal to promote the rhetorical skills of Hungarian youth two instructors of Eötvös Loránd University LÁSZLÓ GRÉTSY and Anna ADAMIK-JÁSZÓ launched in 1999 the *Rhetoric in Society and Society in Rhetoric* conference and the *National Kossuth Oratorical Competition for College and University Students*. The goal of this annual competition was to prepare representatives of Generation Y and since 2010 the Generation Z (the requirement for entering the competition is reaching age 18 in 2010) to fulfill public, professional, and pedagogical roles. Furthermore, the Competition in the last 15 years aimed at raising the standards of language use, create a tradition,¹¹ while supporting the instruction of Rhetoric in secondary schools along with creating a Rhetoric workshop. In the past one and a half decades altogether 685 students participated in such competitions and 25-61 participants tested their mettle in Rhetoric annually (*Figure 1*).

¹¹ Rhetoric Then and Now (RTN) 2000: 219.

This is a rather impressive number regarding the identification and nurturing of rhetorical talent, while the respective efforts perform a gap-filling function as well.

Figure 1
The number of the participants of the National Kossuth Oratory Competition for University and College Students between 1999-2013.



Our research is inspired by the statement made by ANNA ADAMIK-JÁSZÓ in 2004: "Published versions of delivered speeches and video recordings should be thoroughly analysed in order to identify the needs of our times via the oratorical competition entries along with providing fresh, and literally youthful answers to current rhetorical phenomena and challenges."¹² Consequently our dissertation undertakes a gap-filling mission along with the justification for the respective hypotheses. The dissertation, however, could only focus on the analysis of published speeches primarily due to the differing methods of examining the textual version and the actually delivered speeches, and secondly due to spatial and length limitations. Our research explored the argumentation techniques of the Hungarian youth (including those living in crossborder Hungarian speaking areas) in the Kossuth Competition held between 1999 and 2013. In other words we aimed to examine the argumentation apparatus and the nature of the arguments of the representatives of Generation Y and Z. Moreover, in an indirect manner we strove for the demonstration and

¹² RTN 2004: 18

promotion of the values and achievements of talent nurturing in Rhetoric along with the promotion of the respective discipline.

During the analysis of the 636 speeches we used the following methods and procedures:

- Collecting research materials: Samples were taken from volumes 1-15 of the book series titled *Rhetoric Then and Now*¹³ (hereafter RTN). The RTN books contain the written version of speeches held at the Kossuth Oratory Competitions between 1999-2013.
- The examination of rhetorical phenomena was performed on samples with differing quantity, indicated throughout the dissertation with a qualifying statement under the subtitle *The subject and objective of the analysis*. The respective quantity difference is justified by feasibility and spatial limitation considerations. While certain examinations could be performed accurately and realistically on all 636 speeches (i.e. the analysis of the rhetorical situation) in case of other criteria such requirements could only be met reliably on a smaller sample. Therefore structural examinations were performed in case of 154 speeches amounting to 24% of the entries published in the 15 volumes. Having analyzed 186 speeches published in the first five volumes of the RTN series (29.2% of the total sample) we can conclude the today's youth are familiar with the most important personal and social values and their speeches call for the protection and promotion of such values. The exploration of the respective arguments and style were restricted to 69 entries held by returning and prize-winning participants along with 7 other previously analyzed texts (10.8% of the full textual sample) published in the *Rhetoric Then and Now* series. We believe that the aforementioned speeches provide an adequate amount and appropriate quality of materials for such a multifaceted and complex research effort.
- We used statistical methods for the processing and quantification of the given data while reinforcing the credibility of conclusions based on textual analysis.
- In order to further substantiate and demonstrate the main points we prepared figures and tables.

¹³ The organisers of the competition published the proceedings of the *Rhetoric in Society, Society in Rhetoric* conference and the written version of speeches delivered at the *Kossuth Oratorical Competition* on an annual basis. Between 2000-2014 15 volumes were published.

- At the beginning of each chapter the topic and focus of the respective examination is indicated, while at the end of each thesis unit the most important conclusions are presented.
- The methodology for rhetorical analysis reflects the criteria system established by ANNA ADAMIK-JÁSZÓ.¹⁴
- We provide examples of correct and improper rhetorical phenomena from award winning speeches and non-recognized entries as well.

1.3. Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the dissertation are based upon research results¹⁵ focusing on the text production skills of Generation Y and Generation Z students along with personal first hand experiences. gained from a/ the preparation of students for participation in the National Kossuth Competitions, b/ personal attendance at the competitions and listening to the given speeches, c/ participation at the *Rhetoric in Society, Society in Rhetoric* conferences, d/ the reading of the volumes of the *Rhetoric Then and Now* series and the presentation and publication of rhetorical analyses, e/ instruction and in-class experiences derived from teaching Rhetoric to college students.

Consequently, our inquiry aims to substantiate the following hypotheses:

1. Only few young orators develop and display an awareness of the rhetorical situation. Certain speakers do not identify their own or their audience's role in the given rhetorical situation, which results in the weakening of the quality (structure, style, efficiency etc.) of the given speech.
2. The structure of the given speech can fulfill argumentation¹⁶ functions if the given orator identifies the main aspects of the respective topic while making a conscious selection of speaking style and observing the respective structural guidelines. If such conditions are not met the rhetorical effort is impaired and loses its efficiency. Some speakers belonging to Generation Y and Generation Z can use the structure of the given speech to bolster their arguments.

¹⁴ KMR 496–8.

¹⁵ KÁDÁRNÉ FÜLÖP 1990; MOLNÁR 1996, 2000, 2009; HORVÁTH 1998; PÁLA 2003; FORGÁCS 2004; VERBÁSZI 2005; VALLENT 2008, NAGY ZS. 2009a, 2009b; MAJOR 2011a, 2011b; SIMON 2014; SZILASSY 2014.

¹⁶ KMR 303.

3. Speeches of today's youth include both internal and external arguments in addition to special and general argumentation sources. Due to the given educational and family background frequent allusions or references are made to professional experts and well-known maxims while the arguments are derived from current conditions and relations. Although such arguments mostly contain data and statements (the components of TOULMIN'S argumentation model), there is no logical connection between such items. Most argumentation errors occur due to improper linguistic expression of cognitive operations.
4. In order to achieve a sense of presence young speakers primarily resort to linguistic images (most frequently verbal images and analogies) and configurations, while other options are rarely taken.
5. The selected style register is generally appropriate and relevant to the given rhetorical situation (the principle of suitability or compatibility) and is consistently maintained throughout the speech. Sometimes codes can be mixed while the speakers generally observe grammatical rules. Sentence structure follows current or student vernacular patterns.
6. Young speakers are aware of important personal and social values while presenting and arguing for them in their speeches.

2. The rhetorical situation in the oratory of the representatives of Generation Y and Generation Z

The objective of this chapter is either the confirmation or discarding of the first hypothesis. Consequently, with special emphasis on LLOYD BITZER and his model¹⁷, we provide a survey of the interpretation of the rhetorical situation in classic and modern Rhetoric. We have also examined and sought evidence whether young speakers between age 18-30 took BITZER'S prioritised elements: 1. *exigence*, 2. *audience*, 3. *constraint* into consideration. This inquiry focused on the full research sample, that is, the 636 speeches found in the 15 volumes of the RTN series.

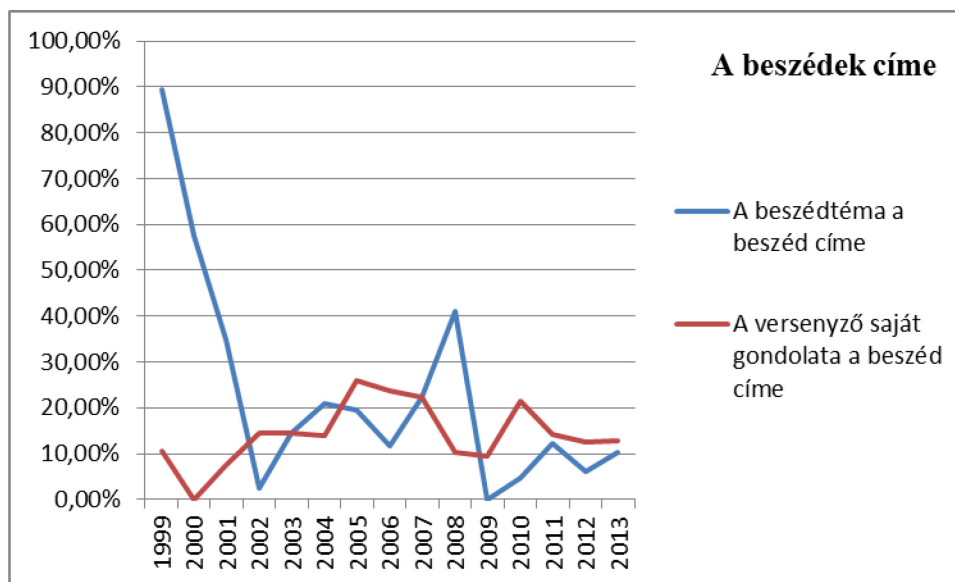
We have concluded that the speech topics offered by the organisers encouraged several Hungarian youths living in the Carpathian Basin to actively address exigencies, problems, and threats. Subsequently they wrote speeches reflecting a commitment to seeking a

¹⁷ BITZER 1968: 1. 5–6.

solution and convincing their audience able to promote and holding a stake in the respective change. *One of the speeches delivered at the ninth competition:* titled “Do private causes concern the public?”¹⁸ inspired by a quote from György Bálint’s “The Death of the Private Cause:” “Private cause quietly passed away in the midst of the increasing din of the world” András Miklós explored the demise of personal concern or commitment. He used the following rhetorical options: *Title:* Do private causes concern the public? *Rhetorical situation:* a real context or situation (here and now): “Dear members of the judging panel, dear audience, dear fellow competitors!” *Exigence:* “everyone’s private concern is in danger/ we should think about this pressing issue,” *Constraint:* “We stopped here in our constant rushing about, in the increasing din of the world, to dedicate a little time for our internal life, because our internal life, or soul is our greatest private concern, Does it help any to speak about it? It certainly does.”

Figure Two demonstrates the exigencies implied in the topics of the given speeches as shown in the title of the entries in the first three competitions. Subsequently, this phenomenon tends to decrease, but with the exception of the eleventh competition in 2009 it was applicable to all events.

Figure 2
The titles of orations

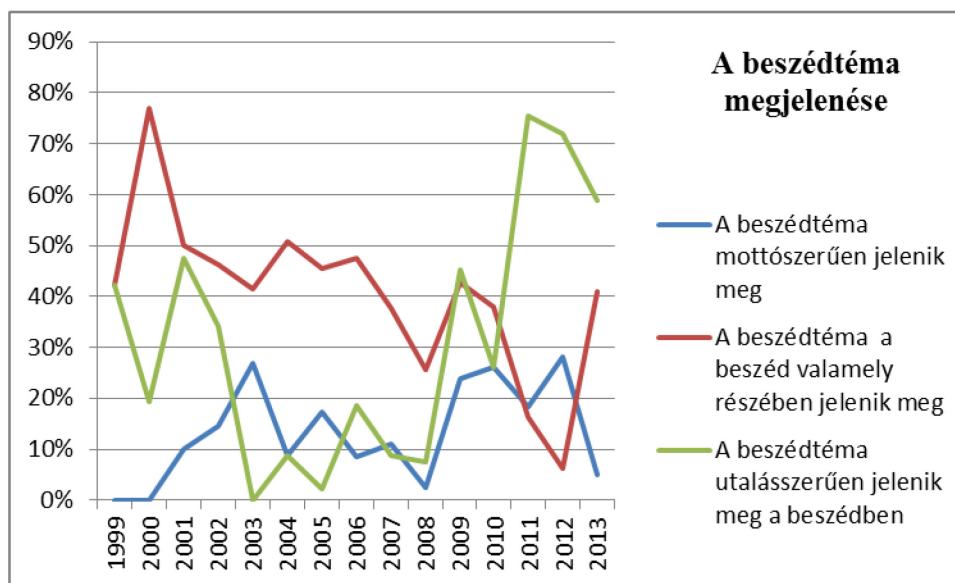


¹⁸ RTN 2008: 183–4

Titles of orations, the topic and titles of speeches, the title of the given speech is the own thought of the competition entrant

While in the beginning the given topics were expressly included in the speeches, as of 2009 and shown by *Figure 3* the titles are primarily referred to or implied.

Figure 3
The means of the appearance of the speech topic in the orations



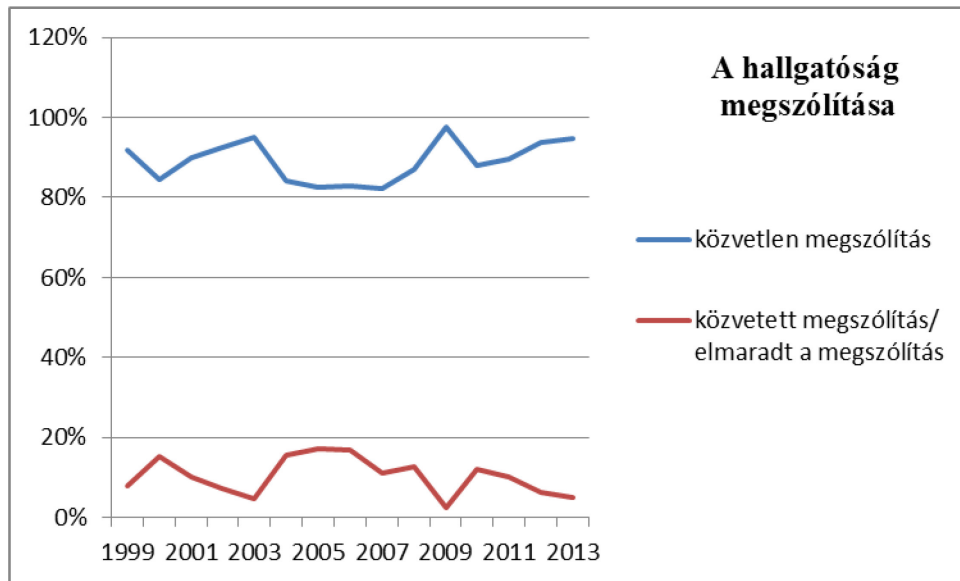
The appearance of the speech topic, the speech topic appears in a motto form, the speech topic is expressed in certain parts of the speech, the speech topic is implied in the speech

We could also find that certain speakers ignored the topic and wrote an irrelevant speech.

In the rhetorical process the speaker and the **audience** are inseparable, mutually presuppose each other while their importance is based on a shared definitional reference point. *Figure 4* shows that 80% of the entrants in the 15 competitions directly addressed their audience. In the sixth and eighth competitions the rate of participants not addressing, or directly engaging the audience increased. Since the experts analysing the given speeches raised concerns "as no rhetorical speech can be imagined without audience,"¹⁹ it is likely that the number of entrants omitting a direct address, or consciously choosing such an approach decreased. The direct address is most often found at the beginning of the given texts.

¹⁹ SZIKSZAINÉ NAGY, RTN 2009: 136.

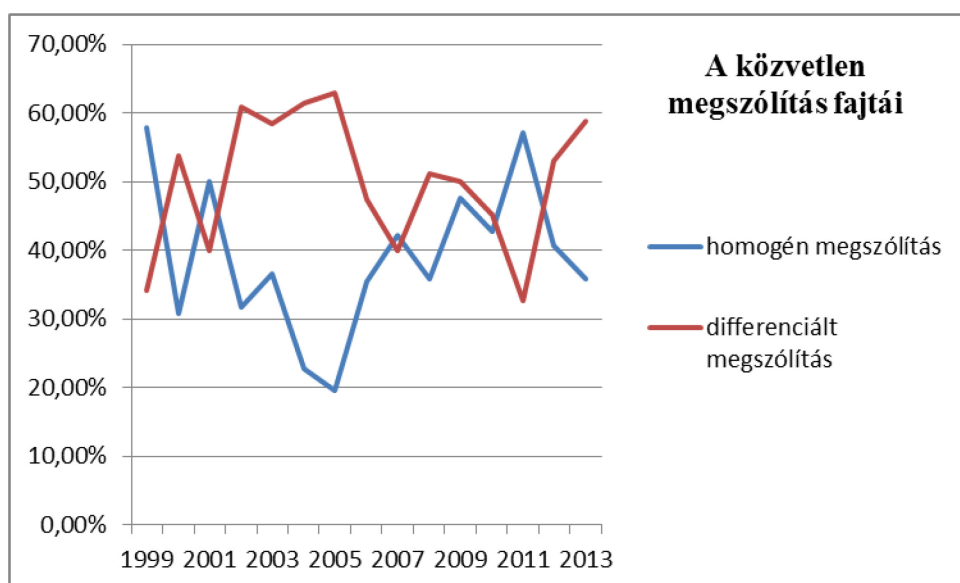
Figure 4
Means of addressing the audience in the orations



Addressing the audience, direct address, indirect or no address

Speakers directly addressing the audience used two types of invocation: homogeneous or differentiated (*Figure 5*). With the exception of three competitions the participants preferred the differentiated address according to gender or occupation to its homogeneous counterpart.

Figure 5
Types of direct invocation in the orations



The types of direct invocation, homogeneous invocation, differentiated invocation

We concluded that the most frequently occurring differentiated (Dear/Esteemed Ladies and Gentlemen!) and homogeneous (Dear/Esteemed Audience!) invocations were relevant to the given situation, but provided little help for the receiver to identify the respective situational roles. The invocations were grouped into three categories according to relevance and compatibility: 1. relevant, compatible address, 2. irrelevant/incompatible address, 3. irregular address. We were able to identify several examples for all three types, but the most addresses proved relevant and compatible.

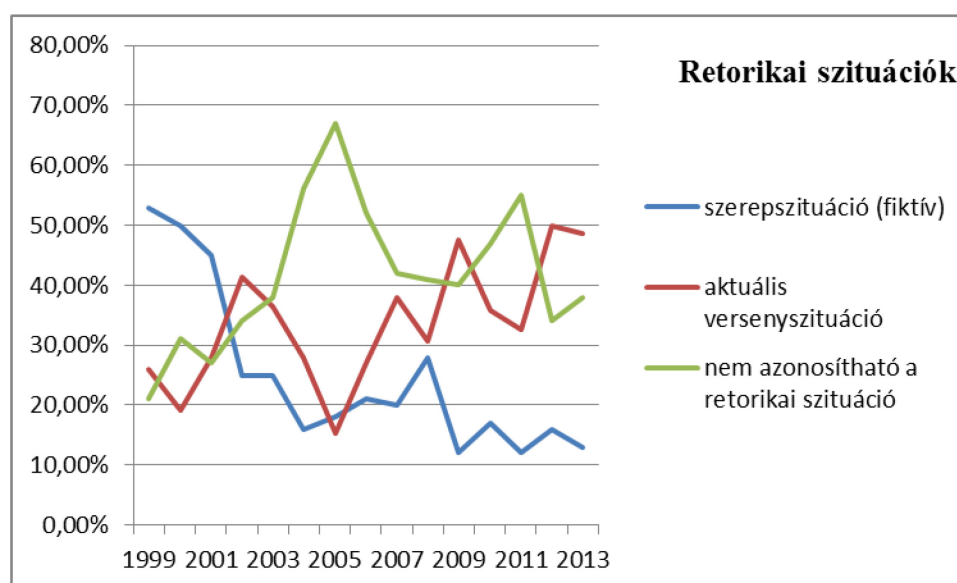
Since the organisers did not provide all details of the total **rhetorical situation**, competitors could select the potential audience of their mandatory speeches. As of 2002 the entrants could select a unique situation, which had to be described before the beginning of the respective speech. Since 2011 competitors have been asked to determine the type of their speech (advisory, introductory, legal) and the situation²⁰, both for the panel and the audience as well. However, only a few competitors complied. Since the 6th competition, with the exception of the 10th event, the rate of entrants describing the rhetorical situation has been under 20%. *Figure 6* describing the types of rhetorical situations illustrates that almost one half of the speeches (45-52.6%) held at the first three rhetorical competitions were delivered in a role playing, fictitious, or "artificial context".²¹ The number of competitors preferring role play contexts decreased after 2001, with the exception of the 8th (2006) and 10th (2008) event, while the number of speakers aiming their speech at the actually present audience increased after 2002. It is noteworthy and shocking as well that 38-67% of the speakers at more than half (53.3%) of the competitions did not connect their speeches to a specific occasion, the rhetorical situation was not specified, thus no elements of the latter could be identified.

²⁰ Rhetorical practices of the antique period (ethopoiia and pathopoiia) encouraged future orators to place themselves in the shoes of others and enable their audience to assume the requested identity (ACZÉL, RTN 2012: 201.)

²¹ PETHŐ RTN 2006: 165.

Figure 6

The types and rates of occurrence of the given rhetorical situations at the oratorical competitions



Rhetorical situations role situation (fictitious), actual competition situation, non-identifiable rhetorical situation

According to LLOYD BITZER the third component of the rhetorical situation is the **constraint**. Constraints fall into two categories: 1. those created and directed by the method of the speaker (considered intra-rhetorical evidence by Aristotle), 2. those that can increase efficiency (considered extra-rhetorical evidence by Aristotle).²² We accept the identification of the types of constraints with intra and extra-rhetorical evidence and the respective detailed analysis and relevant results will be introduced in Chapter 4 focusing on argumentation techniques.

Our starting premise held that “the given speech emerges from the rhetorical situation and cause”²³. We have previously concluded certain young speakers did not identify the rhetorical situation. Moreover, a section of participants did not raise the topic to the level of the cause. Consequently, while the speech was delivered, it could not be analyzed according to the rules of rhetoric.

²² BITZER 1968. 1: 6–8; cf. RL 1032.

²³ KMR 78.

2.1. Thesis One

We have concluded that our first hypothesis can be converted into a thesis: certain orators belonging to Generation Y and Generation Z did not develop an awareness of the elements of the rhetorical situation. These speakers did not identify or outline their own or their audience's role in the rhetorical situation. Therefore the quality (structure, style, and effectiveness etc, of speech) was weakened.

3. Structural analysis of the oratory of contemporary Hungarian youth

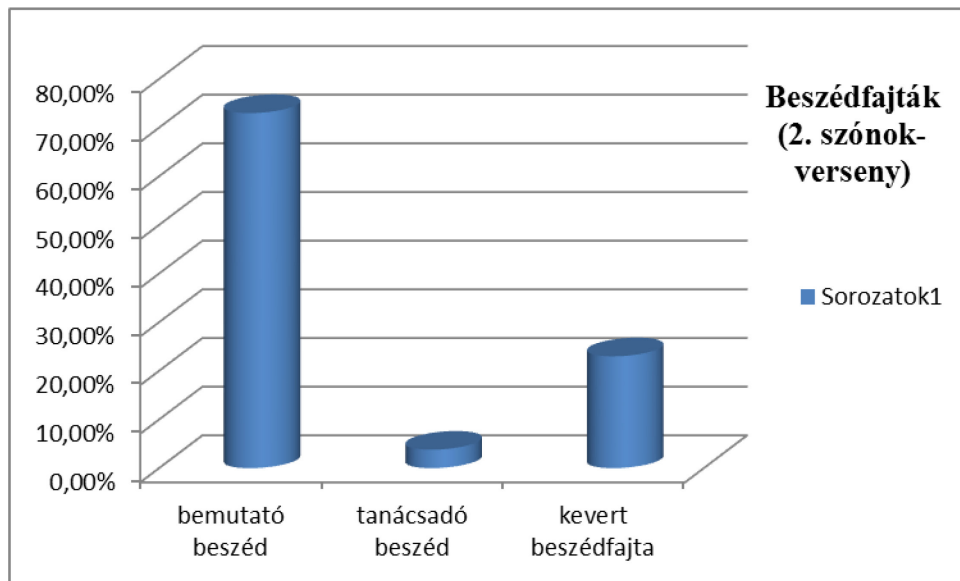
This chapter describes the inquiry aiming at substantiating or discarding Hypothesis Two. According to the analysis introduced in the previous chapter during the 1-5th, 9-12th, and 14-15th competitions most entrants conveyed a message based on a specific rhetorical situation. This was the reason for choosing the speeches delivered at the 2d, 9th, 12th, and 15th competitions for structural analysis. Moreover, we examined the structure of the speeches winning the best structure award of the Chronos Publishers²⁴. The inquiry focused on 154 speeches, that is 24% of the total sample. As part of the examination we surveyed the connection between rhetoric and speech editing, the ethical aspects of the specific causes and the types of speeches identified by rhetorical experts. The specific speech topics treated at selected competitions were identified according to ethical aspects, followed by the examination of the types of speeches conveying the respective message. Our findings are summarised in *Figures 7-10*.

²⁴ Lilla Nóra Kiss, RTN 2012; Márton Gergely Rétvári, RTN 2013; Pál Balázs Juhász, RTN 2014.

Figure 7

Types of speeches delivered at the second oratorical competition

(Subject: Did books make our world better?)

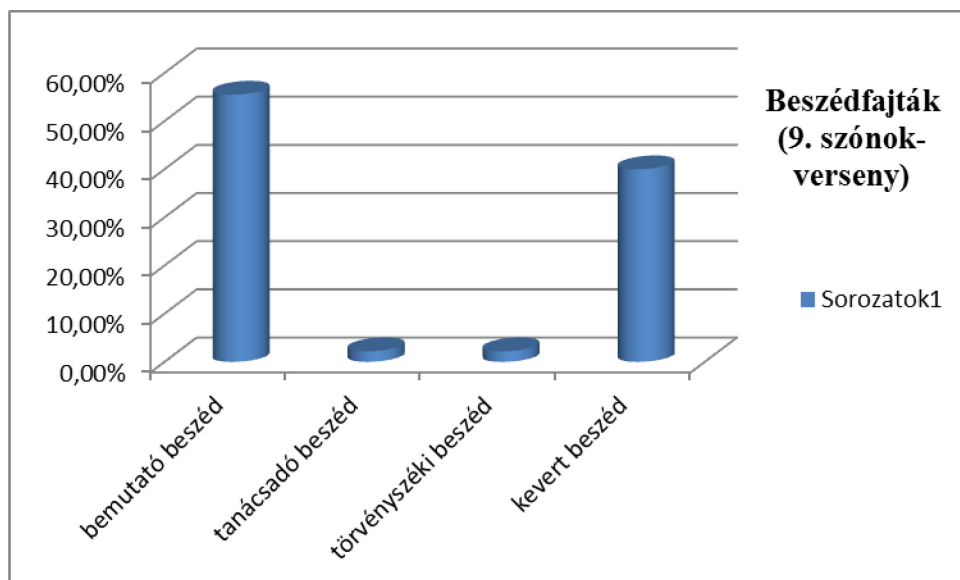


Types of speeches (2d. oratorical competition), Series 1, introductory speech, advisory speech, mixed type of speech.

Figure 8

Types of speeches at the 9th oratorical competition

Subject: Do private causes concern the public?)

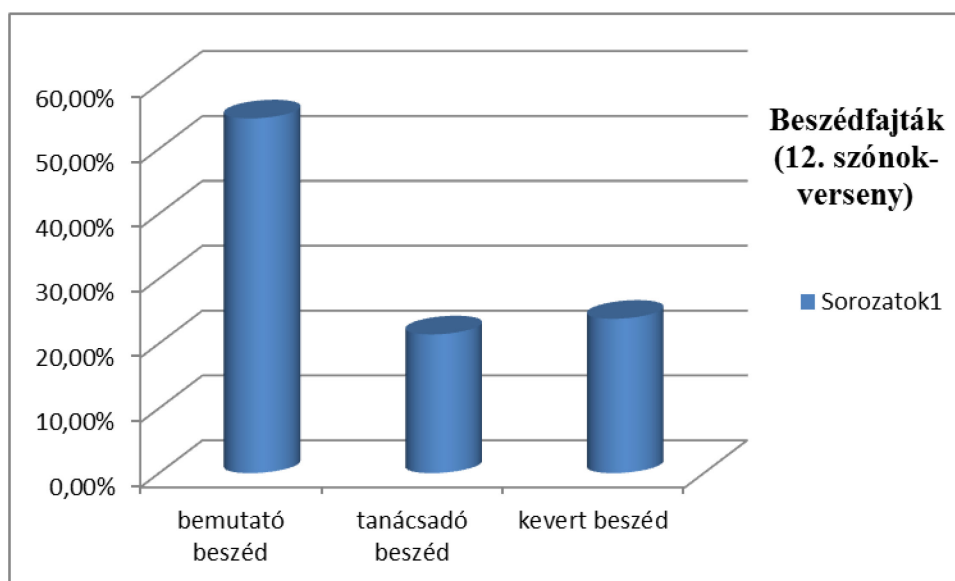


Types of speech (9th oratorical competition),
Series1 introductory speech, advisory speech, legal speech, mixed type of speech

Figure 9

Types of speech at the twelfth oratorical competition)

(Subject: Where is the limit for empathy, patience, and self-effacement?)



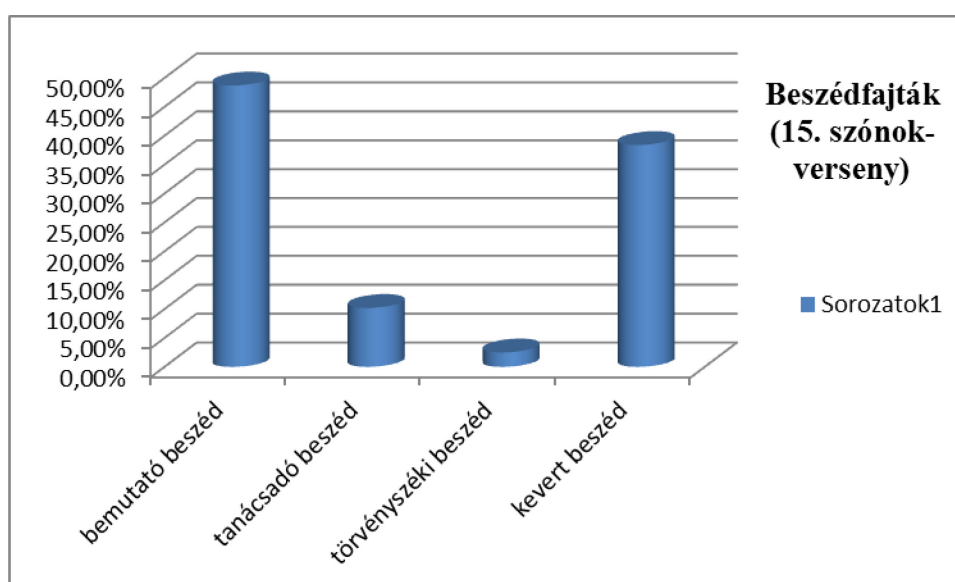
Types of speech (12th oratorical competition)

Series 1, introductory speech, advisory speech, mixed type of speech

Figure 10

Types of speech at the 15th oratorical competition

(Subject: Are we prisoners of a web-based world?)



Types of speech at the 15th oratorical competition

Series 1, introductory speech, advisory speech, legal speech, mixed type of speech

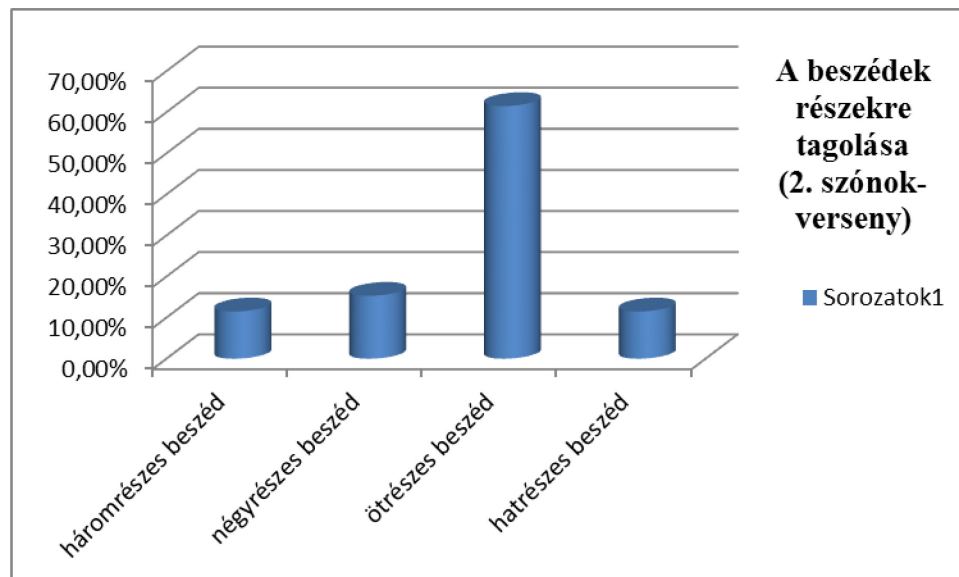
We can conclude that today's youth select the following types of speech at the rhetorical competitions in the order of frequency: 1. introductory speech 2. introductory and advisory (mixed) speech 3. advisory speech, 4. legal or court speech.

The speeches under exploration were divided into sections according to the criteria of classic oratory. After the dissection we counted the speech parts according to each competition and each entry. The respective statistical results are illustrated by *Figures 11-14*.

Figure 11

The number of the components of speeches published in 2001 in the RTN series

(Subject: Did books make the world better?)



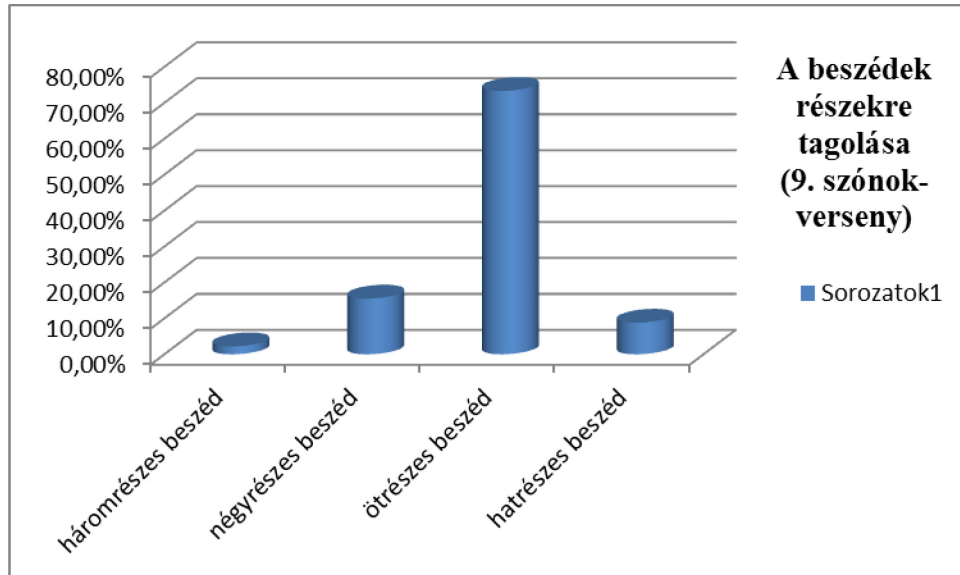
The division of speeches into components Series1 three part speech, four part speech five part speech, six part speech

Figure 11 suggests that 61.5% of speeches could be divided into 5 parts including introduction, exposition, thesis, evidence, conclusion. The respective speeches are primarily of introductory nature.

Figure 12

The number of the components of speeches published in 2008 in the RTN series

(Subject: Do private causes concern the public?)



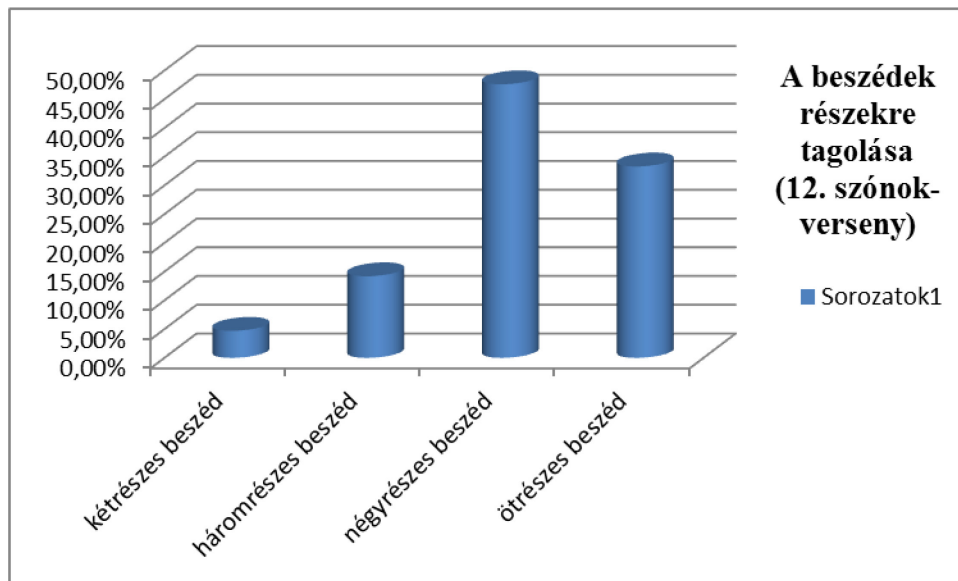
The division of speeches into components (9th rhetorical competition) Series 1 three part speech, four part speech five part speech, six part speech

Figure 12 suggests that 73% of speeches written for the 9th rhetorical competition could be divided into 5 parts including introduction, exposition, thesis, evidence, conclusion. The respective speeches are introductory and mixed (introductory and advisory) nature in 48-48%.

Figure 13

The number of the components of speeches published in 2011 in the RTN series

(Subject: Where is the limit for empathy, patience, and self-effacement?)



The division of speeches into components (12th rhetorical competition)

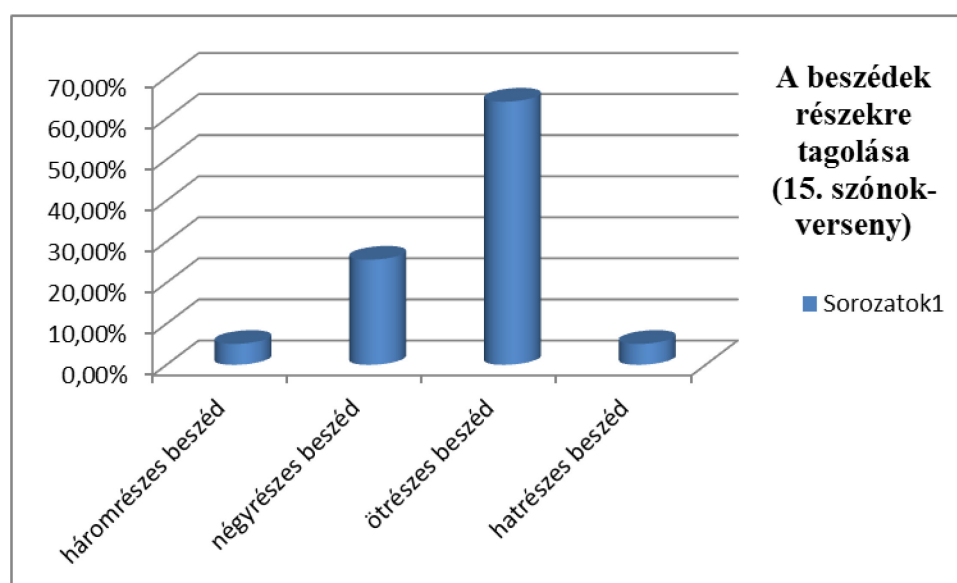
Series1 two part speech, three part speech, four part speech five part speech

Figure 13 suggests that 47.6 % of speeches written for the 12th rhetorical competition can be divided into four parts including introduction, exposition-evidence, thesis and conclusion. Most of the four part speeches are introductory.

Figure 14

The number of the components of speeches published in 2014 in the RTN series

(Subject: Are we imprisoned by the web?)



The division of speeches into components (15th rhetorical competition)

Series 1, three part speech, four part speech five part speech, six part speech

Figure 14 suggests that 64% of the speeches written for the 15th rhetorical competition could be divided into 5 parts including introduction, exposition, thesis, evidence, and conclusion. Most of the five part speeches are of the introductory nature.

Consequently, most of the speeches delivered at the four rhetorical competitions could be divided into five parts. The general structure included the following elements: introduction, exposition, thesis, evidence, conclusion. Furthermore, we found examples of noteworthy magnitude in case of four part speeches with a typical structure of introduction, exposition/evidence, thesis, conclusion. The structure of speeches or competition entries covers a broad scale. We found well-structured, coherent texts which were easy to follow and understand. The division of topics was rather rare. Those, however, applying such technique, delivered a well-planned, logically arranged speech. At the other end of the scale certain speeches were equivalent to a stream of thought, proved hard to follow and required several readings for understanding. (The audience, however, hears the given speeches only once!) Several competitors addressed their audience at the beginning of a new speech component in order to direct the listener's attention. While we surmised that only a few people would resort to narration, our analysis refuted this hypothesis. Moreover,

several narrations melted into other speech components frustrating any effort at distinction according to the classic rules of rhetoric. Only a few young orators adhered to the optimal arrangement of arguments. In case of well-framed speeches the orator placed the most important message at the beginning and at the end. In several speeches the thesis was found close to or in the concluding section.

3.1. Thesis Two

It was concluded that our second hypothesis can be converted into a thesis holding that a group of speakers belonging to Generation Y and Z used the structure of the speech as an argument. Consequently the respective speeches reflected a conscious awareness of the structure of speeches as the speaker identified the main features of the given cause, selected the appropriate type of speech, observed the rules of arrangement and the appropriate arrangement of structural components, especially that of arguments. Speakers lacking a conscious awareness of the importance of structuring did not produce a speech reflecting such criteria and could not use the structure of the speech in the argumentation process.

4. The analysis of argumentation and style in the oratories of Generation Y and Generation Z speakers

This chapter contains the substantiation of our third and sixth hypotheses. The analysis is expanded to competition entries receiving multiple awards. Consequently we examined 62 speeches held by 26 orators along with 7 previously analyzed speeches receiving distinction. While the analysis of these speeches was published in the *Rhetoric Then and Now* series, we included reworked versions in the dissertation. The 69 speeches subjected to examination amount to 10,8% of the total textual sample. We surmised that the prize winning orations provide a critical mass of adequate quantity and quality for the comprehensive and complex examination.

We explored the use of internal and external arguments in convincing the audience. We concluded the proportion of internal arguments was greater than that of the external ones. Each orator resorted to internal arguments and the most frequently used external arguments included maxims or statements from highly prestigious persons, less often statistics or laws. The external arguments led to conclusions concerning the educational background and creativity of the speakers as prerequisites for finding the cause-related

evidence outside the rhetorical context. In case of special argument sources the good-bad, useful-harmful conceptual dyads were discernible. This was expected since the orators selected the introductory and mixed (introductory and advisory) types for influencing their audience. The argumentation process of Generation Y and Generation Z is unique and determined by the era they live in, the place they come from and actually live along with such other factors as family and community. While most young speakers based their arguments on the circumstances and conditions, such premises can be easily refuted. Frequent references were made to famous and lesser known prestigious persons of the past and present. Furthermore, virtually all speeches made by orators representing the Hungarian speaking communities accross the border contained expressed references to the respective minority status. Several speakers made their presentation too personal via references to their partners, family members, or emotions thereby advancing their relationship issues or feelings to the level of a cause. While numerous entries could be considered a form of confession, by itself not meeting the criteria of a rhetorical speech, that is focusing on public concerns, based upon CHAÏM PERELMAN's expanded audience model they were accepted. The model holds that the audience could be the speaker himself or herself, implying that he or she wants to convince himself or herself to support or take a position on a certain cause. Therefore, confessional entries containing arguments were found adequate to meet competition criteria.

The argumentation process was examined according to STEPHEN TOULMIN's model²⁵ (*data, substantiation, reinforcement, qualification, refutations, conclusion*). Our research showed that the argumentation effort included the mandatory components (*data, substantiation, conclusion*) while most frequently *reinforcement* represented the optional elements, as qualification, or refutation were hardly discernible. One such example is the speech held by Márton Gergely Rétvári, which contained the required data, conclusion, substantiation, and reinforcement.

In one of the chapters of PERELMAN's *New Rhetoric* ²⁶ titled "The Starting Point of Argumentation" he forwards the principle of presentness. Accordingly speakers have to lend presence to things or entities spatially and temporally distant from the audience via images and metaphors. "Each rhetorical formation contains metaphors, verbal or thought images established by an identical mental operation facilitating the argumentative

²⁵ KMR 241.

²⁶ PERELMAN 1958.

functions of metaphors.²⁷ A wide variety of stylistic devices were used in the speeches delivered at the competition. The speech held by Anna Balogh²⁸ did not utilize any tools facilitating presence and even its style is inappropriate addressing the listeners as Dear Mourners!²⁹ Furthermore, the oration held by Csilla Kinga Székely representing the Géza Bárczi Foundation which was awarded by a special prize³⁰, can be considered a figurative speech. We could also conclude that the young speakers resorted to devices acquired since elementary school including metaphors: "seeding the spirit"³¹, personification: "I could vail for those for whom culture never shed a tear."³² As far as rhetorical forms are concerned contrasts are frequently deployed: "If I wanted to be trendy and stylish, I would simply declare that such things are out of style or obsolete³³." along with the the simile: "Without women like these the world would be as barren as a beggar without music"³⁴ It must be underlined that metaphors and rhetorical forms could improve only those speeches which included clear, well-thought out ideas and no stylistical device could enliven a speech which lacked thoroughness and reasoning. Certain speeches could clearly be allocated into a given category as László Száraz³⁵ represented the simple speech, Zsolt Lokodi³⁶ delivered a mid-style oration, Attila Bugledich³⁷ held a lofty speech, and the mixed style could be discerned in the competition entry of Pál Balázs Juhász³⁸. The style of the speakers was generally compatible with the situation. This is primarily applicable for those speakers who concretized the rhetorical situation and took into consideration such conditions as the relationship between the audience and the speaker, or the artificial context. While most speeches were grammatically and stilistically acceptable certain errors (mixing up suffixes, verbosity, use of articles) occurred. Sporadic problems were found with spelling, orthography, punctuation, and the use of quotations as well. Speakers used a wide variety of syntax too. Speakers using long, complex, and unclear sentences were not clearly understandable, and those aware of the single opportunity to influence their

²⁷ A. JÁSZÓ, RTN 2011: 68.

²⁸ RTN 2013: 165–6.

²⁹ RTN 2001: 120–1

³⁰. RTN 2011: 165–6.

³¹ RTN 2001: 101.

³² RTN 2001: 101.

³³ RTN 2003: 110.

³⁴ RTN 2003: 114..

³⁵ RTN 2000: 2001–2; 2003: 98–9. (prize winning speech); 2004: 97–8. (prize winning speech); 2005: 163–4. (prize winning speech)

³⁶ RTN 2001: 101–2. (prize winning speech); 2002: 177–9; 2003: 114–5. (prize winning speech)

³⁷ RTN 2000: 111–4

³⁸ RTN 2014: 129–130

audience resorted to short expressive statements. Some speeches contained so effective sentences that they were unwittingly committed to the audience's memory. A few speakers resorted to free verse or rhyming statements to increase the rhetorical effect. We found that only those speakers delivered credible speeches who used a unique yet age appropriate vocabulary to convey their thoughts. One memorable and successful speech managed to combine contemporary youth slang with a normative mode of expression in a relevant topic ("The whole world is a collection of links including people and objects." Dániel Varró — Are we prisoners of the web-based world?) Young speakers displayed optimistic, mature and responsible attitude compared to their ages, freely expressed their opinions, criticism, and the speeches always had a positive message. Regardless of the topic of the speech the most highly appreciated features are knowledge, intellect, patriotism, love, faith, sincerity, tradition etc.

4.1. Thesis Three

The speeches of today's youth mostly contain both internal and external arguments. While maxims and prestige are the most frequently deployed external arguments, statistical data are rarely used despite a greater accessibility of such information than 25 years earlier. The arguments contain the obligatory components (*data, substantiation, conclusion*) optional items include *reinforcement*, while *qualification* or *refutation* are rarely discernible. The speeches include both special and general argument sources. Special argument sources include such conceptual dyads as good-bad, useful-harmful, while the right-not right conceptual pair is not as frequently found. This is due to the number of the selected speech types. The most frequently used argument sources include the circumstances and conditions (persons/things) and the relations (cause-effect, opposition). Comparisons are rarely used, and rhetorical definitions are sporadic. Most argumentation errors are caused by the expression of thoughts.

4.2. Thesis Four

Young speakers used linguistic forms, narratives, descriptions, and examples to create a sense of presence. Metaphors and similes are favourite rhetorical tools along with the opposition or contrast as a lexical form. Among the less frequently used devices we could mention the analogy, the complex and further developed image, the allegory, metonymy, and synesthesia.

4.3. Thesis Five

The chosen style register generally is relevant to the given situation, thus the speakers consistently adhere to the principle of compatibility. Yet, there are certain exceptions as deliberate and unwitting commingling of codes were discerned as well. Deliberate code mixing took place in order to promote the effectiveness or reception of the speech. The speeches are grammatically correct, the vocabulary reflects the current student vernacular. The short sentences with strongly expressive content can be easily committed to the audience's memory virtually immediately.

4.4. Thesis Six

Young orators are aware of crucial personal and social values which they identify with and argue for in their speeches.

5. A further look and summary

We can conclude that speeches held by today's youth can be analyzed according to the criteria of classic rhetoric including the types of oration and the tasks of the orator. However, we identified entries, which partially reflected adherence to such rhetorical rules or not at all. The causes of such shortcomings include the inability to classify the given speech, the lack of certain speech components, or a presentation and sequence of the latter not meeting the classic requirements. In certain speeches the orators did not raise the topic of the speech to the level of cause, did not express their position or point of view, did not reflect an awareness of the rhetorical situation. Consequently, the audience and the subject of their persuasive attempt was not clear.

We believe that the rhetorical competence of today's youth has to be improved in the following areas: the advancement of the topic to the level of cause, the presentation of the exigency, the selection of the appropriate type of speech, the identification and implementation of the rhetorical situation, the elaboration and positioning of the thesis, familiarity with argument sources and arguments, the purposeful arrangement of arguments, and the linguistic expression of thought processes.

In light of the findings we make the following recommendations:

- Teacher training curricula should include a mandatory introductory course on **logic and argumentation**. Presently such courses are not included in most sample curricula.

- All teachers in all classes should **provide an example** to follow for accurate expression of thoughts meeting relevant norms of written proficiency. We are in agreement with KATALIN EDIT MOLNÁR arguing that written composition can be an ideal tool for the development of various thinking operations and skills.³⁹ Consequently we support her position concerning the development of a **composition program** surpassing disciplinary and subject limits.
- Written composition competence and argumentation techniques should be **continuously developed** throughout one's studies including elementary, secondary, and higher education.
- Within the framework of all day schools and in secondary schools as well **extracurricular programs** and in higher education institutions **elective composition courses** should be implemented. Participating students should practice written composition regarding a real need, i.e. arguing for a certain position.
- Students should be taught to develop **greater awareness** and **self-control** regarding the rules of written composition.

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³⁹ MOLNÁR 2001: 226.

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