

Aktualne kierunki w badaniach retorycznych

Current developments in rhetorical studies

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SPRAWOZDANIE / REPORT

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**Sprawozdanie/Report: The RHEFINE Conference
(13.10.2022, University of Warsaw/online)**

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Sprawozdanie/Report: The RHEFINE Conference (13.10.2022, University of Warsaw/online)

The two-year project „RHEFINE – Rhetoric for Innovative Education” was summed up by the international scientific conference on October 13, 2022. The event, organized in the prestigious Hall of the Senate of the University of Warsaw, in the Kazimeirzowski Palace, gathered several dozen researchers and practitioners of rhetoric from Poland and European countries. RHEFINE was implemented as part of the EU strategic partnership in higher education KA2 Erasmus+ and was coordinated by the Center for Applied Rhetoric (University of Warsaw, Poland). Its partners were: the Department of Theoretical and Applied Phonetics (University of Zagreb, Croatia) and the Institute of Rhetoric and Communication (Bulgaria).

The project’s activities were targeted at students, PhD students, academics and researchers and it has been focused on the idea of reforming the academic teaching of rhetoric with the following steps:

- providing a better framework for teaching and learning rhetoric, e.g. new curricula better adapted to the needs of students and the job market and the introduction of new teaching methods;
- closing skills gaps and increasing students’ competences, developing evidence- and research-based learning, creating training opportunities for such skills as analysis and problem solving, teamwork, science communication, conflict management,
- improving the competences of academic teachers: creating a space for discussion, presenting new solutions and exchanging experiences, training in open science.

The Academic Days of Rhetoric on October 13-14 were the main element of the conference that created an opportunity to present the results of the project. The event was inaugurated by Agnieszka Budzyńska-Daca, the leader of the Polish researchers’ team. She greeted the participants and announced the agenda of the meeting. Then she introduced Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Polish Studies, Katarzyna Drózdź-Łuszczuk, who also greeted the participants of the conference, congratulated the project team and expressed appreciation for the effective international cooperation in the difficult, pandemic conditions. An adequate

illustration of that was the fact that due to further spreading infections, some participants were forced to resign from participating in the event, while others participated in the conference remotely.

The meeting was opened by Agnieszka Szurek, who talked about the objectives of the project and the related challenges, as well as innovations in teaching rhetoric and the effects of the project. She thanked the students and doctoral students for their involvement in the project.

The session titled „Methods of Rhetorical Criticism; Rhetorical Research and Didactics” was chaired jointly by Agnieszka Szurek and Diana Tomić (University of Zagreb), who concluded: „We don’t know much each other, about how we do rhetoric and teach it – this project helps us to learn how to communicate even in tough circumstances like earthquakes in Croatia, pandemic, we live in constant change”.

Then Anna Bendrat from Marie Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin presented on the topic „From pathos to affect – rhetorical approaches to a cultural analysis of emotion”, and, using the example of various content, illustrated how teaching rhetoric is teaching emotions and teaching communication practice at the same time. Examples ranged from classic messages from ancient times to modern social media content like Tik-Tok.

In the next part of the conference, Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz gave a speech „University of Warsaw, Streamlined rhetoric in academic teaching”, and Agnieszka Szurek talked about the final effects of the RHEFINE project: the online rhetoric pilot course and the developed programs of first and second degree studies, as well as about the planned books: „Methods of Rhetorical Criticism”, „Rhetoric of Debate”, „Rhetorical Research and Didactics”. The latter contains chapters illustrated with examples of essays written, reviewed and commented on by students. All the books are planned to be published in open access.

Diana Tomić, in cooperation with Elenmari Pletikos Olof (University of Zagreb), gave a presentation entitled „The importance of delivery practice in the contemporary oratory: Living on the impromptu public speaking edge”. The researcher started with a provocative question: „Why are we so lazy?” and presented various ways of delivering speeches, proving that rhetoric applies to everything that is around us.

In the session „Students’ Research Teams, Curricula”, chaired by Ewa Modrzejewska (University of Warsaw), the milestones of the RHEFINE project were presented. Ewa Modrzejewska and Agnieszka Budzyńska-Daca presented the paper „Rhetoric curricula at University level” and briefly talked about the online RHEFINE workshops; discussed the way of working and the different approaches in the multicultural environment of the project. After the workshops, students sent

written analysis of selected speeches – the best ones will become the part of the aforementioned handbook.

Then Marta Kobylska (University of Rzeszów) presented a report written together with Agnieszka Kampka (SGGW) on an international survey among researchers and practitioners of rhetoric on contemporary rhetorical theories, names and the canon of teaching rhetoric. Meanwhile, Iglia Kassabova from Sofia University in Bulgaria, in her paper „Good practices during the education on rhetoric at Sofia University” talked about her experiences with teaching rhetoric and including such techniques as role-playing and games.

After these papers, a discussion on unifying the rhetoric curriculum and introducing it to the entire educational path flared up. There were many ideas on how to incorporate rhetoric as a practical skill in the teaching system, and there was a consensus that rhetoric teaching must include three perspectives: art, techne and scientia. Meanwhile, Diana Tomić shared her experiences with the opposite, sad circumstance: the closure of the rhetoric course at her university.

In the next session, the following speeches were presented: Elżbieta Pawlak-Hejno (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin) on „Rhetoric and crowdfunding – a teacher’s perspective”, Ivanka Marovdieva from Sofia University on „Rhetorical, media and business features of podcasts” and Olena Synchak (Ukrainian Catholic University) on „Case studies as a method of teaching theories of rhetoric in the 20th and 21st centuries”.

In the last panel „Rhetoric of Debate”, chaired by Agnieszka Budzyńska-Daca, and Kinga Rogowska (PhD student at the Centre for Applied Rhetoric) presented a paper entitled „How to assess debates in a rhetoric classroom?”. On October 14th, Kinga Rogowska, together with Anna M. Kielbiewska (University of Warsaw), conducted a practical rhetoric workshop for students and doctoral students, while they played rhetorical board games. They could also take part in an open lecture by Przemysław Kutnyj „How to be funny (and not ridiculous) in conversation”.

The two-day event, including the international scientific conference RHEFINE and the aforementioned workshops, lectures and accompanying events, was known as the Academic Days of Rhetoric. All the events were very popular among the academic community.

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