Rhetorical analysis
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Introduction

Rhetorical analysis is concerned with ways of finding and interpreting persuasive strategies in language. The language of politics particularly is in the focus of rhetorical analysts as it ‘is both the result of rhetorical creativity and the object of rhetorical analysis’ (Lunsford, Wilson & Eberly 2009, p. 433). Rhetoric and rhetorical analysis have always been an important skill or even art (**artis rhetorique**). In ancient Greece, rhetoric was viewed as a crucial discipline, the ‘queen of all subjects’ (Kienpointner 1995a). In his famous treatise,¹ Aristotle identified rhetoric as an essential part of the ethical discipline **politics** (Sloane 2001, p. 612). The art of rhetoric was practised in political settings and assemblies, as well as in public discussions in order to persuade audiences of certain political acts. Thus, there has always been a close relationship between rhetoric and politics: ‘All the major classical rhetorical scholars […] focused on politics as the “principal locus” for rhetoric and their rhetorical theory and practice were aimed at citizens as political agents’ (Rutten, van Belle & Gillaerts 2014, p. 4). The contrast between the philosophical paradigm and linguistic practice has also been an area of conflict. Over time, rhetoric gained a negative connotation in the form of ‘mere rhetoric’ meaning ‘empty words’, or even manipulative speech and propaganda (Kienpointner 2005). In the twentieth century, however, the occupation with rhetoric became increasingly scientific and new research traditions with multiple approaches developed.

Kienpointner (1995a) identifies two general theoretical perspectives on which rhetorical analysis typically draws:

- traditional or classical rhetoric approaches;
- approaches based on the **New rhetoric** or contemporary rhetoric.

These perspectives are often integrated with other analytic frameworks from different fields, such as philosophy, social sciences and especially linguistics (for example, Critical Discourse Studies [CDS], the Discourse Historical Approach [DHA] and politolinguistics).

In the following paragraphs, first, the traditional approaches to rhetorical analysis will be discussed with a focus on Aristotelian concepts, which were a basis for all later frameworks.
Then, contemporary approaches to rhetorical analysis are introduced and a more detailed overview of linguistic and discourse approaches is given. Thereafter, methods of analysing rhetorical devices are explored, such as logical structure analysis of argumentation, the semantics of arguments and fallacious argumentation. Finally, some figures of speech, especially metaphors, are sketched out in more detail.

**Traditional approaches to rhetorical analysis**

Traditional theoretical perspectives on rhetorical analysis are based on pre-modern concepts and ‘have conditioned more recent thinking about the nature of rhetoric’ (Zachry 2009, p. 68). In particular, they rely on Aristotelian notions, many of which remain valid and important today. Aristotle offered the first systematic theory aiming at exploring how persuasion works ‘by identifying and defining its constituent parts’ (Zachry 2009, p. 71). Working from a traditional perspective, many present-day rhetorical analysts especially in the North American tradition, draw on Aristotle’s rhetoric (Zachry 2009, p. 71).

According to Aristotle’s theory, there are three means (called proofs, ‘písteis’) by which a communicator persuades an audience: the character of the speaker or the source of communication (‘éthos’), the emotion of the person or people being persuaded (‘páthos’), or the arguments presented in a speech (‘lógos’) (Kienpointner 1995a). Following these basic categories, rhetorical analysis of political language is conducted to this day (Zachry 2009, p. 71).

Aristotle further developed a rhetorical theory of speech genres, which is based on the goals and subjects of speeches. Three types of oratory are distinguished: forensic (judicial), political (deliberative) and epideictic (demonstrative) speech (Reisigl 2008, p. 244; Zachry 2009, p. 68). Forensic rhetorical performances are concerned with the justness or unjustness of past actions, with the question of whether a past event is justifiable from a present point of view. Political or deliberative rhetorical acts deal with the question of whether ‘future political actions are useful or disadvantageous for the state’ (Kienpointner 1995a). The third type is about the question of whether the distinctive actions and behaviours of a person in the present should be praised or reprimanded. In rhetorical analysis, this typology of speech genres is useful ‘for making sense of communicative events’ in context (Zachry 2009, p. 71).

Aristotle and his followers also developed a framework along the lines of which communicative acts may be analysed. According to Kienpointner (1995a) this framework represents a set of five rules or ‘tasks’ of a speaker as well as stages of speech:

- finding arguments or invention (‘inventio’);
- structuring or arranging (‘dispositio’);
- formulation and style (‘elocutio’);
- memory (‘memoria’); and
- delivery (‘actio’).

The first category *invention* is about discovering the most important instrument of the art of rhetoric, the argument, in communications. Aristotle’s *invention* aims at providing a systematic way to discover arguments in certain ‘places’, which he calls ‘tópoi’; and he distinguishes 28 ‘common arguments’ (Forchtner 2014, p. 30; Lauer 2004, p. 19). Researchers differently interpreted what exactly Aristotle meant by ‘tópos’ and it has been described as both a ‘device to find arguments’ (Kienpointner 1995a) and a ‘warrant’ connecting arguments with conclusions (Kienpointner 1995a; Lauer 2004, p. 20). A more
detailed description of *topoi* as understood today will be given in the section Semantics of arguments (p. 252). *Disposition* is the structuring and arranging of a communicative act. Traditional rhetoric entails a fine-grained structuring quite similar to that known from composition: introduction, presentation of facts, argumentation and epilogue. The third element in the framework is about formulation and style (‘*elocutio*’) and includes the ‘virtues of style’ (Kienpointner 1995a) of linguistic expression: grammatical correctness, clarity, adequacy, brevity and ‘embellishment’ or ornaments of speech. *Memory* (‘*memoria*’) refers to the practice of communication, to reflection on the form of presentation and remembering of ideas for presentation. *Delivery* means the act of carrying out a communication and is thus concerned with the performance of a rhetor. With these so-called *canons*, Aristotle and his followers provided a stable and robust rhetorical genre theory, which is still considered to be important for rhetorical analysis.

Until the twentieth century, little changed about the general theory of rhetoric, even if extensive catalogues of concepts and categories were developed or adapted throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Rhetoric went out of fashion as a discipline and was ‘gradually reduced to a theory of style’ (Kienpointner 1995a). As mentioned earlier, in the twentieth century, with the linguistic turn in the humanities, interest in rhetoric as an important element of public discourse increased again.

### Contemporary rhetorical analysis

Zarefsky speaks of the chief responsibility of rhetoric today as being the ‘display of public reason’ and the justification of ‘contingent claims in the public forum’ (Zarefsky 2014, p. 49). Rhetoric constitutes a public or community by construing and negotiating ‘common bonds, [...] interests, experiences, and aspirations as consubstantial’ (Zarefsky 2014, p. 53). Contemporary approaches to rhetoric are strongly influenced by the work of Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca. Their *Traité de l’argumentation: La nouvelle rhétorique* (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 2004 [1969]) brought rhetoric as a heuristic tool back into academic discussion. They viewed rhetoric as a ‘theory of plausible argumentation’, as a valid alternative to strictly mathematical and logical approaches in the fields of ethical and political argumentation (Kienpointner 1995a). Rhetoric was re-established as ‘a sophisticated framework for analysing and thus making sense of how human beliefs and behaviours are shaped by patterns of communicative practices as well as by discrete communication events’ (Zachry 2009, p. 68). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca presented a comprehensive typology of argumentative schemes, which has been taken up and used in numerous fields of study and research (Kienpointner 2011, p. 512). Starting with Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s work, new developments in rhetoric were triggered and contributions were made by researchers such as Kenneth Burke (2004–2014), Michel Meyer (1994), Stephen Toulmin (2003) and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell (Campbell & Huxman 2009). Its aims are defined differently by these scholars, either as ‘a tool for identification’ or ‘a tool to enable our understanding of contextualized reasoning or argumentation’ and also ‘a tool to avoid violence and build community through a listening rhetoric’ (Rutten, van Belle & Gillaerts 2014, p. 4–5). The *Toulmin schema*, for example, tries to include all essential components of argumentation. Current approaches in the US and Canada are much influenced by Toulmin, especially the research programme known as *informal logic*. Informal logic looks at argumentation in everyday language. Argument schemes for reconstructing, assessing, criticising and construing arguments are developed within this framework (van Eemeren 2008, p. 4217; Hansen 2008). Approaches vary from those closer to formal logic (Johnson 2000) to those that take a more dialectical stance (Tindale
One of the most influential schools of argumentation research today is *Pragma-dialectics*, established by Frans van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst (1992). The aim of this approach is to create a link between formal dialectics and rhetoric, or more specifically ‘to provide a sound integration of both dialectics – the study of critical exchanges – and pragmatics – the study of language use in actual communication’ (van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2006, p. 1). What is pragmatic about this approach is that it is also influenced by ‘speech act theory, Grice’s logic of conversation, and discourse analysis’ (van Eemeren 2008, p. 4218). In this way, the pragma-dialectical method ‘enables the analyst of argumentative discourse to make a theoretically motivated reconstruction of the discourse’ and detect those elements applicable to critical assessment (van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2009, p. 1).

**Linguistic rhetorical analysis**

Meynet describes rhetorical analysis as an activity or field that belongs to linguistics ‘by reason of its object, even if it also works beyond the limits of the sentence; it also belongs to it by reasons of its method and its procedures’ (Meynet 2012, p. 23). It shares many characteristics with different textual analysis approaches within linguistics. Thus, rhetorical and linguistic analysis often go hand in hand. Even if there is no such thing as a ‘linguistic rhetoric’, there are various approaches within linguistic communication and argumentation research that investigate persuasive strategies used by communication participants. These research activities could be viewed as ‘linguistic rhetoric’ (Kindt 2008, p. 147). In the context of political language it is possible to speak of politolinguistics as proposed by Reisigl: ‘Politolinguistics theoretically relies on actual concepts in political science, as well as on rhetorical and discourse-analytical categories [...]’ (Reisigl 2008, p. 244). A thorough analysis of political language may benefit significantly from approaches connecting rhetoric, political science and linguistic discourse analysis (Wodak 2014a, p. 525). Rhetoric in politics today is much characterised by persuasiveness, because a democracy depends on agreements for decision-making processes. Thus, political discourse shaped by rhetoric has become an important field for rhetorical analysis. Because political decision-making processes are largely reliant on the willingness of people to agree, there is a strong preference for persuasive language. Most political interactions, as well as texts, are influenced by this preference and their lexis – as well as the structure of their speech acts – are formed by persuasive language (Klein 2009, p. 2113).

**Discursive approaches to rhetorical analysis**

Researchers, referring to their own work as ‘rhetorical criticism or rhetorical theory’, unfortunately often are not familiar with the multidisciplinary field Critical Discourse Studies (Eisenhart & Johnstone 2008, p. 14). Discourse-centred approaches – with their major exponents, Ruth Wodak (Wodak & Chilton 2005; Wodak & Meyer 2001; Wodak 2012), Paul Chilton and Christina Schäffner (2002), Teun van Dijk (2008), and Isabella and Norman Fairclough (2012) – combine the traditional modes of rhetorical criticism with the tools of linguistic analysis. The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), for instance, is a three-dimensional model connecting ‘formal, functional and content-related aspects of argumentation in an integrative framework’ (Reisigl 2014, p. 69). The DHA specifically stresses the importance of the historical dimension in the analysis of political discourse. In this way, a multi-perspective interpretation of text is possible and intertextual, interdiscursive, diachronic as well as synchronic links can be drawn. Texts are never isolated, but are parts...
of greater temporal and spatial nexuses. Discourses overlap, and texts and genres thus are of a hybrid nature. Therefore, the DHA ‘facilitates looking at latent power dynamics and the range of potential in agents’ (Forchtner, Krzyżanowski & Wodak 2013, p. 211). The DHA aims at bringing to mind the relationship between power and language and at producing ‘enlightenment and support emancipation’ (Wodak & Köhler 2010, 36–37; Forchtner 2011, p. 2). The DHA criticises political language, and there is a special focus on right-wing and populist rhetoric (Wodak & de Cillia 2007; Wodak & Köhler 2010; Wodak 2014b). Topics of specific discourses, discursive strategies and the linguistic means by which they are constructed are analysed within the following five heuristic categories (Wodak 2001, p. 93). A focus on nomination, for instance, reveals how social actors or events (anthroponyms, tropes, etc.) are linguistically constructed. Predication refers to strategies, which attribute negative or positive characteristics to the social actors identified in a text, for example, via certain figures of speech, such as euphemisms or dysphemisms. In a further step, argumentative strategies, which are used to justify, for example, predications, are identified. In this step, topoi and argumentation patterns/fallacies are evaluated. By looking for mitigation/intensification, ways of modifying utterances are detected. Furthermore, strategies of perspectivation are assessed – here, the point of view of a rhetor in the production of the communicative piece is of importance (Forchtner, Krzyżanowski & Wodak 2013, p. 211). The DHA is ‘particularly interested in the analysis of contents of argumentation schemes’ and ‘stresses the importance of mapping out sound or fallacious argumentation’ (Reisigl 2014, p. 69). The approaches described above have in common that they analyse specific devices of rhetoric, some of which will be described in more detail in the next sections.

**Analysing rhetorical devices**

Fairclough and Fairclough (2012, p. 17) define public discourse, especially political discourse, as ‘primarily argumentative discourse’. Hence, it makes sense that many rhetorical analyses focus on evaluating and critically assessing arguments. Argumentation schemes and typologies form a basis for carrying out argumentation analysis. They have been criticised (Öhlschläger 1979) and modified by more recent researchers (Manfred Kienpointner; Douglas Walton) and modern typologies also ‘try to improve standards of explicitness and demarcation and sometimes also incorporate normative aspects by asking critical questions on argumentative schemes’ (Kienpointner 1995a). Two main areas of argumentation analysis are generally conducted and briefly discussed in the following sections.

**Logical structure analysis of argumentation**

Formal structures underlying argumentation are omnipresent in everyday language and even more so in political arguments. To reconstruct the logical structure of arguments found in a discourse, so-called argumentation schemes are useful. The most basic structure of an argumentative utterance consists of a major premise and a conclusion that follows it and may look like this:

- **Major Premise:** A
  - *thus*
- **Conclusion:** B

(Posch 2014, p. 39)
In complex discourse, argument structures are often much less transparent, thus argument schemes were proposed to help identify and reconstruct structure to enable argument evaluation. For example, Walton and Hansen (2013, p. 79) propose the following argument scheme for the logical structure analysis of an argument from fairness:

Major Premise: If A treats B and C equally then A is fair (just).
Minor Premise: Action (policy) A treats B and C equally.
Conclusion: A should be carried out.

(A is an action, or in some instances a general policy for action. B and C are agents or groups of agents)

(Walton & Hansen 2013, p. 79)

Walton and Hansen demonstrate how this scheme works via the example of a text concerning a programme suggested for criminals in Ontario. This programme requires criminals to do community work. In a press conference, the politician Tim Hudak said: ‘We’re just asking the prisoners to do what every other hard-working Ontarian does – an honest day’s work instead of spending the day working out to become better criminals’ (Mackrael 2011). According to Walton and Hansen, this is an argument from fairness, because it suggests that criminals and citizens should be treated in the same way with respect to having to work (Walton & Hansen 2013, p. 79). With the argumentation scheme above, the argument can be broken down into the following structure:

Major Premise: If the work programme treats criminals and citizens equally, then the work programme is fair (just).
Minor Premise: The work programme treats criminals and citizens equally.
Conclusion: The work programme should be carried out.

The argument scheme as such does not automatically make a claim about how justified an argument is, or whether it is good or bad. It only identifies the structure underlying the argument. In order to assess an argument more profoundly theoreticians suggest asking critical questions about it.

In traditional logic, arguments that are not formally valid are generally viewed as fallacies. For everyday language, however, this strict distinction is not useful and therefore recent approaches evaluate fallacies differently by bearing in mind linguistic and communicative aspects. One basic assumption here is that even emotional appeals can be acceptable in certain circumstances and some traditional fallacies can be ‘re-evaluated as forms of presumptive reasoning’ (Kienpointner 1995a; Walton 1995). The important question in recent structure analysis is whether or not emotive language in arguments is acceptable and when. Macagno and Walton (2013, p. 5) consider emotive words ‘extremely effective instruments to direct and encourage certain attitudes and choices’ which makes ‘words’ key in rhetorical analysis: they describe and hide reality at the same time. What we name is equally important as what we omit. Thus, the focus of rhetorical analysis cannot be on the structure of arguments alone, as this is not sufficient to evaluate arguments as plausible or fallacious.

Semantics of arguments. Topics

Textual aspects of argumentation have to be examined closely, which can only be done if the meaning of ‘extra logical vocabulary’ is also considered (Kienpointner 2008, p. 711). An
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The analyst has to assess the actual meaning of the words used in the context of an argumentation, the ‘argumentative *topoi*’ (Kienpointner 2008, p. 710). *Topoi* (singular *topos*) are a concept frequently used in rhetorical analysis: ‘They are the content-related warrants or ‘conclusion rules’ connecting the argument or arguments with the conclusion, the claim. As such, ‘they justify the transition from the argument or arguments to the conclusion’ (Kienpointner 1992, p. 192). *Topoi* could be described as thought markers that lie behind the argument and indicate the route to a certain conclusion. *Topoi* are always connected to the context of an argumentation and they are likely to ‘proliferate according to the range of specific rhetorical situations for which arguments are necessary’ (Klein 2014, p. 133). Lists of frequent *topoi* are a background for analysing typical content-related argumentation schemes, even if they are ‘incomplete and not always disjunctive’ (Wodak 2001, p. 74). In a case study of a petition issued by the Austrian right-wing party FPÖ in 1992–1993, Wodak (2001, p. 75) distinguishes 15 *topoi* as typical for discriminatory discourses. One is exemplified here: the *topos of danger and threat*. In its simplest form, this *topos* can be paraphrased as ‘if there are specific dangers and threats, one should do something against them’ (Wodak 2001, p. 75). This *topos* appears frequently in discriminatory discourses on immigration, which argue that something should be done against too many immigrants. In these discourses, immigrants are viewed as threats to a country or society, often with a demand for political action. Forchtner, Krzyżanowski & Wodak (2013, pp. 211–217) identify this *topos* in a series of election campaign posters advertising Austria’s Freedom Party *inter alia* arguing for ‘More courage for our “Viennese Blood”’ and ‘too much otherness is not good for anybody’.

In an extensive study of the Austrian ‘rhetoric of the national’ Reisigl (2007) analyses politicians’ speeches on the ‘Austrian nation’ and ‘Austrian national identity’, which were held at especially staged commemorative events with the slogan ‘950 years Austria’ and ‘1000 years Austria’. Reisigl identifies 34 notable *topoi* in the Austrian discourse on ‘nation’ and ‘national identity’, for example the so-called *singularity topos*. The *singularity topos* in Reisigl’s study refers to the explicit and implicit idea of Austria’s uniqueness or singularity within Europe, which is generally assumed and sometimes argumentatively highlighted in the speeches analysed. Former Federal President Thomas Klestil argues that he ‘does not know any other country’ which has been so closely connected to the idea of Europe from its very beginning (Reisigl 2007, pp. 171–72). ‘Any other country’ is also phonetically emphasised to strengthen the argument. *Topoi* in discourse serve as a connection or thread providing the content-logic of an argument.

**Fallacious arguments**

Since the beginning of the occupation with rhetoric, deficient arguments have been called fallacies, and typologies of fallacies have been created. Aristotle already provided catalogues of fallacies, which were not changed much or criticised until recently (Kienpointner 2008, p. 715). Today, research defines fallacies as rule violations in reasonable argumentation, corresponding to a pragmatic theory of fallacies (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1992). The related pragma-dialectical perspective on fallacy (Reisigl 2014; Walton 1987; Walton 1995) defines it as:

> an argument, a pattern of argumentation, or something that purports to be an argument, that falls short of some standard of correctness as used in a conversational context but that, for various reasons, has a semblance of correctness about it in context, and poses a serious obstacle to the realization of the goal of the dialog.

(Walton 2011, p. 380)
Reisigl (2014, p. 82) emphasises that a fallacy need not necessarily be restricted to single speech acts and also that ‘sequences of related speech acts’ can become fallacious. Thus, if one is to analyse argumentation, some normative model that provides guidelines for distinguishing sound from fallacious argumentation, is needed. Even so, it is difficult to make this distinction, because it also ‘heavily depends on the previous topic-related knowledge of the analysts and on the respective “field” in which the argumentation is embedded’ (Reisigl 2014, p. 79). Pragma-dialectics provides such a set of ten normative rules (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1992), which are supplemented by eight more rules in the Discourse-Historical Approach (Reisigl 2014, p. 83). Forchtner (2011, p. 10) argues that for an analysis of fallacies Habermas’ language-philosophy which ‘gives an account of why fallacious arguments are fallacious at all’ should also be given more weight in the future.

Names of fallacies are often composed of argumentum ad and another Latin component describing its meaning. Some terms for fallacies also have numerous, descriptive English equivalents. Argument schemes, as well as rule sets, can be used to analyse fallacies such as argumentum ad misericordiam (appeal to pity), argumentum ad populum (appeal to popularity, consensus fallacy), argumentum ad hominem (personal attack), argumentum ad baculum (appeal to force), the Straw Man Fallacy, and many more. Lists of informal and formal fallacies are abundant on the internet, even though sites of course greatly vary in quality. Many fallacies may be acceptable in distinctive circumstances and in particular dialogue types, even if they form weak or presumptive arguments to support a certain standpoint. To evaluate at which point a fallacy becomes unacceptable in a certain discourse, analysts ask critical questions. For example, argumentum ad misericordiam (appeal to pity) is an argument in which the arguer tries to evoke feelings of pity in order to persuade. Walton (1997) suggests that an appeal to pity is fallacious if it is either formulated in such a way that it blocks further questions, or if its dramatic impact is severely exaggerated. A fallacious appeal to pity mentioned by Kienpointner (2009) is often used by so-called Pro-Life activists. In one example, US abortion laws are compared to the Nuremberg laws and to slavery, drastically accompanied by explicit pictures on a website. Such arguments prevent rational discussions of the topic by ‘using excessively drastic verbal and visual means of argumentation for their standpoint in order to seal off the discussion and to silence the opponent’ (Kienpointner 2009, p. 71). This makes them highly problematic strategic moves in a discussion.

A major problem arising when classifying arguments as fallacies is that ‘we have to explain how each of them is used as an effective deceptive tactic that does work to fool people’ (Walton 2011, p. 381). To solve this problem, the concept of strategic manoeuvring was introduced by van Eemeren (2008) to account for actions arguers take to achieve both their rhetorical and dialectical goals. Here, rhetorical strategies are registered and evaluated to determine at which point emotional argumentation becomes unacceptable or fallacious (Kienpointner 2011, p. 513).

Figures of speech

Figures of speech (FSP) are another important instrument in rhetoric, especially political rhetoric, and they have been studied as one of the main branches of rhetoric from antiquity onwards. They are small rhetorical units and, from a classical perspective, they were viewed as linguistic ornaments or stylistic means. Recent approaches influenced by modern linguistics, however, also concentrate on the mechanisms and structures of FSP (Gévaudan 2009) and rather view them as semiotic categories. Extensive typologies specifying and
describing the five traditional categories of FSP – simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification and synecdoche – were developed. Tzvetan Todorov (1966) and Geoffrey Leech (1979 [1966]) undertook modern attempts at the classification of FSP.11

However, what exactly are FSP? A broad definition is given by Kienpointner (1995b), who states that they: ‘are the output of discourse strategies which we use to select units from linguistic paradigms of different levels (phonetics/phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics) to create texts (in the sense of both written and spoken genres of discourse) which are adequate as far as their communicative purpose in some context is concerned’. FSP can be distinguished by a) the linguistic levels on which they are operating, and b) the operations that occur when figures of speech are realised (Kienpointner 1995b).

A brief explanation of these distinctions will be given in the following short sections. On the linguistic level of sound (phonology) FSP such as alliteration, assonance, consonance or onomatopoeia are situated. Put simply, FSP on this level achieve attention because they do something with sound, for example, repeating the initial consonant sound of a word (alliteration). The following example from George W. Bush’s State of the Union Address in 2002 demonstrates this effect (alliteration highlighted): ‘The American people have responded magnificently, with courage and compassion, strength and resolve’ (Posch 2006, p. 94). FSP may also be at work on a meaning-level of language (semantics) as is the case with euphemisms, metaphors, metonymies, personifications, and many more. In political discourses especially, euphemisms are frequently used as stylistic elements. Their ability of blurring or disguising a meaning in an utterance is in parts responsible for the sometimes negative conception of the term rhetoric. One example of this is a regional political campaign in Austria titled ‘sauberes Graz’ (clean Graz). This campaign focused on the terms ‘clean’ or ‘to clean’ which alludes to the terrible euphemisms Nazi propaganda frequently used. ‘To clean’ was used to camouflage genocide (Wodak & Köhler 2010, p. 41). Many more types of FSP are also located on other linguistic levels such as morphology (anaphora, anadiplosis, archaism, epiphora) and syntax (ellipsis, parallelism, chiasmus, asyndeton, polysyndeton).12

FSP can also be categorised along the lines of how they operate. For example, the aforementioned figure ‘alliteration’ is defined as a figure of repetition, because it achieves an effect by repeating sounds. Other operational modes are subtraction, permutation and substitution. Again, these types of operation can appear on all levels of language. An FSP that operates by substitution, the re-arranging of an element, is metonymy. Metonymy refers to a type of relation between two linguistic entities. On a word level, for instance, this would be achieved by using one name to stand in for the name of an entity that is closely related to it (Wodak & de Cillia 2007, p. 43). This can be observed when the name of a country is used to refer to the people living in it, such as ‘Austria is World Champion’ (Wodak & de Cillia 2007, p. 43) or ‘America has a window of opportunity to extend and secure our present peace […]’ (Posch 2006, p. 86).

Parallelisms are, for example, pairs of utterances in which syntax and lexis are coordinated in such a way that they are short and easy to remember. According to Charteris-Black (2005, p. 5) such short ‘sound bites’ are often selected because they suggest certainty and simplicity with the aim to persuade the audience of a certain argument. Parallelisms are figures of repetition – one element (for example sound or word), or even a broader structure (phrase, sentence) is repeated. The following short excerpt from a speech delivered by George W. Bush to the US troops in Qatar on 5 June, 2003 demonstrates this (Posch 2006, p. 107): ‘We believe that liberty is God’s gift to every individual on the face of the earth. We believe people have the right to think and speak and worship in freedom.’ This FSP operates by parallelism and is called anaphora. The phrase ‘we believe’ is repeated at the beginning
of each sentence, thus the linguistic level on which it operates is syntax and the operation that occurs is repetition.

The use of FSP does not automatically turn rhetoric into something negative, or make it fallacious. Rather, FSP are more or less present in any utterance. Particularly in political rhetoric, the overall aim is to convince audiences of a standpoint and FSP are a tool that may or may not help to achieve this goal. A rhetorical analyst may categorise FSP used in a discourse and take a close look at the effects that are achieved with their use.

Reconstructing metaphors

In a traditional sense, metaphors are often viewed as purely ornamental, as subsets of FSP. In modern discourse-centred approaches, however, metaphors are no longer viewed as artificially crafted linguistic tools, but rather as instruments that structure thinking and are deeply anchored in the human mind. Charteris-Black (2005, p. 13) views metaphors as important in any persuasive discourse, because they mediate between ‘conscious and unconscious means of persuasion – between cognition and emotion’ and they are therefore ‘a central strategy for legitimization in political speeches’. Charteris-Black also assumes that metaphors are the most important rhetorical and stylistic device in political discourses. It is a linguistic characteristic of metaphors that they produce semantic tension. Pragmatically, the aim of metaphor use, as everyday their use may be, is to persuade (Charteris-Black 2005, p. 13). Most approaches dealing with metaphor in language today are based on the definition of metaphor as cognitive structures by Lakoff and Johnson (2011) from their famous book *Metaphors we live by*. Metaphors are understood in such a way that they do not only appear on the linguistic surface, but rather that the linguistic metaphor is cognitively preceded by a so-called ‘conceptual metaphor’. Conceptual metaphors are, simply put, ‘pathways’ of thinking we are used to taking, they hint at our thinking habitus (Leech 1979 [1966], p. 331). Conceptual metaphors in metaphor analysis are usually indicated by capital letters. Frequent metaphors, especially in political discourses, are war metaphors. Posch, Stopfner, and Kienpointner (2013, p. 113) identified the politics is war metaphor as a metaphor that is frequently used by right-wing populists.

In a study on media reports of the worldwide financial crisis, Posch (2010) found that conceptual metaphors that frame the international financial crisis as a phenomenon occurring without any external influences are frequent; for example, the crisis as sickness or as natural catastrophe metaphors. They linguistically manifest in phrases such as ‘there is no recovery’ or the ‘crisis has become virulent’, and in sentences such as ‘There is a storm brewing: It is about low paid salespeople and business groups heading towards crisis’ (Posch 2010, 133). The crisis as sickness metaphor entails that the financial crisis is, rather, a danger that comes from outside and not anything produced by humans. This danger is spreading autonomously, the crisis itself becomes the acting subject of the discourse. In this way, the discourse obscures those responsible for the crisis. The same is true for the crisis as natural catastrophe metaphor. People as well as business are cognitively construed as actors in nature who are endangered by the catastrophe, rather than as responsible agents.

Prospect

Research into speech communication continues the tradition of classical rhetoric with a focus on critical rhetorical analysis (Campbell & Jamieson 1990; Gévaudan 2009) as well
as composition (Raskin & Weiser 1987). Furthermore, especially in linguistics, the focus now is on the use of computerised methods for applied and critical research into rhetoric and discourse analysis. Corpus linguistics aims to develop new methods for finding arguments and rhetorical devices in huge numbers of texts, which may contribute empirical support to the findings of discourse analysis. The research programme of sentiment analysis, for example, aims to develop machine algorithms to detect subjective emotions in a text (Généreux, Poibeau & Koppel 2011). Other corpus linguistic approaches seek to combine ideas and concepts from discourse analysis and rhetoric with the analysis of large corpora (Baker 2006; Bubenhofer 2013; Bubenhofer & Scharloth 2013; Felder 2012; Mautner 2001; Volk et al. 2010). Rhetorical analysis is now key in all of these disciplines and presumably will continue to blossom as a field of interest in the years to come.

Notes
1 For a translated version of Aristotle’s work, see Roberts 1984.
2 Singular: ‘tópos’.
3 In his Topics, Aristotle lists more than 300 tópoi, see Kienpointner 1995a.
4 For a short overview, see Kienpointner 2011, p. 512.
5 For a general introduction on CDA, see Forchtner 2012; for a view on the relation of rhetoric and CDA, see for instance, Forchtner & Tominc 2012.
6 In Walton and Hansen’s (2013, p. 79) analysis, the scheme is more detailed and there are different versions of it.
7 For an example of critical questions concerning the above argument on fairness, see Walton and Hansen 2013, p. 82.
8 On topoi, see also: Klein 2014, p. 133; Forchtner 2014; Wodak 2001, p. 110; for a critique of the concept of topoi as it is applied by rhetorical analysts, see Žagar 2010; for a reply to Žagar’s critique, see Reisigl 2014, p. 85.
9 For example, as ‘economic threat’ see Baker, McEnery & Gabrielatos 2007.
10 The singularity topos can also be found in nomination strategies referring to the ‘real Austrian’ and ‘Viennese Blood’, see Wodak 2014b, p. 111; Forchtner et al. 2013, p. 217.
11 For a more detailed overview, see Dubois 1981 [1970].
12 Abundant catalogues and glossaries with examples of types of FSP can be found on the internet (e.g. http://rhetoric.byu.edu or http://americanrhetoric.com).

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