



## Research Article

# Improving the Teaching of Rhetoric of Students-Philologists by Text Analysis

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### Abstract

The aim of this study is to present the authors' experience in improving the teaching of rhetoric by the formation of students' skills to analyze text. This research is devoted to the problems of teaching the rhetoric of students of higher educational institutions of the humanities. The research considers a comprehensive approach to working with a rhetorical text, reveals the specifics of rhetorical analysis of the text as an important factor in the formation of communicative competence of future philologists, which is one of the main aspects of their professional training. Experimental testing and creative work were done. The data were collected using tests and creative work. The testing of methods for improving the teaching of rhetoric was conducted in the form of an experience in the context of the Russian State University named after A. N. Kosygin. Third-year students of the faculties of Philology and Linguistics were involved in the research. Results of the research that are firstly, the acquired knowledge and skills influenced the formation of such qualities as observation, logical thinking, creative imagination and the independence of mind. Secondly, practical mastery of rhetoric by text analysis contributes to mastering the constructing and implementing public speech and developing speech abilities.

### Keywords:

teaching improvement, rhetoric, rhetorical text, rhetorical analysis, communicative competence

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## Introduction

The problem of improving education, determining effective ways of preparing students for future professional activities, testing and introducing them into the educational process remains relevant for higher education. Various aspects of this problem are in the focus of attention of modern researchers. According to the scholars there is a need to integrate the learning process to form communicative competence (Andryukhina, 2016; Li, 2018). Scientists develop a model of a new type of teacher, mobile, creative, able to use modern educational technologies. The model is based on different principles: variability, modularity, mobility, unity, continuity, manufacturability (Yachina, 2016). The scientists pay special attention to the methods for improving linguistic, communicative and professional competence (Rydell, 2018). Some scientific papers call for more complete materialization, embodiment and performativity (Canagarajah, 2018). The focus in the analyzed papers and theses is on the fact that language makes it possible to "penetrate" into world culture, into the awareness of one's national and cultural identity, which contributes to the formation and socialization of the student's personality (Soboleva, 2018).

Few papers are devoted to finding out to what extent the textbooks contribute to the acquisition of rhetorical skills (Wang, 2018). The learning process is considered as a transition from form to the meaning of speech phenomena and the speech creativity of students (Byrdina, Dolzhenko & Yurina, 2018). The authors consider the professional competence of the teacher-philologist as a unity of the following components: key competence, basic competence and special competence; raise the problem of training philologists ready for competence-oriented, intellectual and creative professional activities (Koval, 2013; Zhuravleva & Kashlach, 2017; Korobeinikov & Kuzmicheva, 2019). The authors of scientific papers point out the great contribution of oral and written academic texts to the acquisition of knowledge about rhetorical devices (Gorelova & Korobleva, 2013). The analysis of scientific papers proves that university training becomes more effective if it is aimed at improving education, at the development of communicative skills allows to quickly adapt in the professional field, in modern life.

Today's science educators face huge challenges despite important educational and research reforms over the past few decades. The most important and worrying challenge is the low motivation and interest of students in learning rhetoric. The low interest in learning is followed by a students' rhetoric illiteracy and communication skills. If this phenomenon continues to be feared it will affect the quality of Russian human resources in the future. Improving the subject training of students-philologists is necessary for the formation of communicative competence, which is the main condition for the development of their professional skills, namely: the ability and willingness to use their knowledge in future activities, which

is primarily associated with the development of their skills effectively organize their internal and external resources to solve problems as a specialist in the humanitarian sphere of activity. In this regard, the problem of managing one's own speech, the ability to think critically and the willingness to defend one's position, the ability to communicate, create one's own texts, and also show decisiveness in public speaking, proving and convincing are especially relevant for philologists. Rhetoric helps to solve these problems. Private rhetoric covers all areas of social life: diplomacy, medicine and pedagogy, legal, administrative and organizational activities. It is traditionally believed that rhetoric is the theory and art of eloquence. Modern researchers define it as the mastery of effective, appropriate, harmonizing speech. No one doubts that effective speech is an important aspect of the professional training of all whose profession is associated with communication. One of the key sections of rhetoric in the system of university training is the oratorio, or theory and practice of public speech. Studying this section, students get acquainted with the stages of the classical rhetorical canon, receive theoretical and methodological knowledge in the field of oratory.

Rhetoric is the doctrine of perfect speech. Various texts help to improve speech. In order to create their own texts (oral or written) of the corresponding styles and genres future specialists must learn to analyze the texts offered by him in the classroom. Exemplary texts are used as educational material, as they are a materialized expression of spiritual culture and a means of understanding social and historical reality. Reading a text, a student should "hear" human voices in it. Rhetorical analysis allows you to "hear" voices by revealing the author's intention, the content of the text, determining the methods of influence, and analyzing the effectiveness of the text as a whole. Therefore, it can be argued that the language of rhetoric acts as the main language of understanding.

When people talk about rhetorical analysis, they usually use the term "rhetorical work" (text). For artistic analysis, the term "work of art" is used. The question is: "Which text is considered rhetorical?" The essence of the rhetorical text can be revealed by the following concepts: topic, author, addressee, rhetorical situation, purpose (task), thesis, argumentation, language, speech, logical and psychological means, composition. In this regard, it is advisable to consider a rhetorical text that has such parameters as authorship, targeting, integrity, connectedness, goal setting, rhetorical situation, dialogism, genre. The basic principle by which texts should be selected for rhetorical analysis is the cultural significance of the work and its relevance.

## **Method**

### **Research model**

The research takes place in the context of the Russian State University named after A. N. Kosygin (students of the faculties of philology and linguistics). This

Experimental design was used in this study. Experimental testing and creative work were done to the students.

### **Participants**

Altogether 112 third-year students of Russian State University named after A. Kosygin, Russia were involved in the research. Among them were 70 female and 42 male.

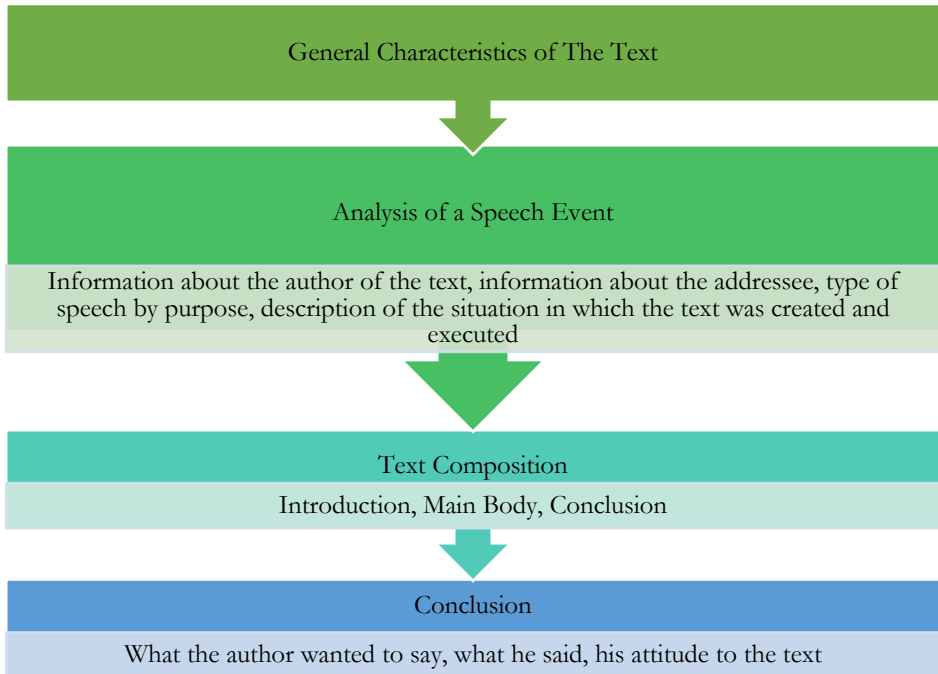
### **DataCollectionTools**

Two experimental and two control groups were formed in order to conduct experimental education. The experimental groups involved 57 students of faculties of philology and linguistics. The control groups involved 55 students. Education was performed in the customary mode of the University operation.

### **Data Analysis**

Experimental testing and creative work were done. The method of analysis of the obtained results in the control and experimental groups was used during the experiment. Data analysis was carried out by combining the results of tests with the results of creative work resulting in a strong data interpretation. Thus, the information will be obtained about the values of rhetoric analyses for improving teaching of rhetoric. (Mosienko, Ilyina, & Kharlamova, 2019). The learning process was organized with the help of techniques that allowed students not only to learn efficiently educational material, but also to acquire skills in working with the text and learn to create their own texts. In this regard, one of the priorities was the development and implementation of an algorithm for working with a text in the educational process (Subeh, 2018).

Two experimental and two control groups were formed in order to conduct the effectiveness of the proposed method for improving the teaching of rhetoric. The control groups studied rhetoric without including the text analysis in the learning process, performed practical tasks in accordance with their curriculum. The experimental groups paid great attention to the rhetorical analysis of the text while studying rhetoric. In order to improve teaching, the researchers developed a plan for the rhetorical analysis of the text, which allowed to consider the text in a dialogical context. One of the main features of rhetorical analysis is its versatility, because it covers the whole work: from the analysis of discourse to the choice of words. The basis of the analysis was a set of categories and concepts of rhetoric which reflect the content of text speech intent. The subject of the rhetorical analysis was the content of the text, the integrity of its rhetorical embodiment and facts reflecting the cultural and speech status of the author. The text analysis was carried out in a certain sequence (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.**

*The Sequence of Text Analysis*

First of all, it was necessary to give a general characteristics of the text, which included the name of the author, the name of the text, the topic, the definition of the kind of eloquence (socio-political, academic, judicial, social, church-theological) and the type (genre) of eloquence. In the process of analyzing a speech event (discourse and speech situation), the students answered the following questions: who is speaking? who is talking to? what is the purpose of speaking? under what circumstances speaks? The students gave information about the author of the text and the recipient. In the author's description, two components were distinguished: an objective portrait (gender, age, profession, qualifications, views) and status, that is, an indication of the features of interaction with students. So, characterizing (Koni, 2012; Gorelova, 2013), they noted that he was a lawyer, judge, writer, statesman and public figure, an outstanding judicial speaker. His activity was progressive, humane. After the revolution, Koni (2012) continued his literary work, was a professor of criminal justice at the University of Petrograd, and gave lectures in scientific, public organizations and cultural and educational institutions. Analyzing the genre of the report, it should be noted that this is an informational speech with which the scientist addressed himself to a competent audience to inform about new results of scientific work. The report provided new information.

Next, it was necessary to describe the situation in which the text was executed, to dwell in more detail on what the author said and how he expressed his thought. Analysis of the method of arrangement of the material, its parts and the sequence

of their presentation involved consideration of the introduction, the main part and conclusion. When analyzing the introduction, one should identify the tasks formulated by the author and the issues that he would discuss. The students indicated the type of entry: natural or artificial. A natural beginning without preliminary preparation introduced the audience to the essence of the matter, that is, the author could tell the reason or purpose of his speech, substantiate the topic, pointed out like-minded people, did a historical review, asked the audience a question that created a problem situation. In contrast to the natural principle, the artificial one was an introduction that, it would seem, was not connected in meaning with the main part. There was no formal connection, but an internal, metaphorical connection was necessarily present. This is a pre-thought out part, which is designed to set up the audience for speech perception: parable, legend, fairy tale, aphorism, analogy, joke, questions of a philosophical or evaluative nature, social or moral assessment of the event under discussion.

In the main part, the author set out the main material, proved the propositions put forward, brought the addressees to conclusions. In this part the logical component, connectedness, consistency, and special techniques of eloquence played a large role. The students determined the author's method of presenting the material: inductive, deductive, concentric, stepwise, historical, analogy method.

At the next stage of the analysis, the students analyzed how the author substantiated (argued) his position, namely: how he tried to convince students of the correctness of what was said, with the help of which words and constructions he evoked their desired thoughts and emotions, which arguments he used to solve the tasks - logical (facts, conclusions of science, statistics, provisions of official documents and legal acts) or psychological (links to authoritative sources, examples, quotes).

Studying the final part of the text, the students noted whether the author used rhetorical methods of endings: quotes, comparisons, paradoxes, appeals. It was determined whether the conclusion was connected with the previous statement, whether they had a desire to meet the aspirations of the author of the text.

The text analysis ended with a conclusion. To summarize it, the students answered the following questions: what the author wanted to say and what he said. A discussion of these issues allowed to determine whether the speech was effective and whether the author of the text managed to solve his communicative problem. A mandatory component of the output was its own assessment of the text. Self-assessment was given according to certain criteria: the importance of the text, the credibility of the text, the availability of the text. Own assessment was given according to certain criteria: the importance of the text, the credibility of the text, the availability of the text. The students noted whether the theme stated by the author was relevant and interesting, whether it was caused by the needs of life. They judged the degree of persuasiveness by how consistently the author set out

the material and conclusively revealed the topic, did the information presented correspond to the real state of affairs, did it contain actual errors or distortions. The students judge the accessibility of the text by the degree of comprehensibility of the words and expressions used by the author.

It should be noted that at the beginning of the experiment, the students analyzed the texts proposed by the teacher, then they independently selected texts for analysis and created their own statements. For analysis, texts were selected that corresponded to certain requirements, namely: they were saturated with thought, meaning, truthfully depicted reality, carried a moral content.

## **Results**

Tables 1, 2 and 3 present the results of testing the skills of students in the experimental and control groups. From the tables it's obvious the following.

- The knowledge of theoretical material of students in the experimental and control groups practically did not differ.
- There is a clear correlation between the ability to analyze texts and the ability to create own speech utterance.
- Judging by the estimates, the ability of the students of the experimental group in terms of indicators are higher. This suggests that the training associated with the rhetorical analysis of the text benefited. This confirms the usefulness of the chosen approach to learning.

At the final stage of the experiment a written survey of students in the control and experimental groups was conducted. The aim of this survey was to identify the students' interest in studying rhetoric. The survey revealed a rather high degree of interest in this discipline: in the experimental groups 82% of students showed interest, in the control groups only 63% showed interest.

Then the students were offered tests consisting of two blocks. The tasks of the first block made it possible to determine the students' level of theoretical knowledge. Each block had ten options. The test of the first block included two types of options: a single choice (students had to choose one correct answer out of the four proposed ones) and tasks for comparing the options. The students of the experimental group and the students of the control group did well the test of the first block. The results showed that the knowledge of the basic terms, concepts, rhetorical laws and rules among the students of both groups is quite high (table 1).

The discrepancy in favor of the experimental groups averages 5%.



**Table 1.***Test of The First Block*

No		Results (%)		Discrepancy
		Exp.	Cont.	
1	Find the correct definition of the concept "kind of definition"	81	76	5
2	Determine what kind of eloquence these types of eloquence belong to	72	66	6
3	What type of public speech by purpose (intention of the author) is the speech genre represented in the task	73	66	7
4	Find a logical argument from the proposed ones	71	65	6
5	Find a psychological argument from the proposed ones	73	68	5
6	Indicate a natural introduction from the proposed options	75	69	6
7	Indicate an artificial introduction from the proposed options	76	72	4
8	Find the correspondence between the methods of presenting the material (inductive, deductive, analogy method, concentric, stepwise, historical) with their definitions	73	68	5
9	Find the correspondence between the means of expressiveness (comparison, metaphor, hyperbole, lilita, periphrase, ellipsis, inversion) with their definitions	86	81	5
10	Find a correspondence between the communicative qualities of speech (accuracy, logic, relevance, purity, wealth, expressiveness, correctness) and their definitions	83	79	4

Exp: Experimental Group

Cont: Control Group

The second part of the test included a variety of texts (speeches by famous politicians, scientists, lawyers, publicists). The tasks were aimed at testing the formed skills. Students had to choose one correct answer out of the four proposed ones. The results of the second part of the test in the experimental groups were significantly higher than in the control group (table 2). The difference averaged 17%.

These data indicated that the ability to work with the text was better formed in the experimental groups. The control groups experienced serious difficulties in applying their theoretical knowledge in textual activity.

**Table 2.***Test of the Second Block*

No		Results (%)		Discrepancy
		Exp.	Cont.	
1	Determine what kind of eloquence the proposed text belongs to	77	64	13
2	Determine what kind of eloquence the proposed text belongs to	74	63	11
3	Determine what type the proposed text belongs to according to the purpose (intention of the author)	79	61	18
4	Determine what genre the proposed text belongs to	81	69	12
5	Determine what method of presenting the material the author of the text used	84	62	22
6	Find in the text examples of expressiveness as a communicative quality of speech	85	70	15
7	Find in the text examples of wealth as a communicative quality of speech	88	72	16
8	Find in the text examples of impaired speech quality as cleanliness	90	72	18
9	Find in the text examples of impaired speech quality as accuracy	92	70	22
10	Find in the text examples of impaired speech quality as logic	87	68	19

Exp: Experimental Group

Cont: Control Group

The third task was creative. It was aimed at checking in which group the greater number of the students formed communicative skills after studying rhetoric. The task was to create own statement on a specific topic. The main condition was compliance with certain indicators (table 3).

**Table 3.***Creative Task*

No		Results (%)		Discrepancy
		Exp.	Cont.	
1	Textsubject	97	95	2
2	Textvolume	90	87	3
3	The communicative purpose of the text (persuade)	72	55	17
4	The three-part structure of the text (introduction, main part, conclusion)	86	62	24

5	Artificialbeginning	72	50	22
6	Usingtheanalogymethod	68	45	23
7	Usingexpressivemeans	92	80	12
8	Usingrhetoricalendings	71	49	22
9	Culture of speech (accuracy, purity, correctness, consistency, wealth, expressiveness, relevance)	69	56	13

Exp: Experimental Group

Cont: Control Group

Both groups of students successfully managed the first indicator (text subject) and the second one (text volume): in the experimental groups - 97% and 90%, in the control groups - 95% and 87%. For the remaining indicators (from 6 to 9), the advantage was in the experimental groups. The discrepancy was from 12% to 24%.

Thus, according to the results of the creative task, the experimental group had better results on average by 16% compared with the control group. Together, the acquired knowledge and skills influenced the formation of such qualities as observation, logical thinking, creative imagination and the independence of mind. Practical mastery of rhetoric by text analysis was aimed at mastering the principles of constructing and implementing public speech and at developing speech abilities.

### Discussion and Conclusion

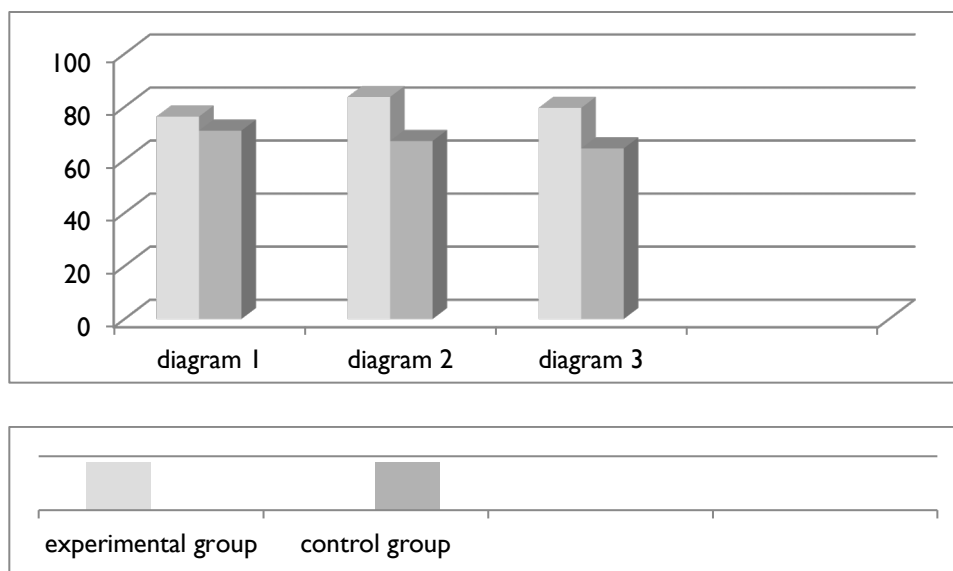
Rhetoric is a unique cultural phenomenon, it is focused on the attitude to the word, plays a decisive role in the speech education of students. For many years the Russians were deprived of the opportunity to study rhetoric: it was excluded from the programs of schools and universities in the 20s of the XX century. Only at the end of that century rhetoric was again taught in secondary and higher educational institutions of Russia. Rhetoric as a science and academic subject experienced a rebirth. And it is not a coincidence. The prestige of rhetoric has been high at all times. It has rich history and literature and it is closely connected with philisophy, psychology, linguistics. It is currently in demand by society. Modern rhetoric, based on the classical traditions of ancient rhetoric, explores the general issues of speech communication, develops the rules by which thought, idea and design find expression in a word and in speech. Rhetoric forms a lifestyle through speech style (García, Montanero, Lucero, Cañedo, Sánchez, 2018). In accordance with a person's desire for a perfect word, it's advisable to call rhetoric the doctrine of a perfect speech. Currently, rhetoric is becoming an important link in culture of modern society and man (Zhuravleva & Kashlach, 2017). Rhetoric forms the process of communication. Improving the process of teaching rhetoric is possible through working with a text. In order to improve the teaching of rhetoric, we have developed a rhetorical analysis plan which consists of the following parts: general characteristic of the text, analysis of a speech event, text composition and

conclusion. At the beginning of the experiment, the students analyzed the texts proposed by the teacher, then they independently selected texts for analysis and created their own statements. Students of the experimental group throughout the entire period of studying rhetoric worked out the ability to analyze the text. After studying the course, testing was carried out and creative work was offered to students in the control and experimental groups. As a result of the analysis of the final works, the following conclusion is made: students of the experimental group are able to apply the theoretical knowledge obtained in the rhetorical classes more effectively in practical activities than students in the control group. The experiment proved the effectiveness of the proposed method for the improving the teaching of rhetoric of students-philologists. The analysis of the texts according to the proposed plan ensures their correct perception and understanding, and also develops the ability to create your own utterance of various kinds, types and genres, using a variety of rhetorical techniques, rules, laws (Saparkyzy, Isatayeva, Kozhabekova, Zhakesheva, Koptayeva, Agabekova, Agabekova, 2016).

The average of students' level of theoretical knowledge on test 1 in experimental group is 76%; in control group it is 71, 0%. (diagram 1). The average of students' level of the formed skills on text analyses on test 2 in experimental group is 83,7%; in control group it is 67,1%. (diagram 2). The average of students' level of the ability to create own statement on a specific topic on test 3 in experimental group is 79,6%; in control group it is 64,3%. (diagram 3).

### Figure 2.

*Effect of Teaching Rhetoric by Text Analysis*



The study confirmed our assumption that the formation of rhetorical analysis skills improves the process of teaching rhetoric. Training in analysis increases the level of speech culture, forms the skills of public speaking, interpersonal and business communication as the main condition for achieving success in future professional activities.

This study was limited to the problems of teaching students of humanitarian universities. However, there is no doubt that the proposed approach can be applied in the training of students of technical universities and schoolchildren. The results of the experimental work will be useful for rhetoric teachers and anyone who wants to learn how to analyze the text, master the skills of public speaking and creating their own speech utterances.

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