

## Topos in Slovak Media Discourse on Inclusive Language

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### Abstract

*The article is devoted to the analysis of *topos* in the Slovak media discourse on inclusive language from the perspective of *topos* theory, which offers one of the most effective ways to identify dominant arguments and their argumentative strength. Special attention is paid to the consideration of the concept of *topos* in the world of rhetorical science and historical discourse analysis with the goal of understanding the content of the term *topos* in the theory of argumentation and its function in the argumentation process. Using the heuristic potential of the *topos* as an argumentation scheme, the article analyzes media communications in which the necessity of generic inclusion of the Slovak language is substantiated. The analysis aims to identify and interpret the most frequent *topoi* in the selected discourse through the prism of their semantic indicators and the method of implementing the argumentation scheme.*

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**Keywords:** argumentation, *topos* (*topoi*), argumentation scheme, inclusive language, discourse analysis.

### Introduction

The question of the possibility/necessity of inclusive language development in the sense of modifying it to achieve gender neutrality has become particularly relevant in recent years (Motyková, 2020; Štefaňáková, 2020; Štefaňáková, 2021; Urbancová, 2019; Urbancová, 2021), both in linguistic research and in public debate. The controversy surrounding this issue stems not only from the specific structure of the Slovak language as an inflectional language, but also from the ambiguity surrounding the necessity and advisability of language changes aimed at neutralizing gender categories or developing methods for linguistically representing participants of all gender groups. On the one hand, inclusive language is one topic within a broader set of issues related to preventing and overcoming gender discrimination

and the need to create an inclusive society. This goal is precisely what is voiced in the legislative documentation of the European Union (see for Example: European Council, 2016a; 2016b). On the other hand, thanks to the efforts of social activists, inclusive language has acquired the status of a social trend, shifting the focus exclusively to language, which is literally criticized for its discriminatory nature and blamed for society's inability to overcome gender inequality.

This article examines Slovak media discourse on the need for gender-based language inclusivity from the perspective of *topos* theory, which appears to be an effective method for identifying dominant arguments and their argumentative force. Since the concept of *topos itself* is interpreted in various ways in modern linguistic literature, demonstrating its terminological ambiguity, we consider it appropriate to begin our discussion of the chosen topic with a description of theoretical approaches to understanding *topos* within the framework of argumentation theory.

### **The content of the concept of *topos* in the rhetorical tradition**

The origins of the concept of *topos* are linked to ancient rhetoric. Its first use is attributed to Protagoras and Gorgias (Žagar, 2010: 14), and its further scholarly understanding is associated with the works of Aristotle and Cicero. However, despite the long history of *topoi*, its terminological meaning remains controversial and ambiguous to this day.

In Aristotle's *Topics* and *Rhetoric*, *topoi* are presented as tools for finding arguments. On the other hand, they are also understood as argumentation strategies (Kienpointner, 2018: 230). In this regard, two main functions of the Aristotelian *topos* are mentioned in the scholarly literature: selective and guaranteeing. The selective function allows *topoi* to be interpreted as rules for finding suitable arguments. The guaranteeing function ensures the transition from logical premise to conclusion during argumentation; i.e., in *topoi*, the speaker finds principles for drawing conclusions to ensure the logical validity of arguments (Rubinelli, 2009: 13–23).

Cicero subsequently significantly revised the understanding of *topos*. He not only replaced Greek terminology with Latin, introducing *loci instead of topoi*, and reduced the 300 Aristotelian *topoi* from *Topica* and the 28 from *Rhetoric* to a list of 20 *loci* (Cicero, 1972), but also reinterpreted the essence of Aristotelian *topoi*. In Cicero's interpretation, the understanding of *topoi* as abstract rules for finding suitable argumentation was modified to the con-

cept of topoi as argumentation schemas (Žagar, 2010: 19; Rubinelli, 2009: 148).

A rethinking and clarification of the ancient meaning of the concept of *topos* occurred in the second half of the 20th century, when the work “*The New Rhetoric. A Treatise on Argumentation*” (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969) was published. In this work, scholars propose understanding *topos* as *a locus communis* (common place), characterized by “maximum applicability <...> in all circumstances”, “as premises of a very general kind”, which are the starting points of argumentation (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 84), on which the justification of most preferences and choices is implicitly built. At the same time, in the understanding of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, loci, along with value systems, facts, and assumptions, being the starting points of argumentation, are not identical to argumentation techniques.

The *topos* received further conceptualization in M. Kienpointner's work “*Alltagslogik. Struktur und Funktion von Argumentationsmustern*” (1992), in which the author attempted to unite various approaches to understanding the *topos* by defining it as an argumentation scheme. Following Aristotle, M. Kienpointner retained the selective and guaranteeing functions of the *topos*, understanding the latter as the ability of the *topos* to justify a conclusion, which, in turn, allows us to consider the *topos* as a specific model of argumentation (Kienpointner, Kindt 1997: 562). Subsequently, it was Kienpointner's theory of *topos* that formed the basis of the theory of argumentation in historical discourse analysis, which will be discussed below.

### **Theoretical understanding of *topos* in historical discourse analysis**

Argumentation theory received further conceptualization within the framework of critical discourse analysis, which turned to the study of argumentation as a discursive practice. This topic became particularly relevant for two areas of critical discourse analysis: The Discourse-Historical Approach, developed by a group of researchers from the Vienna School of Discourse Analysis (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001), and the Dialectical-Relational Approach proposed by Norman Fairclough (Fairclough, 1995; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

For the discourse-historical approach, which studies argumentation as one of the discursive practices used to achieve social, political, psychological, or linguistic goals, *topos* becomes a key concept through the prism of which the process of argumentation is examined and its success is assessed (Hart, Cap 2014: 5). In determining the substantive content of *topos*, fol-

lowers of historical discourse analysis rely on the theory of classical and modern rhetoric, as well as the theory of pragmialectics (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001: 32). However, it should be noted that even within the framework of the discourse-historical approach, a certain variability in the interpretation of this concept can be traced. At its initial stage, historical discourse analysis borrowed the concept of *topos* entirely from the works of Kienpointner, defining it as “parts of an argumentation that refer to the obligatory premises, whether explicit or inferred, that justify the argument” (Kienpointner, 1992; Kienpointner, 1997; Wodak, 2001: 74, Reisigl & Wodak, 2001: 75–76). Moreover, all arguments, including fallacious ones, are called *topoi*. Even the distinction between the concepts of *topos*, *argumentation scheme*, and *argument* is leveled (Wodak, 2001: 76). However, in later works of researchers representing the discourse-historical approach, the division of argumentation schemes into *topoi* and fallacies returns (Reisigl, 2008; Reisigl & Wodak, 2009). *Topos* is defined as a “plausible scheme of argumentation” that “functions as a link leading from premises to conclusion” (Reisigl, 2008: 118–119).

It was within the discourse-historical approach that the *topos* gradually acquired its terminological form, combining features of the functional and formal approaches to argumentation theory. In the structure of argumentation, which consists of three main elements – the argument, the conclusion rule and the claim – it is the rule for obtaining a conclusion that is considered as a *topos*, since it connects the argument and the conclusion, and is called an argumentation scheme (Reisigl, 2014; Reisigl, 2018). *Topoi* are often contained in enthymeme statements, which are based on generally known premises or some tacit knowledge known to each member of the addressee group under the conditions of a specific context (Kwon, Clarke & Wodak 2014: 6). Wodak defines a *topos* as “a broad semantic, often stereotypical, cliché that contains the common features of certain lines of argumentation” (Wodak & Iedema, 2004: 166). The main function of a *topos* is to give evidence to a statement.

### **The place of *topos* in the structure of the argumentation process**

Since *topos* is an integral part of argumentation, it would be appropriate to determine its place in the structure of the argumentation process. One of the most well-known models of argumentation today is S. Toulmin's model, according to which each argument has several elements in its structure: claim, data/ground and warrant, which establishes a connection between the basis and the conclusion (statement). The third of these elements – a certain gen-

eral, widely shared conclusion – is the *topos*. The peculiarity of the *topos* is that it does not require proof, since it is considered generally accepted in a given society. In addition to the above elements, Toulmin distinguishes three additional elements in his model: *backing* – some information, facts that can support the *topos* in the event of an attempt to refute it; *rebuttal* – the possibility of exceptional circumstances that may call into question the significance of the conclusion, i.e., attempt to call into question the authority of the *topos*; and *modal qualifier*, which demonstrates the degree of persuasiveness of a *topos* (Bermejo-Lique, 2006: 71).

The described model of the argumentation process is also one of the most effective ways of identifying *topoi* in a text. First, the main statement is identified, and then, by formulating the corresponding questions, all parts of the argumentation are determined. In the course of this process, the *topos* and its type are determined (Žagar, 2010: 23). In identifying a *topos*, semantic indicators are of particular importance – “certain words or expressions that indicate the unfolding of an argumentation scheme in the text” (Eemeren, Houtlosser & Henkemans, 2007). In the scientific literature devoted to the discourse analysis of the political sphere, the following types of *topoi* are distinguished: *topos of threat*, *topos of benefit/uselessness*, *topos of justice / legality*, *topos of responsibility*, *topos of effectiveness/ineffectiveness*, *topos of an unbearable burden*, *topos of authority*, *topos of culture*, *topos of history*, *topos of humanitarian mission* (Wodak, 2011: 74). However, it should be noted that this list is neither exhaustive nor universal. Depending on the type of discourse being analyzed, the specifics of the research subject and the cultural context, other types of *topoi* can be identified.

### **Main types of *topoi* in Slovak media discourse on inclusive language**

The issue of language inclusivity in the Slovak linguistic and cultural space has now gone far beyond the scope of professional debate, as evidenced by its extensive coverage in the Slovak media. This includes journalistic articles, media appearances by representatives of both the professional and non-professional public, and various user posts, comments, and the like on the internet. In this article, drawing on the aforementioned theory of *topos* as an argumentative framework, an attempt is made to identify the main types of *topoi* used in Slovak media discourse to justify the need for generic inclusivity of the Slovak language. For analysis, we selected media communications that can be defined in terms of genre as a journalistic article or in-

terview.<sup>1</sup> The goal of the analysis was to identify the main topoi (without claiming to provide an exhaustive list) and their semantic indicators.

**The *topos of justice/injustice*** is one of the dominant toposes in Slovak media discourse to argue for gender inclusiveness. This *topos* is embodied by emphasizing the discriminatory nature of certain linguistic structures related to the expression of grammatical gender. This primarily concerns the discriminatory nature of language toward women and members of other gender minorities, which directly negatively impacts their social status in society. For example:

*Pravda je, že nielen v hovorovom jazyku, ale aj v tom verejne používanom av tlači sa nájdu príklady **rodovej necitlivosti**. / The truth is that not only in colloquial language, but also in that used publicly and, in the press, there are examples of gender insensitivity.*

*Tvrdí, že jazyk, ktorý väčšina ľudí v našej krajine používa, je **výrazne nekorektný voči ženám**, <...> ženy vynecháva, v podstate ignoruje. / She claims that the language that most people in our country use is significantly incorrect towards women, <...> it leaves women out, basically ignores them.*

*Zvykli sme si používať podstatné mená mužského rodu na súhrnné označenie mužov a žien, takzvané generické maskulinum, o ktorom sa hovorí, že je neutrálne. „Ale ono vôbec nie je neutrálne!“ oponuje Debrecéniová. „Vidíme, čo to robí v realite, **jednoducho ženy ignoruje**.“ / We have become accustomed to using masculine nouns to collectively designate men and women, the so-called generic masculine, which is said to be neutral. “But it is not neutral at all!” Debrecéniová objects. “We see what it does in reality, it simply ignores women.”*

*Ide o to, aby to bol **nediskriminujúci jazyk** voči všetkým možným skupinám, ktoré v spoločnosti sú. Aby to čo najviac a čo **najsymetrickejšie zviditeľňovalo** tých, ktorých sa to týka. Samozrejme, že je absurdné hovoríť o pacientoch na pôrodnickom oddelení, ale to je len jedna vec, ktorá je skôr v polohe anekdoty. / The point is that it should be non-discriminatory language towards all possible groups that exist in society. So that it makes those affected visible as much and as symmetrically as possible. Of course, it is absurd to talk*

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<sup>1</sup> The following media communications were used as sources of empirical material within the framework of this article: Neoral, 2022; Kopcsayová, 2011; Horák, Chrastová, 2024; Hrúziková, 2016.

*about patients in the maternity ward, but that is just one thing that is more in the position of an anecdote.*

*Pojem **sexizmus** znamená **discrimináciu** na základe pohlavia. Jeho prejavy sú všakovaké a nevyhýbajú sa ani jazyku. Typickým prejavom v slovenčine je „**zneviditeľňovanie**“ žien, teda označovanie osôb ženského rodu mužským gramatickým rodom. / The term sexism means discrimination based on gender. Its manifestations are diverse and do not avoid language. A typical manifestation in Slovak is the “invisibility” of women, i.e. the designation of female persons by the masculine grammatical gender.*

*A to už – v zmysle **humanistickej spravodlivosti** – féravé nie je. K typickým, aj keď často prehliadaným, prejavom **unrovnosti pohľadu** patrí aj stereotypná **jazyková unrovnosť**. / And this is no longer fair – in the sense of humanistic justice. Stereotypical linguistic inequality is also a typical, although often overlooked, manifestation of gender inequality.*

*Pod pojmom zákazníci automaticky rozumieme zákazníkov (mužov) aj zákazníčky (ženy), pričom v opačnom zmysle to už neplatí – teda ak sa povie zákazníčky, nepredstavujeme si pod tým aj mužov (zákazníkov). Tým v jazyku vzniká **rodová asymetria**, ktorá je **nespravodlivá**. / Under the term customers, we automatically understand both male and female customers, while the opposite is no longer true – i.e. if we say female customers, we do not also imagine men (customers). This creates a gender asymmetry in language, which is unfair.*

*Od **nespravodlivosti** k **rodovej citlivosti**. / From injustice to gender sensitivity.*

*Už vieme, ako nie, no treba ešte ukázať, ako áno – ako sa vyjadrovať tak, aby sme ženy **nestavali slovne do úplného tieňa mužov**. A na to slúži spôsob vyjadrovania, ktorému sa hovorí: rodovo využavený jazyk, ale tiež jazyk rodovo korektný, symetrický, spravodlivý, neutrálny, kompetentný, citlivý. Znamená **rodovo nediskriminujúce a nevylučujúce** používanie jazyka. / We already know how not to do it, but we still need to show how to do it – how to express ourselves in a way that does not verbally put women in the complete shadow of men. And this is what a way of expressing oneself is called: gender-balanced language, but also gender-correct, symmetrical, fair, neutral, competent, sensitive language. It means the use of language that is gender-non-discriminatory and non-exclusive.*

Topos justice / injustice is one from the most common in Slovak media discourse about inclusive language. Its semantic indicators perform expression types whereas argumentation unfolds according to the following examples: *rodová citlivosť / necitlivosť, diskriminácia / nediskriminácia, ignorovanie, zviditeľňovanie / zneviediteľňovanie, rodová rovnosť / nerovnosť, rodová symetria / asymetria, vylučovanie / nevylučovanie, sexizmus (gender sensitivity / insensitivity, discrimination / non-discrimination, ignoring, making visible / making invisible, gender equality / inequality, gender symmetry / asymmetry, exclusion / non-exclusion, sexism) etc.*

The argument unfolds according to the formula: if the language (the method of using the language) is not fair, then the language (the method of using the language) must be changed. Since the category of justice a priori is one of the main ones in the value hierarchy, this *topos* is also one of the strongest methods of argumentation in support of generically inclusive language.

**The *topos of danger*** is implemented through the prism of the idea that language directly influences reality. Non-inclusive language is dangerous because it leads to intolerant, discriminatory behavior, which in turn poses a threat both to members of certain gender groups and to democratic society as a whole. For example:

*Ked' ich [ľudí] jazyk nejakým spôsobom zväzuje alebo potláča, nemôžu dosiahnuť svoj potenciál. Toto sa týka aj žien, aj ľudí s ďalšími rodovými identitami. / When [people's] language binds or suppresses them in some way, they cannot reach their potential. This applies to women as well as people with other gender identities.*

*Ženy vynecháva, v podstate ignoruje, a to, ako je to v jazyku, sa neskôr odráža aj v spoločenskej realite. Všade sa hovorí o riaditeľoch, poslancoch a ministroch. A potom sa nemôžeme čudovať, že na významných postoch, či už politických, alebo ekonomických, vidíme vo väčšine prípadov mužov. / Women are omitted, essentially ignored, and this, as it is in language, is later reflected in social reality. Everywhere we talk about directors, deputies and ministers. And then we cannot be surprised that in most cases we see men in important positions, whether political or economic.*

*Jazyk skutočnosť nielen pomenúva, ale zároveň sa podieľa na jej formovaní. Teda pokiaľ spomenutá dominancia mužského rodu v jazyku pretrváva, pretrváva aj nižšia hodnota pripisovaná ženám v spoločnosti. S tým pretrváva aj nižšie zastúpenie v spoločensky významnejších funkciách, nižšie priemerné platy žien, prevažujúce násilie na ženách a podobne. / Language not only names reality but*

*also participates in its formation. Thus, as long as the aforementioned dominance of the masculine gender in language persists, the lower value attributed to women in society also persists. With this, lower representation in socially significant positions, lower average salaries for women, prevalent violence against women and the like persist.*

*Zaradenie týchto označení do slovníkov môže zároveň vyslať určitý signál **spoločenskej akceptácie**. / Including these designations in dictionaries can also send a certain signal of social acceptance.*

*Rodovo citlivý jazyk nie je o tom, aby sme dogmaticky používali rodové dvojtvary v štýle súdružky a súdruhovia. Rodovo neutrálny jazyk zvýšil podporu rovnosti pohlaví a toleranciu k LGBT komunité. / Gender-sensitive language is not about dogmatically using gendered terms like comrades (female indicator in Slovak) and comrades (male/generic indicator in Slovak). Gender-neutral language has increased support for gender equality and tolerance of the LGBT community.*

While this *topos* dominates, semantic indicators, like *sociálna zmena, akceptácia, socialne hodnoty, ignorovanie, potlačenie, nerovnos, nutnosť podpory akceptácie* (social change, acceptance, social values, ignoring, suppression, inequality, the need to support acceptance etc.) become prominent. The *topos* of threat is used to formulate a concept of the potential negative consequences for a society that does not adhere to the norms of linguistic inclusivity. The argumentation proceeds according to the following rule: if something in the way a language is used poses a threat, appropriate measures must be taken. The discourse on inclusive language emphasizes the need to eliminate discriminatory factors in language that pose a threat to the normal functioning of society.

**The stereotype *topos*** is widely used to justify the need for changes in linguistic behavior as a way to overcome stereotypical ideas, primarily about women and their social roles. For example:

*Čiže treba meniť nielen jazyk, ale aj realitu, aby sa zmenili aj naše stereotypné rodové predstavy. / So, not only language, but also reality must be changed in order to change our stereotypical gender ideas.*

*Dnes sa zvykne hovoriť "milé dámy, vážení páni". <...> Osloenie v tomto prípade odráža určité stereotypné očakávania, aké má verejnosť v súvislosti so ženami a tiež v súvislosti s mužmi. Dámy sú len milé a muži sú tí vážení <...> Pravda je, že dievčatá boli po stáročia*

vychovávané tak, že majú byť milé, usmievavé, nekonfliktné a tí, ktorých si má spoločnosť vážiť, sú muži, hlavy rodiny. Zdá sa vám tento model zastaraný? Možno. Ale ako vidno, jazyk odráža realitu a, naopak, späťne ju aj ovplyvňuje. Nie je preto jedno, ako rozprávame, aké slová volíme. / Today, it is customary to say “dear ladies, dear gentlemen”. <...> The address in this case reflects certain stereotypical expectations that the public has in relation to women and also in relation to men. Ladies are only nice and men are the respected ones <...> The truth is that for centuries girls have been raised to be nice, smiling, non-conflicting, and those whom society should respect are men, heads of families. Does this model seem outdated to you? Maybe. But as you can see, language reflects reality and, conversely, influences it in turn. Therefore, it does not matter how we speak, what words we choose.

A nie je to len generické maskulínum, ktoré robí šarapatu pri vnímaní žien. Od malíčka nás **nálepkujú** princeznami, nežnejším pohľavím, krajskimi polovičkami. „Na symbolickú hierarchiu mužskosti a ženskosti odkazujú slovné spojenia ako napríklad „nebud’ ako baba“ či „babské reči“, ktoré priamo vyjadrujú to, čo je nehodnotné alebo zlé prostredníctvom ženského pomenovania (“baba”). Naopak, výrazy „bud’ chlap“ či „chlapské slovo“ vyjadrujú pozitívnu hodnotu. Ak chápeme jazyk ako spoločenský nástroj myslenia, takéto vyjadrovanie prestáva byť len pomenovaním, označením či slovom. **Stáva sa nástrojom formujúcim naše zmyšľanie o ženách a mužoch, o ich pozícii a rolách v spoločnosti,**“ vysvetľuje v rovnakej publikácii Alexandra Ostertágová. / And it is not just generic masculinity that makes a mess of the perception of women. From a young age, we are labeled princesses, the fairer sex, the more beautiful halves. “The symbolic hierarchy of masculinity and femininity is referred to by phrases such as “don’t be like a woman” or “woman’s talk”, which directly express what is worthless or bad through the feminine name (“woman”). On the contrary, the expressions “be a man” or “man’s word” express a positive value. If we understand language as a social tool of thought, such expression ceases to be just a name, designation or word. It becomes a tool that shapes our thinking about women and men, about their position and roles in society,” explains Alexandra Ostertágová in the same publication.

Boj proti **rodovým stereotypom a nerovnosti** sa skladá z mnohých detailov a rodovo citlivý jazyk je jedným z nich. / The fight against gender stereotypes and inequality consists of many details, and gender-sensitive language is one of them.

*Gender je vlastne rod uchopený zo sociologického hľadiska. Je sociálnou konštrukciou, ku ktorej sa viažu pripisované alebo očakávané sociálne roly, správanie, ale aj predsudky, stereotypy, hodnotenia a sebahodnotenia, predstavy o tom, čo je a čo nie je pre ženu alebo muža správne a vhodné. Od očakávaných sociálnych roľí je v praxi už iba kúsok k rodovým stereotypom, ktoré zo života dobre poznáme. / Gender is actually gender (sex) viewed from a sociological perspective. It is a social construction to which attributed or expected social roles are attached – behavior, but also prejudices, stereotypes, assessments and self-evaluations, ideas about what is and what is not right and appropriate for a woman or a man. In practice, it is only a short distance from expected social roles to the gender stereotypes that we know well from life.*

The perception of stereotypical ideas determines the argumentative power of a stereotype's topos as an established system of attitudes, modes of judgment, and behavior that directly and negatively impact reality. Semantic indicators include expressions such as *rodový stereotyp, stereotypné predstavy, stereotypné očakávania* (gender stereotype, stereotypical ideas, stereotypical expectations) etc. The argumentation unfolds according to the formula: if the way a language is used supports a stereotypical idea, something in the language or in the way it is used must be changed. Stereotypical linguistic behavior is considered in the context of negative social practices that directly impact social reality and pose a threat to the normal functioning of society.

**Topos of history.** This topos, in the context of arguing the need to use inclusive language, is embodied through appealing to various facts and events as positive or negative examples. For example:

*Rakúskym sestrám sa to podarilo. <...> Rakúske feministky docieliли zmenu textu rakúskej hymny. Tamojšie politické strany sa dohodli, že upravia text štátnej hymny, ktorá krajinu v jednom z veršov opisuje ako „domovinu veľkých synov“. Po niekol'koročných diskusiách sa v hymne objavia aj „dcéry“ národa. / Austrian sisters have succeeded. <...> Austrian feminists have achieved a change in the text of the Austrian anthem. The country's political parties have agreed to amend the text of the national anthem, which describes the country in one of its verses as the “homeland of great sons”. After several years of discussions, the “daughters” of the nation will also appear in the anthem.*

**Diskusia o rodovo nestereotypnom zámene, z ktorého sa nedá určiť pohlavie osoby, prebiehala vo Švédsku od roku 2012. Výraz „hen“ zaviedli v škandinávskej krajine v roku 2015 a používajú ho ako neutrálny výraz vedľa „hon“ a „han“, čiže ona a on. / The discussion about the gender-non-stereotypical pronoun, from which it is not possible to determine the sex of a person, has been ongoing in Sweden since 2012. The term "hen" was introduced in the Scandinavian country in 2015 and is used as a neutral term alongside "hon" and "han", meaning she and he.**

**Najmä po teroristickom útoku pred Teplárňou** upravili aj médiá svoj slovník a vo verejnom priestore sa začalo viac upozorňovať, ktoré výrazy sú správne a ktoré úplne nevhodné. / Especially after the terrorist attack in front of the Teplárska power plant, the media also adjusted their vocabulary and in the public space they began to draw more attention to which terms are correct and which are completely inappropriate.

**Tradícia umiestňovať' feminínum za maskulínum** je ďalším znakom podriadeného vnímania žien a je sotva náhodná. Pochádza ešte z 18. storočia, keď toto pravidlo zaviedli presne z toho dôvodu, aby potvrdili, že „najvyššia bytosť je vo všetkých jazykoch mužského rodu, rovnako ako je i mužské pohlavie nadradené a význačnejšie...“ Zdá sa vám takýto prístup v súčasnosti ešte opodstatnený a udržateľný? / The tradition of placing the feminine after the masculine is another sign of the subordinate perception of women and is hardly accidental. It dates back to the 18th century, when this rule was introduced precisely to confirm that "the highest being is in all languages masculine, just as the male sex is superior and more prominent..." Does such an approach still seem justified and sustainable to you today?

A historical *topos* is an argumentative framework in which the justification is a reference to a specific event, perceived as a positive or negative experience. This *topos* is identified through an implicit or explicit reference to a precedent fact, which may only be mentioned in the text or described in more detail. The argumentation is based on the following formula: if previous experience teaches us that a certain action has certain consequences, then a need arises to perform this action or refrain from it. A historical *topos* is an effective way to argue for the need for linguistic change, as it appeals not only to emotions but also to rational data, i.e., to concrete facts that took place in reality.

## Conclusion

The topoi identified in Slovak media discourse on the need for gender-specific language inclusivity represent only part of a broader set of argumentative frameworks used in media communications on this topic. For analysis in this article, we selected the main types of topoi, which differ in frequency of use and argumentative force. It should be noted that all of the aforementioned topoi are closely intertwined, forming a specific argumentative strategy in support of gender-specific language changes. The conducted research allows us to conclude that the main arguments in media communications on this topic include the notions that inclusive language is non-discriminatory, gender- neutral, accepting, and free of gender-specific stereotypes. Inclusive language is interpreted as an integral attribute of a democratic society. Its use allows us to address gender-specific social issues and positively influences the social climate. However, it should be noted that all of the above-mentioned argumentative schemes associated with the installation of inclusive language are also widely used in media discourse about its uselessness/redundancy, which indicates their potential substantive argumentative ambivalence.

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