

Rhetoric in the Digital Age: A Comprehensive Framework for Formalization, Collection, Annotation, Detection, and Interpretation of Rhetorical Figures

Doktorandenkolloquium mit

Presenter: Ramona Kühn

am Mittwoch, 29.5.2024 um 14:00 Uhr

im HS 13, IM, Innstr. 33 der Universität Passau

oder auch per Zoom (der Zoomlink wurde am 22.5. gemailt)

(Betreuer: Dr. Mitrovic)

Rhetorical figures, such as metaphors, irony, or antithesis, are language constructions that make language more interesting or persuasive. From a linguistic perspective, rhetorical figures have been studied since the ancient Greeks. Since then, numerous approaches and attempts have been made to categorize rhetorical figures and unify their definitions. However, this led to an even greater variance. This makes it hard to study those figures from a computational perspective, as formal models are missing. Nevertheless, studies showed how crucial the automatic detection of those figures is, as they are often used in hate speech, fake news, argumentation, or populist speeches.

In this thesis, we want to focus on rhetorical figures in the German language in the digital era. Our goal is to build a holistic framework to formalize, collect, and detect rhetorical figures. We will build an ontology of over 100 rhetorical figures in German to achieve this goal. Based on this ontology, we will develop a web application that helps untrained users to annotate text containing rhetorical figures. To allow a more natural interaction, we will use retrieval augmented generation (RAG) on our ontology to convey rhetorical knowledge to language models. We will then develop efficient detection algorithms for various rhetorical figures, comparing both rule-based and deep-learning approaches. One of the figures we will focus on is “antithesis”. As it shows contrast, we assume that it is often used in a populist and persuasive context. Therefore, we investigate the use of antithesis in a populist dataset to verify our assumption.