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PUPPETS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH LANGUAGE - HAND PUPPETS AND THEIR LANGUAGE USE

Kulcsszavak: *language use; Muppets; phonetics; phonology; puppets*

The theme of my research is the relationship between puppets and language. This research delves into the fascinating realm where puppets and language intersect, with a specific focus on hand puppets, also known as muppet-type puppets. After providing a brief overview of the history of puppetry and a linguistic outline, my aim is to present the linguistic elements that form the basis of and colour the creation of a character. My hypothesis is that puppets reach their physical boundaries at some point, and beyond that, they are helped by various linguistic tools. As there is very little literature available on this topic, I support my thesis with empirical research. Using qualitative methods, complemented by in-depth interviews, I also shed light on why people do not find literature on this topic. Puppeteers from North America addressed my pragmatic inquiries. Based on the responses of the puppeteers, I am seeking answers to questions such as how it is possible to create many characters with a single voice, whether the nasal tone is used frequently, what phonetic or phonological phenomena are used in addition to meaningful words, and whether vocal compensation is necessary when the puppet reaches its physical limits. After analysing the responses and providing a linguistic explanation, I demonstrate the unique relationship between puppets and language by drawing on the television shows *The Muppet Show* and *Sesame Street*, created by Jim Henson, to analyse both the physical features and language use of some famous characters. In examining the characters, I draw on the literature to present and explain the linguistic phenomenon in detail. The choice of characters is based on the variety and colour of their language use, thus enriching the narrative. Among the characters is Kermit the Frog from the *Muppet Show*, examining his language use and how it changed when the performers changed. Also, the repertoire of Count von Count from *Sesame Street* is analysed, comparing it with the basis of the vampire character, Bela Lugosi, in the *Dracula* (1931) movie. The paper thus contributes to the field of puppetry and linguistic research and offers a new perspective on the relationship between character formation and language use.