

Abstract

The thesis deals with the comparison of Andrej Babiš and Petr Fiala's communication during the election campaign before the 2021 elections to the Chamber of Deputies. The specific subject of the research is the communication of both actors towards each other during the pre-election debates broadcast between August and October 2021. The thesis tries to answer the question whether Andrej Babiš used negative campaigning techniques to a greater extent than Petr Fiala. Thus, the theoretical part describes the key concepts related to negative campaigning. To analyse the actual communication during the debates, a method based on the work of William L. Benoit is applied, dividing both actors' statements into three categories: attack, praise, defence. The content analysis of the rhetoric of both actors in the debates and the classification of their statements into these categories shows that the negative campaign was applied to a greater extent by Petr Fiala and not by Andrej Babiš. Petr Fiala more often used attacks and critical statements, whereas Andrej Babiš was more often defensive in his statements. Thus, the theory of the challenger and the defender was confirmed at the same time. The analysis also showed that Petr Fiala more often than Andrej Babiš used attacks directed at the character of the opponent. Among the topics that were most often used for attacks in the debates were anti- pandemic measures, rising prices and the state budget.