

Allegorie als Interpretationsschema – kognitiv poetische Untersuchungen

Abstract

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The dissertation studies the allegory as a cognitive phenomenon with special respect to the role of construal, analogy and literary schemas in ensuring consistency of allegorical interpretations. The rhetorical and functional-cognitive definitions of allegory highlight two main characteristics of allegory: consistency and ambiguity. The starting point of my theoretical investigations is the assumption, that the consistency and ambiguity of allegorical interpretations are based on the operationalization and specification of a general schema of interpretation. I investigate the process of allegoresis in a functional-cognitive approach with the methodology of the cognitive poetics (Bergs & Schneck 2013; Freeman 2007a; 2007b; Stockwell 2015) to determine the relevant factors in activating the allegorical schema of interpretation. The focus is on the interaction of the following cognitive factors in the process of allegoresis: construal (Langacker 2008), analogy (Thagard 1999; Gentner 1983; Holyoak & Thagard 1995) and literary schemas (Stockwell 2002). This main problem of the dissertation is divided into two sub-problems:

P1: The role of construal in activating the allegorical schema of interpretation, describing patterns of construal in allegorical texts with the methods of cognitive poetics

P2: The role of the type of the analogy in activating the allegorical schema of interpretation

The Case study 1 focuses on P1, the Case study 2 focuses on P2. The aim of Case study 1 is twofold: to determine the relevant concepts of cognitive linguistics in describing the typical patterns of construal in allegory and test these concepts by analyzing the text Walter Benjamin: *Möwen* with the methodology of cognitive poetics. The text *Möwen* will be analyzed as an allegory of text interpretation (interpretation A1). The Case study 1 aims to exploit the concepts of the Cognitive Grammar of Langacker (2008) above the sentence and test them as cognitive poetic tools. From the sentence profile (usually an object) I conclude which conceptual domains were activated. The sentence profile is usually an OBJECT concept. The activated conceptual domains will be described in terms of the literary schemas of Stockwell (2002). On the basis of the theoretical findings of Case study 1 I conclude that applying the concepts of the Cognitive Grammar of Langacker (2008) above the sentence on the allegorical text *Möwen* does not yield

a clear-cut result in determining the sentence profile. Furthermore on the basis of the sentence analysis I infer, that the sentence profiles does not support a regular shift of the attention between the source domain of the allegory (FLIGHT OF THE SEAGULLS) and the target domain of the allegory (THE PROCESS OF INTERPRETATION). It can be noticed, that the patterns of construal are showing symbolically the regular shift of the attention between the source domain of the allegory and the target domain of the allegory, but the patterns of construal alone can not be responsible for the consistency of the interpretation A1. The interpreter removes the potential inconsistencies on the basis of another literary schemas and conceptual domains are not activated by the sentence profiles but associated with them.

The Case Study 2 is based on the cognitive psychological experiment of Okonski (2015) and focuses on the type of the analogy at the basis of the allegory. The participants of the experiment of Okonski (2015) interpret the poem of Adrienne Rich: *Diving into the Wreck* in different settings. The central claim of Okonski (2015) is that allegorical interpretation is a default mode of interpretation and the results of the experiment seem to confirm this assumption about the fundamentality of allegorical interpretation mode. On the basis of the findings of Okonski (2015) in Case Study 2 I test the following hypothesis in an empirical pilot study with naive average readers: If the analogy at the basis of the allegory is a structural analogy, the allegorical interpretation will be prominent. If the analogy at the basis of the allegory is a formal analogy, the allegorical interpretation will be less prominent. The results show that in case of structural analogies the naive average readers tend to interpret it allegorical by each literary schema settings (e. g. +/- verse). But if the analogy at the basis of the allegory is a formal allegory without additional allegorical triggers (e. g. schema setting + verse) they tend to interpret it literal. Accordingly it can be inferred, that literary schemas are constitutive factors in activating the allegorical schema of interpretation. This refines the hypothesis of Okonski (2015) about the fundamentality and pervasivity of allegorical interpretation and sheds light on the conditions of activating the allegorical schema of interpretation.

In summary, at this stage of research the following answers can be formulated to P1 and P2:

P1: The role of construal in activating the allegorical schema of interpretation, describing patterns of construal in allegorical texts with the methods of cognitive poetics

P1A: The patterns of construal show symbolically the regular shift of the attention between the source domain of the allegory (FLIGHT OF THE SEAGULLS) and the target domain of the allegory (THE PROCESS OF INTERPRETATION), but the patterns of construal

alone can not be responsible for the consistency of the interpretation A1. The interpreter removes the potential inconsistencies on the basis of another literary schemas and conceptual domains are not activated by the sentence profiles but associated with them.

P2: The role of the type of the analogy in activating the allegorical schema of interpretation

P2A: If the analogy at the basis of the allegory is a structural analogy, the allegorical interpretation will be prominent. If the analogy at the basis of the allegory is a formal analogy, the allegorical interpretation will be less prominent.

The insights gained by the doctoral dissertation are the following: Firstly, the patterns of construal show symbolically the regular shift of the attention between the source domain of the allegory and the target domain of the allegory, but they alone can not be responsible for the consistency of the interpretation. Secondly, literary schemas play a constitutive role in ensuring consistency of allegorical interpretations. Thirdly, structural analogies at the basis of the allegory play a constitutive role in ensuring the consistency and prominence of allegorical interpretations.

Literature

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