

Tanulmány

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On the anaphoric functioning of rhyme¹

The case of sloppy identity

Abstract

The study aims to model rhyme as a structure and process of figurative meaning creation, from a cognitive poetic point of view. In my proposal, rhyme is described as non-canonical anaphoric semantic structure, i.e. a specific reference-point configuration. The first member of the rhyming relation serves as a reference-point during the meaning generating process, from which another entity of the text world can be accessed and conceptualized. Consequently, rhyme increases the coherence of the text, at the same time, however, enriching the referential complexity of the discourse. The poetic nature of rhyme conceived as linguistic structure is the result of its twofold semantic functioning in the proposed approach, in that it contributes to the development of the substantial implicitness and referential complexity of lyric discourses. The paper elaborates the anaphoric model of rhyme with the terms of cognitive grammar, through an analysis of the problem of sloppy identity, i.e. the complex identification process of the subject/trajector in the clause by means of processing rhyme.

Keywords: rhyme, indirect anaphor, metonymic antecedence, sloppy identity

0 Introduction

The question of whether rhyme has a meaning generating function or not seems to be one of the most difficult points in the Hungarian metrical tradition. While the Jakobsonian poetic theory (Jakobson 1969) establishes the semantic functioning of rhyme in relation to the poetic function of language, and some Hungarian metrical works (e.g. Gáldi 1961) acknowledge this explanation, the canonical theory of Hungarian verse and metrics (Szepes & Szerdahelyi 1981, Szepes 1989) refuses to accept the semantic consequences of acoustic connection between the members of rhyme, considering it as a “pseudo-function” (Szepes & Szerdahelyi 1981: 101). In this paper, I elaborate a cognitive linguistic explanation according to which rhyme is a non-canonical anaphoric configuration: the conceptualizer can develop an anaphoric connection between the rhyme-fellows, parallel with the acoustic processing, i.e. rhyme yields a kind of conceptual grouping through which rhyme contributes to the referential complexity of the text-world of the poem.

The study aims to model the meaning generating function of rhyme, based on the anaphora explanation in cognitive grammar (see chapter 1). The secondary aim of the paper is to investigate the complex referentiality of lyric texts through an analysis of rhyme structures in

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two Hungarian modern poems. Consequently, this paper has a cognitive poetic orientation, since the main goal of modelling the anaphoric functioning of rhyme is to demonstrate how rhyme plays a role in the interpretation of a poetic text, in other words how rhyme makes a poetic experience possible; the cognitive grammatical analysis serves to model the specific, non-canonical meaning structure of rhyme.

There are possible alternative explanations of rhyme meaning in cognitive linguistics, of which the most productive is perhaps the conceptual integration model of rhyme. Consider the second rhyme structure (the underlined words) in the stanza below (quoted from the poem “Nyár” of Attila József).

- | | |
|---|--|
| (1) Aranyos lapály, gólyahír,
áramló könnyűségű <u>rét</u> .
Ezüst derűvel ráz a nyír
egy szellőcskét és leng az <u>ég</u> . | ‘Golden plain, marsh marigold,
Streaming light <u>field</u> .
The birch is shaking a little breeze
with silver serenity and <u>the sky</u> is flying.’ ² |
|---|--|

The members of the *rét* – *ég* (‘field’ – ‘the sky’) rhyme are connected not only in sound: through processing rhyme, a conceptual configuration is developed between the meaning of the rhyme-members: the FIELD and the SKY can be corresponded to each other along the shared conceptual attributes (LIGHTNESS, AERIALNESS) also elaborated by the rest of the stanza. Rhyme symbolizes these conceptual correspondences iconically; it has a conceptual integration configuration in the background. The members of the rhyme are input space builders, and the conceptual background can be formed through building a generic space. The blended space establishes the meaning of the rhyme, as demonstrated in figure 1.

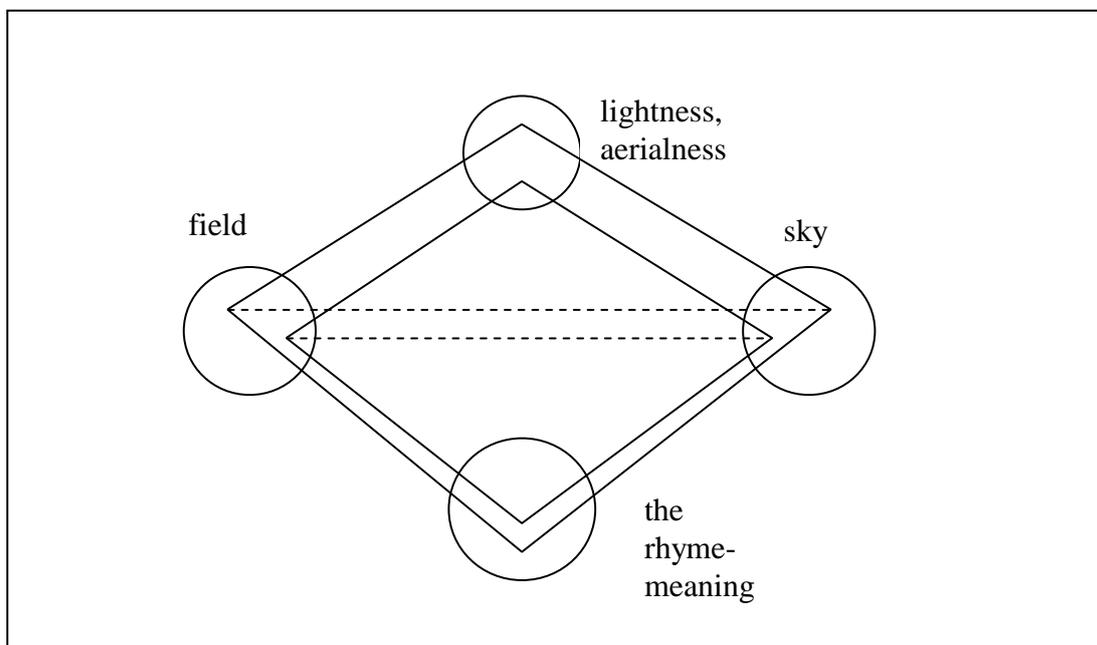


Figure 1. Conceptual integration model of the *rét* – *ég* rhyme

² This and the other translations in the study – which are rough translations in prose – are mine.

As a result of this integrating process, new conceptual connections emerge from processing rhyme, hence it multiplies the conceptual connections between the entities of the text world; so rhyme increases the coherence of a text, according to the network model of coherent text representation (see Givón 2007). However, as Turner (2007) pointed out, blend is not a meaning structure; it is part of background cognition, thus with a conceptual integration model we can explain only the conceptual motivatedness of rhyme, not the meaning structure arising from it. Therefore, it is necessary to describe the meaning connection between rhyme-members with the terms of a theory modelling the foreground of cognition, i.e. the semantic configurations of language. Cognitive grammar has proved a useful tool to achieve this aim. From a cognitive grammatical point of view, the relation between the rhyme-fellows is a kind of anaphoric relation, in which the first rhyme is an antecedent, and the second rhyme is a lexical anaphora. I detail the cognitive linguistic model of anaphoric configuration in the next section, and then I demonstrate how it can be applied to model the semantic structure of rhyme.

1 The cognitive linguistic explanation of anaphora

According to the basic theoretical works of Ronald Langacker (1996) and Karen van Hoek (1997, 2003, 2007), anaphoric structure can be described as a kind of reference point configuration (Langacker 2008: 83–85), in which the entity first activated is the reference point, and the entity accessed conceptually via the reference point is the target. The set of potential targets is the dominion of the reference point. The anaphoric structure can be grasped as a kind of conceptual grouping with the terms of the reference point relationship, in which the antecedent functions as the reference point, and the anaphora is the target accessed from the antecedent. From a procedural perspective, the anaphoric structure is a two-directional searching process: the first sub-process is identifying the antecedent (with which the anaphoric component is related conceptually and referentially), and then the conceptualizer can establish the whole reference point configuration, elaborating conceptually the anaphora as the target from the antecedent.

The identification of the antecedent is the main point of the cognitive linguistic explanation, because it is the basis for extending the category of anaphoric phenomena beyond the canonical co-referential instantiations. Langacker (1996) draws attention to the following: (i) the reference point configuration can extend across sentence boundaries; (ii) to elaborate the reference point configuration there is no need for an explicit antecedent, but for a conceptually salient reference point. In this regard, the canonical solution is the explicit symbolization of a reference point; this is the case of strict antecedence. The non-canonical way of developing anaphoric structure is through metonymic/neighbourhood antecedence, when an elaborated conceptual structure offers access to the required reference point. The anaphoric configuration with metonymic antecedence is an indirect anaphora. The cognitive theory of anaphora sketched above is based on previous investigations: Gensler (1977) and Hirschberg & Ward (1991) concluded in their researches that – unlike in the generativist explanation – anaphora is not a syntactic phenomenon. Non-canonical, metonymic antecedence is a specific way of grouping entities conceptually. An activated conceptual structure has a properly salient substructure, which functions as the antecedent in the

discourse. Consider the sentences below, in which the underlined expressions form indirect anaphoric structures based on metonymic antecedence.

(2)

Remember Mary's party? Wasn't she just the neatest girl you ever saw?

(3)

She speaks excellent French even though she's never lived there.

There is a frame-based connection between the underlined elements: between the concept of a PARTY and its PARTICIPANTS, as well as between the concept of a LANGUAGE and its SPEECH AREA. These conceptual connections make a metonymic shift from the frame to a particular element, or from one frame-element to another, possible. It is also the background process of indirect anaphora.

2 The anaphoric structure of rhyme

The crucial sub-process of establishing an anaphoric configuration – especially in the case of indirect anaphora – is to identify the antecedent. Karen van Hoek (2003: 182) defines the factors that influence the selection of a reference point from the textual context: these are prominence, linear order and conceptual connectivity. Consider that (i) the first member of the rhyme has phonological and hence discursive prominence, (ii) there is a conceptual connection between rhyme-fellows modelled with the terms of conceptual integration, and (iii) the first rhyme has linear priority, it can function as metonymic antecedent, and the second rhyme-member can be elaborated as the target of a reference point configuration. At this point, we can realize that the generation of rhyme meaning is not a unidirectional process: the anaphoric semantic structure is the consequence of an emerging conceptual integration on the one hand, but on the other, the metonymic, frame-based relationship established between the rhyme-fellows yields new conceptual connections, enriching the conceptual background.

With the help of the semantic model of rhyme proposed here, we can refine the description of rhyme meaning demonstrated above.

(4)

“(…) áramló könnyűségű rét, (...) leng az ég”

The conceptualizer elaborates the rhyme structure semantically when he processes its second member: he identifies the first member as the antecedent/reference point through a backward searching process starting from the second member, and then, again, accesses the second member as the anaphora/target. Consequently, the conceptualizer anchors the rhyme-fellows together anaphorically: he begins the semantic elaboration of rhyme from the concept of RÉT (FIELD), and activates the concept of ÉG (SKY) in the dominion of the concept RÉT (FIELD), hence he associates two conceptually delimited areas of the text world; in this case, two vertically distinct horizontal regions are related referentially. The referential connections can be detailed further through running the blend, which strengthens the frame-based relationship between the rhyme-fellows. From these follows that in the case of rhyme the meaning creating

process has a specific order: at first the language user recognizes the possible conceptual relation between the rhyme fellows, from the first member to the second, according to the phonological resemblance; then he elaborates this relation semantically through establishing an anaphoric (reference point) configuration, which sub-process refines the conceptual connections within the rhyme along the symbolic structures of it; thus the conceptualizer enriches the conceptual background in the course of building the anaphoric semantic structure of the rhyme. The whole process of it can be characterised as a bidirectional meaning creation.

I examine another example from the same poem of Attila József. In this case, the first member of the rhyme is a verbal expression, hence the conceptual integration model seems to be problematic in the description of rhyme meaning.

(5)

Jön a darázs, jön, megszagol,	‘The wasp is coming, it is sniffing,
dörmög s a vadrózsára <u>száll</u> .	<u>It is</u> growling and <u>flying</u> on the briar.
A mérges rózsa meghajol -	The angry briar is bowing –
vörös, de karcsú még a <u>nyár</u> .	<u>The summer</u> is red but slim so far.’

We can start the analysis of the semantic structure with the verbal component of the rhyme. The conceptual structure of the verb *száll* (‘flies’) has a focally prominent schematic participant, the primary figure of the process called the trajector in cognitive grammar. In the process of construal, the trajector of the verb is salient enough to serve as a reference point from which potential targets can be accessed. (The only specification of these targets is the ability to fly in both literal and in figurative senses). In terms of cognitive anaphora theory the salient subpart of the schematic structure of the verb (i.e. the trajector) becomes the metonymic antecedent of the configuration, and the second member of the rhyme, the *nyár* (‘summer’) nominal, becomes the target component. This semantic analysis confirms that an anaphoric configuration can be based not only on linguistically explicated semantic components, but also conceptually accessible and properly salient (sub)structures. The other conclusion of the analysis is the affirmation of extending the notion of anaphora from co-reference configurations to cases based on conceptual connectivity. Rhyme may be a very peripheral instantiation of the anaphora schema; however, a good rhyme is motivated by a strong conceptual relationship between its members, and through it, rhyme contributes to the referential complexity of the text. As we have seen, the meaning of the rhyme can be related to other figurative semantic structures, such as metaphor and metonymy. To properly understand this relationship certain other cognitive grammatical notions are needed.

3 The notion of sloppy identity

As a result of investigating the instantiations of pronominal anaphora from a cognitive grammatical point of view, Langacker (1996) circumscribes the phenomenon of sloppy identity. The vantage point of analysing the structure is metonymic antecedence, when an explicit pronominal anaphora has a schematic component as its antecedent. Consider the following sentences (for other examples see the appendix of Hirschberg & Ward 1991: 118–119).

(6)

Jeff raises his hand, and Bill did so too.

(7)

Peter shouted his mouth off, and Mark could not keep it shut either.

These sentences have two alternative readings: there is an interpretation in which two actors do the same activity with a part of their bodies ('Jeff and Bill raise Jeff's hand', or 'Peter and Mark shouted Peter's mouth off'); in the other, the two people take part in two referentially distinct events (both actors manipulate their own bodies). It is obvious that language users regard the second interpretation as natural and conventional, but the cause of this evaluation is probably worth detailing. The key of the interpretation is that the real antecedent of the pronominal anaphor is not the elaborated participant (the linguistically explicated landmark) of the conceptual scene, but the salient participant or substructure of an activated schema. In other words, there are two analogous events on the objective scene, which are distinct on the instantiation plane of construal, while on the type plane, i.e. on the plane of activated conceptual schemas, these events are categorized and sanctioned by the same schematic structure. This complex conceptual and referential relationship is demonstrated in the following diagram. (The circles and the squares designate the schematic participants of the process symbolized by the verb, the bold lines indicate that the schema on the type plane is in the foreground of attention in the course of construal, and the broken lines designate the sanctioning relationship between the schema and instantiation, according to the marking conventions of cognitive grammar.)

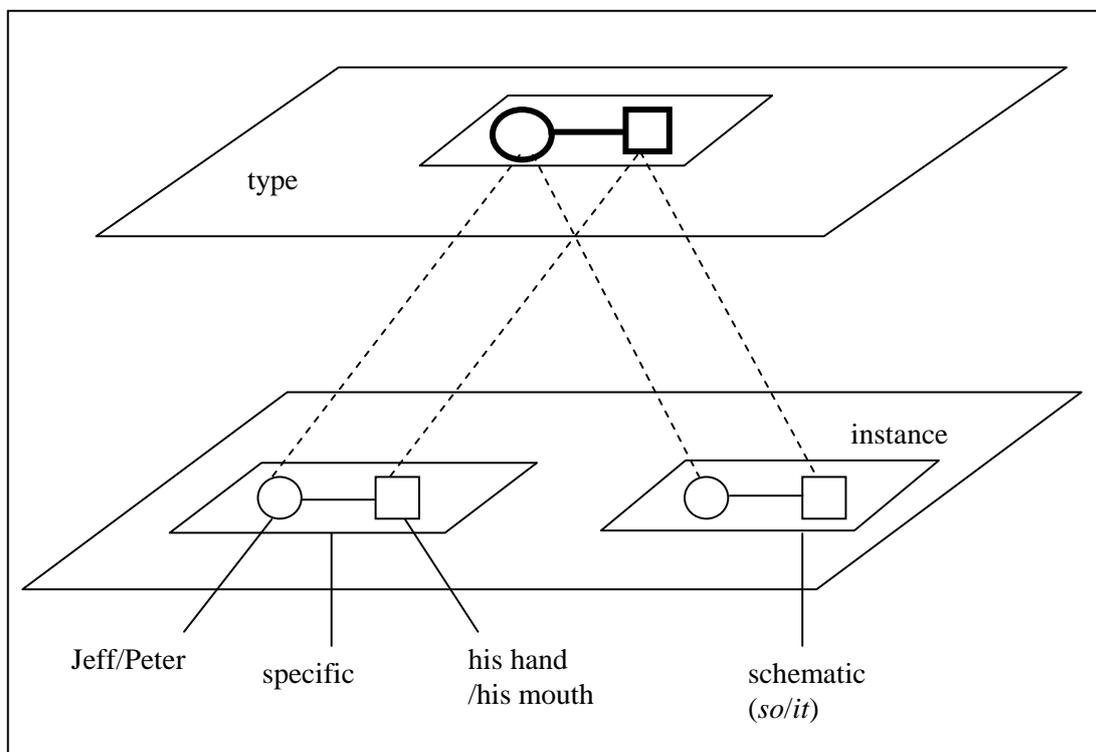


Figure 2. Schematic semantic structure of (6) and (7) sentences

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We can see in the diagram that there is a surface analogy between the actual events in the scene, which makes their conceptual joining possible. Consequently, the instantiations are identical on the type plane, thus the pronominal symbolization is sufficient, and is interpretable without any problem. This phenomenon is called sloppy identity in the linguistic tradition. In order to apply the semantic explanation of sloppy identity to rhyming structures and to investigate how the notion of sloppy identity is useful in the explanation of the anaphoric functioning of rhyme, it is worth re-analyzing the stanza from Attila József's poem.

(8)

Jön a darázs, jön, megszagol,	‘The wasp is coming, it is sniffing,
dörmög s a vadrózsára <u>száll</u> .	<u>It is growling</u> and <u>flying</u> on the briar.
A mérges rózsa meghajol -	The angry briar is bowing -
vörös, de karcsú még a <u>nyár</u> .	<u>The summer</u> is red but slim so far.’

In the course of construing the objective scene, the schema of *száll* (‘flies’) becomes active, its trajector is elaborated by the *darázs* (‘wasp’) nominal. However, rhyme initiates another semantic relationship, in which the trajector of the verb functions as antecedent, and its anaphora is the second member of the rhyme, the *nyár* (‘summer’) nominal. Thus, rhyme makes a sloppy interpretation possible, in which the activated schematic structure of the verb offers a sanctioning structure on the type plane, and hence the two nominals belong to the same schema. The complexity of sloppy interpretation resides in the difference between the processes related through rhyme. As a consequence of rhyme, the referentially distinct events of the wasp’s flying (physical motion) and the summers’ flying (metaphorical motion, based on the TIME IS MOTION conceptual metaphor) are mapped onto each other, establishing a new conceptual and referential relationship, not only between the entities of the text world (between the WASP and the SUMMER), but also between the sanctioning schemas on the type plane. The following figure demonstrates this complex semantic process, mapping two phases of the construal process onto one diagram. (The dotted-broken arrow indicates the second phase of construal, the emergence of correspondences between the schemas on the type plane.)

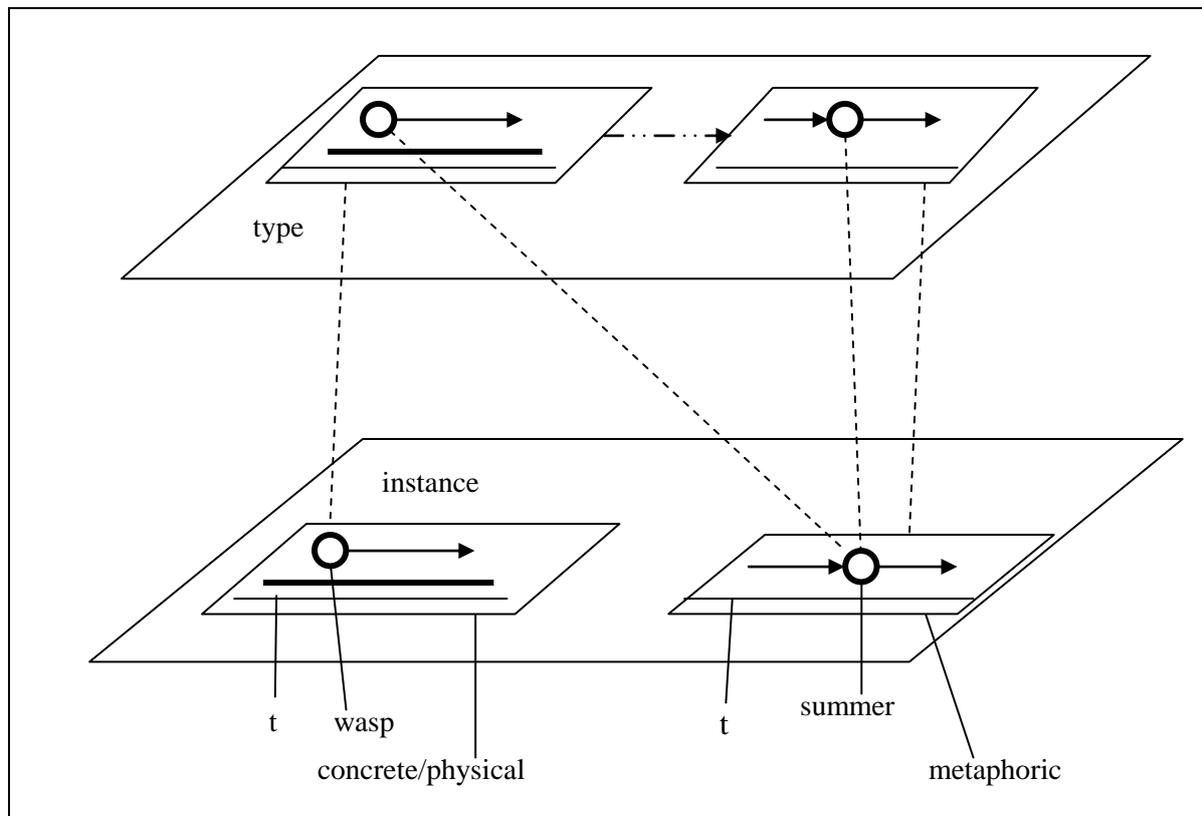


Figure 3. Semantic structure of sloppy interpretation in the case of *száll – nyár* rhyme

As we can see, the essential poetic function of rhyme is not only to initiate various conceptual connections between the entities of the text world, but also to map one schematic semantic structure onto another, which makes the referential interpretation of the poem quite different compared to prose. In this semantic model of rhyme, the conceptual background is partly a motivating structure of rhyme meaning, but on the other hand, it is the result of the mappings established on the type plane, between the schemas, since the conceptualizer elaborates the conceptual integration of *SUMMER* and *WASP* as a consequence of their sloppy identification through a verbal schema.

4 Complex analysis of a poetic text

In the last section of the paper, I try to apply the proposed semantic model of rhyme to a whole poem, demonstrating its interpretive efficiency. In addition, the analysis sheds some light upon the multiple sources of poetic effect: as we will see, rhyme, inversion in word order and the division of the text into lines contribute to some kind of referential ambiguity in the interpretation, which results in the complexity of the text world of the poem. For the sake of simplicity I have chosen a very short poem containing only four lines, because, due to its brevity, it can be demonstrated appropriately how the microstructures of the composition take part in the interpretation of the macrostructure. The analysed poem is by Noémi László, and is entitled “Ahol lakunk” (‘Where we live’).

(9)

Ahol lakunk, elül a szél,

where 1pl-live, 3sg-drop the wind

a téboly részegen **henyél**,

the fury adv-drunk 3sg-idle

hasát a nappal sütteti

3sgPOSS-tummy in the sun 3sg-bask

a szerelem, s **félrebeszél**.

the love, and 3sg-rave

The first important connection is symbolized by nominal inflection in Hungarian (designated by the short bold arrow): *a szerelem hasát [a nappal] sütteti* ('the love basks its tummy [by the sun]'). It is a possessive structure, which is a reference point configuration in cognitive grammar: according to its semantic arrangement, the possessor functions as the reference point from which the possessed entity is accessible. In the poem the LOVE participant becomes a reference point in a strict interpretation. However, the FURY entity also functions as the metonymic antecedent (designated by the short broken arrow): because of inversion the conceptualizer processes the nominal with a possessive inflection (symbolizing the possessed entity in Hungarian) before he processes the original possessor, and from the inflectional morpheme he makes an inference and identifies the possessor with the processed entity of FURY. Thus, inversion initiates a sloppy interpretation in which FURY and LOVE are related through the possessive structure, both functioning as reference points. Consider the following diagram, in which the bold broken line designates the sloppy identification of the FURY participant with the primary figure of the other verbal schema.

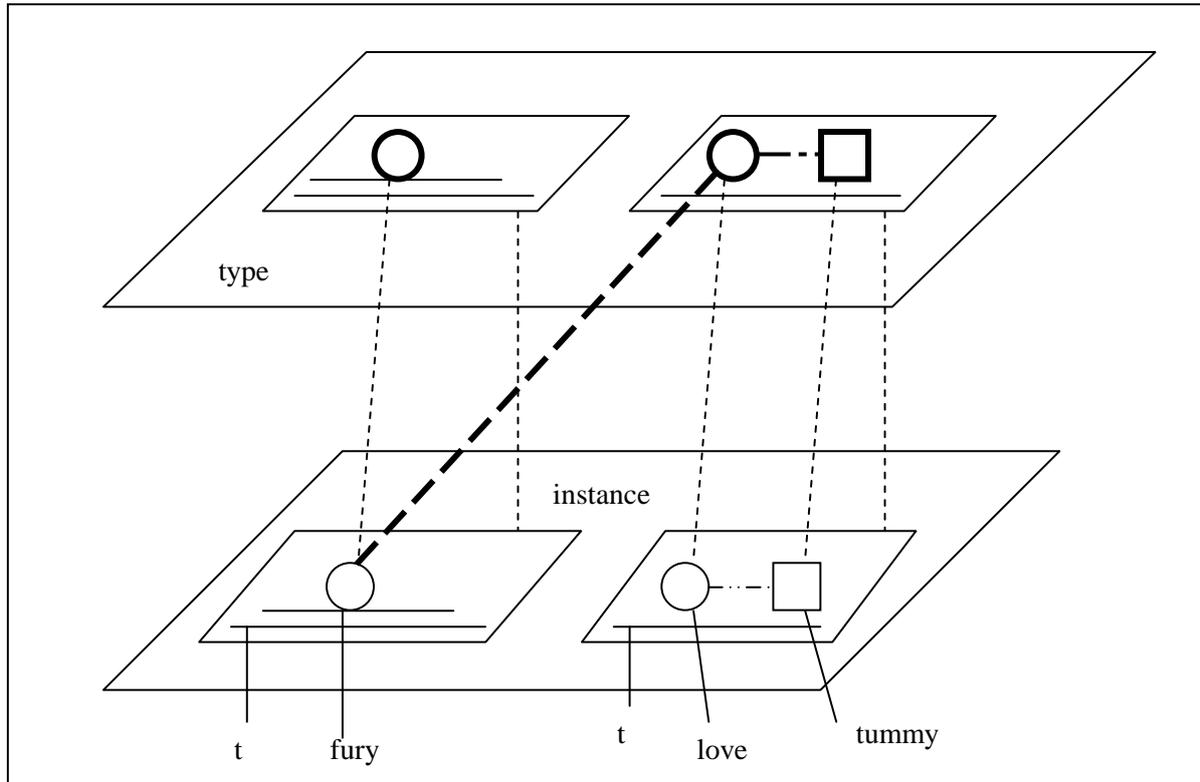


Figure 4. Schematic structure of sloppy interpretation initiated by inflection and inversion

The rhyme at the end of the second and fourth lines increases the referential connection between FURY and LOVE through another construal of sloppy identity, in the course of processing the indirect anaphoric structure. The first member of the rhyme (*henyél* ‘idles’) provides its primary figure as a salient reference point, from which the prominent participant of the second member of the rhyme, i.e. the trajector of the verb *félrebeszél* (‘raves’) is elaborated conceptually as the target of the configuration.

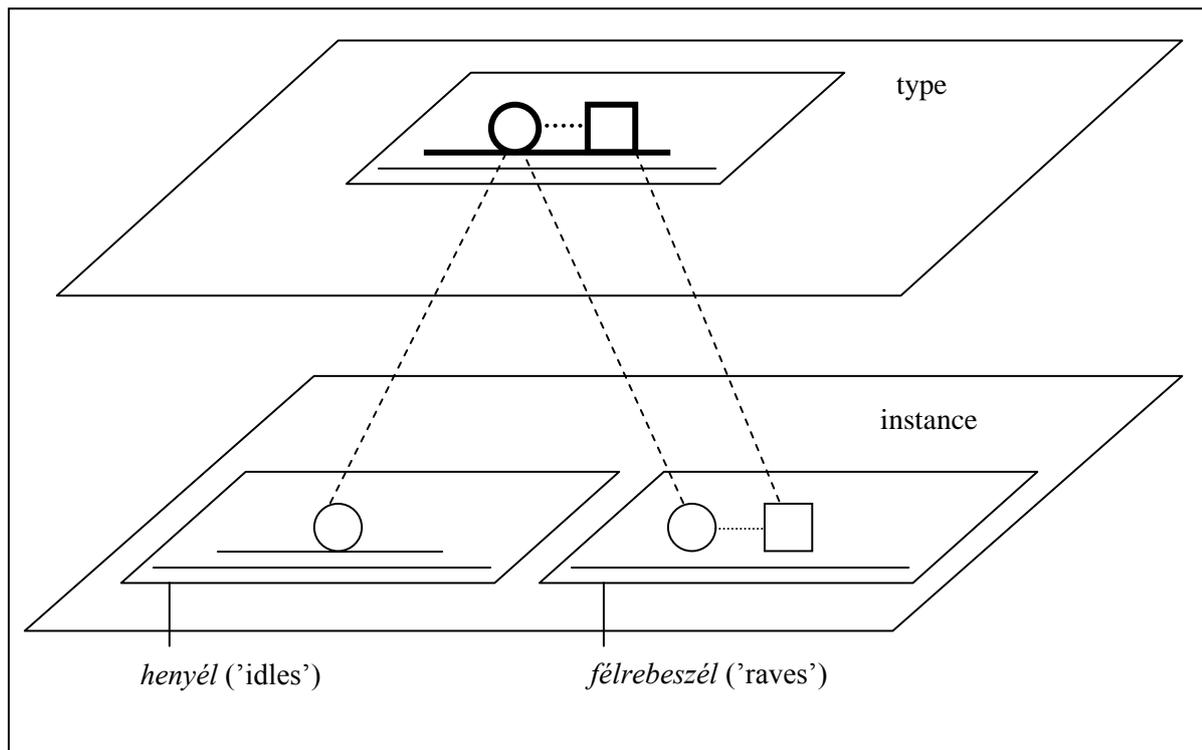


Figure 5. Schematic structure of sloppy identification initiated by the rhyme

There are two effects of the rhyme: (i) the FURY participant elaborates the primary figure of both verbs; (ii) the schemas of the verbs are mapped onto each other, and some correspondences emerge between their focal participants. As a result, rhyme supports the sloppy interpretation initiated by inversion in word order; however, not only do the entities in the text world become referentially connected, but the verbal schemas function as component structures of a complex anaphoric composite.

The conceptual specification of the region where the poetic subject lives can be characterized by the mental disposition of suppression, derangement and aimlessness. These feelings are related to the state of love, and in my interpretation, the poem aims to grasp the essence of love and its effects on the environment in the subject's emotions and cognition through poetic structures. Among the poetic structures of the text, rhyme has great significance in representing the emotions and mental states experienced by the poetic subject through developing referential ambiguity at the conceptual and semantic construal of the objective scene in the text world. The anaphoric model of rhyme seems to be an adequate explanation for the vagueness of poetry, because the semantic description of the functioning of rhyme brings the meaning of the text from the obscurity of individual emotions and intuitions into the light of analysis of linguistic structures using the terms of cognitive grammar. From this perspective, the dynamicity and multiplicity of interpretation reside in the different possibilities of the conceptual grouping of entities in the text world symbolized iconically by the indirect anaphoric configuration and sloppy identification of rhyme.

The poetic subject performs through language the sensations and emotions felt through constantly being in love in the area where she lives (i.e. in an environmental specification), a feeling which is similar to fury, drunkenness and aimless idling. The poetic text does not

represent these feelings and emotions, nor does it mirror them by using linguistic structures, but it forms their image – not an image similar to the experienced state, but the image of the experienced state. As Margaret Freeman (2009: 174) points out, feeling, form and meaning are “all intertwined components of the cognitive processes of the embodied human mind or “minding” in language and literature”, and the most important task of cognitive poetics is to find ways to explain and model these connections. With the anaphoric model of rhyme, I have tried to demonstrate how we could carry out this task in relation to rhyme.

5 Conclusions

The most important findings from the cognitive linguistic modelling of rhyme can be summarized as follows. Rhyme increases the referential density of a poetic text by initiating new correspondences and extensions at the schematic level of construal and conceptualization, in the process of dynamic meaning generation. The main result of processing rhyme is that the conceptualizer develops new conceptual connections and correspondences between the entities in the text world. The emerging conceptual relationship can be explained semantically with the terms of indirect anaphora and metonymic antecedence. The first member of the rhyming structure functions as the antecedence, the second member is the anaphora. There is a metonymic shift from a conceptually activated frame to a frame element, or from a conceptually salient substructure of a schema to another conceptual structure. This conceptual connection is the background of the anaphoric relationship: the antecedent functions as a reference point from which the anaphoric target becomes accessible. The explanation detailed here can be applied to both nominal and verbal rhymes: in the first case, the rhyming nominals form an anaphoric configuration; in the case of verbal rhyme-fellows the focally prominent substructure of the verbal schema functions as the reference point (antecedent), or target (anaphora). An additional consequence of rhyme processing is the emergence of new correspondences between the rhyming verbal schemas: these schematic structures are mapped onto each other, or one schema sanctions the referentially distinct events symbolized by the rhyme-members. Thus, processing rhyme initiates the schematic identification of their schemas or schematic substructures. This semantic phenomenon can be characterized as sloppy identity, known from the theory of pronominal anaphora.

It is important to note that both metonymic and metaphorical processes contribute to create rhyme meaning: the metonymic shift from a frame to its participant grounds the anaphoric configuration conceptually, while the result of elaborating the configuration is the emergence of new conceptual correspondences between entities and processes similar to metaphors. The main conclusion of the description proposed is that rhyme contributes to the reference of a poem at the level of schemas, and its semantic effect develops in the dynamic process of resanctioning an elaborated instantiation. Its poetic function is to provide dynamic processes for semantic rearrangement, i.e. a specific way of minding, making the felt life of the poetic subject interpretable.

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