

Rhyme and Children's Knowledge or about One Way to the Symbol and Metaphor

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Abstract

Rhyme is originally a product of the collective consciousness. As a folklore formation it is characterized by its overlaps to natural speech, the initial acquisition of linguistic competence in terms of mastering phonetic system of the language. The rhyme is close to the game that converts in the harmony of speech and being. It is a cultural construct that symbolically models the children's being in real life. It specifically emphasizes the pantomimic or sound gesture, which becomes the starting point of its internal divergence as the genre. The rhyme is a unique cultural construction. It is like a conventionalized (text) formation and it is cultural evidence that speech is contingent on language and language is formed in speech. The rhyme is strong evidence for the unity of knowledge and emotional survival, because it is always associated with certain intellect operations and metacognitive processes. The rhyme is a metaphor of reality, its neighborhood with a fairy tale indicates the evolution of narrative formations and it is evidence that speech grows.

Keywords: rhyme, children speech, language image of world, gesture, mental models

Introduction

The question how a child understands an adult, is not new, but still actual. It is deepened by the understanding of grammatical problems or text ellipses, parentheticals, ambiguous expressions, and so on. These at first sight simple questions lead to uncovering the nature of our mental operations. There is also a question of conditionality and unconditionality in understanding the meanings and emotions in this process. In this study, we deal with the essence of rhymes, not only as a folklore and literary formation, but especially as one possible tool for building and developing imagination and symbolization in child speech. We try to catch the process of cognition mediated to a child by text in early infancy (childhood). We start from the position of cognitive linguistics, from Johnson - Lakoff's theory of conceptual metaphor. However, the question of metaphor is not developed at the level of connotation and so called lexicalized metaphors, but using the example of rhymes.

The main purpose of imagination is present outer and inner world, what helps to construct the mental world of man. Behaviorism refused both introspection and imagination. After partial rehabilitation of imagination in the 1960s there was discussion about the imagination as a tool of mental representation and it continued in the 1970s and 1980s. In parallel, knowledge about empirical nature appeared what demonstrates that the imagination serves the symbolization. Scientists have elaborated models of imagination relations to other psychological processes: the perception, thinking, memory processes, which can be divided into three groups (Sedláková, 2004, p. 271): functional models, structural and interaction models. They are proof that the image works as a symbol, even if it fulfills the function of denotation (identification), even if it fulfills the notation function (it creates a system of characters).

Symbolic processes and symbols enter into relationships with thinking. From the point of view of cognition there is a problem of creating mental representations. Some authors identify the mental representation with symbolic representation, others say that the symbol can be identified with the external structure of mental representations. The validity of such reviews is examined by applying analysis of deductive reasoning, interference, text comprehension and so on.

Symbolic processes are concerned in creating a mental representation of external and internal world, both in the case of real world and the image of world in text. In the case of the mental representation of the image of world it is the representation of representation of the world. The above mentioned models of imagination relations to other processes, such as memory, consider the meaning as the basic unit. Cognitive psychology defines the meaning as a structured mental content that is identified in the language of perception or in language behavior, or it can be defined as a content of language expression. According to J. Sedláková (2004, p. 272-273) "human consciousness can be studied as a structured field of meanings. The meanings have several levels. The lowest level contains meanings deduced from perceptual activity or active behavior. The higher levels are dependent on interiorized character system." J. A. Fodor (1975) reduces the contents of consciousness to lexical meanings, resp. to language of thinking.

In the mind of a child, the world is represented through the contents. The child adopts such schemes that are initially of assimilative-accommodative nature, then sensemotoric character. L. G. Lundh (1979, 1981) argues that "early childhood is a life stage when the primitive representation system is transformed in the conceptual system socially conditioned."

Due to interpreting the meaning of a text, for example literary, F. Miko (1989, p. 150-151) says that broader context of "*literary, cultural, social, psychological enter into the reception, and thus into the interpretation.*" Similarly, in U. Eco (1995, p. 65-68) we find phenomena such as the *intention of the text (intentio operis)*, the *author's intention (intentio auctoris)* and the *reader's intention (intentio lectoris)*.

1. Cognition - Conceptualization - Language

Cognition is inherently linked with language, only in language we can make decisions, adopt and change the information, decide about the outcome of cognitive processes. In connection with conclusions of representatives of cognitive linguistics (Lakoff, Johnson, Wierzbicka, Čudinov, Alefirenko) are concepts as knowledge elements autonomous in relation to language, as well as our thinking is essentially nonverbal. According to Vežbická (1997, p. 28) "... when the concept reaches the linguistic expression, the means that served it, act as verbalizing instruments, as tools of linguistic image of concept. Concept is represented in the language by: finished lexemes and phrases that contain various shema of different level - archishema, specific shema, peripheral shema; free expressions; structural and positional schemes of sentences that have a type proposition - ie. syntactic concepts and texts."

Our perception and understanding the world is seizable and can be interpreted particularly in language. Language - its grammar, vocabulary, phraseology, internal semantic coherence of its units, methods of joining - all that testifies about the principles of our thinking and processes that take place (occur) in us (Lakoff - Johnson 2002, Nebeská, 2003 Janda, 2004 Vaňková, 2005). The key issues in cognitive linguistics is the question of how the human mind works with the language or the language with the human mind and what does the language speaks about our mind. Examining the language leads to revealing the cognitive structures (Vaňková et al, 2005).

According to G. Lakoff (2006) the whole psyche can be understood as a set of meanings and forming semantic structures. This system can be seen as unclosed dynamic whole whose elements are the meanings and relationships between them. Meanings are constantly replenished with new meanings and enriched by new relationships between the old and new contents. In this understanding questions play the crucial role, because the contents acquired in early childhood or mediated by perception are schematized, resp. to what extent are involved in creating the context of other meanings, or to what extent they establish autonomous meanings.

2. Understanding Speech and Text Formations

When the child begins to speak whole words, it is a mechanism where the relevant sound form is associated with repetitive situation (communication stereotype). His effort and "training of mental and articulating nature" last until its speech is correct, until he reaches to use the appropriate series of phonemes to indicate a particular person, thus, at the beginning there is obviously an imitation - imitation of forms. Attempts of the child are multiple and the continual, what implies that in his mind the same sound pattern was fixed in correlation with meaning. The sound pattern has obtained a form of imagination and the ability to coordinate the speech organs allow him to move closer to the fixed idea - the model obtained by auditory perception and determined by mental activity. The initial image produced on the basis of sound perception may not be perfect, but it is always more perfect than the product of imitating. An adult advocates the child from birth. This specific type of speech was called a *speech focused on the child*.

It is a modified speech communication between adults and little children, it comes from English, motherese (Rice, 1989, p. 155), but also the term child - directed speech is used, that is, speech focused on the child (Sternberg, 2002, p. 343).

Debate about if the child starts to talk understandable words or one-word sentences, is concluded by J. Janousek (2007, p. 37) as follows: *"The sentence was not before the word and the word was before the sentence, both formations are correlative moments."*

Kids words occur in spoken form of the language in the private sphere. Such a model of communication is also transferred into creating an image of communication or speech in artistic texts, particularly in poetry for children. The reception of phonetic units defined by accent, or pause, is the basic prerequisite to the imitation ever occurring. There is no need to prove this fact, as it is a priori known. The evidence is the fact that deaf children do not learn to talk. Recall that K. Bühler (1934, p. 43) characterizes the foursome phenomena for methodological reasons: *speech activities - language product; speech act - language unit* as follows: speech activities and speech acts are disconnected from the subject, i.e. they are intersubjectively fixed. He distinguishes them due to their degree of formalization. Speech activities and language products represent a lower degree of formalization and speech acts, together with language units, represent a higher degree of formalization. The language product is produced as a result of the speech processing of external events or internal experience. Language product as a result of the creation - poesis - is relatively independent on its originator. K. Bühler (ibid.) also comprises the lyric, epic and dramatic forms as language product, and he connects them with children's storytelling stage.

The child, except of the spontaneous speech, is also the percipient of text formations which are not only of communicative nature but they are the bearer of aesthetic information too, which, however, to be communicative from the aspect of the child must match his mental maturity and must be practiced with such expressive elements that the child prefers naturally in that age. For example, in texts for children aged three - four years the game and the ability may be simulated. From the aspect of perception of mentioned texts the rhythm and rhyme are dominant, verse - syntactic parallelism prevails, dialogues, the content focused on the child recipient is determined by both the sense and empirical experience, as well as by the process of socialization itself.

Linguistic-thematic analysis of texts for children from the aspect of their reception by children percipient is in fact revealing age - reception dispositions of literary texts. Assumptions of text reception are related to mental disposition of the child in the process of acquisition of the world contained in the text and creating its image in the individual consciousness of the child.

On the other hand, assumptions of the perception of the text are contained in children's reader disposition, what implies the reader's competence. The mere literary studies addressed the issue of what to include in reading, resp. reception competence. J. Kopál (1990, p. 15) argues that: *"Whole receptionist competence is constituted from disposition elements that are formed by a set of qualities of the recipient for reading, reception, acquisition of the text. These disposition elements are of psychological, epistemological, ontological, social and socio-cultural nature."*

Standards competences of a child are age, i.e. mentally conditioned, but there are individual exceptions that cannot be denied. This mental conditionality is referred to as age appropriateness and J. Kopál (1990, p. 17.) states that *"In connection with the adequacy we mention the creation and reception of literary texts for children and youth. This is also because the term is the most used. That is a formation with the primary determination for the reception in the community of child recipients. Literary theory, therefore, in order to reflect the specificities of the creation and reception of children literature introduced the term age aspect. It specifies the age-reception variability of the text - the fact that a literary composition has certain assumptions, given by a set of information for the reception by child, youth and adult recipients. "*

The development of understanding not only of literary texts, but the text itself in children results from its formal and content criteria. Properties of communication at the level of contact are of hierarchical nature, which means that we can talk about several levels of understanding development in children. Analogy, the question of it understanding is reflected in communication with the child percipient at the level of aesthetic communication, mediated by artistic text.

The different phases in the development of speech and in the development of understanding corresponds to the differentiation of literary texts for both children's and author's origin. At the very beginning of human speech there is the ability of imitation (it has been demonstrated in animals too).

In the language there is a group of words whose meaning and form are clearly linked, it is the onomatopoeia and the words derived from them that some psycholinguists call parawords, i.e. words that differ from the word - the symbol for which there is no direct connection between the meaning and the form. F. de Saussure (In Culler, 1978, p. 55) differs the symbol from the character. He says that there is a natural connection between designating and designed. Similarly, he sees symbolic elements contained in onomatopoeia. To what extent a significant role in the development of the child's speech, and later on in the process of learning about the world, is played by parawords can be deduced from the content and form of the poem of L. Feldek *Hlasy dvora (Voices of barnyard)*.
 // Čimčarara! Bé – é – é/ Kikirikí! Mé – é – é!

The extremity of the content and form is designed to the principle of mirroring of the most elementary of speech discourses in the text in which the author himself becomes a child and hence an equal partner to the child recipients in communication. This text toy has the character of language - sound gestures and cognitive point of view the information here runs at the level of denotation. This verse formation is a reflection of cultural-anthropological early stages of speech. Feldek's poem is atextual, and the denotat is present in the title. It reflects the primary understanding of the world and it is the evidence of that the word is in the mind of a person associated with the image. The world in our consciousness is so big, as large is our vocabulary and therefore the idea of the world. According to the Vygotsky's thesis on fastening the lower stages of speech in the higher stage really reached has its justification in the reception of 3 – 4 years aged children. The initial communication is communication using gestures (Mead, 1967, p. 148).

3. The Meaning and form of the Rhymes in Optics of Linguistic Determinism

The rhyme focuses on the question who is the subject of speech (who says?) and on the question of the position of the subject of the language (from what perspective the subject says?). In the first question the age of the subject of the language is accentuated, in the second question the social position of the subject and its relationship to other subjects. Every thinking and speaking is done from a partial perspectives and the ways of thinking and speaking are different in angles of view. The rhyme is culturally and socially accepted formation which is a part of speech practice of the subject, of the child, with emphasis on its age.

The highlighting the age has a content and formal dimension, the speech attracts the attention. The rhyme emphasizes the semiotic basis of speech. It accepts the dependence of the subject and its speech on the age, what implies fragmentation. It respects its gesture, motion, audio and rhythmical basis. The fact that the rhyme originated as a folk verb formation and thus it is an expression of the collective consciousness, it is a confirmation of the semiotic foundation for the later emergence of the symbolic, which has a systemic form, in the speech it is related to the sphere of articulated meanings and relies on social and legal patterns. In this context, the semiotic connects with the empiricism and it is analogous to psycholinguistic analysis of speech of little children. The semiotic and the symbolic are two modalities that are associated with the process of signification. They are mutually connected, they overlap and they are inseparable. Their ratio determines the different types of discourses, while the natural language is a balanced form of the semiotic and the symbolic.

The personality is also formed under the influence of language, more specifically, language standardization. J. Dolník (2009, p 28) interprets the relationship between the subject and the language as follows: *"An individual adopts fixed language-social standards, i.e. conventionalized language responses within the social interactions in a given linguistic community. We speak of settled interpretations tied to perception, evaluation, feeling, thinking, behavior and actions, that is, the perception and apperception, evaluation, emotional, cognitive and behavioral standards."* According to the cited author an individual applies his or her accommodative – reaction ability. Accommodative means to adapt to the collective, what implies that the language helps to specify its position within the linguistic community and assimilation means individual manifestation of personality.

The current cognitive linguistics states the language determination of categories of perception. The language gives the form to the image of the world. Natural processes that lead to language acquisition tend to perceive the world as categories of language and those become a tool for shaping the mental world, the whole process is viewed as self-evident. The truthfulness of the theory of linguistic determinism is conditional by the relationship between the own language and the world in the spirit of linguistic realism. From the point of view of linguists it is the language determination, from the point of view of the bearer of this realism it is the nature that the language is adapted to the world (Dolník 2009, p. 30). Experiencing and expressing emotions and associated ratings are related to culture and language.

In this context the rhyme is understood as a cultural-semiotic formation, in which accommodative-assimilation principle is applied in order to enhance the natural processes of language acquisition, which lead to the acquisition of greater linguistic freedom and speech autonomous entities.

The rhyme is an experience and as the semiotic it is situated in an early stage of childhood, when a basis is constituted as an assumption for the emergence of the symbolic in order to be negated later, whereby this negation leads to a qualitative transformation of the starting base. At first glance, the time dimension of rhyme functioning is ontologically closing. However, some elements may re-emerge later. Such a moment is every game at the level of words with different meanings. Explicitly the rupture of symbolic system is shown in the so-called nonsense poetry. The higher developmental phase is characterized by the semiotic self-expression here can be achieved only by a symbolic system. While in the rhyme the semiotic is subordinate to the symbolic, it acts as the promotion of social production of texts and meanings, in the avant-garde directions, but also in the nonsense poetry it is the opposite process. The joy stems not from the correct articulation, which is a confirmation of the system, but from the erosion of the system, the order of meanings.

4. From Rhymes to Fairy Tale

Rhymes and fairy tales are two qualitatively different formal and textual genres that can be seen as the endpoints in developmental interval. The rhyme is at the very beginning of that interval, and it demonstrates the understanding of words and statements, it reinforces previous zone development (speech) in terms of socialization through language. The fairy tale concludes this imaginary interval. Its originality lies in that it completes the ability of perception of the story, which is associated with the perception of time elements mediated by various metamorphoses plot. Between the extremities of the interval there is a shorter or a longer poem, which is normally the bearer of a simple metaphor. With its growing range the story intensifies and it prepares the recipient for the rich content of fairy tales, but it formally remains tied to rhyme, particularly because of the rhyme and verse-syntactic parallelism. The form with its specific rhyme helps to memorize and after multiple reproduction it stimulates the understanding of the content.

Although the rhyme and the fairy tale are different in form and content, for both it is characteristic that they are communicated in mutual interaction of a child and an adult. They both were created as a manifestation of collective consciousness and oral folk formations they were spread by word of mouth. The rhyme as well as the fairy tales have become the starting point for the author's intentional production for children.

The content of a fairy tale is more difficult in comparison with the rhyme, what indicates a shift in the way of communication of fairy tales. In general, the fairy tale is talked by an adult to a child, an adult's authority is important here, because what an adult says it is true from the perspective of the child, or at least it once *might have been*. When a child recites the rhyme, it declares that it has managed a continuous text and that he or she remembers it well, that he or she understands it.

The rhyme prepares the child for the role play, which is the start of dramatization. The rhyme is the first comprehensive speech construct, which serves the child to declare its membership in the group of children like him. The nature of this process is externally presented as pleasure and enjoyment of speech associated with the game. The speech of the rhyme is qualitatively different than the child's speech at normal game. The text of rhymes is a kind of authority that the child voluntarily accepts. On the other hand, the speech during the game stems from the game itself. The union of speech and actions is an expression of the joy of speaking and demonstration of a specific degree of communication competence. In contrast to spontaneous speech, in which the author will always demonstrate the testimony, there every child subjects its will inherently contained in the content of the text.

The rhyme as a product of collective consciousness, that is as the primary folk formation with its overlays to natural speech, to the acquisition of language competences, to the game as speech and being harmony, accentuating its specific sound or pantomimic gestures demonstrates its own divergence. The rhyme is a unique cultural construction, which is a manifestation of forming and improving the future discourse competence. Its primary goal is to improve the regularities of the language as a predictor bases of speech, the substance of the speech itself has grown and the developmental basis of determined language. As a conventionalized (text) formation it is cultural evidence that speech is contingent by language and that language is formed in speech.

5. Rhymes is an Act of Speech and it Brings the Image of Speech

From the aspect of a child the speech and its mastering, as well as the understanding of verbal communication with an adult is in the center of his or her attention during longer period than its actual formation. The evidence is the emergence and existence of rhymes, as well as the function of rhyme and its tradition in folk literature. We stress the importance of the word rhyme (riekanka), which is derived from the word riecť, i.e. say. In some types of rhymes the child declares the understanding of the text by its moving behavior or gesture he or she makes. This fact corresponds to Vygotsky's (1970, p. 56) proposition about the nearest development zone, but also with his argument that each higher developmental stage of speech is not isolated from the previous one, but the previous phase is being fixed. F. de Saussure (In Culler, 1978, p. 55) has paid attention to the image of speech, he compares the psychological nature of acoustic images with the observation of his own language, he connects the inner speech with acoustic images of words, whereby the rhyme reflects the image of speech as well as the inner speech.

Rhymes are generally characterized by a high degree of specificity of illustration and imagery, and are composed in the way to ensure the maximum physical and sometimes also physical activity of the child. These properties correspond to the mental maturity of the child beneficiary who prefers concreteness, directness. The limited attention of the three-four aged children is connected with the extension of the rhyme, the presence of onomatopoeia in rhymes is related to congenital disposition of imitation.

The rhymes always communicates specific matters, therefore, words that are ontologically, socially and age contingent dominate. This fact, but also realistically depicted events that the child usually knows empirically, correspond to the specificities of the psyche of this age group, when a child has a tendency to understand the contents literally. The authentic sounds of real world are related to the mental model of the beneficiary. Sound rendering is the dominant attribute that attracts the attention of the child. The full text of the rhymes is usually formed by two parts that correspond to a challenge and a response to this challenge. Its two-part text makes the rhyme very closely to speech acts in the process of interpersonal communication. Particularly the section, we consider an appeal – call or challenge, used to have the imperative form of main verb: var (cook), daj (give), povedz (say), ...

Great popularity of rhymes for children lies in their articulation - phonic substance, which implies its entertainment function. The child enjoys the essence of language that is deliberately more difficult and belongs to more complex articulation formations, or the child is entertained by physical reaction to appeals arising from the content of the text. It is always emotionally engaged and experiences a good feeling from mastering the text or understanding commands. Connecting the logical and the emotional leads to greater efficiency in the process of cognition compared to the situation when we are only commanding the child or when we recommend him or her something, hence the emotional involvement would absent.

The word rhyme but also other features indicate that the centre of attention is the speech as the most important instrument of social communication of people. In connection with the rhymes we cannot fail to mention the function of gesture, which is explicitly required by the content of a rhyme. Subsequently, we have to think about the function of gestures in communication.

By examining nonverbal communication it has been realized that gestures, like speech, pass through certain stages of development. The gestures of children aged three and less years are of pantomime character, later these gestures become symbolic. O'Reilly (1995, p. 71) says that a major milestone in the development of pantomimic gestures occurs at the age of three to five years. Gestures become symbolic. These arguments lead us to speculate that the rhyme is associated with pantomime gesture, which are gradually losing from the natural speech activity of the child of a certain age, thus, there is a transformation of pantomimic gestures to symbolic gestures. In other words, the change in the quality of speech activities is also accompanied by a qualitative transformation or qualitative shift of gestures.

Despite the fact that the gesture belongs to non-verbal communication tools, it gets into texts and it performs several functions. A special group is formed by sound gestures. It is characteristic for live, immediate speech. These elements symbolize or substitute authentic sounds. They are used to express emotional impressions or contacts.

In the text rhythmic gestures often applied, they express monotony, for example nodding the head or hands and so on. Gestures express enthusiasm, joy, anger, as well as the relationship of the speaker to the content of his enunciation. Emotional gestures in rhyme are expressed by the child spontaneously, he or she unmistakably expresses facial expressions with corresponding intonation.

At the beginning of understanding of the speech there is reactive language, which is based on understanding the form and content of salutation. Analogously, the salutation and its corresponding form - vocative are reflected in texts for children, for example, in the folk rhyme: *Kavky, kavky, kde letíte? / Do nového mesta,/zarúbaná cesta, krížom, krážom,/ povrazom,/ sedí baba za vozom. / Kavky, kavky, kde letíte? / Do nového mesta,/zarúbaná cesta, / ... Jackdaws, jackdaws, where are you flying? / To a new city / the entrenched road, criss cross, / twine / old hag sitting in carriage. / Jackdaws, jackdaws, where are you flying? / To a new city / the entrenched road / ...* Or another example in invocations: *Klnka, klnka, daj nám slnka.... Klnka, Klnka, give us the sun*

The rhyme, which is the start of a contact of the child with a language-mediated culture, retains the dialogic speech like other folk formations. The child uses the rhymes to speak to the outside world and its natural components, e.g. sun, grass, snails, wind, etc., which is an indicator of two facts:

1. The child is an initiator of the enunciation;
2. The child applies formula and phrases that the linguistic community accepts in spontaneous and live speech. In this context, primary the vocative works, because it is viewed as a contact element.

Conclusions

1. The rhyme is a textual variant of stereotype and of its functions in natural language. Rhyme and rhythm of rhymes are sound schemes, which transport the content of rhymes first into the consciousness, then to the subconsciousness of the child. They fulfill a primary function in the process of memorizing the text rhymes by the child. The rhymes are used in education of foreign languages, especially typologically different languages. The rhyme becomes a natural tool for language teaching and learning activities.
2. The rhymes reflect national values and respects the age specificity of the receptor and it is not negligible that it stimulates the child's metacognitive activities.
3. The rhyme is the first coherent text formation the child works with. If a paravocal, as it is referred to by many studies about the evolution of language, then the rhyme is paratex, which represents the basis of image, firstly in speech and subsequently in the mind of the child.
4. The rhyme is text image of transition from gesture as primary and fundamental tool for communication to verbal communication. It is a tool of gestures establishment as accompanying instrument in natural communication, with the difference that this tool is an aesthetic-emotional reflection of collision of the child at some stage of speech development and the real world.
5. The rhyme reflects the reactivity and position in child's expressing. The rhyme figures in all languages and was created as a result of collective creativity, in order to thematise the speech as a tool of integration of children into the community, that is, the primary tool of socialization on the one hand, and, on the other hand, as an instrument that conveys aesthetic experience in terms of preserving national identity and ethical values.
6. The rhyme is a metaphor of the real. It portrays various situations and mind operations, from the enumeration and maintaining word order through the paradox and interference. The popularity of rhymes among children without proves the innate human ability to understand and at the same time create a metaphors and texts that are a metaphor of life experience. The metaphor is a transformation of one to other text, similar, but not identical, enriched with a new quality.
7. The ability of the child to move on from nursery rhymes to fairy tale is given by ontology of mental operations and the complexity of the language / text mediated by ideas and demonstrates the evolution of the text formations. This evolution is what we mean by metaphorical expression that the language grows.
8. Rhyme is a cultural construct based on naturalistic language survival. It has been established in the ontology of child's speech, it is related to human creativity, it is the conventional part of the acquisition of linguistic autonomy. Expression of emotions and associated ratings or attitudes is related to culture and language.

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