



THE USE OF THE HERMENEUTICAL APPROACH AS A METHOD OF INQUIRY IN COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS: AN EXAMPLE IN SPANISH POPULAR SONGS

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Abstract

The article discusses the cultural and philosophical foundations of the formation of hermeneutics, starting a connection with religion and its own texts. According to Cuervo (2003), the word “hermeneutics” first appears in the work of the author J.C. Dannhauer as “Sacred Hermeneutics versus Method of Explaining Sacred Literature” in 1654, in which hermeneutics was viewed as the art of interpretation and writing. Concepts are analyzed: in the 18th century, the rejection of all differences between “sacred hermeneutics” and “profane hermeneutics” (Cuervo, 2003), in the 19th century criticism of the concept of hermeneutics, new consciousness was imposed on the so-called “hermeneutic consciousness” (D`Agostino, 1996). Beuchot defines how the ability and talent to interpret the text, to be able to correctly understand and contextualize; The most consistent hermeneutics of Gadamer (“Truth and Method”) and many authors have conclusions regarding hermeneutics - a search for deep meanings in the text, overcoming simplified approaches to cognitive linguistics, which could not come together in a radical analysis of the language of communication.

Keywords: hermeneutics, meanings and meanings, explicit and hidden, interpretation of texts, Spanish songs, cognitive linguistics.

Introduction

In its first manifestations, hermeneutics has always been linked to religion and its own texts. The investigation of a biblical passage by Judge Gideon inferring “evaluative patterns” works as an example [1, p. 327]. According to Cuervo, the word “Hermeneutics” appears for the first time

in the work of the author J.C. Dannhauer, entitled *Hermenéutica sacra sive methodus exponendarum sacrum litteratur* [Sacred Hermeneutics versus the Method of expounding the Sacred Literature], in 1654 [2]. In this work, hermeneutics was considered as the art of interpretation and writing.

The same author warns that thanks to the development of rationalism and classical philology that occurred in the 18th century, there is a significant shift in the conception of hermeneutics. In this profound change, the abandonment of all distinction between «sacred hermeneutics» and «profane hermeneutics» was of great importance [1, p. 328-329]. Up to this point on history (18th and 19th centuries), hermeneutics was considered as a secondary activity, inevitably always linked to the circumstances. It is known as a methodological tool to turn to only in extreme and marginal cases. In addition, it had always been thought to be dangerous in a certain way. Since the 19th century, after an important criticism of the conception of hermeneutics already mentioned, a new consciousness has been imposed on what is known as «hermeneutic consciousness» [4, p. 35].

Actually, there is no perfect agreement between the authors when defining the concept of hermeneutics. One of the clearest definitions is offered by Beuchot (cited by García Bravo and Martín, 2013) which defines it (in general terms) as the ability and talent to interpret a text, being able to understand and contextualize it properly in order to understand the content and intention of it [3]. The best, most consistent hermeneutics are those proposed by Gadamer (1991) in *Truth and Method*.

In other words, the hermeneutic investigative option involves asking oneself about how to approach certain problems from the phenomenological assumption of the linguistic condition of human experience. Basically, hermeneutics pursues the understanding of texts through its profound interpretation [3], [13] and not a mere explanatory exegesis.

Methods

For all these reasons, hermeneutics must have great importance as a method of qualitative inquiry to obtain understanding in the human sciences (García Bravo and Martín, 2013). In the same way, the hermeneutic strategy makes it possible to reveal hidden senses that help to get a better understanding of people and the phenomena studied. Each speech is a story and each story can be understood as a narration that assembles the experience of the one who manifests it and at the same time, this story can be transformed into a linguistic unit that is called text [13].

Hermeneutics expects to reach the original and authentic meaning of texts and through them, understand and investigate the human experience. According to García Bravo and Martín, [8] this risk is nothing more than the possibility that the interpretation performed does not correspond to the authentic and original meaning that the author really wanted to convey with his text. There is a threat that the primary text loses its original meaning due to continuous interpretations. The great “Gabo”, as he is affectionately known throughout Latin America, already warned us about the evils of over-interpretation when he said, “ultimately interpretive mania ends up being a new form of fiction that often runs aground with nonsense” [10, p. 53-54].

On balance, hermeneutics is a search for deep meanings in the text, overtaking the various content analysis (manifest and latent, textual exegesis) and even semiotic analysis, obsessed by the mere relationship of symbols-meanings. It is an overcoming of the simplistic approaches to cognitive linguistics that have not been able to converge in a radical analysis of language, due to its scarce emphasis

on the clause/s, in the broad text, as a message or complete communication. A totalistic and profound approach requires rejecting some dogmas of cognitive linguistics, namely: the relation between language and thought is not totally disembodied but experiential, the metaphor is not the only interpretive frame of meanings, despite the insistence of Lakoff and Johnson in the Conceptual metaphor; thought is not essentially unconscious but must be specified and wormed [12]. It is necessary to make the thought emerge, to make it conscious to a certain extent, otherwise it will remain hidden. Some examples of studies with interpretative emphasis based on metaphorical analogies (in this case with Greek myths) would be Fernández-Cano, Torralbo, Vallejo and Fernández-Guerrero [6] and Fernández-Cano and Fernández-Guerrero [5].

Results

Hermeneutics to overcome content analysis and metaphors

In this way, the text is considered as a linguistic unit that can be interpreted, allowing us to immerse ourselves in the world of the language of the subjects and phenomena that we try to understand [13]. We will have to face multiple complications when interpreting the texts and understand what they really want to tell us, their hidden meanings and ultimately, their authentic meaning. Subjectivity and doubt will have a leading role on this analysis, but if we act correctly, we will reach a deep understanding of the text and consequently, a deep learning about everything that it brings us.

Therefore, according to Colom and Rincón (cited by García Bravo and Martín, 2013) hermeneutics will proceed “ideographically” by renouncing the

aspirations of the generalizing, positivist or experimental sciences [8]. Hermeneutics must have a heuristic potential to discover deep elements in the text that add value to it. In addition, hermeneutics must adjust itself to the empirical evidence through a conventional relationship between language and objects of the world. Otherwise the interpretations we obtain will be nothing more than mere fantasy or pure nonsense. According to Zagumenov (2017) there is a connection in the linguistic discipline between the paradigms of hermeneutics and phenomenology, determined by several reasons such as historical and methodological ones [14].

Therefore, many studies advocate for a greater use of hermeneutics as a method to overcome the analysis of the content and metaphors when interpreting texts in the field of cognitive linguistics, for example, related to politics [11].

Some examples of hermeneutic analysis in Spanish popular songs

Two examples of hermeneutic analysis of texts (Spanish popular songs in particular) are presented below. It is observed how this analysis delves into the deep meaning of the text, contextualizing it and obtaining its deepest meaning. We’ve reached conclusions by focusing not only in the analysis of content and the metaphors that appear in the text.

The first one is a popular children’s song called Nana del Galapaguito (Little Big Tortoise’s Lullaby) compiled by Federico García Lorca, which has been sung as a lullaby since its appearance. The second song is an old romance from the 15th century called La muerte ocultada (The Hidden Death.) It can also be considered as a children’s song, although its topic and background do not seem childish at all, given its deep tragic sense.

Little Big Tortoise’s Lullaby (or Seville’s

Lullaby)

This little giant tortoise doesn't have a mother

he was given birth by a gypsy
she throws it out onto the street.
he doesn't have a mother, yes
he doesn't have a mother, no
he doesn't have a mother
she throws him out onto the street.
Hermeneutic analysis

Discussion

The baby in question looks like a giant tortoise (a reptile very similar to a tortoise.) We have to know that the gypsies do not practice abortion and they reject infanticide. They take care of their children, and they do not support the euthanasia either.²⁹ In this case, a gypsy woman practices infanticide because she «throws» her baby (“little giant tortoise”) into the street. For what reasons could the gypsy woman take this decision against her traditions that have so much weight in the gypsy world? There are possible explanations: for being a single mother bringing ignominy on her person and her family's absorbing clan; for being abandoned by her lover, who surely should be “payo” (a non-gypsy) since gypsies rarely abandon their partners.

The hermeneutic examination is exposing a cruel episode to which a person is forced due to his triple condition of: woman, gypsy and single mother. Three highly discriminated figures rejected and repudiated by heteropatriarchal societies. Also, we must remember that it is a lullaby, a song for sleeping babies.

The hermeneutic inquiry goes further, always further, when asked: Why did somebody sing this song for a baby and the collateral listeners with such tragic lyrics? To assume the abandonment (foundlings) so usual in poor societies? To accept the

tragedy as a resilience guide? For the child to assume the tragic of existence from the earliest childhood?

Every good hermeneutic examination gives more questions than answers.

The Hidden Death

Here comes Don Pedro [Mr. Peter] from the war, wounded, and he comes running to see his son:

- How are you Teresa about your happy birth?

- I am very well, Don Pedro, if you come healthy...

- You end with those reasons, Teresa, because the king is waiting for me in court.

And when he left the room, Don Pedro passed away and his poor mother full of pain...

- Mother-in-law, my mother-in-law, my always friend: What is that noise in the kitchen?

- I tell you Teresa, my always friend, that is a card game of new birth.

Teresa had already completed forty days; she was getting ready to go to church:

- Mother-in-law, my mother-in-law, my always friend: What clothes should I wear to go to church?

Should I wear the white one? If not, the yellow one.

- You should dress up for mourning, it interests you.

- Mother-in-law, my mother-in-law, my always friend: I will wear the white one, I will look splendid.

She dresses in white and goes to church, and as she was entering the church, people were saying: “The little honest widow, the cute little widow”

- And why they were saying that?

- For you, my Teresa, for you, my life; Don Pedro is dead, and you didn't know it.

She closed the windows and the curtains, and she fainted and died

heartbroken.

Hermeneutic analysis

In this song, several features of the Spanish culture can be seen. The song is about the death of a marriage. The man (Don Pedro) dies after returning home with war wounds, and his wife (Teresa) dies of sadness because of the death of her husband.

The different roles assumed in marriage according to gender deserve attention. The woman's life and state of mind depend entirely on the man's one. Teresa, just after she gave birth, says she is fine if her husband is healthy. If Don Pedro feels good, so does Teresa, despite the pain and discomfort of a postpartum state.

It is the woman who remains continuously at home, at the mercy of the husband's actions. She will wait for his return faithfully. However, the husband has absolute freedom to decide his future. What's more, despite being a father, he decides to attend the war and leave his pregnant wife on her own. It is clear that women and men took responsibilities in different ways in order to take care of a child. It is much more a woman's problem than a man's problem. Another detail would be that the man is called by the word «Don» (title of honor derived from the Latin "Dominus", that means «Sir») while the woman is called just by her name, Teresa.

Conclusion

In the song it is wanted to emphasize the innocence of the women, the lack of «lucidity», not being able to connect facts and to obtain conclusions by themselves in spite of the evident facts. When she entered dressed in white to the church (the color white is a symbol of purity in Western culture), people refer to her as «the little widow.» She is still not aware of her husband's death, despite hearing all

these references, while she goes ignorant and submissive to the church. It is her mother-in-law who has to inform her that Don Pedro died more than a month ago. To make it clear once again that Teresa did not suspect anything, when she finally knows the announcement, it is such bad news that it provokes her own death.

Related to that, we can finally draw conclusions about the triangular relationship: son / husband-wife / wife-mother / mother-in-law. The hidden intention of the mother-in-law is to humiliate her daughter-in-law, who is dressed in white despite the death of her husband (in spite of not being aware of that.) The mother-in-law tries to hide his death to humiliate Teresa in the church with the purpose of keeping her grandson.

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ГЕРМЕНЕВТИКАЛЫҚ ТӘСІЛДІ САУАЛДАМА ӘДІСІ РЕТІНДЕ КОГНИТИВТІК ЛИНГВИСТИКАДА ҚОЛДАНУ: БЕЛГІЛІ ИСПАН ӘНДЕРІ МЫСАЛЫНДА

Андатпа:

Мақалада діннен және өзіндік мәтіндерден бастап герменевтика қалыптасуының мәдени және философиялық негіздері қарастырылады. Куэрваға сәйкес (2003) «герменевтика» сөзі автор ДжС. Даннхауэр жұмысында алғаш пайда болып, 1654 жылы «Қасиетті герменевтика қасиетті әдебиетті түсіндіруге қарсы әдіс» деп аталды, онда герменевтика түсіндіру және жазу өнері ретінде қарастырылды. Тұжырымдардың талдануы әрқилы болып: XVIII ғасырда «қасиетті герменевтика» және «профанды герменевтика» арасындағы барлық айырмашылықтардан бас тарту (Куэрво, 2003), XIX -ғасырда герменевтика тұжырымдамаларын сынауға «сананың герменевтикасы» атты жаңа сана қосылды

(Д'Агостино, 1996). Veuchot мәтінді түсіндіру қабілеті мен дарындылық ретінде анықтап, дұрыс түсінуге және контекстендіруге қабілеттілігін анықтайды; Гадамерде едәуір бірізділік («Ақиқат пен тәсіл») және көптеген авторларда герменевтика бұл – когнитивтік лингвистика ең алдымен қарым-қатынас тілін түбегейлі талдай алмайтынмен келісе алмау, жеңілдетілген тәсілдерді жеңу, мәтіндегі терең мағыналарды іздестіру жайлы шешімдерде анықталды.

Трек сөздер: герменевтика, мән мен мағына, ашық және жасырын, мәтіндерді пайымдау, испан әндері, когнитивтік лингвистика.

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ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ ГЕРМЕНЕВТИЧЕСКОГО ПОДХОДА КАК МЕТОДА ЗАПРОСА В КОГНИТИВНОЙ ЛИНГВИСТИКЕ: НА ПРИМЕРЕ ИСПАНСКИХ ПОПУЛЯРНЫХ ПЕСЕН

Аннотация.

В статье рассматриваются культурно-философские основы формирования герменевтики, начиная со связи с религией и ее собственными текстами. Согласно Куэрво (2003), слово «герменевтика» впервые появляется в работе автора JC. Dannhauer как «Священная герменевтика против метода разъяснения священной литературы» в 1654 году, в которой герменевтика рассматривалась как искусство интерпретации и письма. Анализируется концепция: в XVIII веке отказ от всех различий между «священной герменевтикой» и «профанной герменевтикой» (Куэрво, 2003), в XIX веке критика концепции герменевтики, новое сознание было наложено на так называемое «герменевтическое сознание» (D`Agostino, 1996). Veuchot определяет как способность и талант интерпретировать текст, быть способным правильно понимать и контекстуализировать; наиболее последовательная герменевтика Гадамера («Истина и метод») и у многих авторов выводы по поводу герменевтики - это поиск глубоких значений в тексте, преодоление упрощенных подходов в когнитивной лингвистике, которые не смогли сойтись в радикальном анализе языка коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: герменевтика, смыслы и значения, явное и скрытое, толкование текстов, испанские песни, когнитивная лингвистика.

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