ALLUSION – A STRATEGY OF PERSUASION

Adina-Elena DUMITRU[G]

Abstract*: The present paper approaches the allusion not only as figure of speech, but, in a pragmatic perspective, as a structure with a certain pragmatic value. With a frequent occurrence in the contemporary public discourse, the allusion has power to orient the hearers' opinions towards what the speakers want to induce and, in this respect, it is similar to the metaphor with an argumentative role. Besides, the present paper proposes a configuration of the most frequent figures of speech the allusion combines with and forms it has in contemporary public discourse"*

Keywords: *allusion, persuasion, parody, pastiche.*

1. The present paper proposes a particular approach of allusion, which is not seen as a figure of speech, but, in a pragmatic perspective, as a structure with a certain pragmatic value. Thus, it tries to explain its frequent use in the contemporary public discourse by the power of allusion to orient the hearers' opinions towards what the speakers want to induce.

If we start with defining the allusion and the delimitations it implies, the similarity with the metaphor with an argumentative role can be noticed and these observations are based on examples in contemporary public discourse.

2. Defining the terms which are used is a preliminary and necessary step in studying the pragmatic role of this type of structures.

In the *Dictionary of figures of speech*, the allusion is defined as "a word or a sentence which aims to evoke an event or a character from history, mythology, folklore, by means of a suggested comparison" (Dragomirescu, 1995: *s.v.aluzie*) in order to characterize a situation in a suggestive manner. As the allusion consists in imitating a famous verse, a saying or a proverb, it offers the reader/hearer the opportunity to reconstitute the comparison, by a spontaneous reflection.

In *Language and politics*, Rodica Zafiu noticed/asserted that "in the relatively recent pragmatic studies, the allusion is a privileged case of communication study, because, to a great extent, it is based on a 'contract', on a conversational complicity between the partners in the dialogue, and because it brings just a confirmation of the things which are already known, a reestablishment of the connection and a refresh of memory." (Zafiu, 2007:72). It is also asserted that this figure is based on a deviation from the normal way of understanding, which means interpreting each piece of information in its context of occurrence, in connection with what has already been said and with what is going to be said next. The premises of some pathological forms of abusive and incoherent reading can be found here.

Without the hearer or reader's comprehending the author's intention, an allusion becomes merely a decorative device. Allusion is an economical device, a figure of speech that uses a relatively short space to draw upon the ready stock of ideas, cultural memes or emotion already associated with a topic. Thus, an allusion is understandable only to those with prior knowledge of the covert reference in question, a mark of their cultural literacy.

(Preminger & Brogan, 1993 *apud* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allusion)

[*] University of Pitesti, adina_elena_dumitru@gmail.com

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2. Allusion and metaphor as argumentative strategies share a series of elements which may be the basis for comparing these two figures of speech.

The argumentative force of metaphor derives from the inference that the hearer does on his own, this way he/she accepting easier what the speaker aimed to but without expressing it directly. The pressure of metaphor exerts on the hearer, who is lead to a judgment, to reasoning and, finally, to a conclusion which he/she reaches by his/her own and that is why it seems to belong to him/her, not to the one who stated/performed the metaphor. As "it is always easier to deny what the interlocutor asserts rather than what you inferred by inferential effort" (Roventa Frumusani, 2000: 119), the conclusion is naturally accepted by the hearer.

Similarly to the metaphor with an argumentative role, the allusion presupposes a route which is to be followed by the hearer in order to "discover" the comparison, the elements which represent the basis of associating the two persons or those two situations. This hearer's reflection increases his/her chances to adopt the opinion regarded by the speaker. Moreover, with the allusion, that complicity shared by the partners in the verbal exchange which R. Zafiu discussed about, creates a more solid premise for persuasion/ seduction/ manipulation, because a quasi-identification of speaker and hearer, as a basis for inducing an opinion, is achieved.

Dominique Mainguenau makes a clear distinction between the simple allusion to other sentences and the imitation of an entire text or of a discursive genre. Considering as a starting point the remark that mass media and advertisement established a habitude of allowing famous, well-known sentences or fragments to be seen behind another sentence, Maingueneau shows that the main purpose of such a practice is to attract the reader/hearer, "making him/her perceive two sentences in only one and, thus, to highlight a ludic ethos" (Maingueneau, 2007: 210).

But the allusion is a starting point for a phenomenon of another dimension, the imitation which has the appearance of captivation or subversion.

3. There are a lot of examples in the contemporary public discourse that can prove the frequent use of allusion with an argumentative force, strengthening the similarities to the metaphor. In addition to the similitudes which have been already mentioned above, one more comes to support this comparison; as the metaphor combines with other figures of speech, the allusion also reflects in other figures of speech or it underlies them. Among these combining figures, two seem to be favorite: antonomasia and paronomasia.

-Antonomasia

De potopul românilor care te vor scuipa, cu dispreț, în ochelari, nici de-ai fi ***Noe*** *n-ai să poți scăpa, fă,* ***domnu' Goe!***(http://m.academiacatavencu.info/social/ceausescu-a-nviat--adevarat-a-nviat--38397)

-Paronomasia

premierul Mickey ***Mao*** (http://www.romanialibera.ro/stil-de-viata/monden/foto--cum-este-ironizat-premierul-victor-ponta-pe-internet-381466)

Catedrala ***Mânuirii*** *Neamului* (http://www.academiacatavencu.info/actualitate/oprescu-si-catedrala-manuirii-neamului-prost-4967)

When the speaker considers that the structure is not "clear" or "transparent" enough, when he/she wants to help the interlocutor to infer what he/she aimed to, the element which is regarded in a sarcastic or jus ludic way occurs in the sentence. The same device is present with the explicit metaphor, where both the metaphorized and the metaphoric terms can be found in the text. But the argumentative force of the allusion

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weakens in this situation, as it happens with the explicit metaphor, too, because the inferential effort of the hearer becomes weaker.

*plenul Camerei **Defulaţilor**, pardon, Deputaţilor*
(http://www.academiacatavencu.info/index.php/actualitate/in-cinstea-lui-ponta--bor-lanseaza-azi-sticla-de-mir-la-trei-sferturi-%E2%80%9Cpremier%E2%80%9D-38405)

*Marea **Adunătură** Națională, adică Parlamentul*
(http://www.academiacatavencu.info/social/ceausescu-a-nviat--adevarat-a-nviat--38397)

*BOR lucrează, în momentul de faţă, la realizarea a 170.000 de iconiţe sfinţite, cu imaginea Sfântului **Plagiarie** (pe numele lui de mirean Victor Ponta), apărătorul loazelor, care vor putea fi achiziţionate, contra cost, de toţi elevii ce dau bacul anul acesta.*
(http://www.academiacatavencu.info/index.php/actualitate/in-cinstea-lui-ponta--bor-lanseaza-azi-sticla-de-mir-la-trei-sferturi-%E2%80%9Cpremier%E2%80%9D-38405)

However, the most interesting form of allusion is the parody or the pastiche, which can evoke:

-a literary fragment

Simulări 2015. Nu ştiu alţii ce cred, dar calculele mele sunt optimiste.
(http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7475&idm=1,003&idl=1)

"Toate-s vechi şi nouă toate" - Avem un nou Guvern
(http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7360&idm=1,086&idl=2)

Cum nu se dă ursul scos din bârlog, țăranul de la munte strămutat la oraș, porcul luat din lături, Năstase alungat de lângă rembranzi și Iliescu smuls din politică, tot așa, drăgăliță Doamne, nu vrea Ponta să plece de la guvernare ca să meargă la răcoare.
(http://jurnalulbucurestiului.ro/academia-catavencu-ceausescu-a-nviat-adevarat-a-nviat/)

Ca să nu-l mai ştie nefericit şi anul ăsta, Mamița Vrânceanu-Firea-Pandele, văru' Cazanciuc și cumătrul Nițu i-au promis micului Goe din fruntea guvernului că o să-l ducă la Jilava, să-l vază pe Băsescu legat la cușcă. Pentru o asemenea vizită însă, e nevoie de o condiţie de bază: să-l bage mai întâi pe Băsescu la cușcă. Și, de când micul Goe a bătut din călcâi și a zis că vrea breaking news la televiziuni, că Băse a intrat la zdup alături de Udrea, cei trei și trepăduşii de prin Parchet nu mai prididesc să-i caute nod în papură Marinarului. Că așa vrea Marinelul. (http://www.academiacatavencu.info/opinii/curat-neconstitutional--da%E2%80%99-agatati-l-cu-ceva--38357)

-the title of a well-known literary work

Călin (file juridice de poveste) (http://www.academiacatavencu.info/politic/calin--file-juridice-de-poveste--38410)

-a proverb, a saying

Usturoi n-au mâncat, gura nu le miroase decât a lavandă, sloganurile de altădată sunt astăzi "aduse la zi". (http://www.romaniacurata.ro/revirginarea/)

Ceaușescu a-nviat? Adevărat a-nviat! (http://jurnalulbucurestiului.ro/academia-catavencu-ceausescu-a-nviat-adevarat-a-nviat/)

-a biblical fragment

Dacă interes național nu e, nimic nu e!
(http://www.academiacatavencu.info/actualitate/revista-tresei--daca-interes-national-nu-e--nimic-nu-e--38415)

As one of the tendencies in the contemporary political and journalistic language is to make capital out of the colloquial, spoken language aspects, especially out of those which come from the informal, argotic area of the language system, as a consequence of the fact that the speaker is oriented towards an audience as large as

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possible, which lacks homogeneity, the allusion also refers rather to proverbs and sayings, that is to the folkloric background.

Furthermore, certain fragments of contemporary discourse which has become famous are parodied or pastiched, because they are well known by this large audience that the speaker aims to reach at.

-sentences which are currently used in public discourse

*"**Prezumţia de corupţie** le taie funcţionarilor publici pofta de muncă"* (http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7460&idm=1,115&idl=1)

"Jos mâinile de pe eroul Avram Iancu!" (http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7475&idm=1,035&idl=1)

Jos mainile de pe TVR !(http://www.cotidianul.ro/jos-mainile-de-pe-tvr-260686/)

Jos mâinile de pe Halep! (http://www.cotidianul.ro/jos-mainile-de-pe-halep-259495/)

Ponta, jos mainile de pe ambasadori (http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-opinii-18441305-ponta-jos-mainile-ambasadori.htm)

Jos mainile de pe justitie ! /de pe Iași/de pe 2 Mai/ de pe școlile cu predare în limba română... (http://independent.md/video-protest-jos-mainile-de-pe-scolile-romanesti/#.V2iK9bh97IU)

procedura dusă de doctorul Ponta pe cele mai înalte culmi juridice, teoretice și practice (http://www.academiacatavencu.info/politic/calin--file-juridice-de-poveste--38410?c=q2561)

-fragments of advertisement messages

Pe pușcării ar trebui să scrie: „aici sunt banii dumneavoastră" (http://www.academiacatavencu.info/actualitate/revista-tresei--daca-interes-national-nu-e--nimic-nu-e--38415)

4. Conclusions

Allusion can be considered not only a figure of speech, but, in a pragmatic perspective, a structure with a certain pragmatic value. Thus, it is frequently used in the contemporary public discourse, as the allusion has power to orient the hearers' opinions towards what the speakers want to induce. In this respect, it is similar to the metaphor with an argumentative role, and its argumentative force depends on a series of factors, among which the hearer's knowledge that is required for understanding the allusion has an important position. The allusion often relates with the parody and pastiche in contemporary public discourse and this phenomenon leads to a type of structures that can be called "suitcase phrases".

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