

Modification of the Horizon of Reception. Do children understand contemporary poetry?

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Abstract: The goal of this research is to examine how elementary school students (aged nine years) perceive contemporary poetry. The research is based on the reception theory (Jauss, Ingarden, Iser) and aspires to define factors and transformations that enable the reception of poetry at a specific age. The qualitative aspects of reception are studied using the poetry that is not written for children, but adults. After the respondents had read three texts of a Serbian avant-garde poet (Vasko Popa) and the semi-structured interview had been conducted with 17 of them, the qualitative analysis was carried out: reception of the stylistic, conceptual, and syntactic-lexical features of the texts. The appropriate elements of the process and quality of reception will stand out based on the dominant factors in the text. Findings of the analysis show that: 1) the students understand poetry to a higher degree than expected, 2) when a student reads a less comprehensible text, he/she also relies on the emotional experience, 3) the conceptual layer is more accessible if the degree of abstraction is reduced, 4) the students are capable of implicit interpretation of stylistic figures, 5) the students' understandings of poetic images are based on personification, analogy, epithets, and sound. Possible distractors that affect reception quality are: 1) impressions of concrete meanings, 2) selective and separate reception on the conceptual and thematic level – poetic images are not connected coherently within the poem, 3) inertness of imagination contrary to the suggestiveness of poetic images, 4) limitations of the possibility to verbalize his/her thoughts. The criteria relevant for the methods of interpretation of poetry and its selection stem from the results of the study.

Keywords: contemporary lyrical poetry, reception, metaphor, elementary school students, avant-garde, Vasko Popa.

Introduction – The Issue of Adequacy of Poetry for Children

The perceptions of the adequacy of the content intended for students are shaped externally, i.e., by a remote, adult “evaluator” of children’s, i.e., somebody else’s horizon of expectations/reception, their reading capabilities, and sensibility/partiality, after which these are labeled as either unfulfilled or confirmed. The said adequacy of content is a form of censorship imposed through compulsory education, curriculum, but also through other optional forms of reading for pleasure. A characteristic of each individual’s “horizon of expectations,” “act of actualisation of a literary text,” “text signals,” “implied reading,” defined by the reception theory (Bužinjska & Markovski, 2009, p. 110–111; Ingarden, 1971, p. 31; Iser, 1978, p. 46–47, 97, 103; Iser, 1989, p. 64, Maricki, 1978) is fluidity. What this actually means is that these are hard to define at the level of the individual and based on age, but in educational practice, they largely depend on the approach and methodical interpretation of the literary text. Issues pertaining to the reception relative to the assumed recipient are reflected in the literary theory in the form of a relative distinction between “the poetry for adults” and “the poetry for children and young adults” (Pijanović, 2014).

The key change in the reception of the poetry for young adults, in respect of its status within the history of literature, occurred with the emergence of avant-garde movements, especially with the development of the surrealist idea, which abandoned modernist postulates by perceiving the principle of poetry in general (the one intended “for adults”) and the principle of childhood as equal and claiming that “irrational illogicality suits the natural form of children’s thought” (Breton, 1962; Ristić, 1979, p. 221, 222). By establishing a new paradigm in children’s literature, which is based on removing or shifting the barrier “keeping one away from things that are not meant for children” (Ćosić, 1965, p. 13), the horizon of reception, with respect to its intent, is poetically directed towards the poetry for adults and merges with it (Danojlić, 1973; Kiš, 1960; Marković, 2017, p. 44–56).

However, a poetic text that reflects such literary and historical fact and that has poetic characteristics close to students’ sensibility has not secured its place in education and with it an approach for young readers who would recognize it as their own (NPP, 2004–2006). “Using classes of Serbian Language and Literature as an example, especially in lower grades of primary school, it is more than obvious that the authors who foster the avant-garde literary expression, whether within children’s literature or literature intended

for adults, are excluded (Panić Maraš, 2017, p. 37).” The influence of the avant-garde poetic heritage had a decisive role in the development of children’s poetry in the 20th century. The reasons for this may primarily be sought in the avant-garde tendency, especially that of surrealist, poetic texts, to get to the core of the *world’s truth* through the category of infantilism and to adopt an irrational, Dadaist, non-standard language typical of children. This is why every text having the heritage of surrealism/avant-garde, where not only those regarded as part of children’s poetry but also those generally written for an adult “implicit reader” are included, is potentially immanent in children’s understanding of language and play in atheoretical and poetic sense. This is precisely why our goal was to examine the reception of such a text perceived as “inadequate” due to the degree of abstractiveness of the text in relation to the age or the fact that the given author had not originally intended this text for children. The paper looks at the active category of students who read contemporary poetry and possess the skills of progressive reception (Pinto, Melogno, & Iliceto, 2011), i.e., those students who could be recommended to read both the contemporary poetry, which is not written primarily for children and young adults, or the poetry written with a full awareness and respect for the young readers’ aptitude. Our hypothesis is that the poetry which has not been primarily intended for “naive” children’s mind actually suits their mental engagement, thus encouraging the comprehension of the language, text, and the world in general, all of which is expected at this age.

Apart from the comprehension of basic content-related interpretation factors, the reception of an avant-garde poetic text will also depend on students’ understanding of figurative meanings in a piece of writing. A generally adopted interdisciplinary scientific attitude takes the cognitive function of metaphorical thinking as the starting point and underlines the importance of the metaphor in the process of conceptualization of the image of the world: metaphor is one of the organizing principles of the human conceptual system; metaphorical thinking develops before the formal operational stage (Alessandroni, 2017; Genter, 1983; Lazarević & Stevanović, 2013, 2018; Winner, McCarthy, & Gardner, 1980; Wojcik, 1983).

As a figure of speech, the poetic metaphor is the most complex form of a trope, which is the crucial issue within the area of research of a literary text reception. The poetic metaphor is an expression of a subjective perception of the world, and it always depends on the context. These main characteristics of

the poetic metaphor affect how it is interpreted by the recipients / readers. It is the context of the text as a whole and subjective understanding of the poetic metaphor, i.e. the thing that stirs "internal imagining" of the intentionally given factors, that facilitate comprehension among many possible meanings.. So, the range of meanings that a child can adopt from a metaphoric transfer is not narrow, which means that many responses given by a child can be accepted as relevant, but the range is not unlimited either, and it cannot always be justified by an individual's subjective experience and the reader's autonomy that allows every reader to understand the text in a certain way. Foss (M. Foss) introduced the notion of metaphorical "resonance" - the tendency of the meaning of a metaphor to broaden and attract other fields of meaning. In the Dictionary of Literary Terms, the "metaphor" entry also includes epiphora and diaphora; as a factor of metaphor, epiphora refers to wider semantic contexts and implies new meanings, while diaphora strives to concentrate the meaning of a metaphor to a single "internal focus," so that a poem in which a metaphor is employed gains an objective reality (RKT, 1985). There is a constant tendency between epiphora and diaphora to expand and narrow the meaning of metaphor, giving the metaphor a stronger effect.

Poetic metaphor is one of three types of metaphor as a complex meta-semantic ability that refers to meanings and their reciprocal relations (Klikovac, 2004). The mechanism of thinking in a metaphor is based on structuring one concrete field/concept/domain that is familiar, experienceable through senses, and concrete in terms of a different field/concept/domain that is unfamiliar, abstract, and that cannot be experienced through senses (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1993; Pollard, 2003). The source (the familiar one) and target (the abstract one, which we strive to understand) domain appear in relatively symmetrical relations, i.e., based on the principle of analogy within the poetic metaphor itself. "Analogies helps us relate phenomena and relations that we cannot experience directly and that do not form an integral part of our experience to something that is a part of our experience and that we already understand, at least to a certain degree" (Pavlović, 2017, p. 34). This is why "we can say that analogies are one of the especially effective ways of applying the didactic systematic and gradual principle" (Pavlović, 2017, p. 36). In this way, complex analogical relations become a path towards "reading" polysemantic poetic metaphors, while the whole process of interpreting a poetic text, rich in this figure of speech, is a manner of developing abstract thinking, which is mostly metaphorical. All this brings children and the young into focus since

their abstract thinking is still developing, as well as metaphorical nature of poetic expression itself, which grows more complex.

Methodology

The goal of this research is to investigate the reception of avant-garde poetry by lower-grade primary school students (aged around 9 and 10 years). The starting point is the theory of reception (Ingarden, 1971; Iser, 1973, 1989; Jaus, 1978), and the research aspires to define factors and transformations that enable the reception of poetry at a specific age. The qualitative aspects of the students' reception are studied using poetry that is not written for children, but adults.

The randomly selected sample of participants included 17 students from two classes of two schools in Belgrade. The selection of students was made based on the students' willingness to be interviewed and independent expression of interest in literary texts in general. Students with learning disabilities and those who attended classes based on an individualized education program were excluded from the sample. Fourth-grade students were interviewed during the last month of the school year. Having read avant-garde poetry by Vasko Popa (poem "Duck" - Appendix 1), the participants were questioned in the form of an individual semi-structured interview. Later, during the interview, the participants were allowed to use the text whenever they felt the need to do so (the participants had the text in front of them), while the interviewer continually encouraged them to use the text in order to provide as precise and as detailed response as possible or to correct any errors in the comprehension of the read text. The form of the interview was suitable for the teaching context since the students were guided through the text with questions, whose purpose was to encourage them to think carefully about the less clear parts of the text and to help them verbalize their ideas, opinions, and attitudes about the read text. At first, the students provided their own answers to interpretative questions as readers (Appendix 2). By providing correct answers to this type of questions, the students were, to some extent, reaching the conclusions independently. When the answers to interpretative questions were not correct or based on the understanding of the read text, the continuation of the interview included a series of follow-up questions (included in Attachment 1), which encouraged the students to be more mentally engaged and to make connections between the facts in the text.

By independent answers provided by the participants as readers we mean that if, for instance, a participant came to understand a metaphor under the guidance of the examiner, the following, related metaphor was easier for individual interpretation. The interview form was consistently structured as a non-independent conversation on a topic. Moreover, individual understanding of each figure of speech in this poem separately relies on the mutual relationship between all figures of speech and the overall comprehension within the context in which they were employed.

Based on the conducted semi-structured interview, a qualitative analysis of the transcript of the interview was carried out. A thematic and content inductive analysis of the transcript was performed by means of the MAXQDA 12 qualitative research program. Stylistic, conceptual, and lexico-syntactic characteristics of the texts in relation to the reception were especially examined, while metaphor was brought into focus. The following units of analysis were identified: “the restlessness of water”, “the thinking reed”, “mirrors”, and “to plough the mirrors” metaphors; reed-person, mirror-water, and ploughing-swimming analogies; personification; “omen” allegory; handling of a text; concrete layer of a text; imagination of a poetic image; the meaning of “running away”; and the attitude towards the text. Based on the degree of comprehension of the predominant factors in text interpretation, the students demonstrated their range of reception capability.

This paper will focus on the results of the qualitative analysis of those transcripts related to the poem “Duck” (Popa, 1977) and the comprehension of this poem, with a special emphasis on the main research question: to what extent and how, if adequately prompted by the teacher, do students understand metaphorical/figurative meanings in a specific avant-garde poetic piece of writing?

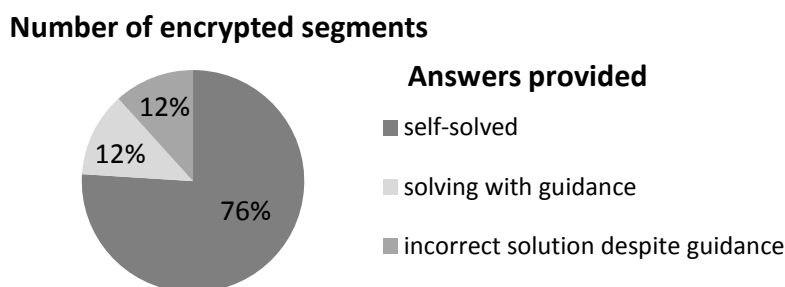
Results and discussion

On the basis of the overall evaluation of the students’ reception of all elements forming literal and metaphorical layers of the text, we can conclude that the majority of the students, either independently or prompted by a competent person, were able to interpret the poem (*Graph 1*).

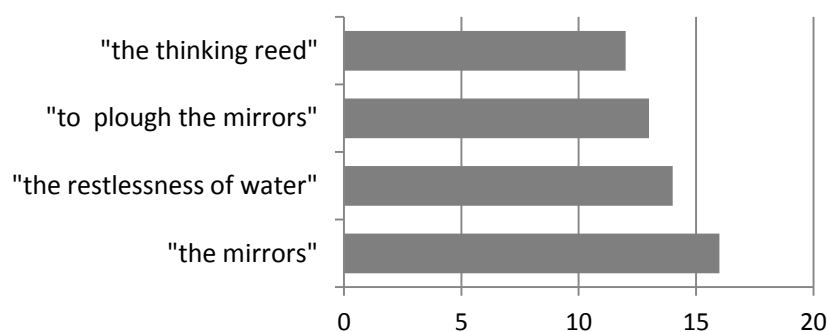
The vast majority of the students demonstrated comprehension of metaphors (*Graph 2* and *Table 1*). Firstly, we can observe metaphors extracted from the

text and the number of participants whose responses have lead us to the conclusion that they comprehended individual metaphors (*Graph 2*).

Graph 1. Number of coordinated segments and type of responses given by the students



In the continuation of this paper (*Table 1*), the distribution of correct and incorrect responses will be examined closely, whereby correct responses include those given independently and those that required the interviewer’s guidance. When it comes to incorrect responses, they could not be rendered correct even with provided guidance.



Metaphor - Number of students who understood the metaphor

Graph 2. Metaphors extracted from the text and the number of participants who comprehended individual metaphors

Answers provided	Solving with guidance	Incorrect solution despite guidance	Self-solved
"the restlessness of water"	6	3	8
"the thinking reed"	0	5	12
"the mirrors"	4	1	12
"to plough the mirrors"	2	4	11

Table 1. Extracted metaphors and types of responses given by the students with respect to the recognition of these metaphors

The metaphors “mirror” and “within her sides she carries the restlessness of water” were the most approachable metaphors in terms of the students’ comprehension. The least comprehended metaphorical expressions were “the thinking reed” and “to plough the mirrors.” The reason for this lies in the poetic constitution of the metaphors themselves. The students demonstrated that they were better at understanding metaphors with an underlying direct analogical relation, where this analogy is more straightforward, e.g., when two distinct notions are compared based on their functional property. For example, “mirror” and “water” share the ability to reflect images. Another example of this is the metaphor “within her sides she carries the restlessness of water,” where waves are compared to the swaying movements of the body. Those metaphors whose analogical relations between two notions are not associated directly or if the relationship is based on an extremely remote or non-existent/imaginary property are less approachable in terms of the comprehension. For instance, “the thinking reed” and a person are similar in height and uprightness and in the fact that they can both think in the poem, but this is not a conventional analogy, but a poetic one, which is not transparent immediately.

Popa’s poetry relies heavily on the metaphor that preserves the analogical relation in itself and analogy as a poetic hint that enables interpretation of the meaning. The analogy is here presented as the most productive means underpinning metaphorical imagery, which requires the readers to connect two distant concepts, usually on the basis of mutual similarities. This is a closed-type analogy whereby both elements of the analogous relationship are represented (*metaphora in presentia*). Our results show that the nine and ten-year-old students understand this type of metaphor much more easily. Other poems contain metaphorical expressions which require from the readers, and this is typical of the aforementioned “surrealist metaphor,” to find the external analogon, outside the text, usually of realistic origin. These analogons can be considered open (*metaphora in absentia*) (Kojen, 1986), and they are, in fact, associations that are made more or less intentionally. When it comes to metaphors from the “Duck” poem, we can state that they mostly belong to the *metaphora in presentia* type, because their analogical relations are marked by the context to a greater or lesser degree (Novaković, 1997). The familiarity of the participants of this age with the source domain (duck, water, mirrors, sides – and, to a lesser degree – to plough, reed) has an

important role within the analogical relation, which enables a more direct recognition of the target domain in the sphere of metaphorical thinking.

Table 2 shows the relation between the number of participants who comprehended/did not comprehend the metaphor in question and the number of those who demonstrated/did not demonstrate comprehension of analogical relations within the corresponding metaphors. For example, it was possible to compare the number of participants who comprehend “the thinking reed” metaphor to the number of participants who were able/unable to explain the analogy on which this same metaphor is based.

Analogy in the metaphor	Metaphor comprehension	Able to explain the analogy	Unable to explain the analogy
“the thinking reed”	metaphor recognized	8	4
	metaphor unrecognized	3	2
“the mirrors”	metaphor recognized	16	0
	metaphor unrecognized	1	0
“to plough the mirrors”	metaphor recognized	13	0
	metaphor unrecognized	1	3

Table 2. The relation between the comprehension of metaphors and the ability to explain the analogy within these same metaphors

The results show that the students who understood the metaphor achieved this in two ways: 1) using the context and/or 2) by understanding the analogical relation between the entities represented in the metaphor. When it comes to this example, we can say that a student has mastered metaphorical thinking if he or she is able to understand a metaphor in both ways. Here, we can see that the majority of the students achieved this (Table 2).

There were students who were not able to understand the metaphor, but, with or without guidance, were able to understand the poetic analogy between the two notions (Table 2). Their way of thinking exhibits the potential to enter the sphere of figurative meaning. Those students who were able to explain a metaphor, but were not able to understand the underlying analogy, understood the metaphor solely by means of the context, which is, to some extent, also the ability to understand the metaphorical layer. The former group needs to be directed towards the context, while the latter needs to be

guided in the direction of development in establishing analogical relations among notions in a creative way. Interestingly enough, it is precisely the “thinking reed” metaphor that was understood by the largest number of participants who, at the same time, were not able to explain the intended analogy (4), and this same metaphor went unrecognized by the largest number of participants who were nevertheless able to explain the analogy (3). What is peculiar for the “mirrors” and “to plough the mirrors” metaphors is that, among the participants who recognized the metaphor, all were able to explain the analogy on which this metaphoric transfer is based. In other words, with these two metaphors, the students demonstrated comprehension of both the metaphors and their analogies (16/13). We can conclude that the “mirrors” and “to plough the mirrors” metaphors are comprehended through analogy rather than context, whose role in determining the nature of their metaphorical meaning is minor.

The overall theme of the poem, expressed in the form of an allegory, is real and imaginary lurking threats. The person has the role of both the duck and the hunter (Brajović, 1997). This allegory about the omen (portent or presage) is directly related to the metaphor “the thinking reed,” because, if the students are able to understand that the reed is actually a person, or a hunter, as they said, it is easy for the students to understand the allegorical situation about the omen, implying that the duck will be a victim of somebody who “will catch her anyway.” The metaphor is, therefore, a part of the allegory about the omen. We were interested in the relation between these two figures of speech with respect to the students’ reception (Table 3). By comparing the answers to the questions about the meaning of the “thinking reed” metaphor (*What is “the thinking reed”?*) and about the allegorical meaning of the omen (*“Is the reed/person a threat to this duck? Explain.”*), we obtained the results on the relation between the comprehension of the metaphor and allegory in the poem.

Allegory and metaphor	Metaphor comprehension	Allegory about the omen - recognized	Allegory about the omen - unrecognized
“the thinking reed”	metaphor recognized	11	1
	metaphor unrecognized	2	3

Table 3. Relation between the comprehension of the “thinking reed” metaphor and the “omen” allegory

Most participants who were able to understand the “the thinking reed” metaphor were also able to detect the omen allegory (11). However, there were also those students who recognized the allegory about the omen but were not able to understand the metaphor “the thinking reed” and vice versa. This means that, when it comes to a metaphor and an allegory with similar meanings, there is no primary and secondary, comprehensible and less comprehensible figure of speech in terms of comprehension. This leads us to the conclusion that whether a student is more likely first to understand a metaphor or an allegory depends on the individual characteristics of the student, despite the fact that, in theory, allegory is an extended metaphor. Although they are based on the same mechanism, understanding an allegory does not necessarily imply that a metaphor is understood as well.

Table 4 shows the relation between the comprehension of a metaphor and personification, which are obvious within the same line: “the thinking reed”

Personification and metaphor	Metaphor comprehension	Personification recognized	Personification unrecognized
“the thinking reed”	metaphor recognized	12	0
	metaphor unrecognized	1	4

Table 4: The relation between the comprehension of the metaphor and personification in the expression “the thinking reed”

The students who comprehend the “thinking reed” metaphor were also able to recognize personification – human characteristics are attributed to the character of the reed (12), while the four participants who failed to recognize the personification in the expression did not comprehend the metaphor. Since these two figures are expressed within the same expression, in other words, their relation here is intersectional; it is expected that the comprehension of these is directly related. It is possible for a child to comprehend the personification, but to fail to comprehend the metaphor, while the other way around is completely excluded.

The relationship of the reception of two metaphors	Metaphor comprehension	metaphor “the mirrors” - recognized	Metaphor “the mirrors” - unrecognized
“to plough the mirrors”	Metaphor recognized	13	0
	Metaphor unrecognized	3	1

Table 5. Relation between the comprehension of two metaphors: “mirrors” and “to plough the mirrors”

“To plough the mirrors” expression was divided into two metaphors (“mirrors” and “mirrors to plough”) to help realize the complexity of this expression, whose function is to conjure up a dynamic poetic image with a metaphorical meaning. We also compared two metaphors: “mirrors” and “to plough the mirrors,” whose relation is hierarchical (Table 5).

The water in this poem is portrayed as mirrors, while the metaphor “to plough the mirrors” indicates similarity between ploughing and a duck swimming, based on the analogy of a trace left by a duck and a plough. The expectation that the students who are not able to understand the metaphor of the “mirror” would certainly not be able to understand the broader metaphor, which the former is part of, was confirmed.

Other characteristics of children’s reception

1) The participants had difficulties in expressing their thoughts on the metaphorical layers of the text. Their attempts to “naively” verbalize their “naive” thoughts on metaphorical aspects enable progress both with respect to development and the ability to provide reasoned arguments for their opinions, but with respect to the general communication as well.

2) In some students, metaphor comprehension was characterized by the inability to separate the abstract from the concrete layer of the text, which resulted in the totalization of this layer of the text by literalizing the poetic expression. This is the most common reason why the students were unable to achieve a more consistent interpretation of the text despite their teacher’s guidelines.

3) In their attempts to interpret the metaphor, the students displayed the inability to attain decentration. In this specific case, this means that they assume the point of view of the duck or the reed/person and form an opinion “from” this point of view. The participants tried to justify the use of the expression “the thinking reed” to refer to a person by saying that this is how ducks see people. This is how the students interpreted poetic language and poetic imagery – by rationalizing them. In other words, they investigated the “origin of the metaphor”. Such interpretations are not necessarily relevant at the level of the meaning of a literary text, but are significant in the teaching process and they enable forming and verbalizing an opinion, because they fundamentally entail a search for analogy. Although this form of

interpretation, from the position of the receiver, is remote from the actual meaning of the text, it is a step towards understanding the mechanism underpinning the metaphor, which can be deemed as progress towards mastering the tools for interpreting a piece of writing. Similarly, the inability to attain decentration most often goes hand in hand with visualizing poetic imagery, which is an active, creative level of attitude to a piece of writing and which also helps in developing imagination. In other words, divergent ways of thinking and typical abstract obstacles, such as metaphors, on the path to achieving understanding play an important role in the development. Metaphorical thinking is developed by intertwining individual and social and cultural dimensions of development (Vosniadou, 1986), and these can be influenced. On the one hand, strategies employed by children in the process of interpreting metaphors, even when opposed to the actual meaning, enhance the creative aspects of their imagination (Vigotski, 2005). On the other hand, our insights into the diversity of strategies for understanding metaphors enable a systemic impact on the development of those elements in the process which are still inactive in children's text reception.

Example 1:

Examiner: Who will catch the duck?

Student: It says in the text. The thinking reed. But this is how a duck sees a person. It's like, it sees the person from a distance because it's in the sea, it sees the land from a distance, and it sees the person, but it thinks that it's a reed because it's too far away, so it can't see clearly.

4) Similarly to the mentioned mechanisms, the participants have an active need to remain consistent with their original interpretation of the text despite the interlocutor presenting new facts that refute participant's / student's interpretation. This kind of situation impels the student to solve the problem in a way that suits his or her interpretation. In a lively teaching process, this kind of "fight for an interpretation" would be even more directed and functional, for both finding the key to a child's reception of a piece of writing and the development of reasoned thinking, which is one of the important preconditions for interpreting a literary text. The role of the teacher is to present students with problem-solving situations that are inevitable when interpreting a poetic piece of writing.

Example 2:

Examiner: Why is the person chasing the duck and will the person catch the duck?

Student: The duck just thinks that the reed is chasing it, but the reed is just carried by the water.

Examiner: Then why did you say that the reed was either a person or an animal?

Student: Oh, then it's possible the person's chasing it. But, you see, the person might not be chasing the duck, but just going in the same direction as the duck.

Conclusion

The findings on the reception of poetry show that: 1) the students exhibited a higher degree of understanding poetry compared to the expected horizon of expectations, 2) the conceptual layer of a piece of writing is more accessible for interpretation if an abstract idea is presented in the concrete layer of the piece of work, 3) students interpret figures of speech implicitly, 4) students are able to understand and form impressions of poetic imagery and metaphors, especially when they are based on direct analogies, 5) if metaphors are based on remote analogies not explicitly expressed in the text, it is more difficult to understand the text, 6) even when they do not understand an analogy which the metaphor is based on, the students can understand the metaphor to a certain degree using the context, 7) understanding allegory and metaphor, as well as personification and metaphor are mutually dependent, 8) when it comes to the students' reception, allegory and metaphor are equally challenging to comprehend - they do not stand in relation where one of them is a part of/includes the other, but are intertwined.

Possible distractors that affect the reception quality are: 1) limitations in the ability to verbalize the opinion about the read text, 2) reducing impressions to concrete meanings devoid of abstract categories and figurative meanings, 3) a student generally understands literal and figurative meanings of the text, but keeps them strictly apart without perceiving a relation between them, 4) inability to attain decentration, resulting in the search for "the origin of metaphor" - the student looks for an "excuse" for a metaphorical expression, 5) impact of sciences studied at school, where phenomena are explained empirically and strictly logically (e.g., ecology).

Given the presented results on the reception of a literary and artistic piece of writing, it is possible to expose the students to metaphorical and semantic levels arising from a piece of writing at an age earlier than assumed, while keeping in mind the possible methodical approaches and distractors in order to achieve as successful interpretation of the piece of writing as possible.

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Appendix 1

DUCK by Popa, V. (1977)

She waddles through the dust
In which no fish are smiling
Within her sides she carries
The restlessness of water

Clumsy
She waddles slowly
The thinking reed
Will catch her anyway

Never
Never will she be able
To walk
As she was able
To plough the mirrors

Appendix 2

Questions asked during the semi-structured interview – methodical interpretation of the poem

1. *What is this poem about?*
2. *Where does this animal waddle?*
Why don't the fish smile in the dust? Where would they be able to smile?
What does the smiling mean? (How do they feel then?)
3. *What does "the restlessness of water" look like?*
If we say that she moves and that within her sides she carries "the restlessness of water," how does she actually move? Describe/show me how you visualized this image/movement?
The movement of the duck is described in the second verse. Find it in the text.
4. *Who will catch the duck?*
What is "the thinking reed"? Can a reed think?
Name all the similarities between a person and a reed.
Why is the reed/person chasing the duck and will it catch the duck?
Is the reed/person a threat to this duck? Explain.
Is there a point for the duck to run away, and where do you see this in the text?
5. *What are the mirrors in this verse?*
In what way are a mirror and water similar?
Why does the author say that the duck "ploughs the mirrors"?
In what way are swimming on the surface of the water and ploughing fields similar?
Where is the duck more successful: in the water or on land?
What about a person?
6. *What tense is used in the line "as she was able"? Why not "as she is able"?*
What is the duck's fate (happy or unhappy) and why?