

Films Analysis in the Perspective of Literary Sources: Developing the Procedure of Movies Analysis

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Abstract—The study is focused on the principles of discourse analysis in the perspective of the analysis of movies and their literary sources. For the sake of research in the study the types of discourse are regarded as "text" for literature and "discourse" for movies. All the elements of text and discourse analyses wouldn't be the same; the aim is to single out identical elements and to compare the literary text and its movie version. Several stages in the analysis procedure were established to reach the goal of adequate comparison.

Index Terms—text analysis, discourse analysis, translation into semi-verbal languages, extra-linguistic factors.

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature – Film opposition, practically, represents text/its translation opposition as a movie is a translation of the original text from a completely verbal into a semi-verbal language. The comparison cannot be produced in general but due to a special procedure; to work out the procedure is the aim of the study.

The objectives of the study include working out strategies of discourse analysis and understanding of their necessity. Such factors as background differences that contribute to the case of misunderstanding: gender, generation, ethnic and cultural differences as well as present-moment factors such as light and sound effects, clothes, time and place start functioning in a specific way when the literary text obtains its visual form.

For the convenience of the research text and discourse in this study are applied to literature and movies correspondingly. This kind of discourse subdivision seems to be logically approved as literary texts are organized and constructed in a way and by means of relevant for the message production elements. Here it's possible to speak about conscious choice of marked/non-marked elements in the perspective of message production. Of course, the reader as the second participant of the act of communication decodes the information according to their background knowledge, and the strategies of adequate decoding are necessary in this case.

II. LITERATURE

In present research the aim of the procedure of text analysis is understood as searching for the answer to the question "How?" – meaning how the one who decodes a text gets a certain information about its message, what elements

of text structure (both formal and semantic) are marked in the perspective of message production? This approach presupposes text completeness: all possible changes including text continuation, change its message. (The term "message" itself is rather vague and could be compared with other terms like "idea", "concept", "author's intention" and even "text intention" – they only reflect the attempts to find possibly adequate name for the same phenomenon. Since it is not the aim of this article to discuss relevancy of each of the terms, they are presented only to clarify what is meant by the term "message" in this study).

One of the main characteristics of a text is its completeness and autonomy. Spontaneous speech and written text are two different types of discourse. For the investigation of text completeness, it is natural to start with written text as formally it is separated from other texts by definite elements of its structure. In this work text is regarded as a unit of speech in its written variety. Text is understood here not just as a written fixation of oral speech but as a special variety of verbal creative activity which has its own parameters different from those of oral speech. From the point of view of text autonomy, the fact that it is fixed on paper is especially important as in this case text delimitation can be materially expressed by means of different signals connected with text existence within the frames of the definite space.

Very often in literary criticism formal endings are regarded as signals of text completeness, but in present day literature practically no texts have traditional formal endings. If the traditional ending were the only criterion for text completeness Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* [1] should be regarded as incomplete whereas Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* [2] as twice complete.

Formal limits cannot solve completely the problem of text completeness since completeness is not only formal but also a semantic text category; thus, different stories united by a ring frame like Boccaccio's *Decameron* [3] or "inserted" stories like in *Don Quixote* [4] by Cervantes don't have absolute formal signs of isolation but are absolutely semantically autonomous. On the contrary, series of stories with one main character are formally separate but semantically closely related with the whole series [5]. The examples show that it is impossible to speak about absolute text completeness.

The notion of completeness in linguistics is closely connected to the same notion in philosophy. In classical philosophy the problem of completeness is regarded from the point of view of continuum/discontinuum and it is recognized that continuum is absolute and discontinuum is relative [6], [7]-[10].

Philosophic problem of continuum/discontinuum becomes text linguistics problem because of the controversial character of the phenomenon under study – the text. On the

one hand, the text is a secondary modelling system [11] and shares characteristics of all the material systems, including continuum/discontinuum. On the other hand, text is the model of the objective world, and, consequently, models objective characteristics of this world [12], [13].

In application to text linguistics, it is possible to say that text completeness is relative (since text completeness is a combination of formal and semantic factors, and semantically no text can be absolutely complete; thus, scientific textbooks have the same titles, subjects and formulas and are semantically related and at the same time, having titles, introductions and conclusions, as well as covers, are formally independent, i.e., complete). Objectively any phenomenon is endless; but having become a subject of text or utterance it acquires relative completeness [14], [15]. In literature relativity of text completeness could be seen if different variations of subject and plot are analyzed (e.g., Shakespeare's plays and their literary sources. A very interesting example can be found in Russian folk songs – one of them is a variation of Ophelia's song – its translation was performed by a certain provincial actress, became popular as a romance and gradually became a song of Russian peasants.

Relativity of completeness could also be traced in fine arts and music (several portraits of one and the same person, different stage versions, musical transcription).

The most interesting cases illustrating relativity of text completeness are text translations into different - verbal and non-verbal – systems of codes. These translations – transformations – of the text are also very important from the point of view of text analysis. Taking into consideration possibilities of other systems (non-verbal - music, dance, fine arts, and verbal – different cultural backgrounds, different language structures) it is possible to single out the unchangeable nucleus that is directly connected with the message.

Completeness is only one of the categories, characterizing the world inside the literary text. [16], [17]. Worked out in philosophy, the notion of "categories" presupposes objective characteristics of the universe. Text as a microworld shares its characteristics with the world outside, and the term "categories" was borrowed by text linguistics to characterize the constituents of the text. Time, place, continuum, retrospection, prospection, polyphony, modality, presupposition, completeness – these are the categories that exist in both worlds – natural and artificially constructed. Such categories as factual, subtextual and conceptual information belong to the world of the text.

Categories function differently in the world of literature; they are subjective and differ from objective categories of universe. Time may be fast and slow, may stop and run, continuum may be interrupted by retrospective and prospective parts, we can jump into the past or future and these "abnormalities" have special emphatic effect.

In this study two practical procedures were established for text analysis in the perspective of its completeness: the analysis of the basic structural and semantic dominants of the text: initial, final and topical, its categories, and the analysis of text transformations.

Literary texts where spontaneous speech is imitated are good samples of material for the analysis preparing the students to further oral discourse analysis. A very interesting

category is polyphony that imitates simultaneous sounding of different voices. Here oral discourse is much better developed presenting different voices sounding in music, theatre performances or movies. In written texts some print interchange has to be used to imitate simultaneous existence of utterances. The reader has to single out thematic or topical chains and to establish relations between them, defining the message as the ultimate result of text decoding. A poem *The Nerves* by I. Annensky [18] could be regarded as a good example of such a text:

How dusty and red hot this street is!

O Lord, what a sad pine tree!

The balcony is under a roof. The wife is winding yarn.

The husband is just sitting. Behind them is canvas like a sail.

Their balcony is built over the very flower bed.

"You think it's not he... But if it is?"

Good heavens, she keeps on knitting... "Let's consider a little..."

...Cloudberry, berries, cloudberry!

"Then, if we could only get rid of the lilac-colored copybook?"

— "Ma'am, should we buy some spinach?"

— "Buy some, Annushka!.. —

"And I also saw

A note on the wall there, so..."

...Good combs!

"But here comes the postman... No letters for Petrov?"

— "The only mail was the newspaper *The World*."

In the text the dialogue between the husband and the wife all the time exists parallel to the hawkers' shouts, the servant and the postman speech; but since the couple has actually nothing to discuss the interruptions only contribute to the idea of emptiness and irritation and create the message of "the nerves" that should be relaxed. The polyphonic structure creates one theme of dull and colorless life. The interruptions at the same time reflect real-life situations where conversations may be interrupted by telephone calls, outer noises, electricity gaps and other possible factors. One theme loss is a commonly known factor that interferes with the channel of communication that should be taken into consideration.

Cultural factor becomes highly important when nature-related texts are analyzed. Thus, the students of Text Analysis class are supposed to analyze *Symphony in Yellow* [19] by Oscar Wilde. For European and North American readers even without reading it may be clear that yellow in nature relates to the fall and a special state of mood. For Israeli readers it's not relevant as a yellow season doesn't exist there. So, it requires additional explanation since culturally accepted connotation of the season wouldn't be considered when the text is interpreted; even more, one of the students wrote in the paper: "You said it was Fall or Spring, so it has some meaning". Israeli climate doesn't make people feel the difference, so it may be taught but not felt.

Another factor – historical background – is also of great importance when literary texts are analyzed; thus, most students when asked how they could define the genre of *Gulliver's Travels* [20] by Swift defined it as a fairy tale. Not

knowing the history of England and the situation Swift criticized they were unable to understand his satire. In this case the question arises: should the commentaries be regarded as a part of a text as only they make it possible to decode the original message. The answer to the question is highly complicated, is closely connected to the problem of original text – its translations relations and is not the matter of present study. It is discussed here in order just to show how complicated decoding is; the students of Text Analysis class become familiarized with it and start paying more attention to extra-linguistic factors.

III. MOVIES

Discourse Analysis, as it was mentioned before, is aimed to work out strategies of oral speech analysis., in the case of translation into another, semi-verbal, language – movies. The procedure includes singling out of meaningful units of discourse relevant in the perspective of message production [21] and their adequate interpretation of verbal and non-verbal factors. Very well understanding that samples of spontaneous speech are hard to record, movies and TV programs are chosen as the material for the analysis. The interviews taken on the spot are the closest to spontaneous, unprepared discourse samples (although in any case the interviewed are aware of the camera).

Units of discourse are singled out by means of objective criteria: one theme, the same number of participants, switches in time and place, in modality and side effects. Switches in theme may occur naturally and verbally, because of co-themes and associative themes, and may develop under the influence of extra-linguistic factors. In this case it is important to define the initial theme and the ones that develop further, to establish their relations.

At the same time within one discourse unit there may be several personal themes manifesting different personal theme interpretations and resulting from different personal backgrounds. Then there are cases when we deal with

One theme – one interpretation

One theme – several interpretations

or rather cases of one or different codes of communication. The information about several interpretations is received through the analysis of "initial statement – response" pairs: responses could be defined as adequate/non-adequate. The reasons of non-adequate responses are very often those of different backgrounds of participants, their false interpretation of verbal remarks and intonation as well as non-verbal elements of discourse: face expression, body language, gestures, even clothes.

The factor of clothes actively participates in discourse development and its adequate decoding. The explanation is a very simple one: an inappropriately dressed person, feeling, and knowing it, would include their irritation into the act of communication; in such a case clothes would contribute to the choice of vocabulary, intonation, gestures, would be responsible at least of the mode of communication. A good example is the movie *My Fair Lady*: [22] badly dressed Eliza tries to protect herself against the respectable society and thus is very rude, yells every now and then. Being well-dressed she immediately changes the manner of speech. Another

example analyzed in Discourse Analysis class is a discourse unit from *Gone with the Wind* [23] movie: Scarlett O'Hara, planning to borrow the money she desperately needs from Rhett Butler, knows he will get irritated with her shabby clothes and being terribly poor and miserable still sews a new dress from her late mother's portieres. When she meets Rhett and starts talking to him, she conducts the conversation the way she planned it to be; the moment Rhett sees her spoiled by hard work hands the conversation changes its mood – initially it was flirt and pity for Rhett on Scarlet's side and admiration on Rhett's, after the switch it's ashamed and business-like on Scarlett's side and teasing, ridiculing, and suspecting on Rhett's side.

"Speaking different languages" within one theme is a well-known case: different background knowledge of the participants lead them to misinterpretation and each one is inadequate from the point of view of the others. The situation may have both humorous and tragic effect and thus is very often used in comedies and tragedies. In Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, [24] the whole piece of discourse thematically connected to a sleeping remedy for Juliet is out of Romeo's discourse; he doesn't know that what he sees is sleep, not death. He misinterprets her state and commits suicide.

The movie *Roman Holiday*, [25] on the contrary, is a comedy and is analyzed from the point of view of "one theme – different personal codes". In the movie a princess wants to see the life of common people and escapes from the palace. Before that she had been given sleeping pills. She finds herself in the streets of Rome alone and gradually falling asleep. On the other hand, a young American reporter is coming back from his friends and meets the young lady in the street. Since she is sleepy and produces an impression of a tipsy woman, he doesn't know what to do with her and takes her to his apartment, a cheap and simply furnished room. This where the piece of the movie regarded as a discourse unit for the analysis starts. The first thing the lady asks is about the room: "Is it an elevator?" Never in her life has she seen such a small room. For the reporter it's just an inadequate phrase of a tipsy lady. He wants her just to have a rest in his room and she whispers, coming close to him: "Undress me". In her language it's a natural thing – never in her life has she undressed herself. For the reporter it's another hint: he should have thought twice before taking the lady to his place. When the gentleman is going to leave for a cup of coffee the lady says: "You have my permission to withdraw". Being a princess, she has never met people leaving without her permission; not knowing it the reporter is greatly surprised.

In the above example the theme can be defined as "night sleep for sleepy and drunk" as the reporter is really a bit tipsy. But the languages the two people speak are different: the language of the princess is adequate for her personal background, for palaces and royal family life and inadequate within the scenery of a shabby rented room. The language of the reporter is adequate for a simple street girl and inadequate for a princess. Thus, the unit of discourse presents "one theme – two languages" situation and could be adequately interpreted only in terms of different backgrounds.

Having seen this unit only the participants of the experiment decoded it in terms of a drunk and thus inadequately behaving lady; having gotten additional

information – seen the previous part of the movie – they changed their opinion.

The conclusion is: one should watch the whole movie to understand the phrase. One should live the whole life to understand another person. In the case of movies or TV programs analysis the factor of the audience should also be considered. The audience participates in the act of communication and seems to be regarded as communication participants; in other words, a certain unit of discourse contains on-screen and opposite-screen participants and presents several personal codes that could be:

Parallel - with no crossing of several codes piece of discourse

Perpendicular -one touch/crossing of codes piece of discourse

Interlaced – of similar or the same codes piece of discourse

To sum the information up it would be possible to say that non-verbal elements of discourse very often are of vital importance in the process of information decoding. Everyday situations prove the point and each time give more material for speculations and studies. It is especially important when literature/based on it movies are analyzed. Each type of a text has its pluses and minuses. In literature much is explained: the thoughts of the characters, their reasons, their way to understand the situation.

On the other hand, the visual representation of a text has its possibility to demonstrate what is presented in literature by means of description. At the same time, it limits the decoding possibilities for the reader/spectator by giving one possible interpretation. Silent scenes are of special importance here.

Thus, if we compare *Great Expectations* [26] by Ch. Dickens and the movie, we read of how unusual the room where Pip finds himself at Miss Havisham's is; every reader could create their world, whereas in the movie a spectator gets a ready-made interior.[27].

The text gets its visual interpretation, but loses the modality of Dickens's book: irony, sarcasm, empathy.

Sometimes a movie introduces an additional scene, almost silent, but giving the key to the situation. In the novel *Vanity Fair* [28], [29] by W. Thackeray the modality is sarcastic, in relation to Rebecca Sharp in particular. The reader knows that the aim of the girl is to catch an appropriate husband, but the spectator should understand it. The scene when Rebecca comes to the stables to initiate the talk with Mr. Rodon Crawly, the son of the landlord, is added. Rebecca is a governess in the house, and it's absolutely inappropriate for her to have private conversation with the gentleman. It's absolutely inappropriate for her to initiate the conversation. And – think! – ask him to give her a cigar to taste. His reaction is appropriate: he tries to hug her. But she leaves, saying "No". With a rising tone. Which means, of not "No", but "Maybe".

Some movies would like to preserve the text of an author as it is very beautiful, but the final product happens to be weak. The movie then works as an illustration but not as a separate piece of art. There is a story *Snowstorm* [30], [31] by Pushkin which is very charming. The movie has big pieces of the narrator's comments, and they only spoil the impression.

It seems important to speak about the two versions of movie translations of the same text. Two versions of *Pride and Prejudice* [31] by Jane Austen were compared – BBC [32]

and Hollywood [33] productions. It was Elizabeth Bennet's and Mr. Darcy dialogue. In the book the dialogue takes place inside the room; they both are emotionally involved but keep good manners. In BBC movie the scene could be described by the same words. In Hollywood movie the scene takes place outside, in the thunderstorm. Both Elisabeth and Mr. Darcy are wet and speak highly emotionally, their feelings are highlighted by the weather. After reading and watching the episodes the participants were asked to choose the better appropriate ones. Strange, but the young generation – under thirty – chose the Hollywood interpretation. The choice doesn't characterize them as good or bad interpreters but rather shows that each generation has their priorities.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study shows that different characteristics of verbal and semi-verbal texts require special procedures of their analysis; such categories as factual information, conceptual information and modality could be analyzed and compared in both versions of the text while extra-linguistic features of both are different and need additional techniques for their interpretation. Anyway, the message is always the best criterion.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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