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**THE INTERACTION OF VERBAL AND VISUAL CODES IN A
FICTION TEXT**

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Abstract

The article represents an attempt of research of intermediality – a field of studies which deals with the issues of interaction of various codes used as means of expressing meaning. The object of the study is a polycode text – a text and illustrations to it. The subject matter is the interaction of verbal and non-verbal codes in the process of meaning expression. The article describes the historical background of the theory of intermediality as an independent field of study, underlines the role of modern text practices and the synthesis of arts which requires theoretical comprehension. The authors give reasons for transdisciplinary approach to the study of intermedial interaction and characterize the major types of intermediality. An intermedial analysis of two texts has been carried out – ‘Le Petit Prince’, a short novel by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, and ‘Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland’ by Lewis Carroll, the former being illustrated by the author himself, the latter – by the author as well as by many artists. The analysis conducted gave grounds for defining three types of intermedial relations that can be traced in the process of verbal and visual codes interaction – complementary, harmonious and disharmonious. The list of text-picture relations is not finite and further study can reveal other types of relations between verbal and non-verbal codes of the text.

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1. Introduction

The integrative nature of linguistics within the context of cognitive paradigm evoked interest in the interaction of different ways of meaning representation. It brings us to a broader field of studies of verbal and non-verbal types of cognition, and of mutual work of the left and the right brain hemispheres in the process of communication. In oral communication this interaction can be traced in the character of relations between words and gestures, mimics and other non-verbal ways of sense expression. In fiction this interaction is represented by the text and visual images which results in the emergence of polycode texts (Hubert, 1990; Jensen, 2016; Linkis, 2019; etc). Though the synthesis of arts has always been characteristic of culture, recently, due to the development of new technologies, the trend to polycode product creation has gained popularity. For instance, current text practices tend to represent a combination of word and picture or word and music that “visualizes” or “asounds” the text. The need for theoretical understanding of such practices has resulted in the emergence of intermediality theory (Literature Beyond Literary Studies: Intermediality and Interdisciplinarity, 2016), based on the principle of intersemiotics, i.e. the interaction of different codes in the process of meaning generation. The study material is represented by texts illustrated by their authors, and texts illustrated by professional artists who have different esthetic credos.

2. Problem Statement

2.1. Historical background of the theory of intermediality

The origin of intermediality as an independent theory dates back to the 1990s. The term ‘intermediality’ was introduced into linguistics in 1983 by Hansen-Löve (2016) at a conference dedicated to dialogue of texts and held in Hamburg (p. 11). The topic of the conference indicated that the theory of intermediality originated from the doctrine of M.M. Bakhtin, who considered dialogism as the foundation of humanitarian studies (Bakhtin, 2017a; Bakhtin, 2017b). Bakhtin’s doctrine gained great popularity and influenced the development of humanitarian studies worldwide. Another factor, equally important for intermediality, was the development of semiotics that views the whole culture as Text. The idea of cultural enrichment in the course of interaction of different forms of culture was expressed by Yuri Lotman who wrote that culture is largely polyglottic, and its texts can find realization only at the borders of minimum two semiotic systems. According to Lotman (1996), polyglottism is language polyphony or ‘intersemiotics’, as far as the creation of the so called ‘polycode’ art always means intergration of different semiotic systems. Thus, Lotman comes to a conclusion that ‘being codified with various codes is a law for most texts’ (p. 143).

Speaking about the development of semiotics, Stepanov (2001) noted that every new idea initially comes into being outside the borders of theoretical knowledge, in textual practice, but it is theorists who complete the process of creation of new ideas, generalizing textual practices which results in the emergence of new theories (p. 39). Similar thoughts are expressed by Demyankov (2017) who points out three successive stages of science development: 1) collecting observations; 2) working out the methods of analysis; 3) working out theories that explain the phenomena discovered in the material (p. 46). But in the case of intermediality the main stimulus for development was found in current text, music and art

practices that turned to methods of arts synthesis and called for theoretical understanding. To illustrate the point it's worthwhile to take the examples of A.N. Skryabin's music, 'cinematographic' futurism poetry, paintings by M. Czurlanis, poetry by Voznesensky (2018). A strong impulse for theoretical understanding of modern art hybridization came from mass media in the late 1900s. It is in mass media that various forms of art merged and fostered *interart(s) studies*, a direction, covering a wide range of studies in the field of intermediality.

Such art synthesis is not unusual as art has always been synthetic, which was determined, on the one hand, by the polymodality of human perception, and, on the other hand, by the common mission of all art forms – to express the results of world comprehension in different art forms and their totality. Cognitive linguistics displays special interest in the study of intermediality because the latter reflects participation of all kinds of cognition, verbal and non-verbal, ordinary and artistic, in the process of world perception. Describing the integration of different kinds of cognition in the process of painting Kantor (2017), says: “The hand of an experienced painter moves according to its own will, the mind often being unable to realize what the eyes regarded as true <...> the painter actually delegates to his arm what he could express in words standing aside from his canvas” (p. 160). What M. Kantor means is that types of cognition and the forms of sense expression can be both verbal and non-verbal.

2.2. Types of intermedial relations

Intermediality today is not just a trend, but a broad field of interdisciplinary research. Various issues of it have been studied in Germany, where the term was introduced (Hansen-Löve, 2016; Rajewsky, 2005); in Canada, where in 1997 a research center was launched at the University of Montreal; in Russia, where the linguists study the general issues of intermediality (Golubkova & Kanashina, 2018; Vladimirova, 2016), and carry out the intermedial analysis of texts (Titarenko, 2017). The multidimensionality of the issues under the study and the versatility of approaches towards intermediality find their reflection in the use of various terms (multimediality, plurimediality, crossmediality, intra-mediality, media-convergence, media-integration, media-fusion, hybridization), united under the umbrella term of ‘intermediality’ (Rajewsky, 2005, p. 44).

There are several classifications of intermedial relations, based on different methods and forms of media interaction. The analysis of works of several authors (Hansen-Löve, 1983; Isagulov, 2019; Rajewsky, 2005; Sinelnikova, 2017) gives grounds for pointing out the followings types of intermediality: 1) medial transposition which is the transformation of one type of media product to another, for example, a stage or screen version of a book, verbal description of a picture or a piece of music known as *ecphrasis*, or vice versa, ‘translation’ of a novel into the language of music; 2) media combination (multimedia, intermedia) which is the combination of different media or different codes. A traditional form of media combination is a polycode text that combines text and illustrations. This intermediality type is widely spread in culture that uses all forms of hybrids: theatre performance and video, music and video, music and sports. The major condition for such media synthesis is their conceptual fusion. When two or three media come into interaction, each of them contributes to the expression of meaning. The combination of media can become so organic as to generate a new media product; 3) transmedial intermediality which is the embodiment of one plot by means of different art

forms. The best examples of this type of intermediality are representations of Biblical plots in painting, prose and poetry. This type of intermediality also finds realization when one trend or movement exists in various art forms, e. g, impressionism in painting, music and literature; 4) ontological, or referential intermediality which finds manifestation in different features shared by various forms of art. It is expressed by means of ‘musicality’ or ‘picturesqueness’ of prose or poetry, by means of applying devices of painting, music and cinematography (assembling, flashbacks, etc.) in fiction. The main difference between ontological intermediality and media combination is that one unit of the former (a word or an image) contains reference to another code, which makes word and music or word and visual image “simultaneously and oscillatingly present” in the reader’s mind (Hansen-Löve, 1983, p. 325).

3. Research Questions

The questions raised by the study are as follows:

- What is the function of illustration in the structure of the text? Do the functions differ according to the discourse type (fiction, media, scientific, etc.)?
- What relations occur between the text and illustrations to it in the structure of the text?
- Are the relations between the text and the pictures always harmonious?
- Can illustrations complement the sense of the text making up for the points that may seem incomplete or unclear or expressing something that cannot be expressed by words?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to find answers to the questions given above and to describe the relations between visual and non-visual codes in the fiction text.

5. Research Methods

The basic research method used is intermedial analysis, i.e. defining and describing the specific features of interaction of different codes (verbal and verbal) in the structure of the text.

6. Findings

As it has been already mentioned above, the object of our studies is the synthesis of media, the second type of intermediality. An illustrated text represents a typical example of this type. It’s only logical to suppose that there may be different relations between verbal and non-verbal codes in the text structure. Maxim Kantor, an art expert and writer, speaks about the illustrations to Dante Alighieri’s ‘La Divina Commedia’ made by Botticelli, describing them as an example of complete harmony between the text and illustrations to it: “Reserved, graphic illustrations, drawn without light-and-shade, play of colors or escalating nightmare” <...> represent most accurately Dante’s style, intense and governed by reason. The voices of both Dante and Botticelli are not loud, as Florentines are not in the habit of shouting, they speak in an even and relentlessly powerful manner. ...The power of confirmation is in its logic and harmony, the relentless power of it is observed in Dante’s vision of the world structure. The righteousness

of this point of his elder Florentine fellow-mate was proved by Botticelli and his reserved, unemotional lines” (Kantor, 2017, p. 90).

It should also be mentioned that in other (non-fiction) types of discourse (scientific, academic, political or epistolary) the relations between a text and pictures, charts and diagrams accompanying it, are harmonious. The illustrations support the ideas contained in the text. One of the most common but at the same time widely spread examples is illustrations that accompany diaries, no matter what social status of the authors have (Afanasiev, 2017, p. 11).

However the relations between the fiction text and the illustrations can be of a different kind. In a TV program ‘Nabludatel’ (‘The Observer’) dated 12.11.2015, dedicated to fiction illustrations, A.G. Traugott, a well known artist, argues against the term ‘illustrator’. He explains that an artist, illustrating fiction, comes into interaction with the text and, in the process of this interaction, he/she can disagree with the writer and offer his/her own interpretation. A picture, in Traugott’s opinion, can complement the text, add emotions to the text. For instance, making illustrations to Leo Tolstoy’s story about a lion and a dog, Traugott found the text just a little bit unemotional and laconic, so, for this reason, the artist tried to translate emotion via his pictures thus saturating the text with emotional tonality (Nabludatel, 2015). This type of relations between the text and the picture brings us to the conclusion: illustrations can carry out a complementary function and add shades of meanings to the text.

We studied the empirical material and analyzed verbal and visual code relations in fiction. For this purpose we picked up two illustrated texts – ‘Le Petit Prince’ by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, and ‘Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland’ by Lewis Carroll (1976).

The famous ‘Le Petit Prince’ by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry was illustrated by the author himself who intended to describe the specific features of children’s worldview. The pictures that accompany his fiction do not only illustrate what the text says – they actually reflect children’s perception of the events described in the text. They help understand the way a child perceives the text and then expresses it by means of a different code. As this entails transformation of codes in a child’s mind, this process can be considered as a type of intersemiotic translation, i.e. a way to express the same meaning by means of another code. As the result of differences in adults’ and children’s worldviews, adults sometimes fail to decode the meaning of the picture drawn by a child: “On disait dans le livre: «Les serpents boas avalent leur proie tout entière, sans la mâcher. Ensuite ils ne peuvent plus bouger et ils dorment pendant les six mois de leur digestion». J’ai alors beaucoup réfléchi sur les aventures de la jungle et, à mon tour, j’ai réussi, avec un crayon de couleur, à tracer mon premier dessin...:



Figure 01. An illustration by A. Saint-Exupéry

J’ai montré mon chef d’œuvre aux grandes personnes et je leur ai demandé si mon dessin leur faisait peur. Elles m’ont répondu: “Pourquoi un chapeau ferait-il peur?”. Mon dessin ne représentait pas

un chapeau. Il représentait un serpent boa qui digérait un éléphant. J'ai alors dessiné l'intérieur du serpent boa, afin que les grandes personnes puissent comprendre. Elles ont toujours besoin d'explications. Mon dessin numéro 2 était comme ça (Figure 01):



Figure 02. An illustration by A. Saint-Exupéry

Les grandes personnes m'ont conseillé de laisser de côté les dessins de serpents boas ouverts ou fermés, et de m'intéresser plutôt à la géographie, à l'histoire, au calcul et à la grammaire. C'est ainsi que j'ai abandonné, à l'âge de six ans, une magnifique carrière de peintre. J'avais été découragé par l'insuccès de mon dessin numéro 1 et de mon dessin numéro 2. Les grandes personnes ne comprennent jamais rien toutes seules, et c'est fatigant, pour les enfants, de toujours leur donner des explications. J'ai donc dû choisir un autre métier et j'ai appris à piloter des avions. J'ai volé un peu partout dans le monde. Et la géographie, c'est exact, m'a beaucoup servi. Je savais reconnaître, du premier coup d'œil, la Chine de l'Arizona. C'est très utile, si l'on est égaré pendant la nuit (Figure 02).

J'ai ainsi eu, au cours de ma vie, des tas de contacts avec des tas de gens sérieux. J'ai beaucoup vécu chez les grandes personnes. Je les ai vues de très près. Ça n'a pas trop amélioré mon opinion" (Saint-Exupéry, 1943, p. 8–9).

In an attempt to define the function of illustrations in 'Le Petit Prince', we suppose that the main function of illustrations in the text under the study is the reflection of a child's world perception and its peculiar features. As for the harmony between the word and the picture, we suppose that there is complete harmony between the way a child understands the text and the way he/she represents his/her understanding in a picture whereas disharmony may exist between adults' and children's perception of the text.

Another important function of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's illustrations is complementary. An illustration completes the text as if making up for something that cannot be expressed by words. The author does not describe the appearance of the character in words but draws a picture of him instead: "J'ai sauté sur mes pieds comme si j'avais été frappé par la foudre. J'ai bien frotté mes yeux. J'ai bien regardé. Et j'ai vu un petit bonhomme tout à fait extraordinaire qui me considérait gravement. Voilà le meilleur portrait que, plus tard, j'ai réussi à faire de lui..."



Figure 03. An illustration by A. Saint-Exupéry (Saint-Exupéry, 1943, p. 12–13).

Let us now consider another type of relations between the text and illustrations to it and address another well-known story – the famous book ‘Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland by Carroll (2017), the author whose childhood, according to Woolf (2015), “remained in him whole and entire” (Figure 03). For that reason “he could do what no one else has ever been able to do – he could return to that world; he could re-create it, so that we too become children again” (Woolf 2015). The book has been translated into over 50 languages and its contents have been represented by means of various art forms. It is well-known that the book was initially illustrated by L. Carroll himself, but being dissatisfied with the result, the writer turned to John Tenniel, a prominent cartoonist. According to Pudney (1982) the author of the work ‘Lewis Carroll and his World’, the relations of Carroll and Tenniel during the process of illustrating were polite, hard, and mutually beneficial: Carroll (2017) gave his illustrator a lot of instructions but he respected all kinds of Tenniel’s feedback. At Tenniel’s insistence Carroll reduced the contents of the book because the artist found it difficult to illustrate one of the chapters (p. 86). The result of such collaboration was the consonance of the word and the picture the world had not seen before Carroll and Tenniel. The verbal and non-verbal codes are in complete harmony, the result is that the illustration intensifies the verbal code effect thus enhancing the expressiveness of words.

There’s another type of harmony that can occur in text-picture relations. This type is discovered in the translation/ customization of ‘Alice in Wonderland’ into Russian made by Vladimir Nabokov (V. Sirin). In his translation Vladimir Nabokov followed the domestication principle which found its reflection in the translation of the title – ‘Anya v strane chudes’. The drawings for the edition were made by Sergei Zalshupin, who also used the method of cultural domestication. For example, when illustrating Chapter 6 ‘A Mad Tea Party’, Zalshupin depicted the Hatter wearing a low wide-brimmed hat, but not a traditional English bowler and a bow-tie (as Tenniel and many other illustrators did). Besides, in the foreground there is a samovar, an inevitable attribute of Russian tea parties in the XIX-early XX century. Finally, we can see Russian-style teapots on the table (Figure 04).



Figure 04. A Mad Tea Party by S. Zalshupin

There have been many attempts to illustrate ‘Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland’ undertaken by many artists. One of them was Salvador Dali, an artist who worked in a different social and cultural context and whose esthetic credo was also different from that of Carroll and Tenniel. If we compare the illustrations it becomes evident that those drawn by Carroll and Tenniel are harmonious with the text whereas the illustrations by Dali tend to reflect a different type of relations between verbal and visual codes. The reason is that Salvador Dali, who considered himself too great an artist to keep close to the text, offers his own interpretation of the book. His drawings that accompany the text do not illustrate the

author's meaning, but, though being inspired by the text, they are of a different, mostly erotic, nature. The illustrations below depict Alice's overgrown arm drawn by J. Tenniel (Figure 05.) and S. Dali (Figure 06.).



Figure 05. Alice's Overgrown Arm by J. Tenniel



Figure 06. Alice's Overgrown Arm by S. Dali

The illustrations by Dali produce the impression of being independent of the text, they sometimes shift Carroll's text to the background. But more often they offer an utterly different interpretation of Carroll's text, an interpretation that corresponds to the new epoch and new esthetic credos. As Hubert (1990) wrote, such a type of text-picture relationship was typical of many XX-th century fiction illustrators: unlike their predecessors who tried to follow the principle of harmony, trying to preserve the author's sense, the artists of the new era used text illustrations to express "their own creative universe" (p. 193). Thus, in the case of illustrations by S. Dali the type of text-picture relation can be defined as disharmonious. As a result, illustrations may cast a shadow on the text, interpreting it in a way which corresponds to the artist's philosophical and esthetic principles. This point could be illustrated by the interpretation of 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland' in the context of postmodernism when the book was widely interpreted in the terms of Freud's theory (Kremneva, 2017a; Kremneva, 2017b). We can suppose that Salvador Dali's illustrations also reflect this approach to the book's interpretation.

7. Conclusion

The research conducted brings us to the following conclusions:

- Intermediality represents a broad field of studies covering a wide range of issues in various branches of humanities, which requires a transdisciplinary approach.
- Being a complicated phenomenon, intermediality comprises the following types: media transposition, the synthesis of media, transmedia intermediality, ontological, or referential intermediality.
- The most typical type of media synthesis is an illustrated fiction text which can reveal different types of relations between verbal and visual codes. The intermedial analysis of the study material presented in the paper enables us to point out the following types of relations: complementary, harmonious and disharmonious. This list of relation types is obviously not

finite and further research of the issue may reveal other relation types of verbal and non-verbal codes.

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