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Narrative Analysis of Media Texts in the Classroom for Student Audience

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Abstract

The author analyzes the features of the narrative analysis of media texts on media education classes in the university. The paper also provides examples of creative problems and issues associated with this type of narrative analysis in the context of media education problems, ie based on six key concepts of media literacy education: agency, category, language, technology, audience, representation. The author argues that the narrative analysis of media texts on media education classes can significantly develop media competence of students, including critical thinking and perception.

Keywords: narrative analysis, media, media texts, media education, media literacy, media competence, students.

Introduction

Narrative Analysis is the analysis of the plots of media texts. This analysis is closely related with the structural, mythological, and other types of semiotic analysis of media and media texts [Barthes, 1964; 1965; Berelson, 1984; Gripsrud, 1999; Eco, 1976; Masterman, 1984; Propp, 1998; W.J. Potter [Potter, 2014], A. Silverblatt [Silverblatt, 2001; 2014].

Media literacy education offers a variety of creative ways to develop students' capacities for the analysis of story / narrative concepts (*plot, scene, topic, conflict, composition* and others). In general terms, these methods can be divided into: 1) literary simulations works (writing applications for the scenario, writing mini scenario of media texts); 2) theatrical-role works (dramatization of various episodes of media texts, the process of creating a media text, etc.); 3) image simulation (create posters, collages, drawings on the themes of culture media, etc.). Imitation is a very popular method of learning media, and simulation is a form of role-playing games: it attracts students and gives them the opportunity to be the creators of media texts [Buckingham, 2003, p.79], because students do not play the role of cineastes, journalists or advertisers: they are cineastes, journalists or advertisers. And even though students' achievements can be amateurish, they involved in the decision-making processes [Craggs, 1992, p.21].

Narrative analysis of media texts implies a number of creative tasks (part of these tasks is available at: BFI, 1990; Semali, 2000, pp.229-231; Berger, 2005, p.74; Nechay, 1989, p.265-280; Usov, 1989; Fedorov, 2004, p.43-51; Fedorov, 2006, p.175-228, however, the cycle of tasks I substantially supplemented and revised): literary simulation, drama, role-playing, image simulation. Each of these tasks includes analysis of the key concepts of media literacy education (*media agencies, media categories, media language, media technologies, media representations, media audiences*, etc.).

Materials and methods

Cycle of literary simulation tasks for the narrative analysis of media texts in the classroom at the student audience:

Media agencies:

- writing the application for original screenplay (scenario plan) of media text (any types and genre) followed his suggestion producers of hypothetical media company;

- drawing up of the producer's plan for media project.

Media / media text categories:

- writing the original text (in the genres of articles, reports, interviews, etc.) for a newspaper, magazine, internet publication;

- writing the same plot synopsis in the different media genres.

Media technologies:

- development plan of technological methods that will be used in the scenario of a media (film, radio / television program, computer animation, etc.).

Media languages:

- writing the shooting mini-script of a media (film, radio / television program, computer animation, etc.): camera angles, camera movements, installation techniques, etc.

Media representations:

- writing of the mini-scenario for one of episode from famous book;

- writing of mini-scenario for one of episodes from your own application for the original script;

- writing of the mini-scenario for the original product media culture (for example, the plot for approximately 2-3 minutes of video action);

- create annotations and scenarios for advertising media texts;

- writing of the messages for TV-news, related to the case of your life;

- writing the story for the sequel of well-known media text;

- preparing newspaper website with stories, that are associated with events of your life or the lives of your friends and acquaintances.

Media audiences:

- use the same plot for the scenario, designed for audiences of different ages, education level, ethnicity, socio-cultural environment, etc.

Thus, the audience develops in practice (with the creative literary and performing simulation tasks), such important concepts of narrative analysis of media texts as an *idea, topic, scenario, synopsis, plot, conflict, composition, script, screening*, etc., without separate study of so-called "means of expression."

Of course, each such occupation is preceded by introductory remarks by the teacher (on goals, objectives, and course assignments). The majority of literary and simulation tasks are perceived audience is not just an abstract exercise, but have a real prospect for practical implementation in a further series of training sessions.

Students' mini-scenario, episodes for hypothetical films; structural and thematic plans for hypothetical magazines and newspapers, radio / TV programs, interactive sites can be submitted for collective discussion, the best ones are selected for further media literacy works.

In this assignment, students should imagine that mini-scenario can be realized only for the subjects that do not require bulky accessories, complex scenery, costumes, makeup, etc. However, the scenario's fantasy is not limited to: students can develop any fantastic, unbelievable stories and themes. But for video shooting understandably, purely practical reasons, only those selected scenario development, which could be used without too much difficulty, for example, in the class room, or to the nearest street.

Step by step, the audience on their own experience becomes aware of the role of the author-screenwriter in the creation of media texts, the basics of narrative works of media culture. The main indicator of the literary and performing simulation creative tasks: the student's ability to formulate briefly their scenic designs, verbally disclosing audiovisual, space-time image of a hypothetical media text.

Thus, students increase the level of their media competence on the basis of practice developing of creative potential, critical thinking, and imagination.

Cycle of theatrical role-creative tasks for the narrative analysis of media texts in the classroom at the student audience:

Media agencies:

- dramatization of the discussions about media text scenario with various authorities from the media agency.

Media / media text categories:

- dramatization of the media text episode with the same story line, but in a format different media genres.

Media technologies:

- dramatization of the implementation of various technological methods that are used in the scenario of a media text (film, radio / television program, computer animation, etc.).

Media languages:

- shooting short movie (duration: 2-3 min.) using different techniques of visual and sound solutions;

Media representations:

- dramatization on acting roles performed by students: the characters must be close to the plot of an episode of a particular media text. Work is proceeding in groups of 2-3 people. Each group prepares and puts into practice your game project of the plot of the episode of a media text. The teacher acts as a consultant. The results are discussed and compared;

- interview (various options for interviews with various imaginary media text person and characters);

- dramatization of "press conference with the "author" of media text" (imaginary writer, director, producer and others.);

- dramatization of interviews with imaginary "foreign persons of media culture" (can be in foreign languages);

- dramatization of imaginary "international meeting of media criticism": discussions about various topics related to the subjects of media texts, analyze the plot, etc.;

- casting (casting of the characters or actors of media texts);

- shooting a video short movie or TV show.

Media audiences:

- use the same plot for theatrical sketches on the theme of hypothetical media texts, designed for audiences of different ages, education level, ethnicity, socio-cultural environment, etc.

Naturally, all the above work collectively discussed and compared.

In fact, the role creative activities complement and enrich the skills acquired by the audience during the literary simulation workshops. In addition to the practical immersion in the logic of the plot structure of a media text, they promote emancipation, sociability audience, make it looser students, and activate improvisational abilities.

The disadvantages of some role-playing activities can probably be attributed quite a long stage of preliminary preparation of the audience who want to get into the role of "author", "journalists", etc.

Cycle of graphic creative tasks for the narrative analysis of media texts in the classroom at the student audience:

Media agencies:

- preparation of a series of cards, drawings, which could relate to the main stages of the creation of a media text in the studio / edition.

Media / media text categories:

- preparation of a series of cards, drawings, which could relate to the implementation of the same plot in media texts of different genres.

Media technologies:

- preparation of a series of cards, drawings, which could relate to the implementation of the same plot of a media text using different technologies.

Media languages:

- preparation of a series of pictures that could be used as a basis of a plot to shoot fight scene, for example, in the western or detective (with support for various types of crop - the general plan, close-up, detail, etc.).

Media representations:

- preparation of a series of pictures / cards that might correlate with the plot of a media text;

- creation of a posters, collages, drawings on the themes of various media texts;

- reading some scenic line (for example: "We take our books in the library") and preparation of a series of pictures that might correlate with this line.

Media audiences:

- preparation of a series of pictures that visually would disclose various emotional reactions in the perception of media texts audiences of different ages, education level, ethnicity, socio-cultural environment, etc.

Cycle of literary and analytical creative tasks aimed at developing the skills of audience for narrative analysis of media texts in the classroom:

Media agencies:

- analysis of factors, causes, which may affect the agency change the original story, the narrative skills.

Media / media text categories:

- analysis of the factors that may affect the transformation scenes in media texts, depending on specific genres.

Media technologies:

- analysis of the factors that may affect the transformation scenes in media texts depending on the specific technology chosen for their implementation;

Media languages:

- analysis of promotional posters of media texts in terms of reflecting them in the narrative media text;

- analysis of possible audiovisual, stylistic interpretations of the same plot of a media text.

Media representations:

- creating a "time line" to show the sequence of events in media text;

- modeling (in tabular / structural form) of narrative stereotypes of media texts (characters, a significant change in the lives of the characters, problems encountered, solutions to the problem, the solution / return to stability); revealing the narrative structure of a particular episode of a media text;

- selection of thesis from the point of view of the student, truly reflects the logic of the plot of a media text;

- selection of media text abstracts in order of importance for the understanding and description of the narrative structure of a media text;

- separation of media text blocks on the plot. Attempt to interchange these blocks and, consequently, the creation of options for changing the course of events;

- understanding of the mechanism of "emotional pendulum" in the media text plot (alternation of episodes that cause positive and negative emotions of the audience);

- acquaintance with the first (or final) episode of a media text, followed by an attempt to predict the future (past) events in the story;

- analysis of stereotypes in particular genre of media texts;

- analysis of the relationship between significant events and characters in the media texts;

- analysis of the plot of a media text on a historical theme, based on documentary evidence.

The study of regional geographic, political and historical materials relating to the subject and the time period. Comparison of the studied material depicting historical events in the story of a particular media text;

- identification plot stereotypes image of the country, nation, race, nationality, social structure, political governance, the justice system, education, employment, etc.;

- comparison of reviews and discussion (articles, books about media texts) in professional media criticism, and journalism;

- preparing essays devoted to the peculiarities of narrative in media texts;

- students' reviews about the media texts of different types and genres (with emphasis on the analysis of the plot).

- group discussions (with the help of problem questions of the teacher) about plots of media texts.

Media audiences:

- analysis of media perception typology of same media stories for audience of different age, education level, ethnicity, socio-cultural environment, etc.

Narrative analysis of a media text is as follows: identification and review content of the scenes of media texts, with maximum brightness embody the characteristic patterns of narrative

work as a whole; analysis of logic thinking of authors in the plot of a media text (in the development of conflicts, characters, ideas, audio-visual, spatial images, etc.).

Concludes with a discussion of problem-test questions, affecting the utilization of the audience received a plot of a media text analysis skills (for example: "What are the known media texts stories you can compare this story? Why? What do they have in common?", etc.).

Classes for the formation of skills of analysis of media texts' plots aimed at training the memory, the stimulation of creative abilities of the individual, on improvisation, independence, a culture of critical thinking, the ability to apply this knowledge in new pedagogical situations, the reflections on the moral and artistic values, etc. etc.

Methodical implementation of these steps based on a cycle of workshops devoted to the analysis of specific media texts.

However, as my experience shows, it is necessary, first, to go from simple to more complex: first choose to discuss, analyze of the plot, the author's thoughts, the style of media texts. And secondly aim: to take into account the genre, thematic preferences of the audience.

Using creative, game, heuristic and problem tasks, significantly increasing the activity and interest of the audience. Heuristic form of the class, in which the audience is invited to a few wrong and right judgment, much easier for the audience analytical tasks and serves as a first step to subsequent gaming and problematic forms of media texts discussion.

During the implementation of heuristic approaches methodology of training audiences include:

- true and false interpretations of the story on the material of a particular episode of a media text;

- right and incorrect versions of the author's conception, reveals in a particular media text.

Such a heuristic form of employment is particularly effective in the classroom with low media competence, with mild personality beginning and independent thinking. This audience will undoubtedly need "support" theses on the basis of which (plus own additions, etc.) can be formulated as a particular analytical judgment.

Critical analysis of media texts stories also connected with an acquaintance with the works of critics' community professionals (reviews, theoretical articles, monographs devoted to media culture and specific media texts), in which the audience can judge the different approaches and forms of this type of work.

The audience is looking for answers to the following problematic questions:

- What media critic opinion about the advantages and disadvantages of the media text?

- How deep reviewers penetrate the author's intention?

- Do you agree or not with this or that estimates reviewers? Why Are?

- Do this reviewer has the individual style? If yes, what is it manifests itself (style, vocabulary, accessibility, irony, humor, etc.)?

- Why the author has constructed story composition of his media text so and not otherwise?

Performing creative tasks related to the plot analysis of media texts, student Paul D., for example, composed entirely convincing imaginary interview with a famous director. Student Natalya B. created the interesting texts on subjects of continuing a newspaper article about a woman who has lost her memory at the accident. Student Sergei S. wrote several short stories in a variety of genres (comedy, romance, thriller, etc.).

Student Anna V. in his creative work moved the action comedy "Operation "Y" in the fantastic future on one of the planets of distant galaxies. Student Irina K. suffered another action comedy "Prisoner of the Caucasus" in contemporary America. Student Eugene V. transformed the comedy "Home Alone" into a dark bloody drama...

Questions for narrative analysis of media texts [Buckingham, 2003, pp.54-60; Silverblatt, 2001, pp.107-108; Fedorov, 2004, pp.43-51; Fedorov, 2006, pp.175-228]:

Media agencies:

- What agency / communicator wants to make you feel in specific scenes of the story?

- Why creators of media text want you to feel this?

Media / media text categories:

- What stereotypical stories, storylines conventions specific to the genre?

- Is it possible to trace the evolution of specific stereotypical scenes? These changes in the subjects talk about changes in the culture of the society?

- Is it possible creating of media text without the dramatic conflict?
- As a genre is refracted in the plots of specific persons of media culture (the same genre in plots of different figures of media culture, different genres of stories in the works of the same person of media culture)?

Media technologies:

- How different media technologies used in the development of plots of specific figures of media culture (for example, different technologies in the development of plots of the same person of media culture)?

Media languages:

- Are audio-visual, stylistic features of a media text depend on whether or not from the concrete plot? If so, how?

Media representations:

- What is the significance for the understanding of the plot is called a media text?
- What is the relationship between significant events and characters in the story of a media text?
- What are the causes of action, the characters' behavior?
- What the characters have learned as a result of their experiences gained in the development of a media story?
- What events occur in the complication of the plot of a media text? What that tells us about a media text?
- Do you trust this media text? If not, what prevents your trust?
- Can you identify the secondary storylines?
- Are there any links between secondary storylines that help to understand the world, the characters and themes of media text?

Whether the final set in the logic complication of the plot, the logic of the characters and their world?

Media audiences:

- What is your emotional response for the media text?
- Does your emotional reactions understanding your personal value system?
- What types of media text stories, in your opinion, cause difficulties in the perception of a mass audience?

Conclusions

So I presented the main path for the narrative analysis of media texts on media education classes in the university, including the examples of creative problems and issues associated with this type of narrative analysis in the context of media education problems, ie based on six key concepts of media literacy education: agency, category, language, technology, audience, representation. I suppose that the narrative analysis of media texts on media education classes can significantly develop media competence of students, including critical thinking and perception.

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