

THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF THE LITERARY TEXT ADAPTATION INTO FILM SCRIPT

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Summary

The article offers a comparative analysis of both texts – the literary text of the novel “Everything Is Illuminated” by Jonathan Safran Foer an American novelist, and the film adaptation of the literary text. The article issues the question of the theoretical fundamentals of the literary text adaptation into film script. The problems that arise in the process of literary text transformation into the language of the film text are highlighted. Differential peculiarities of the literary text and its film version are determined. The research proves that the text of the novel “Everything Is Illuminated” has undergone particular semantic changes and the emphasis shifted from verbal to verbal-visual in the film text, nevertheless its communicative function has been preserved.

Key words: adaptation, literary text, film text, author’s image, semantic changes, flash back, type of narration, film adaptation, verbal, verbal-visual.

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1. Introduction

Research of stylistic peculiarities of transformation of the literary text into a verbal component of its screen is not new - with the appearance of full-length motion films researchers of cinema and directors tried to understand the peculiarities of interaction of cinema and literature, including objective regularity of screen of literary novel (*Aleksandrov, 1983*).

A number of publications that appeared in the first half of the XX century reflect interest in this problem; a significant number of works by Yu.Bogomolov, B.Balash, A.Piotrovskyi, Yu.N.Tynyanov, V.B.Shklovskyi, S.M. Eisenstein and I. G. Yerenburg have not lost theoretical significance. In 1948, French researcher A. Bazen published an article “Adaptation, or Cinema as a Digest”, which became an important stage in the study of film screening. By this time, the screen has already taken a worthy place among the variety of artistic films (*Agafonova, 2018*).

At the same time, all further research focuses on the analysis of individual screen displays and on-screen versions of written works. Nowadays, no system of objective criteria has been developed in the way to investigate the relationship between the screen adaptation and the original literary source. Screen adaptation is considered optimal, in which the goal of cinematographers is to create a screen equivalent of a “literary work,” translating it into the language of cinema while preserving the content, “spirit and words”. In its most general form, a work of art consists in the author’s idea and the method of its implementation, that is,

to preserve the author's style, language linguistics, and stylistics according to a written text. Despite the great importance attached to style in film theory, until now a systematic approach to describing the style of film adaptations has not been fully developed, therefore the evaluation of film adaptations is based on the subjective views of the critic (*Mast, Cohen, 1995*).

The indicated problems prompted an appeal to the study of the artistic screen adaptation of a literary work – the author's style, language linguistics, stylistics according to its written text. The second reason is purely academic, the fact of constant development of cinema as an art form and its impact on the society requires theoretical foundations for the analysis of film text as one of the types of mass communication texts.

According to the studies by V.Kravchenko and N.Zubets, an artistic text is a specifically organized way of communication that creates a certain mental model in the addressee's mind that ensures understanding of its content. "An artistic text is a collection of various means, an aesthetic influence on human consciousness and behavior, a means of speech activity, a result and a method of cognition" (*Kravchenko, Zubets, 2015*).

Thus, a distinctive feature of an artistic text is the semantic and artistic or aesthetic information that the text conveys and which is realized within the limits of an individual artistic structure, that is, a specific artistic text. The carriers of artistic information in the text are various markers corresponding to a certain culture, historical period, biography and the aesthetic views of the author of the text, and artistic elements.

In a literary text, any elements, both at the level of language and at the level of speech, are structurally significant elements. According to B.S.Meilakh, formal elements of language, including graphic means, can acquire independent significance and act as carriers of aesthetic information in the text (*Meilakh, 1958*).

The objective of the study is to carry out a comparative analysis of the artistic/literary text and its film adaptation on the material of the novel by J.S. Foer "Everything is Illuminated" (*Foer, 2002*).

2. Linguistic and Stylistic Peculiarities of the Artistic/Literary Text and its Film Adaptation

The linguistic-stylistic category that unites all elements of the content and style of an artistic work into a textual whole is the category "image of the author". According to A.I. Domashnev, the image of the author is the cementing force that binds all stylistic means into a coherent verbal and artistic system, it is the inner core around which the entire stylistic system of the work is grouped. The image of the author, manifesting "the internal unity of the stylistic system, thereby expresses the internal unity and integrity of the prose work" (*Domashnev, 1983*).

If we consider the category of "the image of the author" in the film as a text of mass communication, then it is present here, but it is expressed in a different form. The author's idea, message and communication with the reader are perceived through the organization of events and scenery by the director, through the play of actors, dialogues they pronounce with different speech manners, hero's appearance, music and a variety of sounds outside constituent the frame and visual sequence. We believe that in the printed text the author resorts to the use of various linguistic stylistic means to emphasize emotions, important events, convey irony and in general for language coloring, the director, on the contrary, depicts with the help of a visual series.

Therefore, Jonathan Saffran's novel "Everything is Illuminated" and its screen interpretation allows to comprehend and analyze events, descriptions of heroes, their manner

of speech, actions and style of communicating since the very first time we get acquainted with them and along the whole plot description. Let us explain the style of the description of the meeting of heroes at the Lviv railway station in the text of the novel: "I was able to move Grandfather from his repose. If you want to know how, I fastened his nose with my fingers so that he could not breathe. He didn't know where he was. "Anna?" he asked. That was the name of my grandmother who died two years yore. "No, Grandfather," I said, "it is me. Sasha". He was very shamed. I could perceive this because he rotated his face away from me. "I acquired Jon-fen," I said. "Um, that's Jon-a-than," the hero said" (*Foer, 2002, p. 34*).

The passage shows that the author uses such stylistic devices as irony and humor, as well as graphic devices, which are expressed in the following phrases that are inherent to one of the heroes: From this passage we see that the author uses such stylistic means as irony and humor, as well as graphic means, expressed in the following phrases: "I fastened his nose with my fingers", "I acquired Jon-fen" and "Jon-a-than". The irony is that Alex could not remember the name of the "hero" and constantly did not see it, poorly understood English, although he studied at the faculty of foreign philology, and with the help of graphic division of words on the warehouses emphasizes correctness and correctness of their words. Although, these events are interpreted in a different way in the film, the style of the hero speech is preserved. When Alex returned from the train station to the car, he says to the grandfather: "Grandfather, I've got Jewish picked up, you can go to Lutsk." The word "Jewish" sounds as figuratively as "Jonfen", but it emphasizes Ukrainian dialectics and unobtrusive attitude toward Jews. That is, the film is characterized by more emotional expression.

The next episode under the analysis is Jonathan's story about his fear of dogs: "Where's the dog going to be?" the hero inquired. "What?" "Where's...the...dog...going...to...be?" I don't understand. "I'm afraid of dogs," he said" (*Foer, 2002, p. 35*). Here, too, with the help of graphic means, poor knowledge of English by Alex the translator is emphasized. In the film, it is depicted more comically and emotionally: "Where's the dog going to be?" – the hero asked. "What do you mean? – Said Alex". "I have a phobia. A fear. I'm distressed by dogs"/

Alex very emotionally conveys the misunderstanding of the words "hero", his acting allows us to understand what the author wanted to say in the novel – the reception in Ukraine by the main character is perceived with caution: an old car, a blind driver and a dog that only causes fear in Jonathan.

3. The Image of the Author

Therefore, the presence of "the image of the author" both in the artistic/literary work and its screen adaptation is expressed in different forms: the printed work provides the reader with a complete description of the events with the author's impressions and attitude to the situation in the verbal fabric of the text, which cannot be fully achieved in the film, since the viewer perceives events through the interpretation of the work by the director, through the prism of the actor's experiences, his comments and through the verbal and visual stylistics of the picture text.

Combined with a specific text structure, narrative perspective produces a specific type of narrativity. All varieties of narrative perspective observed in literary prose can be conditionally reduced to two types: comprehensive or unlimited narrative perspective and limited or concentrated narrative perspective. In the case of an all-encompassing or unlimited narrative perspective, the author epically distances himself from the depicted, he stands above the described events and heroes, freely moving from one plot episode to another both in their

linear spatial and temporal sequence, and in vertical cause-and-effect interdependence – reverse shot. The textual whole, thus, is not oriented to the “personal”, subjectively determined the plan of the narrator (*Klarer, 2005*).

A limited, or concentrated, narrative perspective provides an artistic image with a focus on a “personal” subject plan or a narrative that has a specific relationship to an artistic action, or one of the characters that acts simultaneously as a speaker. The presence of a specific story subject, which depicts artistic events, determines the orientation of time and space of the artistic action concerning this person.

The second type of narrator is a “personified” narrator, one of the actors of the literary work, he can be labeled as a “narrator – a participant in the events”, a commentator “from within” the action (*Domashnev, 1983*).

This type is presented in the novel by J. S. Fayer “Everything is Illuminated”. The story is told from the person of Alex, a Ukrainian student, the son of the owner of the “Dorogami predkiv” travel agency, who, on the orders of his father, has to go to Lviv to meet an American guest. J.S. Foer, the author of the work himself, plays the role of this guest; in the novel, he is simply called a “hero”. Thus, the author is a direct participant in the events in the work, although he is not their narrator.

The film is changing the type of the story: Alex’s image – the speaker turns into Alex – the commentator. As the film is devoid of the possibility of telling all events in verbal form, the director can explain only a few scenes: Acquaintance of the viewer with Alex’s family at the beginning of the film and commentary of the previous events depicted at the end. It is this method of commentary, which is almost not used in film art, that gives an opportunity to receive the author's message and to get closer to the main idea of the work, which is sounded by Alex: “It has shown me that everything is illuminated in the light of the past. It is always along the side of us. On the inside looking out. Like you say – inside out”.

A work of art gives the writer the opportunity to show his own worldview, the style of his own thoughts and feelings. Instead, in the film, we perceive the author’s message through the performance of the actors and the production of the director, and we do not always see exactly what the writer wanted to tell us in his work. For example, in J.S. Foer’s novel “Everything is Illuminated”, consider the first meeting between Alex and Jonathan at the city railway station – the place of destination of the main hero. In the work, J. Foer describes this episode as follows: “When we found each other, I was very flabbergasted by his appearance. This is an American? I thought. And also, This is a Jew? He was severely short. He wore spectacles and had diminutive hairs which were not split anywhere, but rested on his head like a Shapka. (If I were like Father, I might even have dubbed him Shapka.) He did not appear like either the Americans I had witnessed in magazines, with yellow hairs and muscles, or the Jews from history books, with no hairs and prominent bones. He was wearing nor blue jeans nor the uniform. In truth, he did not look like anything special at all. It was underwhelmed to the maximum”/ (*Foer, 2002, p. 31*). The film does not mention the “cap” and the surprise at all, instead, the director of the film, Liev Schreiber, conveys all the comedy of the meeting through a visual series: Alex hires station musicians to meet Jonathan, and he himself runs after his car with the sign “JonFen S. For”. Moreover, in the novel we only have a mention of the fact that Alex wrote the hero's name on a piece of paper: “And held a sign with his name in front of me”, but the wrong spelling of this name underlines Alex’s level of the English language knowledge (*Foer, 2002, p. 31*). The effect and peculiarities of Alex character is achieved through his visual appearance – a cap, a sports suit, sneakers, a gold tooth, a chain around the neck, which adds a certain imagery: the viewer’s attention is focused not on verbal, but on visual perception, since the text of the film is limited

in time and space, unlike the literary text. Thus, the presentation of the image of Alex in the film text, in contrast to the literary text, changes.

The next difference between the film text and the text of the novel lies in the creation of the image of the grandfather – if in the printed text the emphasis is on the image of Jonathan Safran Foer, who came to learn the history of his ancestors, then in the film the focus also shifts to the image of the grandfather, for whom the trip down the “memory lane” has become more decisive, that is reflected due to the reduction and simplification of the plot, since the film misses the historical context of the events, their entire course is presented visually through flashbacks and flashbacks that send the audience, both the reader and viewer, to the events of the World War II and consequently to Holocaust.

4. The Language of the Author

The author’s character, his language and speech are reflected in the film to help us deeper understand him, and is very close to the literary text a person who is an avid collector of his family heritage – copies of old pictures, armed maps everything that inspired him to go to Ukraine to get to know more about his family roots. The language of Alex is dialectical, oversaturated with slang expressions and incorrect grammatical construction of sentences according to English syntax, which emphasizes a certain social status and level of education of Alex: “But all to many friends dub me Alex, because that is a more flaccid-to-utter version of to légal name”/ (*Foer, 2002, p. 1*). This sentence contains colloquial vocabulary, for example, the word “dub” means “baptize”, “give a nickname”, and the adjective “flaccid-to-utter” means “better for pronunciation”. The trick is that Alex, using the thesaurus to enrich his vocabulary, does not see the difference between common, folk and poetic words: “I fatigued the thésaurus you presented me, as you counseled me to, when my words appeared petite, or not befitting”/ (*Foer, 2002, p. 23*). Alex uses the word “rotated” instead of “turned”, “luxuriated” instead of “enjoyed”, “premium” instead of “important”, or “appeased” instead of “pleased”, interchangeably as a person who does not attach importance to the context in which it is used word. The elastic breasts of the girl from his fantasies are described as “unmalleable bosom” (*Foer, 2002, p. 33*), and the guide dog is translated as “Seeing Eye bitch”. With such a pun, Foer emphasizes the comic, kind and open character of Alex, his level of education, which does not lower the level of communication.

Thus, in contrast to Alex’s illiterate English, the author presents the phonetically, lexically and grammatically structured language of Jonathan Safran Foer: compliance with the norms of syntax, the correct selection of words by meaning, taking into account the context of the utterance, the perfect accent that can be heard in the film. During the first meeting of the heroes, we can already see the juxtaposition of their images: “You’re my translator, right?” I asked him to be slow, because I couldn’t understand him.” (*Foer, 2002, p. 32*). However, despite the national and cultural codes and the difficulty of Alex’s understanding of the English language, the communication process does not decrease, which is reflected both in the literary text and in the film text.

Alex’s language is colourful – colloquial with elements of neutral vocabulary, sometimes official English is used more inappropriately, which creates a comic effect; the stylistic coloring of the Russian language is no less vivid. Russian is used in Alex’s dialogues with his grandfather during the trip, and when Jonathan asks to translate the conversation into English, the translation is significantly different in emotional colour and meaning: “Yes, nonsense, who’s afraid of dogs anymore?” is translated as “Grandfather informs me that it is not possible”,

where the verb “to inform” is formal from the point of view of the differentiation of the English vocabulary, and in colloquial speech it should correspond to the verb “to tell”, which gives additional stylistic colouring to his speech, creating his cinematic image of a many different qualities but a sensitive one.

5. Conclusions

According to Yu. M. Usov's statement, the film text is a dynamic system of sound-image images, or “a dynamic system of plastic forms that exists in the screen conditions of space-time dimensions and transmits the sequence of development of the artist’s thoughts about the world and about himself through audiovisual means”, which proves the comparative analysis of both texts in our study (*Agafonona, 2018*).

Therefore, the categories “author’s image”, “author’s language”, “literary text” and “film text” undergo transformation during the translation of the novel into the language of cinema, namely, the narrative structure of the text changes, the emphasis from the image of Jonathan to the additional image of the grandfather, appears colloquial Russian along with English, the texts of character dialogues are abbreviated. The above is due to changes during the adaptation of the novel and the communicative direction of the screen version, due to which the emphasis shifts from verbal to verbal-visual.

An attempt to analyze and compare the literary text and the film text proved that during the transformation of the text of the novel into the film text, the author’s style and the image of the writer were preserved, to a certain extent the stylistic functions in the film text were preserved which contribute to the creation of characters, despite the different genres, minor semantic changes took place, however, the conceptual and communicative functions of the screen version are preserved.

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