The Concept of Intertextuality and the Importance of Dialogism and the Utterance

Aziza Mirzaeva Shavkatovna
BSMI, teacher of English language department

Abstract: This article explores the concept of Intertextuality primarily from a theoretical point of view and analyzes the concept of Intertextuality and its further development. The article focuses on in the exploration of the theoretical approaches are: the text, or the object of literary study, the author, and the reader, and the manner in which meaning is produced through the interaction/agency of these three elements.

Keywords: Intertextuality and interculturality, theoretical approaches, the concept of intertextuality, literary study, interaction, intertexts, discourse, dialogism and the utterance.

Introduction. The intertextual component of the novels always brings the readers closer to literary texts. On one hand, if the intertextual reference hints at texts which are known to the readers, they feel somehow flattered by the discovery, even proud that their previous knowledge helped them to understand the reference, and they always search for more. On the other hand, if the intertextual reference is overt enough for the readers to realize which the text in question is, even though they do not know it, then they become curious what that text is about, and maybe look for it. Intertextuality also marks a highly significant aspect, namely that all texts are connected, which means that the mentalities which shape them are based on the same structures. This idea emphasizes the connection between intertextuality and interculturality and it represents the reason for which I chose to include both of them in one comprehensive project.

The contemporary world needs more openness and tolerance, and these are achieved through enhancing one’s horizons with the help of education and of experience. Thus, intercultural exchanges help people to discover new cultures and to respect their diversity. The intercultural references included in literary works encourage openness and acceptance. Moreover, in the novels, the inherent discrepancies between different cultures can be easily presented through the means of devices like irony and humor, thus making it much easier to overcome the cultural differences and to restrain from transforming them into insurmountable obstacles. It employs theoretical tools from several critical approaches, like narratology, feminism, structuralism, and linguistics.

Definitions of Intertextuality. As a point of departure, there are some definitions of the term Intertextuality. Harris, who defines Intertextuality as follows:

a) In its broadest usage, the mode of existence of all thought, language, and discourse.
b) More narrowly, the interaction of other utterances/texts (discourses) that produces a new utterance/text (discourse).
c) A synonym for allusion.
d) In one possible interpretation of Julia Kristeva, the process that produces the text from among the manifold possibilities of the mind’s contents.

Harris’ definition is based on a theoretical perspective. The term Intertextuality has been widely used outside of this definition. Graham Allen describes this use thus: Intertextuality is one of the
most commonly used and misused terms in contemporary critical vocabulary. ‘An Intertextual Study of…’ or ‘Intertextuality and …’ are such commonplace constructions in the titles of critical works that one might be forgiven for assuming that intertextuality is a term that is generally understood and provides a stable set of critical procedures for interpretation. Nothing, in fact, could be further from the truth. The term is defined so variously that it is, currently, akin to such terms as ‘The Imagination’, ‘history’, or ‘Postmodernism’: terms which are... underdetermined in meaning and overdetermined in figuration.

Indeed, the terms intertextuality, intertextual and intertext are often employed in contexts where they are used to represent source study, as has become common in scholarship. In order to avoid such confusion, the concept of intertextuality has been explored as set out in the writing of the originator of the word, Julia Kristeva, and its further development in the work of Roland Barthes. Once the relevant theoretical points have been identified, the concepts related to Intertextuality has been explored, primarily from the perspective of Classical scholarship. The exploration of these concepts will highlight the manner in which a post-structuralist approach to Intertextuality differs from other similar methodologies often employed in Classical scholarship.

Julia Kristeva Kristeva’s own contribution to literary theory had its origin in another theory. The subject of Kristeva’s essay in which she introduces the term “intertextuality” is the literary theory of Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin. In this essay she transforms and reinterprets his literary theory and formulates her own theory of Intertextuality. She does this by fusing Saussurian linguistics with Bakhtin’s literary theory. In order to understand what Kristeva contributed to literary theory, it is worth looking at the aspects of Bakhtin’s theory that she uses or transforms in her own theory. Two aspects of Bakhtin’s literary theory are relevant, namely, the notion of the “utterance” and his idea of “dialogism”.

**Dialogism and the utterance.** The importance of Bakhtin’s “utterance” to this study relates to Saussure’s notion of the sign: in order to establish a theory of how texts convey meaning, the elements that make up texts and how they function need to be addressed. Differing significantly from the abstraction of the linguistic sign proposed by Saussure, Bakhtin understands the “utterance” as central to the meaning of any text. The utterance differs from the sign in that it possesses a social context, a human element. Whereas the sign is an abstraction, the performance of the utterance, its social significance, is what defines its meaning. The abstraction of the sign robs it of one of the key aspects which provides it with meaning.

For the purposes of the conceptual framework used in this study, the most important aspect of Bakhtin’s theory developed further by Kristeva is the concept of dialogism. For Bakhtin, dialogism is not simply one aspect of language but a central element thereof. Bakhtin defines two kinds of texts or utterances: the monologic and the dialogic. The dialogic text is in continuous dialogue with other texts, and is informed by other texts, whereas the monologic text seeks to impose a singular logic and meaning. These terms refer to ideological perspectives. For Bakhtin, all language is dialogic, locked in the struggle between the opposing forces of the monologic and dialogic utterance. The monological text is that which imposes a singular perspective on the text, expresses a single voice; the dialogical text is a text possessing multiple voices, multiple perspectives.

Bakhtin refers to the existence of more than one simultaneous voice as polyphony, a term he borrows from music. Bakhtin describes it thus: The word is not a material thing but rather the eternally mobile, the eternally fickle medium of dialogic interaction. It never gravitates toward a single consciousness or a single voice. The life of the word is contained in its transfer from one mouth to another, from one context to another context, from one social collective to another, from one generation to another generation. In this process the word does not forget its own path and cannot completely free itself from the power of those concrete contexts into which it has entered. The voice, for Bakhtin, is therefore a perspective, defined by social and literary contexts, of which there are many in any text. What Bakhtin is defining in the discussion above is a theory of how meaning is produced by texts, a central and important issue to the
interpretation of any text. The word does not possess a singular meaning, but is characterised by a number of contexts, across geographic, historical, literary and other spaces, potentially innumerable. These contexts thus inform the meaning of the word, but not in the sense of a mathematical function, whereby one would consider all these contexts (as inputs) and produce a single output, a single meaning. Rather, the word is in constant dialogue with these contexts, allowing for a multitude of meanings to emerge.

Conclusion. In distinction to Bakhtin, Kristeva considers the word not as an intersection of voices, but rather an intersection of texts. Kristeva, in “Le mot, le dialogue et le roman”, also criticises Saussure’s concept of the sign. The sign, according to Saussure, is, as Kristeva puts it, “a product of scientific abstraction”, “a vertically and hierarchically linear division”, while poetic language is double in the sense of “one and other”. The term sign, as understood by Saussure, cannot be applied to poetic language. Poetic language is subject to “an infinity of pairings and combinations”. In a similar vein, Allen describes Intertextuality as a kind of language which resists a singular, absolute logic; meaning is not finite, it is subverted or resisted. To clarify here, poetic language, according to Kristeva, is always multivalent: there will always be traces of other texts (and, for example, other contexts, voices or narrators) in poetic language. For Kristeva, abstraction such as attempted by Saussurian linguistics, to reduce the text to a collection of signs, is not possible, because of the infinite possibilities that poetic language produces.

REFERENCES


