

TRAINING OF AN IMPLIED READER AS A GOAL FOR LITERARY EDUCATION AT TERTIARY LEVEL

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New goals for literary education at tertiary level have been emphasised from the perspective of the secondary school reform in Ukraine. A literature teacher's meta objective is to educate "an implied reader" who is able to perceive and understand a literary work accurately, and who has a competency for the adequate analysis of artistic tools and means to establish the message of a literary work implied by its author. This paper aims at examining the issue of the training of an implied reader as a goal for contemporary literary education. The receptive poetics is claimed to be an essential component of the analysis of the implicit meanings in a literary work. The mechanism of the implicit meanings generation is described in the process of the reader's reception actualisation. Modelling how the reader's associations emerge also requires the application of psychological tools (namely the reverse funnel effect). The strategy of slow reading allows to deeply specify every artistic tool and significant detail, and the analysis of their functionality allows readers to understand the mechanism of the main message creation. The awareness of the importance of the above mentioned methodological approach opens up new research perspectives, with the methodology for a literary work academic analysis being one of the most urgent.

Keywords: higher education; literary education; implied reader; literary work; the receptive poetics; slow reading; systemic approach; psychological tools.

Introduction

From the perspective of the secondary school reform, presented in "The New Ukrainian School: Conceptual Principles of Secondary School Reform" (see: The New Ukrainian School, 2016), new goals for the higher education have emerged that focus on new key competencies that secondary school students should acquire. One of them is *cultural awareness* that is defined as "the ability to appreciate objects of art, form one's own artistic tastes, independently express ideas, experiences and feelings towards art" (The new Ukrainian School, 2016, p. 12). Accordingly, to be able to develop students' cultural awareness a literature teacher is supposed to possess this competency himself / herself which necessitates the updating of the curriculum and content of the literature teacher professional training.

In the first place, the education of readers, let us call them "implied", is of a paramount importance. The implied reader is a literary term used and detailed by W. Iser and some other theorists of reader-response criticism, that means "an ideal" reader who has the particular attitudes (moral, cultural, etc.) appropriate to that text in order for it to achieve its full effect" (Baldick, 2001, p. 123). So such readers can perceive and understand literary works adequately, and analyse artistic tools and means for (re-)creation of true message (idea, sense) of the literary work. In relation to this, the meta skill of understanding the world and a man in the world should be developed. Klochek (2017) draws attention to Gadamer's idea, expressed in his article "Aesthetics and Hermeneutics", that "for the recipient to understand the art work inevitably means to meet himself", and concludes that "the development of the skill to understand an artistic text provides an individual with the competent understanding of himself and the world" (p. 7). So, the implied reader education should become one of the main objectives both for the secondary school and literary education at tertiary level, and the strategies of this education are to be developed.

In connection with the current secondary school reform in Ukraine, a range of problems involving the literary training of teachers, philologists, methodologists have received a lot of attention in recent research works, e.g. Bondarenko, 2017; Klochek, 2017; Movchan, 2017; Mykytiuk, 2017; Pakharenko, 2017; Tokman', 2017, etc.

This paper aims at examining the question of the implied reader training as one of the main goals for the modern literary education. There are a few tasks that are to be solved: to determine the main methodological approaches for the education of the implied reader, and to analyse a passage of a literary work to detail the main points, which, in our view, are important for the implied reader's interpretation.

The research methods include analysis and generalisation, the systemic approach that are most appropriate for answering the questions relating the training of the implied reader.

Results and Discussion

The education of an implied reader needs a special methodological strategy. First of all, one can be aware that deep understanding of a literary work is virtual under the condition of slow reading. Klochek (2017) remarks that contemporary literary studies being predominantly of a “dissertational” type ignore “the genre” of a separate literary work analysis, and academic sources devoted to “slow reading” of fiction do not enjoy popularity with those who teach literature at secondary and tertiary levels (p. 8).

But it is the strategy of slow reading that allows to deeply specify every artistic tool and means, every important and significant detail, and the analysis of their functionality allows readers to understand the mechanism of the main message creation. Newkirt (2012) clearly explains, “To read slowly is to maintain an intimate relationship with a writer. If we are to respond to a writer, we must be responsible. We commit ourselves to follow a train of thought, to mentally construct characters, to follow the unfolding of an idea, to hear a text, to attend language, to question, to visualise scenes. It means paying attention to the decisions a writer makes” (p. 2).

The most efficient material for slow reading is those literary works that have subtexts, in other words, the implicit meanings, created by authors and re-created by readers. Due to the reason that the main message of literary works with subtexts is implicit, not obviously and directly articulated, they incite the readers’ thinking, making them ponder, reflect, and this reading process needs critical skills and specific knowledge. In fact, modern readers demand such an approach to the text as described by Iglesias (2005): “The reason why readers welcome subtext is that it challenges them, engages them, and makes them active in the reading experience. When the reader’s mind is engaged, it’s automatically interested by what’s on the page” (p. 84).

To decode the implicit meanings, the readers have to analyse every detail, define its function, and understand its true meaning. Such a balanced approach to the text represents it as a system, where every element creates the entity, having an important role. If we take into consideration that the artistic system consists of tools (linguistic, narrative, and compositional) that interact with each other, making system connections, it comes to light that the subtext is one of the most important parts in this system, because it is the key to understanding and realising the true message of a literary work.

Typically, readers can feel subtext intuitionally, but the implied readers are supposed to have a special skill of reading between the lines, put the information in other words, fully understand how the subtext is generated and with which tools. Weston (2003) explains, “Intuition plays a big part in accurately reading subtext. [...] The ability to notice and appreciate subtext is commonly called an ability to “read between the lines”. It applies to reading between the lines of a dramatic script. [...] The skill of mining subtext – of spontaneously and perceptively interpreting the truth behind actions, words, and events – is intuition” (pp. 85–86).

Thus, the subtext poetics has a variety of tools for creating the subtext plan in literary works. The subtext can be formed with the use of the words full of suggestions, certain tropes (metaphor, metonymy, simile, irony, allegory, periphrasis, etc.), stylistic figures of speech (anaphor, epiphora, parallelism, aposiopesis, etc.), associations, symbols, allusions, intertextual connections, etc., and every of the above named tools needs special readers’ attention.

In line with the systemic approach, every part of the triad “author” – “text” – “reader” is important. According to it, the aspects of perception, understanding, and interpretation of the subtext by readers are significant, and its adequate decoding depends on the readers.

Further, the functionality of the methods and the tools is fully disclosed from the perspectives of the receptive poetics, the essence of which is to model their impact on the recipient’s mind. In other words, it is about the modelling of the process of artistic perception of the literary work. In the process of such modelling, which should be reasoned and proved, coherent and linear recreation of meaning is possible by way of exploring tools and means that generate it.

In the process of literary works reading, readers should be very attentive to the signs that the author leaves for them for adequate decoding of implicit meanings. These signs generate the true message of a literary work.

The process of forming the subtext in the reader’s consciousness is primarily related to the “awakening” of the imagery. This is due to the artistic and information density of artistic images which have high information content, and therefore, can generate a number of visions, thoughts, and feelings. Gal’perin (2007) notes, “The text can cause images – visual, hearing, tactile, and flavor. These images are not indifferent to the content of literary and artistic works” (p. 20).

In turn, the main notions of the receptive aesthetics, such as actualisation, specification, and visualisation, help reconstruct and describe the mechanism of how these images are invoked in the readers’ mind or imagination.

Actualisation is the mechanism that is launched when “the reader, “stumbling” over any textual mentioning of a certain situation or its details, gestures, the landscape, expressions of the characters’ faces, the interior details etc., begins to hear, see, smell, and perceive sounds, colours, smells, bodies, and things” (Czurganova, 2004, p. 30).

Visualisation is another specific mechanism dealing with the appearance of visual images in the recipient’s imagination. Its function is the reproduction of visual images during the perception of a literary work.

The main function of the specification mechanism is to build the recipients’ additional impressions, i.e. to fill in the “empty spaces” and “areas of uncertainty” with the readers’ own ideas and emotions, in accordance with their “horizons of expectations” (Czurganova, 2004, p. 190).

Meanwhile, the readers’ associative flow will depend entirely on their stock association and thesaurus that help re-create the author’s subtext. It is important to note that the subtext can be created by the readers, and then it becomes the reader’s subtext. Dolinin (2007) observes, “We ourselves refer to the statement of the subtext, acquiring its elements from our thesaurus” (p. 38). So, the readers can be creators of the subtext themselves, and most researchers agree to this fact. Kaida (2005) underlines, that “the reader is able to read the text more deeply than the author intended it” (p. 4).

At the same time, the process of modelling the awakening and generating of the readers’ associations during their perception of the literary work is impossible without the involvement of psychological tools. In particular, the reverse funnel effect (Klochek, 1986, p. 106) is significant, the essence of which is that a certain image can awaken both conscious information which “retains everything that has passed the crucible of thinking, feeling, imagination, and psychomotor actions”, and the unconscious one which “saves that has spared the focus of consciousness and has spontaneously been stored behind the threshold of consciousness” (Klymenko, 2006, p. 325).

The true artistic (literary) work can activate the reverse funnel effect. Urnov (1971) claims, “Every true artistic work can reflect the millennial heritage, the burden of traditional perceptions that appear as the natural and the accustomed. Fitted in somewhere between lines, behind the text, in the subtext, these images, as balance, gear the mechanism of the characters’ simple acts” (p. 56).

In the process of the modelling of the subtext (re-)creation mechanism by the readers, the semiotic approach is effective, because the creation of the subtext meanings is connected with the active use of symbols, signs, that have some meaning, long-standing in the people’s consciousness, having variety of senses and moods.

So there is a moment of the discovery in the process of the implicit meanings decoding that, in turn, generates the true message of the literary work.

As we can see, the analysis of the works with subtexts needs special reading competences, skills and knowledge. The capacity for observation, comparison, analysis, generalisation, deduction, induction, etc. are to be developed in prospective philologists and literature teachers. And those skills make good background for one more competence – a *lifelong learning skill* – “the ability to search and master new knowledge, to gain new skills, to organise an educational process (individually and in groups), in particular, trough effective resource and information flow management, an ability to set educational goals and determine means to achieve them, to build one’s own educational and professional trajectory, to appraise your own educational achievements, and to learn throughout life” (The new Ukrainian School, 2016, p. 11).

There are a lot of literary works from different epochs, national literatures, artistic systems which are rich in subtext meanings. Let us mention G. García Márquez’s magic realism, E. Hemingway’s “the iceberg theory”, M. Maeterlinck’s “the second dialogue”, A. Chehov’s “new drama”, V. Shevchuk’s fanciful prose, etc.

To deeply understand the nature of a literary work subtext and peculiarities of its analysis, let us look closely at a passage from E. Hemingway’s short fiction “Hills like White Elephants”.

The choice of the literary work is easily explained with the fact that E. Hemingway is considered to be the subtext skilful creator, the inventor of “the iceberg theory”, when the main message is implicit and unspoken. His short stories are included in literature syllabuses at tertiary levels.

The reception of any literary work begins with its title that generally accumulates the artistic conception or the ideal content of the text. The title of the short story “Hills like White Elephants” both generates vivid visual images of hills in the reader’s mind, comparing them to the elephants, their forms and outlines, and makes readers think of their symbolism.

It is common knowledge that the elephant symbolises strength, penetration, longevity, prosperity, and happiness. In Buddhism, the white elephant has a sacral meaning, connected with the spiritual knowledge and stability. Queen Māyā had a dream foretelling her pregnancy with Buddha: in her dream a white elephant got into her body, and soon afterwards she gave birth to Buddha (Tresidder, 2001, pp. 341–342).

Alongside with all the above said positive connotations, the idiom “white elephant” means a burden, a gift that nobody knows where to put it (Müller, 2001, p. 232).

Therefore, the image of a white elephant interplays with its symbolic meanings, having both positive and negative connotations. In such a way, the title of the story does not make clear what it is about, but intrigues the readers who do not find an instant clue to the content of the text in its title. So, with this feeling of mystery, recipients begin reading E. Hemingway’s short story “Hills like White Elephants”:

“The hills across the valley of the Ebro were long and white. On this side there was no shade and no trees and the station was between two lines of rails in the sun. Close against the side of the station there was the warm shadow of the building and a curtain, made of strings of bamboo beds, hung across the open door into the bar, to keep out flies. The American and the girl with him sat at a table in the shade, outside the building. It was very hot and the express from Barcelona would come in forty minutes. It stopped at this junction for two minutes and went on to Madrid.” (Charters, 2003, p. 475)

The above given visual picture generates a Spanish panoramic landscape in the readers’ imagination: the valley of the river Ebro somewhere on the way from Barcelona to Madrid, the hills across the valley, painted only with two main brushes: *long* – and the readers get the idea of their form, and *white* – of their colour. And the picture is divided into two even parts with the words “*on this side*” and the implied words “*on that side*” (there are hills on that side).

There is no shade or trees “*on this side*” – these details draw an instant association with a hot day, lighting the depiction with sunshine by means of the collocation “*in the sun*”. And the readers feel a little discomfort, aggravated with the words “*very hot*”.

Then, a few more details of the story’s setting are depicted: the station, the bar, and tables outside the bar, supplemented by the introduction of the main characters: the American and the girl who sat at the table of the bar, in the shade outside.

Hemingway’s frequent use of the definite article *the* and the demonstrative pronoun *this* should be noted. This feature suggests a strong feeling that the readers are already familiar with the story’s setting and characters:

“The hills across the valley of the Ebro were long and white. On this side there was no shade and no trees and the station was between two lines of rails in the sun. Close against the side of the station there was the warm shadow of the building and a curtain, made of strings of bamboo beads, hung across the open door into the bar, to keep out flies. The American and the girl with him sat at a table in the shade, outside the building. It was very hot and the express from Barcelona would come in forty minutes. It stopped at this junction for two minutes and went on to Madrid.” (Charters, 2003, p. 475)

Such a beginning of the short story under analysis, where *the* and *this* are actively used by the author, has a salient effect of an imaginary continuation of the narration about the characters and their actions, as if having been told about before, and being refreshed in the readers’ mind at the moment of their reading the text. But, actually, it is just the readers’ first acquaintance with the text.

“What should we drink?” the girl asked. She has taken off her hat and put it on the table.

“It’s pretty hot,” the man said.

“Let’s drink beer.”

“Dos cervezas,” the man said into the curtain.

“Big ones?” a woman asked from the doorway.

“Yes. Two big ones.” (Charters, 2003, p. 475)

At a glance, there is no allusion on the surface of the text: to satisfy their thirst on a hot day, the girl suggests having beer, and the man orders it. The only detail that might attract the readers’ attention is that the girl is younger than the American, because the author uses “the man” to describe him, but not “the boy”, and for her “the girl” is used – not “the woman”. It is a subtle hint to the characters’ age difference.

“The woman brought two glasses of beer and two felt pads. She put the felt pads and the beer glasses on the table and looked at the man and the girl. The girl was looking off at the line of hills. They were white in the sun and the country was brown and dry.” (Charters, 2003, p. 475)

The girl’s look is directed at “the line of hills”. The colour palette of the landscape is contrastive: the hills painted white by the sun amid brown and dry landscape.

“They look like white elephants,” she said.

“I’ve never seen one,” the man drank his beer.

“No, you wouldn’t have.”

“I might have,” the man said. “Just because you say I wouldn’t have doesn’t prove anything.” (Charters, 2003, p. 475)

This is the first sign of conflict and the first appeal to the image of “the white elephant” which, however, at that moment do not help the readers to grasp its symbolic meaning. The phrase “*They look like white elephants*” said without any emotional overtone sounds as a matter-of-fact statement. But the readers have a distinct opposition “the man – the girl”. From there, the girl appears dreamy, with rich imagination, in contrast to the man who is more down-to-earth, and pragmatic. At the same time, this part has a deeper subtext level: behind the man’s words “*Just because you say I wouldn’t have doesn’t prove anything*”, some old misunderstanding is hidden.

“The girl looked at the bead curtain. “They’ve painted something on it,” she said. “What does it say?”

“Anis del Toro. It’s a drink.”

“Could we try it?”

The man called “Listen” through the curtain. The woman came out from the bar.

“Four reales.”

“We want two Anis del Toro.”

“With water?”

“Do you want it with water?”

“I don’t know,” the girl said. “Is it good water?”

“It’s all right.”

“You want them with water?” asked the woman.

“Yes, with water” (Charters, 2003, pp. 475–476).

But the girl changes the topic of their talk deliberately (“*They’ve painted something on it,*” she said. “*What does it say?*”), and it shows her reluctance to continue the conversation. And they order one more strong drink – *Anis del Toro*.

“It tastes like licorice,” the girl said and put the glass down.

“That’s the way with everything.”

“Yes,” said the girl. “Everything tastes of licorice. Especially all the things you’ve waited so long for, like absinthe.”

“Oh, cut it out.”

“You started it,” the girl said. “I was being amused. I was having a fine time.”

“Well, let’s try and have a fine time.”

“All right. I was trying” (Charters, 2003, p. 476).

The conflict situation is back again, at one moment it sharpens, at the next it quiets down: “*Oh, cut it out*” – “*You started it. I was being amused. I was having a fine time*” – “*Well, let’s try and have a fine time*” – “*All right. I was trying*”.

But the readers notice another important detail – the girl’s susceptibility to smells and flavours that might be suggestive of her pregnancy: “*It tastes like licorice*”. And the man’s answer “*That’s the way with everything*” might prompt a conclusion that the girl is irritated by the smell of many things. This intolerance of smells generates another implication – her shortness of temper: “*Everything tastes of licorice*”. And finally, it can point to the girl’s dissatisfaction with her life explicated with the sentence “*Especially all the things you’ve waited so long for, like absinthe*”. So this talk about smells and flavours shows the girl’s attitude to her real life.

“I said the mountains looked like white elephants. Wasn’t that bright?”

“That was bright.”

“I wanted to try this new drink. That’s all we do, isn’t it – look at things and try new drinks?”

“I guess so.”

The girl looked across at the hills.

“They’re lovely hills,” she said. “They don’t really look like white elephants. I just meant the coloring of their skin through the trees.”

“Should we have another drink?”

“All right.”

The warm wind blew the bead curtain against the table.

“The beer’s nice and cool,” the man said.

“It’s lovely,” the girl said” (Charters, 2003, p. 476).

It becomes obvious that the couple travels a lot, constantly trying something new. And the readers get aware of their lifestyle – they have no home, no real family life. Consequently, the girl is tired of such life which is evident from her words: “*That’s all we do, isn’t it...?*” But the man is not ready or is afraid of losing the present lifestyle: “*I guess so*”.

The image of the hills like white elephants begins representing its new symbolic meanings: a possible happiness for the girl and a heavy burden for the man. At the same time, the image of the white elephants brings a parallel with the Buddhism tale – about Queen Māyā and her pregnancy with Buddha. In this context, the theme of the possible happiness of motherhood is suggested. And the girl subconsciously moves away from this theme: *“They don’t really look like white elephants. I just meant the coloring of their skin through the trees”*.

The interplay of words “the mountains” – “the hills” is very significant:

“I said the mountains looked like white elephants. Wasn’t that bright?”

“That was bright.”

[...] *The girl looked across at the hills.*

“They’re lovely hills,» she said. «They don’t really look like white elephants. I just meant the coloring of their skin through the trees” (Charters, 2003, p. 476).

Such alternation “the mountains” – “the hills” directs the readers’ associations, feelings and thoughts, either intensifying or diminishing shades of symbolic meanings. For example, the readers notice the girl’s subconscious returning to the theme of pregnancy, and her attempt to avoid it.

“It’s really an awfully simple operation, Jig,” the man said. “It’s not really an operation at all.”

The girl looked at the ground the table legs rested on.

“I know you wouldn’t mind it, Jig. It’s really not anything. It’s just to let the air in.”

The girl did not say anything.

“I’ll go with you and I’ll stay with you all the time. They just let the air in and then it’s all perfectly natural” (Charters, 2003, p. 476).

This is the moment when the conflict comes into the limelight: *“It’s really an awfully simple operation, Jig”*.

And the readers guess that they are talking about an abortion. This pivot proves that this situation has already been discussed many times and the present conversation is just another one in that string of their discussions these days:

“It’s lovely,” the girl said.

“It’s really an awfully simple operation, Jig,” the man said” (Charters, 2003, p. 476).

The readers clearly understand that the girl has already decided what to do. Only in such a way we can analyse her behaviour model: at the beginning of the story, she herself chose to drink beer (*“Let’s drink beer”*) and after that she wished to taste *Anis del Toro* (*“Could we try it?”*). But the conflict is inexhaustible because the girl may want to have a child. In any way, there is a point of no return: would any pregnant woman consciously touch alcohol, knowing that it could injure her future child?

So the author sends important signs to the reader, and their decoding opens up complete visions, forming a complete thought. Thus, the main idea is between lines, and careful, thoughtful, and close reading of the text enables the reader to understand true meanings.

The education of the implied reader is supposed to be consistent and balanced, the methodological principles need to be thoroughly analysed, reconceptualised, and developed.

Work with a literary text requires from prospective literature teachers not only good knowledge of literary theory, but also of history, culture, religion, fine arts, etc. In other words, they should possess a wide range of competencies, knowledge, and skills. They should be taught how to perceive a literary work correctly, feel every word, spoken and unspoken, thus getting “the joy of discovery” (V. Sukhomlynskyi).

Literary works with subtexts teach us to understand real life. This aspect is highlighted by script consultants and screenwriting coaches. Seger (2011) claims, “We encounter subtext all the time in daily life. People have a habit of not always saying what they mean; or, sometimes they realise that it’s not good form, or polite, or acceptable to speak the subtext, so they cover it up with text and let the real meaning simmer beneath the surface. Sometimes they want the other person to understand the real meaning. Sometimes not” (p. 2). And McKee (1997) remarks, *“Nothing is what it seems*. This principle calls for the screenwriter’s constant awareness of the duplicity of life, his recognition that everything exists on at least two levels, and that, therefore, he must write a simultaneous duality [...]. As in reality, so in fiction: He must veil the truth with a living mask, the actual thoughts and feelings of characters behind their saying and doing” (pp. 252–253).

Today, subtexts are used in different kinds of art (painting, music or cinema), in mass media, etc., and the skill of feeling and decoding subtexts of literary works develops two more important skills – to understand subtexts in other spheres of our life and to have a lifelong learning competence.

Conclusions

The reform of Ukrainian’s educational system sets forth new goals for literary education of prospective philologists and secondary school teachers, with the education of the implied reader acquiring a great

importance. One of the effective methodological strategies is to develop the reader's competence in the slow reading of literary works with subtexts by using the systemic approach, the receptive poetics, and a range of psychological tools (namely the reverse funnel effect). The awareness of new demands in this area has made the education of the implied reader, and the application of the slow reading technique for a literary work analysis important research and academic issues.

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Received: September 11, 2017

Accepted: November 15, 2017