Information and Cooperativity in Fiction: The Pragmatics of David Baboulene's "Knowledge Gaps"

Authors : Cara DiGirolamo

Abstract : In his 2017 Ph.D. thesis, script doctor David Baboulene presented a theory of fiction in which differences in the knowledge states between participants in a literary experience, including reader, author, and characters, create many story elements, among them suspense, expectations, subtext, theme, metaphor, and allegory. This theory can be adjusted and modeled by incorporating a formal pragmatic approach that understands narrative as a speech act with a conversational function. This approach requires both the Speaker and the Listener to be understood as participants in the discourse. It also uses theories of cooperativity and the QUD to identify the existence of implicit questions. This approach predicts that what an effective literary narrative must do: provide a conversational context early in the story so the reader can engage with the text as a conversational participant. In addition, this model incorporates schema theory. Schema theory is a cognitive model for learning and processing information about the world and transforming it into functional knowledge. Using this approach can extend the QUD model. Instead of describing conversation as a form of information gathering restricted to question-answer sets, the QUD can include knowledge modeling and understanding as a possible outcome of a conversation. With this model, Baboulene's "Knowledge Gaps" can provide real insight into storytelling as a conversational move, and extend the QUD to be able to simply and effectively apply to a more diverse set of conversational interactions and also to narrative texts.

Keywords : literature, speech acts, QUD, literary theory
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