

# INTERTEXTUAL STUDY THROUGH FILMS AS AN AID FOR STUDENTS TO UNDERSTAND ENGLISH NOVELS

*Sri Muniroch*

---

Email: srimuniroch@yahoo.co.id

Fakultas Humaniora dan Budaya, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

Alamat Koresponden: Jalan Gajayana 50 Malang 65144

---

## Abstract

Understanding English literary works is inevitably a big problem for the students of non-English-speaking countries. The writer proposes that intertextuality may help the students to understand them better. Through her study, she tries to find out the problems the students have in understanding literary works, in this case, novels; and to investigate how intertextual study through films can help them to solve the problems. By doing observation and interview to the students in her class of English Prose, she finds out that the problems are the difficulty to understand the sense of the language, the cultural gap, the uncontextuality with their experience, the difficulty to grasp the imagery, and the lack of information about the literary works. Through the films adapted from the novels they read, the students can overcome their problems. The films make them understand the sense of the language, understand the culture, more aware of the relation among people and the situation, feel that they become part of the issues in their lives, get more vivid images about the setting, the characters and other elements, familiar with the issues in the works. All of them help them to understand more the novels they are reading.

## Keywords

Intertextuality, Film Adaptation

## Introduction

In Indonesia, as one of non-English-speaking countries, students frequently have problems in understanding English literary works. The problems arise when they cannot enter the world of the literary works. For most of them, the world in the English literary works is different from the world in their lives. All elements provided in the English literary works are not the same as what they find in their real life. Not only the setting, but also other elements, such as, character, theme, or even the style of language used by the writers are sometimes far from what they understand before.

Students as the readers of literary works are the main factor in the process of reading literary works. If they have problems in reading the literary works, the process of reading will be disturbed. Therefore, there must be a way to solve their problems in order that the process of their reading will smoothly proceed. In this paper, the writer wants to suggest how the concept of intertextuality may help the students to overcome their problems in reading literary works.

The basic concept of intertextuality assumes that meaning and intelligibility in discourse or texts is based on the relation to the previous discourse or texts. Graham Allen (2000: 2) states that:

*The fundamental concept of intertextuality is that no text, much as it might like to appear so, is original and unique-in-itself; rather it is a tissue of inevitable, and to an extent unwitting, references to and quotations from other texts. These in turn condition its meaning; the text is an intervention in a cultural system. Intertextuality is therefore a very useful concept – indeed some would say essential – for literary study, as it concerns the study of cultural sign systems generally.*

The concept suggests us that every text (we can refer to any cultural sign systems generally: including film) is a mosaic of references to other texts, genres, and discourses. In turn, discovering meaning in a text can only happen by relating to the previous texts that provide the context of possible meaning.

## Conclusion

Most of students have problems in understanding English literary works because of some reasons. They are: the difficulty to understand the sense of the language, the cultural gap, the incontextuality with the students' experience, the difficulty to grasp the imagery, and the lack of information about the literary works.

The problems can be solved by applying the concept of intertextuality in teaching English literature. Intertextuality links between the students and the literary works. By providing media, the lecturer can give chances to the students to do a process in which they connect what they read with what they previously read, viewed, heard, and told. By active efforts, they can also redefine texts, reframe, their thought, and reconstruct their notions and beliefs about texts. The materials given can be adaptation of literary works into films; sources from other genres, such as documentary, news, current affairs; and also

medium of print, such as listings magazines and newspapers.

After doing intertextuality, it can be observed that the students can solve their problems. The films, as the main media used in this observation, can help them to understand the sense of the language because they can feel the situational context suggested in the film. The films suggest more comprehensive understanding about the culture. Visual presentation in the films makes the students more aware of the relation among people and the situation. When the films become hot issues in the infotainment, they feel that they become part of the issues of their lives. Visual presentation in the films gives the students more vivid images about the setting, the characters and other elements. The film presentation renews the old issues; they become popular and are discussed in many media. All of them help the students to understand more the novels they are reading. Even, they can find the literary quality of the works. And finally, they can enjoy more reading literary works.

## REFERENCES

- Allen, Graham. 2000. *Intertextuality*. London: Graham Allen.
- Aragay, Mireia, ed. 2006: *Books in Motion: Adaptation, Intertextuality, Authorship*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi. 289pp. ISBN: 90-420-1885-2
- Bakri, Masykuri. Ed. 2002. *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif: Tinjauan Teoritis dan Praktis*. Malang: Lembaga Penelitian Universitas Islam Malang collaborated with Visipress.
- Chandler, Daniel. *Semiotics for Beginners*. <<http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/semiotic.html>>. 7/5/2011
- Chi, Feng-Ming. (1995). "EFL Readers and a Focus on Intertextuality". *Journal of Reading*. Vol. 38, No. 8 (May, 1995). Pp. 638-644. International Reading Association.
- Goodman, Y.M., Watson, D., and Burke C. 1987. *Reading Miscue Inventory: Alternative Procedures*. New York: Richard C. Owen.
- Hartman, D.K. (1990). "The Intertextual Links of Readers Using Multiple Passages: A Postmodern/Semiotic/Cognitive View of Meaning Making". In R. Ruddel, M. Ruddel, & H. Singer (Eds.). *Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading*. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.
- <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40032309>
- Kang, Dong-Ho, 1999. *L2 Children's Reading Conceptions and Its Relationships with Intertextuality*. [www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED430210.pdf](http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED430210.pdf). 7/11/2010.
- Kristeva, Julia. (1986). *The Kristeva Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Paech, Joachim. 2000. Artwork-Text-Medium. Step en route to Intermedialiti. Online in Internet: <http://www.uni-konstanz.de/FuF/litWiss?MedienWiss/texte/interm.html>.

