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Which literary theory tools can a psychologist use for interpreting language communication?

Abstract:

The theory of literature provides tools for interpreting language communication. A psychologist, when interpreting a communication – which is often a latent one – has no other alternative but to employ these tools (with the exception of non-verbal communication). Often, however, this stage of work is defined as "intuitive", which significantly limits the repeatability of the procedure and thus gives rise to reservations as to its scientific value. Review of certain literary theory devices, along with their possible applications, allows for naming these tools, selecting, and ordering the consecutive stages of communication analysis. In our opinion, such reviewing opens up the possibility for filling this gap in qualitative research analysis with specific tools and specific ways of using these tools in place of intuitiveness.

Keywords:

narrative analysis; interpretation of personal narratives; qualitative research; interdisciplinary approach; literary theory devices

Streszczenie:

Teoria literatury dostarcza narzędzi do interpretacji komunikatu językowego. Psycholog, dokonując interpretacji – często niejawnego komunikatu, nie ma innej możliwości niż posługiwanie się tymi narzędziami (wyłączając komunikację niewerbalną). Zwykle jednak ten etap pracy określany jest jako intuicyjny, co znacznie ogranicza powtarzalność procedury a tym samym budzi zastrzeżenia co do jej naukowości. Przegląd poszczególnych narzędzi teorii literatury oraz możliwości ich zastosowania pozwolił na nazwanie narzędzi, selekcję i uporządkowanie kolejnych etapów analizy wypowiedzi. Co, jak sądzimy, daje możliwość wypełnienia owej luki w analizach badań jakościowych konkretnymi narzędziami i sposobem ich użycia, zamiast intuicyjnością.

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Słowa kluczowe:

> analiza narracji; interpretacja osobistych narracji; badania jakościowe; podejście interdyscyplinarne; teoria literatury

Introduction

"How is it possible that you don't have my tools and yet see the same things as I do?" This question was asked almost at the same time by a psychologist and a specialist in Polish studies, who were sitting together and trying to work through transcripts of monologues on upbringing – and this very question provided a starting point for this article. The answer to this question was pretty obvious. Neither of us saw nor heard the authors of the analysed narrations. The only option open for us was to make use of what a narrator actually said, and in what way he did it (including only the linguistic aspect of the narration, without non-verbal communication). What we had to do was to identify the shared elements of the process, find their sources, verify their legitimacy by means of devices taken from the theory of literature and adequately define their successive stages. As we were proceeding with our analysis, new questions arose, concerning underlying assumptions, and many times we were surprised at the relevance of some observations and reservations. Here are the results of our efforts.

Utilising methods of literary interpretation analysis for auto-narration might at first raise doubts (because of the specificity of the latter), yet it is entirely justifiable. This is in agreement with Culler's (2000) belief, which states that from the methodological point of view there is not much difference between the novels by Virginia Woolf and the cases described by Freud, and that literature and non-literary texts can be analysed concurrently and in a similar way due to the fact that literature is derivative of language[3]. A similar opinion is expressed by Okopień-Sławińska (1987), who says that a narration provides information about the addresser in the same way as any other piece of work does about its manufacturer. A narration presents the addresser through its content, and also (sometimes even more so) through its characteristic semantic organisation.

However, considering the distinctive nature of auto-narration in the psychological context, it is important to make a few comments/reservations:

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[3] Culler`s statement is the consequence of learning the context and rules of language use socially. It concerns the methodology of analysis and not final conclusions, which obviously will be different for auto-narration and for literary narration. It is noteworthy that the term' auto-narration' is narrower in psychology than in the theory of literature. In psychology this term is limited exclusively to communications referring to personal life.

a) Neither the narrator nor the addresser/sender of a communication is identical with the author in a ratio of 1 to 1; they are only part of the author. It seems that this part corresponds to just one of many polyphonic selves of the author (Oleś & Puchalska-Wasyl, 2005). And the narrator/sender are identical with the author only in this part/role. The world presented in auto-narration is narrower than the author's real world. Thus, the analysis and interpretation of auto-narration can concern only and exclusively this part of the author's reality which is included in his communication.

b) The question as to what degree the narrator is identical with the author has been widely debated in the literature of the subject for a long time, yet no clear consensus exists (see Jasińska, 1987). However, denying the possibility of shared parts of the narrator and the author would be difficult because:

- Even an outstanding author is a human being: if he creates the world, he must draw heavily on his personal experiences and other people's as well. Even when he "borrows" something from other people's observations and experiences, he must filter it through himself/internalise it to some degree. The author's way of thinking, his notional apparatus, his experience and emotions – all these elements must leave a trace on everything that is "filtered" through them. These traces alone reveal – even if it is just in part – the author.

- The author who does not write belles-lettres finds it more difficult to hide himself, even if he tries hard [high-level control requires many corrections, even in the case of experienced writers (Boy-Żeleński, 1924, p.27; Szumilak, 2008)].

c) The author of a communication does not have the final word in its interpretation. Wimsatt and Beardsley (1954) claim that a dispute over the interpretation of a literary work cannot be resolved just by referring to the author. Culler (2000, p.66) states that: *the meaning of a work is not what the writer had in mind at some moment during composition of the work, or what the writer thinks the work means after it is finished, but, rather, what he or she succeeded in embodying in the work.*

d) Language can be perceived as the echo of living/staying in a specific environment/ or environments which is/are relatively stable and long-lasting, even if there are more than one (such environments); individual rules of using the language are established primarily in the family environment (which is predominant when we acquire the language, and remains so for another several years). We learn the language, the rules of using it unconsciously at home and freely at school – but as in the case of the accent or the melody of a language – what is acquired at home is un-eliminable.

Quantitative methods, which strive for the precision of science, usually derive from analysis. Qualitative analysis is different. Following Sawicki's statement (1987), interpretative description (the "intuitive", synthetic stage of communication) is usually a starting point for analysis (not only its aim). Detailed observations and the analysis of specific elements require a wider perspective (Kmita, 1987; Berube, 2002). Once we have identified what is essential and meaningful in the text, we can verify the legitimacy of our perception by analysing the communication. While many scholars consider this "intuitive" starting point indispensable, others have their doubts, as it might allow latitude in interpreting the text (Eco, 1992a, 1992b, 1992c). At the same time it is highly problematic for the researcher to adopt a neutral position (Culler, 1995). In the light of this undoubtedly complex problem, Culler (1992) – in his dispute with Eco – distinguishes between: *understanding* (i.e. posing questions and looking for answers which arise from the text itself) and *overstanding* (formulating questions which are not addressed in the text but which open up possibilities for interpretation, as it is not always the most important what a text tells us but what it wants to conceal). Hermeneutics, which is sometimes viewed by scholars with suspicion (on account of its limited possibility of repetitiveness) cannot be overestimated. Following Sawicki (1987), we can conclude that analysis which is restricted to a statistical registration of motives, plots, metaphors and genres appearing in the text seem to be mere pedantry and its usefulness is questionable, as it does not reveal the guiding idea/concept behind a communication. Although the theory of literature draws on linguistics, it cannot adopt its model of communication. From the perspective of linguistics a communication can be divided into two structures: surface and deep ones. However, a language structure which is deep in the case of literary theory is often the mere superficiality of a communication (Balcerzan, 1998, p.5-6).

In contemporary scholarship, which favours hermeneutics over poetics, literary works are studied because they are believed to have something important to say. They are not studied simply because people are interested in the mechanism of literary functioning. It might be the case that contemporary psychology deals with an individual not merely with the aim of helping him/her understand the mechanisms of his/her functioning. First and foremost, the aim is to hear what his/her world is like and what meaning it carries for him/her, and to what degree it is meaningful. This provides important information not only about the subject, a person the psychologist is working with, but also about the psychologist himself. Patients` stories often say something important about their therapists (Yalom, 2002).

Stages of communication analysis

We isolated consecutive stages empirically. First we described consecutive stages in the process of deciphering the meaning of communication, next we named these stages/activities trying to find the most adequate concepts or categories in the literary theory. Thus, the procedure for narration analysis involved three main stages:

a) Searching for the "hidden story" through identification of narratively out of key communication.

This stage is based on the assumption of a story within a story, that is, a multiplied, enveloping structure in which the first stage of the presentation provides a compositional frame for the story which takes place at the second stage. The narration is organised in a multistage way, independent compositional units are arranged in hierarchical order. Each unit is confined in the unit one step higher (Sławiński, 2010, p. 255). According to the story-within-a-story assumption, what might be uncovered from under the main current of a communication is also a story which further reveals the meaning. From a psychological perspective this stage reflects the belief that the speaker in his auto-narration wants to reveal only part of the presented area/events. Yet, as it is impossible for him to control all the aspects of communication, he reveals a much greater part of this area than he would wish to. What he would like to omit in his auto-narration, although it is covered with what he actually says, sometimes gets disclosed for a moment, or somehow emerges from under the main current of the narration. Some other time the covering layer is not thick enough and betrays the shape of what the narrator is trying to conceal. This hidden part can be isolated and interpreted by recognising what is different/strange/unsuitable/unusual in the context of the whole narration (see Ulatowska, 2013).

b) Looking for the answer to the question in one of the following layers:

- thematised and implied information,
- un-stylised/free-flowing and deliberate style of individual language,
- type of narration and changes it undergoes,

Following these, we examine the

- time-level and manner in which it is defined,
- events and their locations (real/mythical),
- place where this narratively distinguishable differentiation of monologues is located.

We also try to find the hidden story on the basis of narratively out of synch communication.

If we analyse monologues of two people who are closely related, there is another stage possible – the fourth stage. Namely, if these monologues concern their relationship, we can compare the worlds presented in two separate hidden stories and answer the

question of whether the worlds described are the same and alike. Theoretically they should be, as any close relationship demands that the characters are present in the same place and time, and that there is interaction between them. We have presented the results of this analysis, conducted on persons in monologue pairs (parents and their adult children) in another article (Kuncewicz, Sokołowska, Sobkowicz, 2014)[4].

Characterisation of individual stages

The first stage can be defined as intuitive, as it requires a special kind of alertness and sensitivity, including the linguistic one. Everything that "doesn't fit", "doesn't sound", is "strange", "attracts attention", and so on is singled out. These elements can be either isolated cases and therefore unique in the context of the narration, or, by contrast, there are many of them, they are characteristic of the whole communication. In order to isolate these elements it is necessary to read a transcript several times.

At this stage it is not a problem to wrongly classify something as "different" when it is not different at all, but rather to disregard certain "differences"/differentiations. The method of "partly competent" judges (they are told what they are to identify but do not get any detailed explanation or instruction – they are to be guided merely by their own linguistic sensitivity) might be useful at this stage. The judges need not be in agreement – their role is not to eliminate anything but rather to make sure that nothing is eliminated.

At the second stage an attempt is made to name this differentiation, to define what this differentiation actually is. This differentiation is interpreted/explained according to the literature theory in such a way that the other judges, who are now competent (because now properly instructed) can discern and acknowledge the correctness of classifying a given element as "different", which further verifies differentiated elements.

Differentiated elements can belong to different layers, which have been described below.

Thematised and implied information

The information included in the text about the narrators can be of two kinds: thematised in other words determined by the meaning of words and sentences, and implied in other words defined by the rules of speech. The latter's scope, which is coded in the communication structure, is more specialised. Thematised information – which pertains to a specific character – can come from his own narration or other characters'. Implied information about a character can only be found in his monologue. Each communication contains some information about its addresser/sender. In psychology the differences and

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[4] The presented type of analysis was also employed in other studies concerning, among other things, relationships based on partnership, life changes and motivation to help. In our estimation, psychological analysis which uses literary theory devies is possible and legitimate only when in a study a psychologist can ask a subject a question relating to his/her private life. At the moment we are working on the second part of this article, which is to illustrate the proposed method of analysis 'step by step'.

references between thematised and implied information, although not identical, seem to be comparable in certain aspects to those which take place between communication content and meta-communication, verbal and non-verbal, open and latent communication.

Thematised and implied information differ in terms of its origin and scope, as well as the way they are disclosed in the text. The former is imparted directly, the latter indirectly, which does not mean that the former is provided straight out and as a whole, and that it is not subject to interpretative operations; it only means that it derives from formulated meanings (see Barry, 2002).

Implied information about the narrator means a steady flow of information running along in the inner current of openly thematised meanings (Okopień-Sławińska, 1987). In psychology a similar relation can take place for example between open and latent – e.g. continual conflicts between a husband and wife; and a strange (considering the cause of the conflict) inability to solve them would be the equivalent of thematised information. The equivalent of implied information in this particular situation would be the fact that this couple actually keep quarrelling about something different – and more serious than it would appear from what is open. They do not speak straight about this hidden conflict, they just wage it in the confines of what is open.

A significant difference between implied and thematised information is that in the latter we can learn something about the narrator only when he refers directly to himself. On the other hand, implied information allows one to reconstruct the narrator's personality on the basis of a communication in which he does not say a word about himself. Here it must be stressed – however obvious it is – that implied information cannot report on behaviours which are not reflected in the narrator's way of speaking (e.g. simple narrative situations).

A full addresser/sender's picture is not a sum of fragmentary pieces of information. The narration's communicative structure creates a complex system of signals which correct and valorise individual information items. This system is based on the difference in the degree of authoritativeness for thematised and implied information as well as information which comes from different transmitting levels of communication. Okopień-Sławińska (1987) outlines the basic rules concerning how this system functions:

a) If implied and thematised information items are in conflict, it is the implied one that is stronger and consequently plays a decisive role in interpreting thematised information. Obviously, the situation gets more complicated when high-level thematised information is contradicted by low-level implied information;

b) If there is a conflict between two thematised information items which come from different levels of the text, the high-level information is stronger; the low-level in-

formation is always subject to interpretation or re-interpretation by the high-level thematised information;

c) Coherent information items – agreement between consecutive levels of communication – lends credence to low-level information;

d) Implied information can confirm or undermine thematised information. A conflict between these two types arises when personality traits which the narrator attributes to himself, or his opinion are questioned by his way of speaking. It is analogous to the relation between verbal and non-verbal communication, where the latter can refute the former.

Un-stylised/free-flowing and deliberate style of individual language

Individualised speech consists in linguistic innovativeness and creating new rules or transforming the existing ones. The unique character of individual language is based on the language which functions in a given community. Ultimately, it is just a small fraction of common language (shared by the whole community). Individual language comprises a system of words, inflection types, word-formation types, syntactic patterns and conventions which are stored in individual consciousness and constitute a reservoir of possible communication items which are used by an individual when speaking (Klemensiewicz, 1987). Individual language has two sources: its own pool and the outside one. The former is accumulated unconsciously through contacts with an individual's family, friends and other people in his/her immediate environment. The latter is acquired freely in many different ways – is consciously searched for in dictionaries, specialist publications and also borrowed from surrounding people. Both sources play a constructive role/ make a contribution in stylisation in other words they shape the content of communication in such a way that it fulfils its intended function: communicative or expressive and authoritative. The extent of this contribution might be different for each source. In deliberate stylisation, which draws only on an individual's own resources, a set of selection criteria are adopted to produce intended reactions.

Stylisation strongly emphasises everything characteristizing an individual: what is relatively stable (their way of thinking, knowledge, education, emotions) and what is momentary or situational (subject, motive, intended function). Style (a system of stylisation tendencies, an individual's characteristics) with regard to conditions and aims of stylisation can be:

- un-stylised/ free-flowing – which derives from individual traits of the speaker, who does not consciously evaluate his own communication,
- deliberate – which comes from the speaker's individual traits and his conscious effort to produce, while speaking, an intended and desired mental reaction in the listener-recipient.

In psychological interpretation, deliberate style in auto-narration can be a form/symptom of reaction formation, where, in an attempt to suppress and deny emotions, the speaker presents a completely different façade. Similarly, deliberate stylisation can be used to create something that actually does not exist. If we track this illusion (created by deliberate style), we can start speculating on what lack/what uncertainty this stylisation is striving to hide. Free-flowing style defines the speaker directly, whereas a deliberate one indirectly – through the purpose it serves, the reaction the speaker wants to produce, and through implying what is hidden.

Type of narrator and changes it undergoes

Narrator types are related to communication levels: there are a number of such levels in a monologue or a literary text (Schmid, 2010; Goetsch, 2004).

Table 1. The Level of Communication.

	Level of communication - sender- recipient
The lowest level	Intra-contextual – speaking character-character
	Intra-contextual – chief narrator-addressee of the narration
	Extra-contextual – addresser/sender-recipient (originator of creative activity)-(ideal recipient of this activity)
The highest level	Extra-contextual – author-specific addressee

A characteristic feature of communication within the same level is the possibility for dialogue, in other words swapping roles between the sender and recipient. On the other hand, a hierarchical relation between consecutive levels manifests itself in unidirectional and asymmetrical subordination between the character-sender and the recipient. The lower level knows nothing about the higher one. The character does not know that he is being "talked" about, he cannot become the sender of a communication about the narrator or about the addressee of the narration, he cannot address his communication to them or swap roles with them.

The lowest transmitting level is created by the speaking character. The addressee of his communication is/can be another character. The most common contact between them is dialogue. At a higher level the chief narrator tells about characters in a given story but he is part of this story, too. The addressee of the narration is this part of the listener which is delegated to became a hidden part of the story. The existence of the listener is implied in the text by the chief narrator himself, who- after all- must address his communication to somebody. Each next level of communication is created by the sender and recipient of a communication, who are already outside the story. The sender of a communication is the decision-maker who determines what and in what way will be told and what will be

concealed. The recipient of a communication is also outside the text, therefore they both can establish relations with the author of a communication, and make an attempt to work out the criteria which have been used to select what to say and why. At this level the sender and recipient of a communication can enter into dialogue in a real/tangible way or in an intra-psychic, internalised one (Okopień-Sławińska, 1987).

The sender, although not being placed at the highest level of the narration, has a casting vote/plays a decisive role in the dialogue. The highest communication level – here both the author and the recipient are equipped with all their roles and a wealth of experience, and as such they are present in a communicative situation but silent. They are not persons in their overall dimensions; so full dialogue between them is impossible. In this sense they are both silent.

The sender's role of the sender is special, not only because of his non-reducibility and his presence in each communicative situation and at each level of communication, but also because he has a decisive influence on the relations between the other roles: of the recipient and the character. The change of the addresser results in new personal subordination. From a psychological perspective, it seems even more important in auto-narration, as the author, the narrator and the main character are all parts of the same person. Of course, narrators from different communication levels are not identical. The narrator is always a narrower individual than the author but relations between the outside sender and the one who exists inside a communication or a text are complicated. The narrator does not have the final word in a communication – it is outside his competence to reinterpret the meaning of his own words and subsequently restructure the meaning of the whole text. Thus, within the text there is a set of rules which are outside the narrator's control, which he does not address. In the text there appears implied information which refers to a subject who possesses consciousness superior to the narrator's. The subject is not presented as a character, no thematised information refers to him, and not a single communication item within the text is addressed by him. He is the subject of the whole text. The sender of a communication, when making a decision (more or less consciously) as to what and how to narrate, reveals – in varying degrees – both his experience and the meaning which he attributes to it. The smaller the distance to the world presented (characters experiences, events), the larger the distance to the sender, and vice versa (see Płachecki, 1982). Psychological interpretation requires not only defining the narrator's distance to the sender of a communication. Changes in the distance also matter. In what context do they occur? What brings them about? It is remarkable that the distance of the narrator as well as the changes in this distance define the distance which the recipient is supposed to take on, as he cannot stay for example inside the world presented when the narrator is speaking from an outside perspective.

Time and the manner in which it is defined

Time in the narration can be specifically defined for example in terms of a particular year, or some concrete events which – although not defined in time – are specified precisely enough to refer to a definite moment in the past/a memory trace (Bartoszyński, 1987; Schmid, 2010). Indeterminacy is a narration in which it is not said what exactly is going on, or where, or when. The narrator can also create a story which on the surface seems to be definite in character for example by accumulating non-defining pronouns like *once*, *somewhere*, or *somebody*; presenting information in an unclear ambiguous manner for example *the world is changing* (What world? What is this change?), *parents taught me (…) all the traditions which they maintained and tried to instil in me so that I would not forget them in the future* (What traditions did they teach? What traditions did they maintain? They tried to instil but were they successful? Does the narrator really remember these traditions?)

The conditional form does away with time; it expresses that something must happen before something else can happen. However, nobody knows if and when a condition will be fulfilled; or if it is fulfilled, something else will happen [e.g. *If I had the means, I would take a long holiday and have a good rest*; however, if he does have the means, it is not so obvious that he will go after all (because he won't be able to make it or he won't feel like it, etc.) and even if he does go away, it is not certain if he will really find rest].

The imperative (mood) does not necessitate defining in time. It goes without saying that it must be done right now. The mood above all implies intention – pressure is what matters.

Another form of indeterminacy is unrealised potentiality, unverified conjectures – in other words the future which is not based on past experience for example *there are no such subjects I couldn't talk about* (which means that in actual fact he has not talked or there is no telling if he ever will).

An interesting narrative method employed by the sender of a communication is to apply so-called quantifiers of lie in other words universal pronouns such as *all*, *everybody*, *always*, or *everywhere*; and negative ones like *nobody*, *nothing*, *nowhere*, or *none*, which refer to some social/ collective experience. Such experience might be true as long as it is considered in very general terms (e.g. *everybody has some unpleasant memories of their family home* or *nobody can say that they are always happy*). At a more detailed (individual) level such a truth could not be established because of a variety of experiences, ages, resources, relationships possessed by individual persons. In the light of the relations between the sender and recipient this apparent over-determinacy used by the author of a communication "engages" the recipient and makes him feel obliged to find this kind of experience in himself. The sender delegates responsibility to the recipient,

who is to "guess" what other meanings a transmitted picture contains. Besides, so-called quantifiers of lie seem to serve another function in a communication, depending on the place where they are used. If it happens at the beginning of a narration (or at the beginning of its part), they put the listener in a situation where it is simply inappropriate to ask questions or demand further clarification, as everything is obvious – or the recipient "should" know it. Questioning the sense of referring to the collective experience undermines the credibility of the whole communication. However, when such a quantifier is placed at the end of a narration – sometimes even preceded by the word *but* – *we all have such an experience*, *everybody is in this situation*, and so on – it seems to diminish the importance or uniqueness of the experience which has only just been related. This suggests that since there is nothing peculiar/unique about this experience, there is no point in attaching importance to it or taking an interest in/asking questions about it. It is also an attempt to reach agreement (under the pressure of language) that it is not only the sender and recipient who should not talk about it but that other people should not either. Such quantifiers allow the narrator to avoid saying too much or in great detail and at the same time reduce the emotional charge which lies behind a related story.

On the other hand, expressions like *suddenly* and *all of a sudden* do not define so much time as the pace of action.

Places of events (real/mythical)

A description of a place of events might serve to make a communication more real. By using a large number of unnecessary details, the author wants to create the illusion of life – he pretends that he is simply relating what he "sees" or what he recollects. In this way not only does he disguise his real memories or the need to create pictures different from real ones, but also masks the very act of creating something (Weintraub, 1987; Brodzka, 1987). In order to describe scenes/events, the author of a communication might use recollections not so much from his own life as from the films, commercials he has seen or other people's stories. To make a narration more real, detailed descriptions are given to the recipient (Mullan, 2006) but, as it is a carbon copy of something that has been seen by the sender, not a specific individual recollection, the recipient does not get any characteristic detail. He does not get anything that could be a memory trace allowing him to reconstruct the remaining elements of narration.

Events

An excessive number of events might serve to fill up the space of a communication. The sender speaks in such a way as not to say something else and prevent the recipient from guessing the information which must remain hidden, or even from realising the very fact of something being hidden. Another method is to speak about something that does not exist or that has not taken place, and so on and avoid talking about what does

exist and what has happened. A communication can be filled with various minor events, characters, stories, and so on. What is interesting and important about this communication is not what the sender is actually talking about, as it is merely a cover-up for what is unsaid (Genette, 1982; 1990). The essence of a communication is just what the sender does not say.

Narration is not a simple task of enumerating/mentioning facts and events. It is "happening" in time. To illustrate this point, the following statement is quoted: "An individual is always an event-teller, he lives surrounded with his events and other people's events, everything that happens to him, he sees through them; and he tries to live his life as if he was telling it" (Sartre, 2007, p. 56).

By mere listing events we act "against" a story. Lack of a personal composition of events/selection and a failure to invest it with meaning results in a communication which cannot be analysed by means of literary theory tools. The course of events is determined by the intensions of the speaker/character/participants, and so on. Here should be stressed once again how important it is to adopt a narrative perspective (i.e. from whose point of view specific events are told): the speaker's own perspective – present or past, or if it is somebody else's, whose perspective is it? Narration makes it possible to express/combine events and time. This aspect has been dealt with by a number of authors, among others Genette (1981, p. 60) who suggests that "the narration reconstructs – in the sequence of a discourse – the chronological sequence of events", and Bruner (1987, p. 12) who assures us that "there is no way of describing the past time other than doing it in the narrative form". We refer to the past or the future by inquiring how far it is, whether it is a question of days, months or years. We build up a story on the time axis from events which are more and more specific/more detailed or more general/not very detailed. The analysis might also involve typicality/peculiarity of events which are reported, or the degree of their complexity/difficulty/saturation with negativeness/stress/traumas or with happiness/positiveness, and so on. All this creates the emotional climate of events, the way they are perceived when looked back upon and possible changes in this perception (*now I think about it as… then I used to think that…*). The analysis of "action"/events can cover physical aspects (stroking), metaphysical (enlightenment) and mental ones (a feeling of loneliness).

The third stage, in other words an attempt to work out 'the hidden story' from narratively out -of-key elements, requires defining which analysed elements should be identified as its components. These are:
- implied information; thematised information but only those items which are at a higher level of literary communication,
- information related in free-flowing language,

- information in which the distance to the narrator is at its least, and information which can be attributed to the addresser,
- thematised information defined in time/real was rejected, leaving only this thematised information which was not defined or was superficially defined.

All these pieces of information correct one another/are mutually corrective and organized into a coherent whole, which allows for reconstructing the hidden narration. The criteria of coherence make it possible to eliminate what is "different" but only when this "difference" (distinctness) has a random character (see Balcerzan, 1987). This randomness might be interpreted as distinctness which is not an element of any story, or which is an element of a completely different story which, however, cannot be reconstructed because there is a shortage/lack of elements. While communication at the thematised level can be incoherent, a reconstructed hidden story should fulfil the criteria of coherence (see Mayenowa, 1971). Sometimes, it is a story which still has not been reached, which has yet to be discovered.

The fourth stage allows us to compare two narrations in order to analyse how the two worlds presented in isolated hidden stories are related. The paralleled comparison of the worlds will answer the question: "Are the worlds described the same and alike?"

The main component of each narration is the world presented – defined as one of the main components of the communicative content, with all the elements taken as a whole (states, processes, experiences, human activity). The presented world's building blocks are thematic material, which is subject to selection, interpretation and construction according to the author's conception. The world, whose elements – or their make-up – are in agreement with socially confirmed cognitive stereotypes, has a realistic character; the opposite world has all the hallmarks of fantasy (Sławiński, 2010, p. 565-566). Possible worlds – a kind of the world presented where described facts and events are not considered in terms of reality. Their existence is not acknowledged or unquestionable. They exist in the realm of potentiality: they might have happened but just as well they might not, they might have taken a certain course but just as well they might have taken a completely different one. On average they are related in a conditional form (Głowiński, 2010, p. 566).

Criteria of assigning to specific groups

The world the same and alike:
- main characters are present in both narrations, attributed roles are the same in both narrations, both narrators adopt two perspectives,
- human activity, processes, states, experiences, times and places described in both narrations correspond,
- the visible world is realistic, it is compatible with the hidden one,

- narrators use the same language code.

The world the same but not alike:

- the main characters are present in both narrations, attributed roles are characterised by uncertainty and lack of definite character,
- narrators are in agreement on only one element of the worlds presented: human activity, processes, states, experiences, times and places which are attributed to the characters (if one agrees, the others don't),
- the visible world is not compatible with the hidden one,
- language codes are different.

The world not the same but alike:

- narrators hold the same negative opinion of the hidden world, they both experience the same negative emotions and agree that what is perceived as negative should not be revealed,
- the visible world is possible or utopian,
- the utopian world is created in a similar way; narrators use the hidden world as a basis from which they pick out what is important – something like reaction formation,
- the visible world refers to social schemas or archetypes (e.g. rituals) – without details, using buzz words, well-known pictures which are broad/general enough to suit everybody, thus they remain non-verifiable,
- smooth schematic stereotypical language – it does not catch attention, it is just to fill space; it might be also another form of expression without anything distinctly different,
- in one tone, a line without amplitude (e.g. chaos),
- language codes have been agreed upon, their aim is to keep up fiction.

The world not the same and not alike:

- the narration includes the perspective of only one of the characters (sometimes the other is not present at all, he/she is just "a figure", an episode, with no significant influence on the events presented in the narration),
- none of the aspects of the worlds presented correspond: processes, states, experiences, times or places; and if the main characters are present, human activity or attributed roles don't either,
- the worlds presented in both narrations are realistic, they are not possible ones,
- language codes used by the narrators are different.

Summary and discussion

To analyse a text/communication, we have used tools from the following areas:

- phonetics and syntax (Labov, 1966; Trudgill, 1986),

- parts of speech and lexis (here: frequency analysis of pronouns, the analysis of motivation patterns/verb forms which appear in the text and investigation into predicate categories) (see Brown & Gilman, 1960; Cutting, 2011),
- semantics (the lexical meaning of words, here: semantic field analysis, the Concept Dictionary of English by Laffal, which allows one to code words using synonymy, similarity and connection; as well as the meaning of discourse; semantic content analysis; concept meaning) (see Malmkjær, 2002; Norrick, 2008; Widdowson, 1995),
- text (its structure, word frequency/the strategy of word counting; using grammatical forms, leading themes, cohesion and coherence, and so on; here: *Linguistic Inquiry Word Count*; *General Inquiry*) (see Carter & Malmkjær, 2002; Cassidy, Sherman & Jones, 2012),
- language style (Agha, 2003; Halliday, 1978; Shuy, 2008),
- genre (typical content, composition, language) (see Bachtin, 2007),
- discursive strategies/discursive practise (here: the method of the sentence analysis of discourse, *analyse propositionnelle du discours* APD) (see Cots, 2006; Fairclough, 1992; 2003),
- narration (here: narrative episodes/events, their sequence; themes/a set of motives) (see Harré, 2008; Hymes, 1996; Labov, Waletzky, 1967; Narrative Inquiry, 2006),
- phenomenology, which allows us to work out senses/meanings which can be interpreted [reconstructing subjective structures of the meaning which are not always realised], reconstructing mental phenomena/describing the essence of expression (see Dale, Soderhamn & Soderhamn, 2012; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2012),
- patterns of interaction and experience (see Drew, 2001; Liddicoat, 2007; Rapley; 2007; Schegloff, 1972; 1992; Stubbs, 2008),
- social actions/social rank/social rules of expression, patterns of culture (see Vicari, 2010; Yule, 1996).

Quantitative analysis of the text, for example counting individual words (*word count strategies*), sentences or episodes (frequency analysis) enables one to support reached conclusions by numerical data, and draws attention to the meaning of words, which is extremely important and valuable in the work of a psychologist. It could also be important in psychological education, as it is often words, on which our work is based. Hence, proper regard for this element is essential. Its limitation, however, is that it does not reveal the concept or meaning of a communication. Besides, using the aforementioned quantitative strategies raises doubts for example in narrations obtained in an in-

terview technique, where the participant is forced to say more words about some areas than he would like to, which in turn might result in using a greater number of specific verbs, people's names, and so on.

Summing up, none of the aforementioned fields has tools for interpreting a communication/text. We mean the interpretation based on the assumption that real meaning is concealed and cannot be grasped in the process of direct empirical observation (Sławiński, 2010, p. 217-218; Markiewicz, 1984), the interpretation whose final effect assumes the form of a reconstructed story. We propose that such tools should be borrowed from the theory of literature, as it is this area of study that for a long time has been involved in interpreting the meaning of what is expressed in words and between words, deciphering and reconstructing a story. An individual can deal with anything (misfortune, loss, the unimaginable) as long as he/she puts it into a story. Therefore, tracking down a story is the aim of narrative therapy (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Tokarska, 2002; Pennenbaker, 2001). A story lacking in words that would tell it "tells a person". It becomes his torment, compulsion, incomprehension (Grosz, 2014). The results of quantitative analysis of a narration do not have narrative structure; they are the complete opposite and thus are useless in psychological practice.

Utilising the aforementioned tools, however demanding it can be, seems useful, as it can be used both in scientific research and in individual work with a patient.

Searching for the hidden story (admitting that it might exist) is, in our opinion, a matter of extreme importance, and yet it is usually skipped over by researchers. On the other hand, it is emphasised in different ways when working with a patient (e.g. remarking that it is not so very important what has been said as what has been concealed) (see Opoczyńska, 2008). As Kaźmierska states (2014), people tend to say more than they would like, and more than they think they have said. A psychologist often depends in his/her work on the unsaid he/she has "heard". In most cases, however, he/she is unable to explain how he/she has managed to hear it and by means of what tools. It is because terming language tools and defining their function lies outside the domain of psychology.

Using literary theory devices not only allows for reconstructing the hidden story but also emphasizes the significance of the speaking situation itself – auto-narration, which is brought about by the authors who adopt the interactive and communicative approach (Metcalfe, 2013; Ponterotto, 2002; Holstein i Gubrium, 2003; Stemplewska-Żakowicz, 2008).

The question of who tells whom also matters. We cannot avoid situations in which participants attempt to influence the way they want to be perceived by other people by selecting specific events from their lives or presenting them in a specific way. This auto-

presentation results from two basic difficulties. First, participants find it difficult to open up to the researcher, to establish a meaningful relation of trust. Of course, there are people who are capable of reaching a high level of intimacy in a research situation, but we are inclined to think that there are few such people. The fact that participation in the study is voluntary does not make any difference in this respect. It would be naive to think that it is possible to find a research group that, after one or two sessions with a researcher, would be able to reveal themselves to a considerable degree. Such a group would be possible only if it consisted of people who are on familiar terms with the researcher. Then the relation of trust could take place thanks to their prior acquaintance/familiarity; at the same time it could lead to even more intensive efforts on the part of the participant to build up their self-image, making use of what the researcher already knows.

Thus, what we can do is to analyse a communication using methods that will allow us to reconstruct the meaning in such a way as to gain inside into an individual person's experience, to see what is hidden, to hear what is left unsaid… and say it in the form of a story.

Translated by Małgorzata Bieleń

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