Chapter 5

Narrative Distance in Advertising Texts

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ABSTRACT

One of the concepts that Genette discusses in the narrative discourse involves the evaluation of the distance between the narrator and the story. The narrative is at every moment of life and bears the resolver information for understanding the message. The distance determines the degree of accuracy and the accuracy of the transmitted information in a narrative. There are four types of discourse at the distance of the narrative and these represent the distance that the narrator takes depending on the text. In this study, the use of narrative distance concept in advertising texts is discussed. In this context, the study evaluates how narrative distance is used in advertising as a narrative form. The aim of the study is to examine the place of narrative distance concept which is used as a method of expression in advertisements. In the study, the applications of narrative and distance structuring in advertising texts were mentioned and examined through advertisement films taken as samples.

INTRODUCTION

Umberto Eco says “Beginning of a narrative is a winking for adult readers.” (Eco, 2018, p. 23). Certain concepts have been developed for interpretation and analysis of texts. Narrative distance is a concept examined by Genette in his narrative discourse. Distance involves an evaluation of the distance between a narrator and a story. What does the use of narrative distance in advertising contribute to an advertisement, an advertising message or the viewers; what does it transmit; and how does it do it? In Eco’s words, a winking is made for the viewers through those forms of narrative.

Narration is conveying events by storifying. Narratives exist at every moment of life, and they have analyzing information for an understanding of a message. An advertising narrative involves motivating viewers’ thoughts, feelings, senses, and even experiences, and drawing them into a character. Establishing a narrative distance reveals the gap between the reader and the narrator or the character. Use of narrative
distance is important to creating a character. This is because narrative distance is regarded as a strong means of narration with several aspects each of which can be used to narrate a better story. Distance determines how to take the contents in a narrative and the message intended to be given.

Narrative distance, a concept of narrative discourse of Gerard Genette, constitutes the subject of this study. Genette shows in his narrative discourse that mode, sound, order, duration and frequency can be adapted to narratives. Narrative distance, constituting the subject of this study, is evaluated under the title of mode. Genette’s term of mode is taken as “degrees of approval” and “seeing an action from a different point of view”. Namely, the questions “Who sees?” and “Who is in the center of the dominant point of view?” are asked (Jahn, 2012, p. 68).

Distance, a concept examined by Genette in his narrative discourse, involves an evaluation of the distance between a narrator and a story. Narratives exist at every moment of life, and they have analyzing information for an understanding of a message. Distance determines the degree of precision and the accuracy of any transmitted information in a narrative. There are four types of discourses in narrative distance, and they show the distance covered by a narrator based on a text. In this study, use of the concept of narrative distance in advertising texts is examined. In this context, in this study, the way that narrative distance is used as a form of narrative in advertisements is evaluated, and its place in advertisements is examined. In the study, applications of structuring of narratives and distances in advertising texts are referred to, and they are examined through the commercial films taken as a sample. In this scope, purpose of this study is to examine the place of narrative distance as a form of narration in advertising texts. In the study, the way the structuring of narratives and distances is used in the advertising texts taken as a sample.

NARRATIVE, PERSPECTIVE AND NARRATIVE DISTANCE

Narratology is “the theory of the narrated. A narratologist takes the constituents of a narrative apart in order to present a description, and then attempts to determine the functions and relations/connections” (Trans. by Jahn from Todorov, 2012, p. 43). A narrative is “a form of communication that presents a chain of events that is both caused by and happens to characters” (Jahn, 2012, p. 12). Narratives represent events. Narratives not only simply reflect events or represent a transition to a situation, but also they question the possibilities, attempt to find them, structure and interpret them (Dervişcemaloğlu, 2014, p. 46).

The mode of narration involves the distance and the perspective. A distance comprises in some degree between the narrator and the narrated. The questions “Who is the character that has the point of view that directs the perspective? Who is the narrator? Who sees? Who speaks?” are presented and attempt to be analyzed. Genette takes “Who sees here?” and “Who speaks here?” apart (Tutumlu, 2002, p. 52). Narratives present a point of view for viewers. In terms of narratology, perspective is “about the way a story is narrated, and is the fictionalizing of a story and events by a narrator” (Çıraklı, 2015, p. 43). The point of view allows to determine the perspective of the narrator, what elements to establish the narrative on, what to focus on, and what aspects to examine them in (Akyıldız, 2016, p. 96). Focalization is the element that determines the perspective here. Focalization is “a crucial narrative technique allowing to exteriorize the perspectives that direct the lines of viewing/sensing/thinking of a narrative, and enables us to understand the type of the narrative mode completing the narrating voice. When determining the perspective, whose voice an event or an object is narrated in is as important as whose eyes/mind it is narrated from.” (Çıraklı, 2015, p. 45).
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