



Article

Intermediality and Literary Reception in the Digital Age: The Impact of Modern Media on Interpretation

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Abstract

This article explores the growing influence of digital media on traditional artistic genres, focusing on how digital technologies are reshaping the reception of literature through intermediality. As society increasingly integrates new media formats, works of art must adapt to meet evolving communication demands. The study aims to analyze various approaches to understanding how audiences perceive literary works adapted into digital media. A combination of general scientific research methods was employed, including synthesis of literary sources, statistical data analysis, systematization, and generalization. Sentiment analysis served as the primary quantitative method, assessing emotional reactions from a sample of 35 respondents. The findings reveal subjective responses influenced by personal experiences with literary formats. Results show a neutral overall sentiment ($S = 0.16$), a high intensity of opinion ($M = 14.53$), and diverse perspectives on literary adaptation ($S = 0.25$; $M = 23.5$). These outcomes highlight intermediality as a significant driver in the evolution of contemporary literature, enabling transformations in both content and form. However, the data also suggest that current societal perceptions of literature demand a new analytical framework, one that reflects the distinctive features of the digital era and its broader cultural and social implications for artistic expression.

Keywords: arts, digital technologies, intermediality, intertextuality, perception of literary works

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Introduction

The actualization of the role of digital technologies in modern society is causing profound changes in the adaptation of artistic works to new media formats that meet the requirements of the times. In this context, the concept of intermediality, which involves the synthesis and interaction of various art forms and media, significantly expands the possibilities of reception of a work of art, opening up new ways of understanding it. Literary works, in particular, are often adapted to new formats through film interpretations, audiobooks, graphic novels, or even video games. In particular, according to an introspective survey of 750 respondents aged 15 to 40 conducted between March and April 2022, 73% of Generation Z respondents on Spotify said they use audio to understand better and comprehend text, compared to 65% of the previous generation (HUB INSTITUTE, 2022). This phenomenon demonstrates technological evolution and a significant expansion of the boundaries of perception and interpretation of literature. The growing impact of digital media on traditional art forms reveals new dimensions of communication, emphasizing the audience's experience and modes of interaction with artistic works. In the context of intermediality, the perception of an artwork is shaped not only by individual interpretation but also by the complex influence of contemporary media, which integrates textual, visual, and auditory elements. It is extremely important to study how classical literary texts are adapted to modern media formats, opening up new possibilities for their interpretation and perception by readers.

This research article aims to explore various perspectives on how artistic works are perceived within the framework of intermediality. The article is aimed at analyzing the impact of modern media on literary perception, studying the mechanisms of integrating different media, and determining the role of new technologies in changing the forms and content of artistic communication.

Literature review

The interplay between literature and modern communication tools has gained significant relevance in today's rapidly evolving cultural environment, shaped by the advancement of media and digital technologies. Examining the relationships among various art forms and their digital counterparts has become central in current literary and art historical scholarship. The conventional categorization of art into distinct disciplines, such as literature, visual arts, music, film, sculpture, and architecture, alongside the rise of newer creative expressions like video games, graphic narratives, and commercial art, is rooted in historical context and does not fully capture the essence of artistic expression (Honour & Fleming, 2005; Horbolis, 2021; Petrovska, 2024; Veleni, 2024). The interaction of artistic forms and their integration into interdisciplinary expressive means demonstrates a tendency towards synthesis, which actualizes the concept of intermediality as a methodological basis for analyzing this phenomenon (Shkliarenko, 2021).

The notion of intermediality was formed under the influence of an extensive ecosystem of communication processes and creative practices that can be analyzed from the perspective of various scientific disciplines. The key aspects of this phenomenon include the material nature of the medium, which is closely linked to technological innovations and technical devices, the specific capabilities of each medium, and the mechanisms of its transmission, distribution, and reception within specific institutional and socio-cultural contexts. Despite the widely recognized contribution of D. Higgins to the formation of the concept of “intermedia,” few scholars pay attention to the fact that the term “intermediality” was also introduced in 1990 as part of the Edge’90: Art & Life in the Nineties project, a biennial organized in the UK under the curatorship of B. La Frene and T. Warr. This project included various art forms, including installations, performances, sculptures, video archives, and a two-day academic conference. Conceptually, the exhibition was based on the ideas of Higgins and J. Maciunas, the founders of the Fluxus movement, and aimed to highlight the relationship between intermedial art and the everyday space of human existence (Bennett et al., 1990). From the beginning, the concept of intermediality was focused on studying the interaction of art forms, technologies, and the space of semantic communication. The development of technical media demonstrates a gradual accumulative process of engineering solutions: the combination of radio, photography, and cinema contributed to the formation of television broadcasting, which embodies the principle of transforming multimodal experience. Each new medium opens up a new stage of practice, forming its own channels of circulation, discussion, and distribution of content, which is also reflected in the respective creative industries (Azcárate, 2023).

The conceptual approach to the study of intermediality is based on forming an integrated polyartistic space within the cultural system (Pieshkova, 2015). However, recent studies have proposed a narrower interpretation of this phenomenon: it is seen as a specific model of intra-textual interaction in which different types of art enter into a communicative relationship within a single work of art (Pieshkova, 2018). Another approach interprets intermediality as a methodological construct that systematizes the processes of inter-artistic interaction and interpenetration in the artistic space (Urmina et al., 2022). In this context, it is important to define the reception of an artwork as an active process of interpretation in which the recipient is directly involved in creating its aesthetic meaning (Hnatiuk, 2013).

The concept of intertextuality, which analyzes intertextual relations in literature, is also a relevant area of contemporary research (Hempfer, 2024; Yildiz, 2024). This phenomenon involves textual interconnections that can be realized through citation, reminiscence, allusion, stylization, parody, pastiche, etc. (Prihodko et al., 2024). At the same time, other scholars emphasize the potential of intertextuality to expand the boundaries of literary communication, which contributes to a deeper analysis of socio-cultural contexts and identity (Abu Sakour, 2024). In this context, a conceptual distinction has been proposed between intermediality as the interaction of

different artistic forms and intertextuality as an intertextual relationship determined by verbal strategies (Popova, 2017).

Modern research pays considerable attention to the recipient's role in interpreting a literary work. In particular, Chandrasoma and Ananda (2018) emphasize that active involvement of the reader in the interpretive process contributes to improving their reading competence, which, in turn, is determined by the level of foreign language proficiency, media literacy, and critical thinking. Qamar's (2016) study confirms that the reception of a literary text requires the ability to analyze and synthesize information from various sources, which is a key factor in shaping the cognitive component of the reading experience.

A separate issue is the impact of digital transformations on artistic discourse, which leads to a revision of traditional aesthetic standards. Some researchers emphasize the negative consequences of this process, including the simplification of artistic concepts, the reduction of the depth of content, and the dominance of commercial factors in creative production (Azcarate, 2024; Balestrini, 2017; Fast & Kaun, 2014; O'Sullivan, 2017). Instead, other scholars emphasize the potential of new media to complement traditional artistic forms, which, provided their artistic nature is preserved, helps to expand the possibilities of literary communication (Lievrouw, 2023).

The growing interest in the interaction of literature and other media determines the fragmentation of the theoretical basis of intermediality in modern research. Bruhn's (2016) research makes a substantial contribution in this area by highlighting the fact that mediality is an integral part of the narrative rather than just a background trait. Bruhn (2015) considers a multimodal approach to literature that sees the medium as both a material and semantic factor that influences narrative structure, meaning production, and reception. This approach confirms the role of literary intermediality in ontological transformations of the logic of text and narrative.

Additionally, the research conducted by Arribert-Narce et al. (2024) contributes to the ongoing discourse by studying the intersections of visual, musical, and textual modalities from the perspective of Barthesian semiotics and beyond. This collection highlights how intermedial configurations shape perception and meaning through complex sensory and symbolic negotiations, thus offering a nuanced theoretical and case-based account of intermedial processes in contemporary art and literature. These contributions highlight the need to integrate both classical and emerging theoretical perspectives into the analysis of intermediality to avoid superficial generalizations and to substantiate the methodological and interpretive depth of such studies.

Despite the growing body of literature on intermediality and intertextuality, there remains insufficient attention to how modern media reshape the mechanisms of literary reception at the cognitive and emotional levels, particularly in the context of hybrid media formats that blur the boundaries between reader, viewer, and user. Moreover, current studies rarely address how intermedial transformations affect the perception of literary value, authorship, and genre in the digital age.

Methodology

The research employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to comprehensively examine the influence of modern media on the perception of literary works. The synthesis of literary sources served as the foundation for summarizing key scientific perspectives and identifying significant aspects of the interaction between classical literature and new media formats. Statistical data analysis was applied to explore correlations between media adaptation parameters and literary perception changes among different respondent groups. Sentiment analysis played a central role in evaluating emotional responses to literary adaptations. This was conducted using feedback from 35 students of the Private Higher Education Institution “Academy of Cinema and New Media” (Kyiv, Ukraine), who shared their views on experiencing literature through contemporary media formats. The collected feedback was processed using the TEXT2DATA sentiment analysis tool, which generated quantitative indicators to measure respondents’ emotional reactions. To manage the diverse data, the method of systematization was utilized to classify and organize findings related to various media formats and their effects. Lastly, the method of generalization enabled the formulation of overarching conclusions and recommendations, helping to identify key trends in how digital technologies influence the transformation and reception of literary works in the digital age.

Results

Processes of communication and representation engage a wide array of media formats, ranging from biological mechanisms of speech (e.g., vocal cords) and material tools of painting and writing to sophisticated technological means of cinema and computerized communication, including video games. These mechanisms produce the embodiment of ideas in sensually accessible forms for a contemporary audience. Architecture, painting, printmaking, photography, cinema, and other arts exist within the framework of a combination of different media perceived through multiple sensory channels. For example, as a synthetic art form, photography actively interacts with other media by combining static images with textual and audiovisual elements, especially in photo reports, documentary projects, and multimedia installations. One of the most striking examples of intermediality in photography is a series of works by the American photographer G. Kruger, who reinterprets the European painting tradition, in particular the works of Vermeer and Rembrandt, through staged photographs. Also worth mentioning is the photographic project by Tim Walker, who created a series of photographs inspired by Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*, adapting the visual language of literature into the format of artistic photography. These examples demonstrate how photography mediates between text, painting, and contemporary culture, creating new aesthetic forms that expand the perception of the original source. Cinema’s ability to integrate visual, audio, and narrative components

is a vivid example of this synthesis. For example, adaptations of literary works, as in the case of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* or J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* novels, demonstrate how cinematic means expand the artistic space of the literary source, enriching it with new visual and sound codes (Tani, 2021).

The physical medium, whether naturally occurring or artificially constructed, interacts with human cognitive and sensory abilities to shape how knowledge is structured and documented within a specific material context. This process is not merely intellectual but also a social act, occurring within defined spatial and temporal boundaries and evolving under the influence of historical and cultural dynamics. For instance, O. Wilde's novel *"The Picture of Dorian Gray"* in its numerous film adaptations, including *"The Picture of Dorian Gray"* (1977), *"The Sins of Dorian Gray"* (1983), *"The Devil's Bargain"* (2003), *"Dorian Gray"* (2009), reflects different cultural epochs and social views on morality and beauty (Martin-Payre, 2020), while modern interpretations of the novel *"The Kaidashev Family"* by I. Nechuy-Levytsky, in particular the series *"To Catch Kaidash"* (2020), adapt the classic story to the contemporary Ukrainian social context, rethinking traditional motifs through the prism of current social issues. Thus, the interaction of the arts within the framework of intermediality contributes to the formation of new artistic forms and cultural meanings, expanding the possibilities of perceiving an artwork in the digital age. In a broader cultural sense, Grajo's (2024a) research on the *Traslación* of the Black Nazarene conceptualizes ritual and symbolic experiences as forms of national allegory. This indicates that media representation, interwoven with collective memory and symbolic meaning, can serve as tools of identity construction and cultural consolidation, reinforcing the potential of mediated narratives to shape individual perception and national consciousness.

The progression of modern art is closely linked to the advancement of emerging media, which operate as intricate systems of signs aimed at conveying meaning and influencing how audiences perceive and engage with artistic content. Through the use of multilevel cognitive, emotional, and sensory mechanisms, media not only modify artistic communication but also influence the structure of the audience's consciousness (Lievrouw, 2023). In this context, they play the role of an intermediary between an artwork and its interpreter, acquiring the function of transmitting content and manipulating it, which causes changes in both the content of artistic discourse and the forms of its representation. These processes lead to a radical reconfiguration of the traditional artistic landscape, initiating the emergence of new artistic phenomena and stylistic trends aimed at adapting aesthetic practices to the parameters of the digital environment. At the core of this transformation is the concept of intermediality, which denotes the interaction between a variety of artistic forms that is achieved by combining their symbolic and sign-based systems. Intermediality appears not only as a methodological paradigm, but also as a means of forming a multisensory artistic space in which visual, audio, textual, and other sign elements are synthesized, opening up prospects for new inter-artistic dialogues. An analysis of contemporary scientific

approaches to the phenomenon of intermediality points to three fundamental interpretations: conventional, based on established models of interaction between art forms; normative, which defines the principles of structural interdependence of media; and referential, which emphasizes mutual citation and semantic coordination of artistic codes within an interdisciplinary context.

Intermediality as a methodological category of contemporary humanitarian knowledge implies the interaction of different media within a single communication system, forming specific content transformation models. Conventional intermediality consists of preserving the semantic structure during the transition between media, which is realized through the change of the sign code (Isagulov, 2023). This form is inherent, for example, in book facsimiles, where the original handwritten text is transferred to a printed format without editing the content. A similar mechanism works in music recordings, where a musical composition created in one notation system (e.g., non-musical) is adapted to modern music notation without changing the melodic structure. Another example is the transliteration of literary texts from ancient languages, such as the translation of Homer's *Iliad* from ancient Greek, while preserving the metrical structure.

Normative intermediality implies changes in the means of expression when adapting a work to a new media space, while retaining the key structural elements of the original. A classic example is theatrical productions based on literary texts, in which the author's words can be shortened and the composition changed to fit the dramatic structure (Isagulov, 2023). For example, numerous stagings of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in different directorial interpretations are distinguished by the variability of character representation and modified plot emphasis due to the peculiarities of theater art. An equally striking example is the adaptation of classic novels in the format of graphic novels, where the text is abridged and the narrative structure acquires visual dynamics.

In turn, reference intermediality functions through allusive connections between different media, when one work refers to another without direct transformation. For example, U.N. Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose* contains numerous references to medieval texts and symbols, creating a multilayered interpretation. Similarly, in H. Klimt's painting, the artistic style resembles Byzantine mosaics, which is not a direct copying of them, but only a reminiscence of the visual tradition of another era. The same type includes musical compositions that quote motifs from classical works, as in the case of the use of Bach themes in contemporary jazz or film music. Entirely new forms of media content, increasingly popular on social platforms, often incorporate instances of referential intermediality. A notable example is the modern track "Gai Shumlyat" by the Ukrainian group Pirih i Batih, inspired by P. Tychna's 1913 poem "Gai Shumlyat...". This work maintains the original piece's emotional intensity and visual imagery while reshaping them within a modern musical framework. Consequently, these forms of intermediality reveal intricate

dynamics between various media, fostering new modes of meaning-making and enriching cultural dialogue by blending and varying media techniques.

The rise of intermediality, which demands the convergence of diverse media types, is closely connected to current trends in how audiences receive artistic creations. Beyond enhancing viewers' imaginative involvement and encouraging fresh interpretative approaches to literary texts, this interplay broadens the aesthetic horizons of perception. Hence, it is imperative to undertake a rigorous and systematic examination of the impact that diverse media formats exert on the hermeneutic processes involved in literary interpretation and elucidate the ways in which transmedial adaptations modulate affective responses and cognitive reception.

In order to achieve this objective, the current investigation implements sensory text analysis. This sophisticated methodological approach is intended to quantitatively and qualitatively evaluate the valence and intensity of emotional and attitudinal responses (positive, neutral, or negative) that participants elicit in response to literary adaptations.

Within this framework, multiple phases of sentiment analysis were performed. Following the collection of comments and feedback from students at the Private Higher Education Institution "Academy of Cinema and New Media" regarding their reception of literature via contemporary media platforms, the TEXT2DATA sentiment analysis software was utilized to produce quantitative metrics.

The first stage of the analysis was to identify the respondents' sentiments about changing the perception of literary works after their adaptation to other media formats, the results of which are shown in Figure 1.

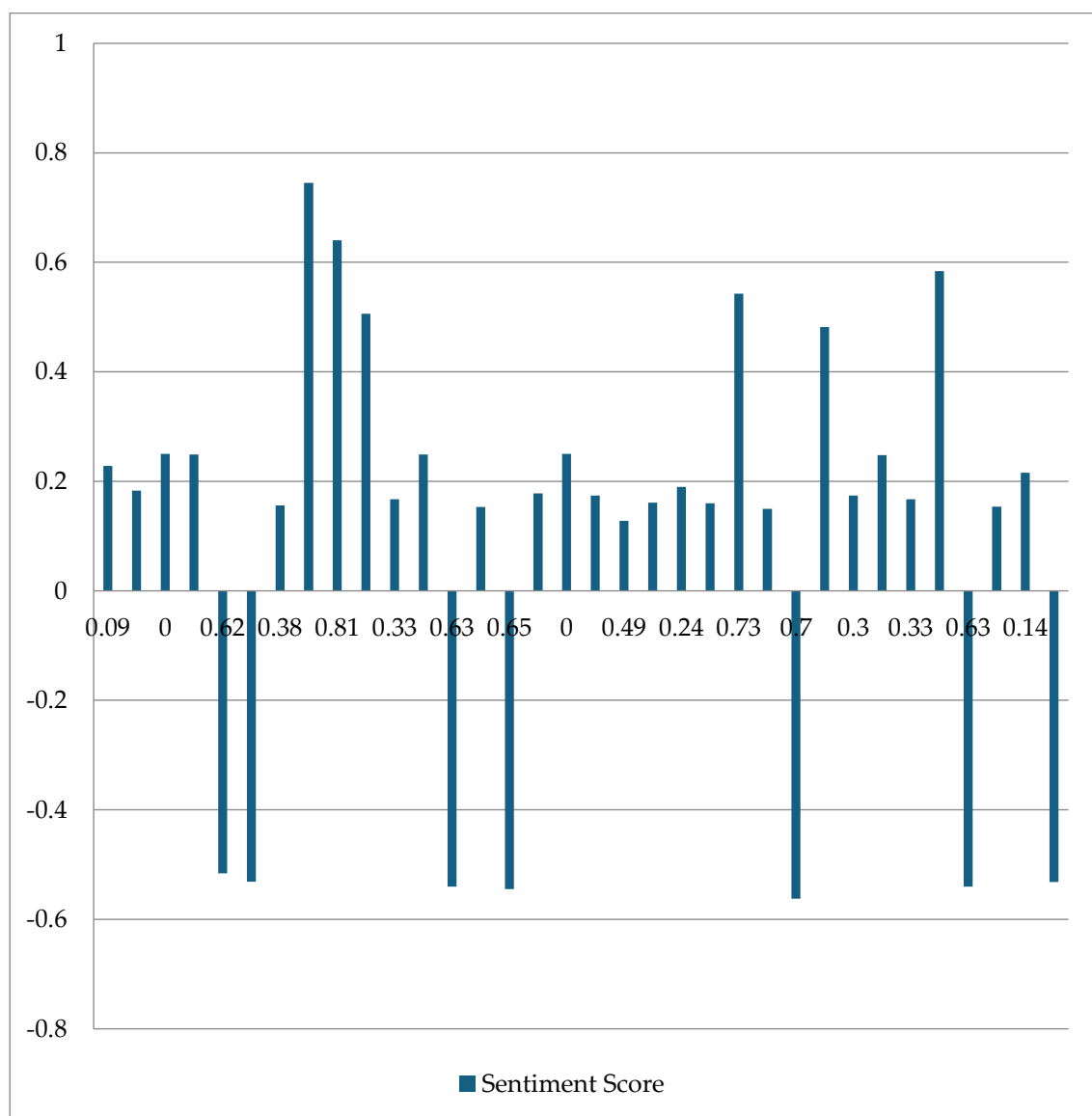


Figure 1. Results of the assessment of respondents' attitudes toward changes in the perception of literary works after their adaptation to other media formats

Source: compiled by the author

The analysis results demonstrated significant variability in respondents' attitudes towards adapting literary works into new media formats. In particular, there is a significant proportion of positive ratings, which indicates a favorable attitude of students to the interaction of text with multimodal media. At the same time, negative Sentiment Score values indicate a certain skepticism of some respondents who may perceive such adaptations as a distortion of the author's intent.

Next, we assessed the respondents' attitudes toward the impact of media formats on the perception of literature, as shown in Figure 2.

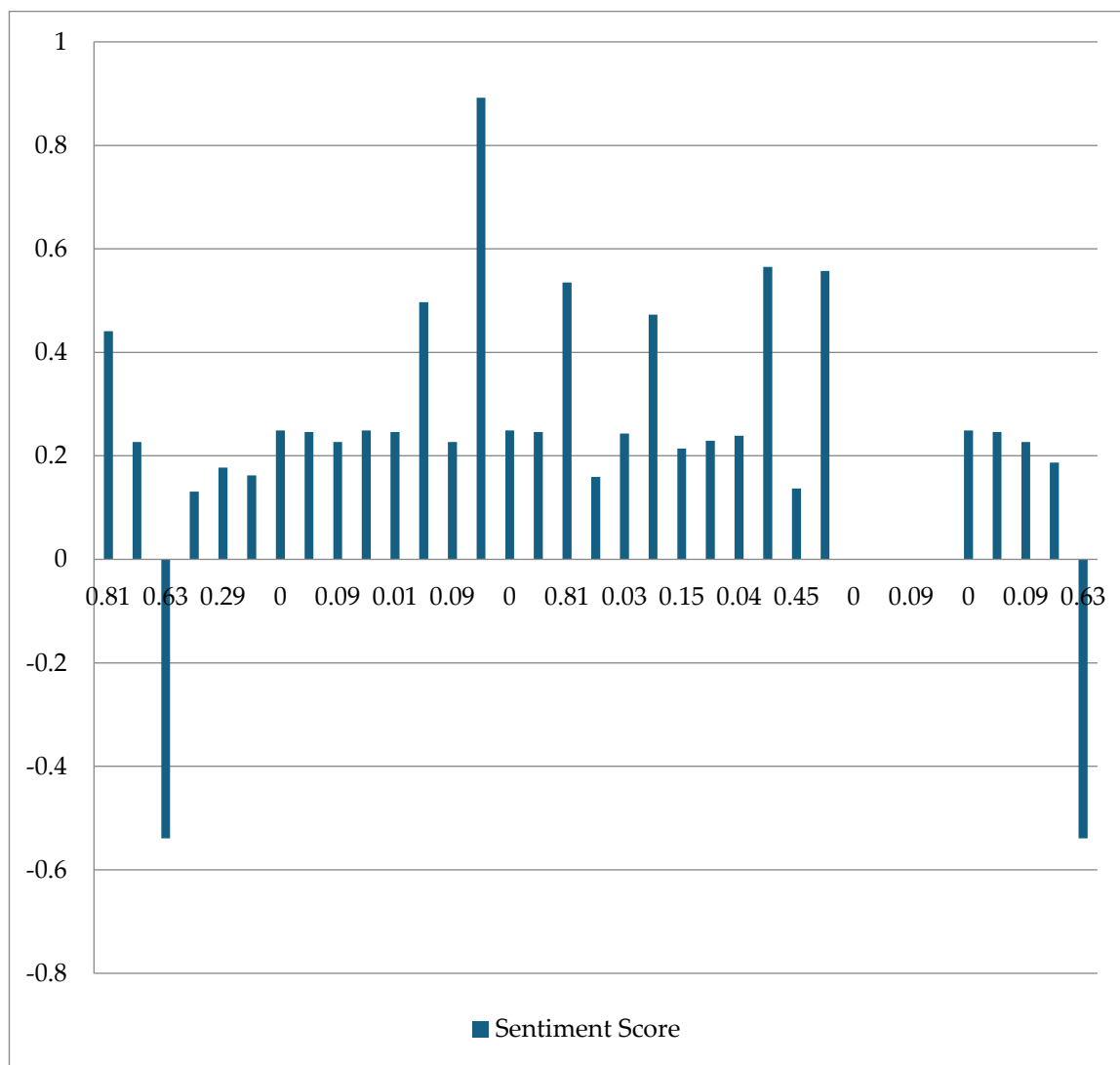


Figure 2. Results of the assessment of respondents' attitudes towards the impact of media formats on the perception of literature
Source: compiled by the author

The outcomes of the analysis revealed considerable diversity in participants' perspectives regarding the transformation of literary works into modern media formats. Notably, many positive evaluations reflect students' generally supportive stance towards the fusion of text with multimodal media. However, negative Sentiment Score values suggest that some respondents maintain a degree of skepticism, possibly viewing these adaptations as a misrepresentation of the original author's vision.

The next step is to quantitatively interpret the respondents' attitudes toward the role of modern media in the interpretation of literary texts, as shown in Figure 3.

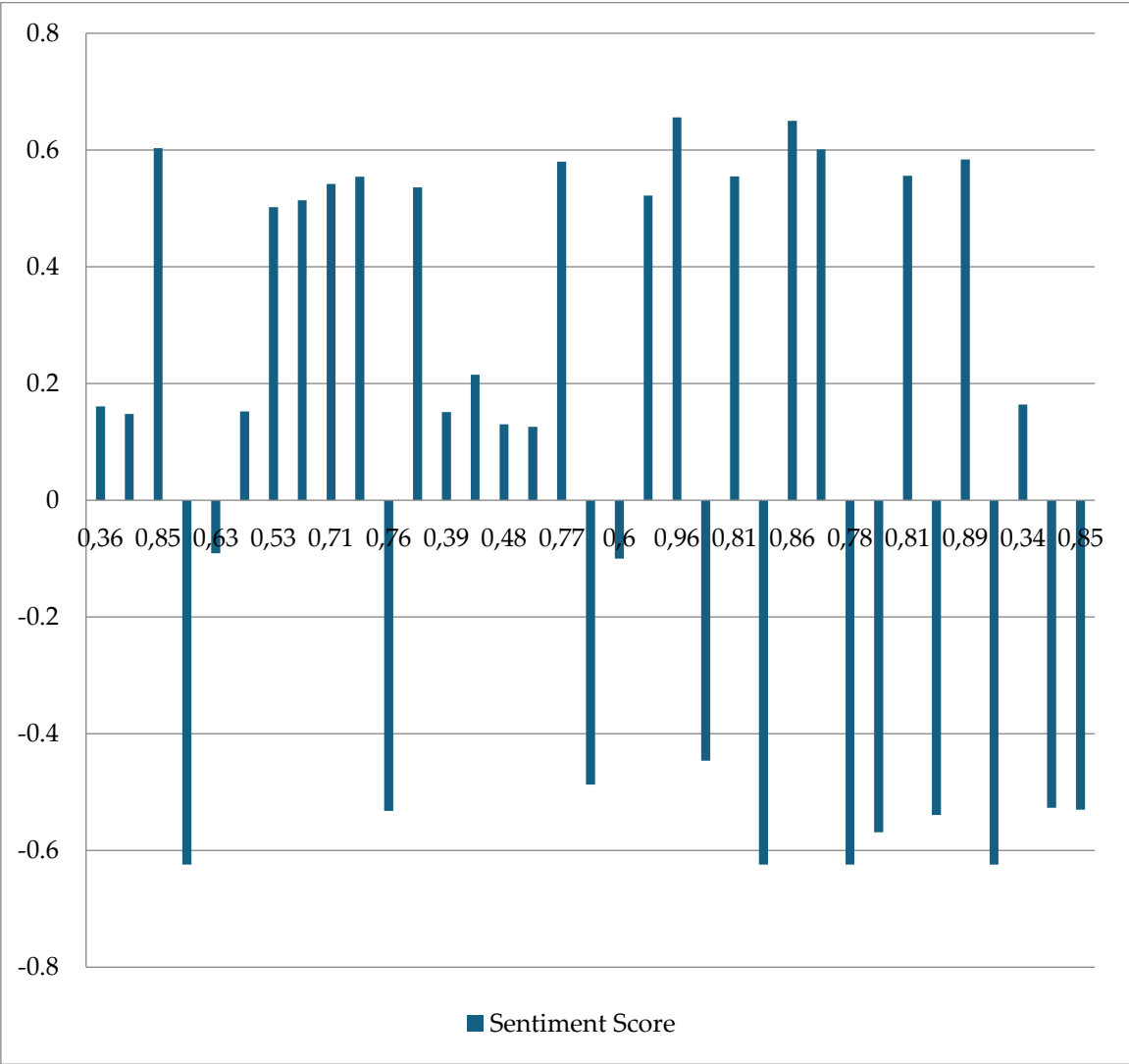


Figure 3. Results of the assessment of respondents' attitudes towards the role of modern media in the interpretation of literary texts
Source: compiled by the author

The findings also reveal a substantial influence of contemporary media on the way literary texts are understood and interpreted: on the one hand, high positive Sentiment Scores confirm the effectiveness of using multimedia technologies to empower readers; however, on the other hand, negative indicators indicate possible discrepancies between traditional textual perception and the latest ways of representing content, which requires further research in the field of cognitive aspects of human interaction with digital texts.

The summary of respondents' attitudes toward the perception of literature through modern media formats is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary indicators of respondents' attitudes towards the perception of literature through modern media formats

Analysis results	Sentiment Score (S)		Magnitude (M)	Subjectivity Score
Respondents' attitudes towards changing the perception of literary works after their adaptation to other media formats	neutral	0,16	14,53	subjective
Respondents' attitudes toward the influence of media formats on the perception of literature	high	0,74	10,51	subjective
Respondents' attitudes toward the role of modern media in the interpretation of literary texts	neutral	0,25	23,5	subjective

Source: compiled by the author

The summarized results of the analysis demonstrate the general subjectivity of respondents' assessments, which may be due to their personal experience of interacting with literary works in different formats. The neutral Sentiment Score for assessing changes in the perception of literary works after their adaptation to other media formats ($S = 0.16$) indicates a generally neutral emotional reaction of respondents, i.e., the changes do not cause significant polarization of sentiment. Instead, the Magnitude value ($M = 14.53$) indicates a significant intensity of the opinions expressed, which indicates a wide range of views among respondents. In addition, it should be noted that the highest Sentiment Score is observed in the category of assessing the impact of media formats on the perception of literature ($S = 0.74$), which indicates a predominantly positive attitude toward such changes. At the same time, the Magnitude score ($M = 10.51$) indicates some variability in the answers, which can be explained by differences in personal preferences and the level of respondents' involvement in new formats of interaction with the text. The role of modern media in the interpretation of literary texts shows that there is no clear emotional polarization on this topic, given the neutral Sentiment Score ($S = 0.25$). However, the Magnitude value ($M = 23.5$) is the highest among all three categories, i.e., it has the highest intensity of discussion and diversity of opinions among respondents and, therefore, indicates the presence of both positive and negative views on the role of new technologies in the literary field.

Discussions

The notion that the boundaries between individual media are becoming increasingly fluid is validated by the general tendency toward integration of artistic forms observed in recent research (Honour & Fleming, 2005; Horbolis, 2021; Petrovska, 2024; Veleni, 2024). This aligns with our respondents' positive perception of literary adaptations that transcend traditional formats. This demonstrates the necessity of the concept of intermediality as a methodological lens for interpreting such transformations, particularly in light of the multimodal nature of contemporary

communication (Shkliarenko, 2021). However, the conceptual distinction between intermediality and intertextuality (Popova, 2017) underscores that media adaptations are not purely verbal or textual in their transformations but involve a deeper reconfiguration of sign systems. Some respondents reported cognitive challenges, particularly in relation to fragmented or genre-blurring formats, which are consistent with this distinction. Furthermore, the emphasis in recent studies on the active role of the recipient (Chandrasoma & Ananda, 2018; Qamar, 2016) helps explain the variability in user responses: the degree of engagement with adapted texts may directly depend on readers' media literacy and their ability to navigate complex intermedia codes. Therefore, the divergent reactions captured in our study can be interpreted not as contradictions but as indicators of differentiated reception strategies shaped by individual cognitive and interpretive competencies.

The quantitative assessment of respondents' attitudes towards changing the perception of literary works after their adaptation to media formats is consistent with the statements in the literature about the positive impact of multimodal adaptations on aesthetic perception (Abu Sakour, 2024; Hempfer, 2024; Lievrouw, 2023; Yildiz, 2024). Many respondents showed a tendency to positively evaluate adaptations, which confirms the expansion of the possibilities of literary communication through new media, emphasizing scientific interpretation as a positive aspect of content transformation. However, our results reveal a certain share of negative attitudes toward adaptations. This trend indicates a certain skepticism among respondents, which may be related to the impact of digital transformations on artistic discourse noted in the literature (Azcarate, 2024; Balestrini, 2017).

However, this discrepancy can be explained by the fact that some students perceive adaptations as a violation of the author's intention or simplification of content, which is emphasized in the discussion of the negative effects of digital transformations (Azcarate, 2024; Balestrini, 2017; Fast & Kaun, 2014; O'Sullivan, 2017). Thus, the results of the quantitative evaluation overlap with the literature on the potential of intermediality to expand the aesthetic possibilities of literature. Still, it also highlights criticisms of the effects of adaptation that should be considered in further research. This duality resonates with Isagulov's (2023) observation that intermedial strategies, such as ekphrasis, operatic allusions, and intertextual layering, function as decorative devices and mechanisms for semantic and intercultural enrichment. By integrating verbal, visual, and performative codes, such adaptations deepen the narrative texture and enhance interpretive complexity, reinforcing the literary value rather than undermining it.

Furthermore, the study by Grajo (2024b) underscores an often-overlooked dimension of media adaptations: their psychotherapeutic capacity. Artistic media content, including literary reinterpretations via platforms such as Netflix, not only alters modes of perception but also fosters emotional resonance and psychological relief, particularly under conditions of social crisis. In this context, media-mediated literature emerges as a tool of aesthetic experience and affective coping, further

substantiating intermedial formats' transformative potential. This correlates with our findings, where media content reshapes literary perception, facilitates emotional engagement, and functions as a form of cultural coping. Thus, both studies confirm the capacity of media to reframe literature as an affective and communal experience, amplifying its relevance in contemporary socio-cultural contexts.

Conclusions

Today, intermediality is an important factor in the development of contemporary art, particularly in literature, where new media open up new opportunities for transforming the content and form of works of art. The interaction of different media, such as cinema, photography, theater, and literature, contributes to expanding aesthetic practices, enriching text perception, and creating new cultural meanings. The impact of technological innovations and the expansion of media capabilities leads to the formation of multisensory communication spaces, where intermediality serves to transmit content and influence the cognitive and emotional aspects of perception. However, the results of the analysis indicate that trends in the perception of literature in society require a new approach to the analysis of works of art that considers the specifics of the digital age and its impact on the cultural and social sphere.

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Conflicts of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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