HOUSE M.D. AND SHERLOCK HOLMES: ALLUSIVE INTERTEXTUAL ELEMENTS

HOUSE M.D. VE SHERLOCK HOLMES: ANIŞTIRMALI METİNLERARASI ÖGELER

Seda KUŞÇU ÖZBUDAK*

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Intertextuality refers to the relationship among texts and can be observed both horizontally between the texts of similar genres and vertically between the texts of different genres. This relationship can be built through several literary devices, one of which is allusion. In this study, a vertical intertextual analysis was aimed at in the texts of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories and the world-famous TV series House, M.D. with a special focus on allusions. These elements were detected by three steps including notice, track, and become familiar. Then they were categorized in terms of explicit and implicit references. The results of the study point out that the House M.D. series is a highly allusive text, and it is thought that the allusions contribute to the success of this long-running series. Considering the target audience of both works, it can be thought that recognizing these allusions can be an enjoyable activity for the audience and guarantee a certain audience for the series. In this context, allusive intertextual elements can be considered not only as stylistic tools, but also as tools that provide familiarity and recognition for the alluded text.

MAKALE BİLGİSİ	ÖZET
	Metinlerarasılık, metinler arasındaki ilişkiyi ifade eder ve hem benzer türlere sahip metinler arasında yatay olarak hem de farklı türlerdeki metinler arasında dikey olarak gözlemlenebilir. Bu çalışmada, Sherlock Holmes hikâyeleri ve dünyaca tanınan televizyon dizisi House, M.D. üzerinde anıştırma odaklı bir dikey metinlerarasılık analizi amaçlanmıştır ve anıştırmalar fark et, takip et ve aşina ol adımları ile tespit edilmiş, açık ve kapalı göndermeler açısından gruplara ayrılmıştır. Çalışmanın sonuçları, House, M.D. dizisinin çok sayıda anıştırma içeren bir metin olduğuna işaret etmekte ve kullanılan anıştırmaların bu uzun soluklu dizinin başarısına katkıda bulunduğu düşünülmektedir. Her iki eserin de hedef kitlesi göz önüne alındığında, bu anıştırmaları fark etmenin izleyici için eğlenceli bir aktivite olabileceği ve dizi için belirli bir izleyici kitlesini garanti edebileceği düşünülebilir. Bu bağlamda, anıştırmalı metinler arası ögeler yalnızca biçimsel araçlar olarak değil, aynı zamanda anıştırma içeren metin için aşinalık ve tanınma sağlayan araçlar olarak da değerlendirilebilir.

* Instructor, Dr., Gazi University, Academic Writing and Research Center. Ankara /Türkiye. E-mail: sedakuscu@gazi.edu.tr.
ORCID https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3503-0958.

Introduction

Intertextuality is a network of texts that are linked with each other. Kristeva (1980) states that no text exists isolated from the texts existed before it, so no text is original and is made by itself. In other words, every text has a certain amount of resemblance to other texts and may serve as a foundation for the other texts to follow. Likewise, Fairclough claims that all texts are intertextual in nature and they are composed of the traces of other texts (1992: 115). Intertextuality can be generally defined as how texts interact with other texts and the idea of intertextuality clearly points out that texts cannot be unique and isolated objects; they are made up of several other texts, both known and unknown (Montgomery & Durant et al. 2007:161).

Although the term *intertextuality* was first coined by Kristeva in 1966, the origins of intertextuality dates back to the twentieth-century linguistics, especially to the work of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. His theory defines meaning as a production of its relation with the literary systems, cultural contexts, and linguistic structures that surrounds it, not the originator's original thoughts. Intertextuality is also thought to take its roots from the *Dialogism* of the Russian linguist and literary theorist M.M. Bakhtin who asserts that spoken or written, all discourses are dialogic, in other words, they are in communication with each other (Morris 2009:131). From this basis, French semiotician Julia Kristeva developed her concept of intertextuality in her pivotal essay *Word, Dialogue, and Novel*, and defined language and literary texts as dialogic in nature and added that a literary work is "a mosaic of quotations" and texts are incorporated and transformed into each other (1986: 37).

These ideas were further advanced by French literary theorist Roland Barthes. In his study *Theory of Text* (1981), he defined the "text" and "intertextuality". His theory states that a text cannot be confined to a singular meaning. Conversely, it is open to various interpretations. For the author, the modernist literature is the key to allow the reader to do textual analysis as productive readers, not consumers who read for stable meaning. Barthes' theory of intertextuality lies in the practice of reading which requires the involvement of the reader, and is seen as re-writing and does not accept the idea that meaning belongs to the individual author: "*the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author*" (1977: 145). The recognition and comprehension of intertextual references by the reader is necessary as these references serve to influence the reader and offers a depth to a text, in line with the readers' knowledge and understanding.

Although *reader* is the agent that is generally referred to in defining intertextuality, intertextuality is not restricted to the field of literary production. Rather, the core idea of intertextuality is to provide interrelation among several texts, thus involving several agents. According to Allen, intertextuality is also found in "discussions of cinema, painting, music, architecture, photography and in virtually all cultural and artistic productions" (2000: 174). In this sense, a book reader, a film audience, or an architecture enthusiast are those who recognize, understand, and enjoy intertextual references among similar or different genres. In this regard, media scholar John Fiske proposes the terms horizontal and vertical intertextuality. When references are made among similar genres, to illustrate, from a book to another book, this is a

form of horizontal intertextuality. On the other hand, if the references are made across different genres, i.e. from a song to a poem, this is a vertical intertextuality (1987: 108)

Allen (2000:24) asserts that intertextuality is a significant component of media studies and influences studies of adaptation, interpretation, and appropriation of texts into other media. Intertextual connections, references, shared themes, and styles naturally exist in media products. Such products can be TV shows, movies, novels, and even video games. Since texts rely on existing genre conventions, which distinguish them from other genres, genres involve a certain degree of intertextuality. As mentioned above, texts of different genres may vertically provide intertextuality and this is widely seen on TV products. For instance, drama series *Lost* embodies many intertextual elements from William Golding's novel *Lord of the Flies*, the comedy- drama *The O.C.* carries references to comic book character *Spider Man*. Lastly, famous animated series *The Simpsons* presents intertextual connections with many other kinds of art and media products ranging from Salvador Dali's paintings to the speeches of politicians. The reason behind such uses of intertextual elements in media products may be for raising a sense of familiarity and drawing the attention to the new product while paying homage to the other text.

Intertextuality is a broad term indicating the relationship between texts, and allusions are the specific references that explicitly or implicitly form this relationship; thus, allusion can be seen as a sub-category of intertextuality. Explicit reference is made through an actual quotation signalled by quotation marks, while the implicit reference does not use any indicator, but changes the original to suit the new context. As a form of intertextuality, the use of allusion is not restricted to literary production, either. Allusions can be traced in many cultural and artistic forms, as they enhance a text by adding a cultural value to the text and literary framework (Montgomery & Durant et al. 2007:158). Music, films, and TV programs are allusive texts on which allusions serve as a kind of tool to make the hearer flattered upon noticing those references. In addition, allusion is considered an instrumental for figures of speech. When used as a literary device, allusion brings an aesthetic experience to the text (Conner 2006:8) and is economical in relating a topic to existing ideas, cultural notions, and emotions as they convey ideas and emotions without lengthy explanations. To illustrate, as a poetic device in songs, allusions help deepen the emotions as used in Alanis Morissette's *song All I Really Want*, where an allusion is made to Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* with an explicit reference to the characters: *"I'm like Estella"*. In adult animated sitcom *Rick and Morty*, almost all episode titles are implicit references where the original wording is fit into the alluded title, such as the title *Mortynight Run* that refers to famous comedy *Midnight Run*.

In this study, vertical intertextuality was traced between Sherlock Holmes detective stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and TV show House M.D. with a special focus on allusions. Dr. House, described by the producer of the show as a *Holmesian* work, bears remarkable references to Sherlock Holmes. In previous studies, Pasnik (2014) found four typical features in the adaptation of Sherlock Holmes stories into the TV series House, M.D. and concluded that intellectual power of Sherlock Holmes, his unconventional social behaviours, his partner, and his professional success were successfully depicted in the show. In addition, the study by Rowland (2011) pointed out the differences between these two characters, such as how they

depict their unhappiness, how they handle scientific reasoning, and their views about status quo. This study; however, aims to depict allusions that forms an intertextual relationship between House, M.D. and Sherlock Holmes in the categories of choice of titles and names, character development, cross-character references, and verbal references with similar or direct quoting with the assumption that these give recognition to the alluded text. In addition, it is believed that an example of a method for discovering intertextuality in vertical texts is offered in the study. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: Two works analysed in the present study are introduced, and then the method and the analysis employed are given. Finally, the discussion and conclusion is reported.

Background to the study: "House, M.D." and "Sherlock Holmes"

House, M.D. is an American medical drama premiered in 2004 and broadcasted until 2012. The series follows the life of the medical doctor Gregory House who is the head of a team of diagnosticians at the Princeton-Plainsboro Teaching Hospital in New Jersey. Starring Hugh Laurie as Dr. House, the character is known to be an anti-social, arrogant, sarcastic, and witty doctor who does everything to solve interesting and challenging cases. House has theories on the illnesses of his patients based on his insights, so he often has conflicts with his colleagues and diagnostic team. The show was among the top 10 TV series in the USA from the second season to fourth season, distributed to 66 countries in the world (Huffpost 2009), and won five Primetime Emmy Awards, two Golden Globe Awards, a Peabody Award, and nine People's Choice Awards.

Sherlock Holmes is the famous character of the detective stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. In his 4 novels and 56 short stories, Doyle tells the mysterious criminal stories solved successfully by the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes. Holmes, as described in all the stories by his best friend Watson, lives a bohemian life and he is a smart and sarcastic person. Holmes, who first appeared in print in 1887, featured in novels and short stories until 1927. However, the character's popularity gave birth to other Holmesian works that sometimes directly involved his name in movies or TV series, or are influenced by the character. Sherlock Holmes is one of the most famous detective stories in the world; thus, it is no surprising that in the nineties, there were more than 25,000 stage adaptations of Sherlock Holmes in addition to films, TV shows, and publications (Haigh 2008). Moreover, Guinness World Records awarded Sherlock Holmes as the most portrayed literary human character in film and TV, beating the character of Shakespeare's Hamlet (Guinness World Records 2012). Thus, it is obvious that Sherlock Holmes character has always been in the centre of intertextual texts since his creation in 1887.

At this point, the interview of the David Shore, the producer of House, M.D., for an article is worth quoting in proving the intertextual connection between these two characters (Steiff 2013: 89): "*Hence, the reason why these two identical characters are chosen for this study is that "Dr. House" can be said to be one of those 'Holmesian' works that embodies significant references to Sherlock Holmes in terms of the theme and character development.*"

Method

While investigating the allusions in House, M.D. series, three steps of analysis obtained from the study by Montgomery & Durant et al. (2007) were employed. Noticing the allusions is the first step of the analysis. Recognizing an implicit allusion is generally possible when the reader has already read the original text, but at the same time, an allusion, thanks to its style or register, reveals itself in the alluded text. Second step is tracing the allusion. If it is a familiar one, the allusion can be traced directly in the original text; if not, a 'detective work' is required on the internet. The final step is to become familiar with the source text that is being alluded to (160-161). A comprehensive reading on the original text leads the researcher to an understanding of the reason of using a given allusion and the ironic or parallel relation it offers. In this study, after noticing a number of references to Sherlock Holmes, internet searches and forum discussions were of great help to discover more allusions and trace them to the original source. Being familiar with Sherlock Holmes stories for years and following the House, M.D. series regularly, intertextual connections with a special focus on the allusions were analysed by the researcher. At this point, it should be noted that the allusions found in this study are naturally limited to the observations and tracings of the researcher, so one may identify many other allusions in such a long lasted and profound TV series.

Analysis

In this study, as stated above, identified allusions in House, M.D. were analysed under the categories of the choice of titles and names, character development, cross-character references, and verbal references with similar or direct quoting.

Choice of titles and character names

House, M.D. involves a number of implicit and explicit references to Sherlock Holmes in the choice of titles and character names. To start with, the name of the show *House* is a play on *Holmes,* which shows a phonetic similarity. Even the pronunciation of *Holmes* is a homophony for *Homes* and this can be named as an implicit reference to the source text; obviously, there is a phonetic and semantic connotation between these two words. Likewise, some other allusions were traced in the similar names of the characters. Both characters have one real friend named *Watson* in Holmes, and *Wilson* in Dr. House. In the pilot episode of House, M.D., there is a patient named *Rebecca Adler* which alludes to the character *Irene Adler* in the first short story of Sherlock Holmes called *A Scandal in Bohemia*. In addition, in the episode called *No Reason*, House is shot by a man whose surname is *Moriarty* and this is another explicit reference to Sherlock Holmes' enemy *Professor Moriarty*. Finally, the addresses of both Sherlock Holmes and Dr. House prove an explicit reference *211B Baker Street*. These three examples are the most explicit references found in this study, as they do not simply resemble the original, as seen in the implicit references mentioned in this category. They carry the same surnames with the original characters in Sherlock Holmes stories in the first two and the same address in the third one. Thus, it can be said that one does not have to master the tiniest detail in Sherlock Holmes stories in order to spot these explicit references in House M.D.

Character development

Many implicit allusions in the character development were also traced in House, M.D. First, both characters are experts of sorting out the cases that are found difficult by others. House does it through his medical treatments; Holmes utilizes his keen sense of observation and deduction to solve criminal cases. Both characters can identify the minutest details and come to rapid conclusions. Their social relationships with others are also identical. They both have one real friend whom they call by his last name. They do not establish sincere relationships with people and their anti-social personalities portray them as reserved and cold-hearted men. House's drug use, which is Vicodin – a kind of painkiller-, shows resemblance to Holmes' use of cocaine for relaxation. Another way to relax for the characters is playing the violin for Holmes and playing the guitar, the piano, and the harmonica for House. Thus, their talent in music is also allusive. They also have similarity in their obsessions. While House likes to watch TV, play video games, and listen to pop music, detective Holmes is keen on reading monographs and listening to classical music. As seen in the examples, the character House is designed to resemble the character of Holmes in terms of behaviour, daily life, hobbies, and even bad habits, which should be described as implicit, because a viewer who does not know the Holmes character will not notice that the House character is adorned with references to Holmes.

Cross-character references

In the alluding text House, M.D, some implicit allusions are cross- characteristic; thus, they are not between the two protagonists. Dr. House limps because of a leg infarction and this echoes Sherlock Holmes' friend Watson's limping, which is from an old war wound. Another example is seen in the profession of Dr. House. Sherlock Holmes is a character inspired by Joseph Bell who was a lecturer at the medical school to which the author Doyle attended. Doyle was inspired by his lecturer in creating the detective character in terms of his success in solving cases. By not simply writing a detective story, David Shore seems to utilize this inspiration in creating the character Dr. House. This allusion is also hidden in one episode *Joy to the World* where Wilson mentions a medical text on diagnosis written by Dr. Joseph Bell. In the series, paying homage seems to be another way of referencing. To illustrate, in another episode, House receives a Secret Santa gift, which is a second-edition book by Arthur Conan Doyle. These implicit references made between the different characters of these two texts are more complex references, but will still be captured by those who know the Holmes stories.

Verbal references

Some examples of explicit verbal allusions were in a way changed to fit into Dr. House. In the episode called *Whac-A- Mole*, House plays a game with his diagnostic team and hides the correct answer in an envelope on which was written, *"The game is an itchy foot"*. This echoes, *"The game is a foot"*, a quote often attributed to Holmes. In this allusion, another intertextual reference occurs by quoting Shakespeare's Henry IV. An explicit verbal reference, which is used in its original version, is also heard while Dr. House explains that he understands

what his aphasic patient is really saying. He says the same riddle Holmes gave to Dr. Watson in Young Sherlock Holmes. In one episode of House M.D. called *Love Hurts*, while conducting an environmental scan, an immunologist in Dr. Gregory House's diagnostic team, Cameron, calls Chase, who is another member of the team, as *Sherlock*, which explicitly refers to Sherlock Holmes. Verbal references can be described as references that require more attention compared to other references mentioned in other categories. Thus, it can be considered quite enjoyable to notice these implicit references for the viewer who knows Holmes stories well enough to remember them in detail, that is, for the fans of Holmesian works.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper aimed to investigate allusions in TV series House, M.D. that is mainly based on Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes character assuming that these allusions contribute to the success of the alluded text in this vertical intertextual framework. The allusions were identified through connecting the carefully observed references in the alluding text House, M.D. with the well-known referents present in several Sherlock Holmes stories. It must be noted that, as comments on the intertextuality of works involve one's own personal knowledge and subjective interpretations, the allusions analysed in this study are observer-based, limited number of allusions.

In the analysis, the allusions were exemplified by categorizing under the choice of titles and character names, character development, cross-character references, and verbal references. As an example of vertical intertextuality, which is the intertextuality between the different text genres, the TV series House, M.D. carries significant number of references to short story detective character Sherlock Holmes ranging from the homophonic choice of the names *House* and *Holmes* and *Wilson* and *Watson* to hidden references which pay homage to the source text. In general, implicit allusions in character development are notable in the alluding text in terms of similarities between protagonists of the two works and even between the main character of the alluding text and the influential character of the source text. Considering all these examples of allusions, it can be said that the TV series House, M.D. is a highly allusive text and this long lasted medical drama is also a successful example of vertical intertextuality in media products.

The use of allusions, both explicitly and implicitly, aims to attract the attention of the viewer and to offer a watching experience filled with links to be traced in another text. Considering the target audience of both works, in which the stories revolve around challenging cases to be solved, it can be thought that the audience follows these allusions like solving a puzzle with pleasure. Since fans of Holmesian works notice such obvious allusions in the series they watch, House M.D. may have gained a certain audience from the very beginning. Moreover, House M.D. is not only a work of artistic value but also a media product created with commercial expectations. Thus, in light of the allusions identified in this study, it can be thought that House M. D.'s inspiration from the Sherlock Holmes stories, which has reached countless readers around the world, as well as making a connection between the two works through allusions, can be considered a factor in the success of this series, which lasted for eight seasons and won two Golden Globe awards. In this regard, it is possible to see allusive

intertextual elements not only as stylistic devices, but also as tools that provide familiarity and recognition for the alluded text.

Ethical Statement

According to the author's statement; scientific, ethical, and quotation rules were followed in the writing process of the study named "House M.D. and Sherlock Holmes: an Analysis of Allusive Intertextual Elements"; according to ULAKBİM TR DİZİN criteria, there was no need for data collection in the study requiring ethics committee approval.

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