

EXPLORING DIGITAL TEXTS: SHIFTING FIXITY, REDEFINING AUTHORITY, INSPIRING HYPERTEXT FORMS, AND UNLOCKING BOUNDLESS CREATIVE POTENTIAL

¹ABDUL MOIZ KHAN, ²RAMEEN MASOOD

1. M.Phil. English Linguistics Scholar, Department of English (GS), National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Email: abdulmoizkhan934@gmail.com

2. M.Phil. English Linguistics Scholar, Department of English (GS), National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Email: ramenmasod21@gmail.com

Abstract

The advent of digital technologies has also inclined the world to shift from traditional books and textbooks to digital texts. In line with this development, it becomes inevitable to explore the features of the digital text. The current research study aims to explore the impact and influence of digital text on the traditional notions of fixity and authorship, along with its evolution into the new hypertext forms. Besides, it also aims to explore the elements of linearity, textual patterns and the creative potential in the digital text. Therefore, this research study critically delineates the functionality of the digital text by taking into account a qualitative research methodology, with a purposive sampling technique, in a bid to accomplish the objectives. This research is fundamentally a critical review of digital texts chosen for this study, and is guided by the theories given by Jannet Murray (1997) and Marry Lauren Ryan (2000). The research concludes that digital text has turned the tables for the traditional printed texts, as it challenges the notions of fixity, allows readers to partake in the meanings making process, has a creative potential, and proves to be conducive to different patterns and forms of text forms and hypertexts.

Keywords: Technology, Language Influence, Digital text, Functionality, Fixity, Authority, Text forms, Hypertext, Creativity, text- generating systems

1. Introduction

The term technology refers to the application of science in different ways to facilitate humans. With the advent of technology, people's livelihoods, communication, and work spaces have been influenced considerably. As language is also one of the fundamental means of communication, technological advancements have also influenced it. Language is governed by technology in its own ways. Its each forms like oral, written, digital, and analog constitutes a medium through which knowledge is systematized and exercised in people's daily lives. (Karakoulas & Theologou, 2023). Texts are also written with the help of language. In this way, texts are also influenced by the developing technology. The new era of technological advancements has given rise to a new form of text called "Non-linear Digital Texts" and they are more prevalent than traditional texts. It has proved to be revolutionary in different ways.

This study aims to critically delineate the functionality of digital text as it challenges notions of fixity and authority, is conducive to new patterns and forms of text forms and hypertext, and its potential for creativity in emerging text-generating systems.

1.1. Background of the Study

The technological advancements have been integrating into humans lives and bringing much efficiency through the development of different systems and applications. So, it has become inevitable to talk about the effects they are leaving on humans as well as the traditional things in their lives. For a comprehensive understanding of the ways technology has influenced humans and their language, it is necessary for the readers to gain some insights into the preliminaries of certain technological inventions brought into their lives by the developing technology. As this research mainly focuses on the functionality of a digital text, so a proper understanding of the different types of digital texts and certain notions that have been challenged by the digital text holds importance.

1.1.1. Digital Text

A digital text is a text that is mainly consumed by the audience its digital form. The most important aspect of a digital text is that it offers interactivity. This interactivity is said to be in the form of links but users can also interact by commenting and adding a content of their own to the text. Digital text can be produced by anyone and can get widely circulated without any sort of censorship. It is most often meant for intended audience due to the aimed wealth of material. However, it cannot be always for the selective audience. The word choices and tag questions made by the author in a digital text are different from the traditional ones. Digital text also demonstrates a complex relationship between the producer and consumer of the text.

1.1.2. Hypertext

Hypertext refers to a form of a document in which interactive structural operations are amalgamated with text (Rosenberg, 1996). It is a form of a non-sequential writing. A hypertext consists of chunks and fragments of text with nodes and associated links as its integral components. In any hypertext, information is bifurcated into different sections or modules rather than a comprehensive and continuous flow of text, where nodes serve as the fundamental means of providing information (Jonassen, 1989). Moreover, according to Rosenberg (1996), hypertext is a text whose structures are usually investigated through the point of view of real structures which connect interactive operational structures. In a hypertext, activities are discovered by the readers through the structures provided by it.

1.1.3. Fixity

Fixity refers to the static or stable nature of meanings in a piece of writing or a text. For instance, a piece of writing having one interpretation is termed as a text with stable or fixed meanings. It does not allow multiple interpretations of meanings even with the passage of time. Basically, a text with the fixed meanings has certain words, phrases and linguistic structures, which cannot be altered or shifted in multiple ways. These kinds of texts serve only one intended meaning and cannot be utilized to demonstrate different insights and interpretations.

1.1.4. Text-Generating Systems

The text-generating systems are basically computer programmed systems that are used to generate humans like text. With the advent of technology, much advancement in multiple disciplines is made. A considerable number of AI-equipped applications are developed for the human's assistance. These include automatic text generating applications like Gemini, GPT and Copilot. These applications work on the transformer models to assist humans. Through the help of these applications, humans can generate content after giving prompts.

1.1.5. Human-Machine Communication

Human-Machine Communication is a phenomenon that emerged with the developing technology. Basically, it refers to the process of meanings making between machines and humans, where technology is normally conjectured as the communicator with humans having a particular subject matter for communication (Guzman, 2018). In this, humans interact with technology and get the desired input by providing certain prompts and instruction. This has gained significant importance in the past few years. Besides, it encapsulates humans' interaction with entities like computers and robots, and is regarded as one of the main aspects in communication.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In the current studies related to language and technology, there is a thorough lack of the study of functionality of digital text as it challenges the notions of fixity and authority, its conducive nature for different patterns and forms of text forms and hypertext, and the element of potential creativity in digital text in the emerging text-generating systems. This has caused hindrance in the comprehensive understanding of the ways digital text is demarcated from the traditional printed texts. By bearing this notion in mind, closing this gap is essential. So, this research aims to delve deeply to critically unearth the functionality of digital text.

1.3. Research Objectives

- a. To see the ways in which a digital non-linear text challenges fixity and authority in the process of meaning-making, and is conducive to new patterns and forms of text forms and hypertexts
- b. To see the ways in which different functionalities of a digital text can be created by harnessing the potential of creativity in new text-generating systems and hypertext

1.4. Research Questions

- i. How does the non-linearity of a digital text challenge the traditional notions of fixity and authority in meaning-making and prove to be conducive to new patterns and forms of text forms and hypertexts?
- ii. How can new functionalities of a digital text be created by trapping the potential for creativity within new text-generating systems?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The significance of the study cannot be overstated since the technology is developing day by day. This study can be deduced as beneficial for many disciplines, as it critically delineates functionality of a digital text, in addition to its authority and fixity in the meaning making. Moreover, it provides comprehensive insights into the ways a digital text is conducive to different patterns and forms of text forms and hypertext. As there is a huge lack of research studies in this domain exploring the aforementioned concepts, therefore, this research aims to provide readers with knowledge regarding the functionality of digital text. After flipping through this research study, readers would see the ways digital text functions in different ways.

1.6. Delimitation

This research only focuses on the functionality of digital text. Instead of thoroughly exploring digital text, the study focuses exclusively on the ways a digital text challenges authority and fixity, is conducive to different patterns and forms of text forms and hypertext, and its potential for creativity in the presence of emerging text-generating systems. However, there is a lot of space to other researchers to explore digital text in other aspects to help readers understand the reasons behind the need and emergence of the digital text as the full-fledged non-linear texts.

2. Review of Previous Literature and Research Works

In the field of language and technology, many research works have been carried out pertaining to different aspects. So, the literature review section of this study focuses on the research works that are already done to see the aspects which are studied and to identify the frameworks and methodologies used in them.

To begin with, a study conducted by Hahnel et al. (2016) talks about the effects of linear reading, evaluating an online information and navigation on a digital text. In this study, they investigated a sample of 888 fifteen and sixteen years old German students, who had taken part in the international students assessment, by developing a set of items related to multiple types of hypertext. Their research finds that there is an intervention between digital text, linear reading and navigation behavior. Moreover, the study also identifies that there is no direct connection between evaluating online information and digital text's reading. Besides, this present study delves into the ways cognitive skills and processes play a role in the comprehension of digital text and its impact on students' performance in digital text reading.

Additionally, another study was conducted by Jin (2012) to develop visual design guidelines to improve and enhance learning from dynamic digital texts. In this study, two structure design guidelines and two attention design guidelines were developed. A sample of 141 university students was used to identify the effects of visual designs and their role in learning from the digital text. The research made use of Tracy and Richey (2007) developmental research methodology through controlled testing, in order to validate the visual design guidelines of a digital text.

Furthermore, Eden and Alkalal (2012) conducted research on the effect of text format on performance. In this study, the researchers talked about editing of text in printed and digital formats. The study drew a comparison between printed and digital texts under active reading conditions. It made use of 93 university students to examine the conditions by giving them tasks to edit, read and recognize errors in short papers in both digital and printed formats. The researchers found out that there was no considerable difference in terms of the performance of participants in reading, editing and identifying the errors in both forms of texts. However, the study put forward the result that those students who were reading digital texts completed their tasks faster than those who were reading texts in the printed formats, but their performance was almost at equal scale to the students who read the digital texts.

In addition, another important study was conducted by Oakley, Wildey and Berman (2020). Basically, this study sheds light on the creation of multimodal digital text to improve the literacy learning of children in the early childhood. This research was of an exploratory mixed method nature, which aimed to investigate the ways multimodal digital texts creation through open-ended applications and tablets enhances the literacy learning of five years old children in two Western Australian schools. In this study, different exemplars were used by the teachers to guide their literacy planning. It was found out that different aspects of children pertaining to reading who participated in the activity had improved, as suggested by the scores after the practice and figures taken before the practice. Besides, as a result of this activity, it was also explored that the children's other aspects of language like speaking and writing were also improved.

Moreover, Bayne (2006) conducted research in order to analyse the aspects of authority and authorship in the digital text in higher education. In this study, the researcher employed the theoretical framework "Author function" given by Foucault. The researcher analyzed some types of texts in the digital space to see the ways in

which the digital texts including emails, wikis and others reword the actual authors in different ways. Additionally, the research study sheds light on the ways certain discourses are used by the teachers and students, in order to delineate digital texts and their possible uses in the field of academia. The research concluded that teachers and students demonstrated resistance to the digital texts and their authorship in the academic practices, as they viewed digital text in the cyberspace as disruptive.

Besides, Ivia (2019) conducted research in order to compare the efficiency of digital and printed texts. In the given research study, the researcher tried to develop a framework for the analysis of printed and digital textbooks and media. This study claimed that as digital texts are at the preliminary stage, so they lack practical experiences with their use. Moreover, this research study incorporated a conceptual framework theory on the character of culturally-psychological tools given by Lev Vygotsky and the theory of medial by Marshal McLuhan to analyze the nature of digital textbooks, in addition to printed textbooks. The research showed that both the printed and digital texts and media have significantly good impacts. However digital texts despite having all the good features, are proven to be harmful for brain functioning and learning process. The digital texts are also facing certain challenges in terms of their production, which are yet to be sorted out. Moreover, many problems have been highlighted pertaining to the reading and understanding of digital texts by the number of empirical researches.

Furthermore, Shimek et al. (2022) have carried out a research on the theme of digital text and students engagement. In this research study, the researchers talk about the ways teachers can use digital text to plan their activities in a literacy instruction. Moreover, it sheds light on the concerns of the teachers in engaging their students, while using different digital text types in the classroom. The study emphasizes the use of conceptual framework “A3 online Conceptual model,” “The community of Inquiry,” and the characteristics of effective professional development, in planning literacy instructions in order to properly engage students in an effective manner.

In addition, another study regarding self-regulatory prompting and generative strategies use in digital texts has been carried out by Reid and Morrison (2014). They used the sample of 89 undergraduate students from the Southeastern United States, in addition to a randomized experimental factorial design, to analyze the relationship between self-regulation level and previous knowledge in the comprehension of digital texts. The study found that all the participants showed positive attitude towards the digital text, while experiencing certain strategies related to meta-cognitive instructional intervention. The research suggests that in order to enhance the comprehension of digital text, it is necessary to incorporate certain generative strategies and increased motivation, before reading a digital text.

Additionally, Kelley and Bonner (2005) talked about the digital text in terms of academic dishonesty, distance learning and the administrators and faculty perceptions regarding this. The researchers used the sample of 45 institutions from the Sloan Consortium Institution to analyze the given aspects. The given research study examined the perceptions and attitudes of administrators regarding academic dishonesty, and the use of internet and digital texts as one of the contributory factors towards cheating and plagiarism. The research study concludes that majority of the administrators consider academic dishonesty in the presence of digital texts as pervasive, and emphasized the use of certain detective devices, in order to curtail this problem. However, some responses suggested that this problem could be handled individually. The research study also concluded that the responses of faculty and administrators did not converge. Another important finding was that faculty members were the most affected by the academic dishonesty. So, their involvement in ensuring

academic purity is essential in policy making.

Moreover, another study regarding the transaction of young learners with interactive digital texts through e-readers was conducted by Brown (2015). The study incorporated multiple comparative and discourse analyses frameworks, in order to analyze the open-ended interviews and transcripts of students who interacted with digital texts like interactive picture books. The sample was based on the 2nd graders group. The study aimed at analyzing the digital literacy experiences of the selected participants. The study argued that even though digital texts provide multiple rehearsals of literary practices, young readers still need a lot of time in social interaction on all sides of books in order to co-construct meanings.

Last but not least, Almas (2022) conducted research on the digital version of *Red Riding Hood*. She carried out this study from a postmodern perspective in order to see the ways this version of the story challenges meta-narratives and blurred the boundaries. The researcher has analyzed the ways digital literature appropriates the classical text and portrays different perspectives on social roles and gender by incorporating different elements. The study finds out that the traditional story has been inverted in a bid to demonstrate the postmodern concerns. Besides, the research shows the ways through which the digital version of this story has challenged the traditional notions of the story. It is also found that the writer of the story altered the original plot and replaces wolf with the boy. Thus, it can be deduced that digital fiction can challenge the traditional meta-narratives of children literature and raises concerns over cultural and social practices, along with gender roles.

To conclude this section, it is found out that the domain of digital media and texts have been extensively highlighted and analyzed by many researchers. However, there is still a need to study the proper functionality of digital text, as it is a complete shift from the traditional printed texts. Moreover, there is a need to critically examine the potential creativity factors of digital texts in the presence of different text-generating systems.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study executes a critical analysis of the functionality of digital text by using a qualitative research methodology. The selected data regarding digital texts serves as the main source of data for this study. Starting with a close reading of the available data, the study aims to analyze functionality of digital text. By using qualitative research technique, the goal of the research is to provide insights into the ways digital text can function, and also into its potential creativity in the presence of AI text-generating systems.

3.2. Methods of Data Collection

3.2.1. Sample

The current study has employed purposive sampling technique. As a sample for this research, the researcher has selected E-versions of the stories, *Red Riding Hood* by Donna Lesishman, and *My Body-A Wunderkammer* by Shelly Jackson, which serve as the main source of data for this research study to attain its objectives.

3.2.2. Tools and Techniques for Data Collection

The researcher has used secondary data collection technique in the given research study. The major tools of data collection for the researcher are E-versions of the stories, *Red Riding Hood* by Donna Lesishman, and *My Body-A Wunderkamme* by Shelly Jackson.

3.3. Conceptual Framework

Jannet Murray (1997) in her book, *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narratives in Cyberspace* presented a theoretical framework regarding fixity, authority, new patterns and forms of text forms and hypertext. She believes that digital texts are unstable unlike traditional printed texts and are subjected to change. Besides, digital texts have dynamic nature and may have multiple authors. She provided an extensive framework that takes into account the following aspects to analyze the functionality of digital text:

1) **Linking and Branching Structures and Multimodality:** (Multilinearity and Forking Paths, Hypertext and new forms and patterns of text forms). These aspects try to analyze the ways in which the digital text is connected through hyperlinks and is conducive to new forms and patterns of text forms and hypertext. Moreover, it also looks for the ways in which text, images, audios, hyperlinks and videos, combine together to shape users experience, challenges fixity and traditional narrative structures.

2) **Interactivity, Reader as Co-author and Remediation:** It analyses the readers control over the flow of information and the ways in which interlocutors' choices affect the digital text. Additionally, this element looks for the ways readers interact with the digital text, which ultimately leads to the loss of authority. Moreover, it also looks for the channels through which digital text incorporates elements from other media forms.

In addition, Marie Lauren Ryan, in her book, *Narrative as Virtual reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media* (2000) talked about the creative potential of digital text in the presence of emerging text-generating systems. Her framework takes into account the following elements to analyse the creative potential of digital text.

- i. **Non-linearity and Beyond Narratives (Multimodality):** This component deals with the analysis of narrative structures in digital text. Moreover, it asserts analysis of different multimodal features incorporated by digital text to see new forms and multimodal narratives are being developed.
- ii. **Reader Engagement and User Experience:** As per Ryan (2000), in order to analyze the creative potential of digital text in the presence of text-generating systems, it is necessary to look into the ways text allows users to interact with it, and enhances or limit their experience.
- iii. **Look Beyond Traditional Originality:** This point emphasizes the analysis of the ways digital text challenges notions of authorship, originality and enhance creativity in the presence of text-generating systems.

This study will take into account the current conceptual framework to see the elements of fixity, authority, conducive nature of digital text to new patterns and forms of text forms and hypertext, and its creative potential in the presence of text-generating systems, to critically see the functionality of digital text.

3.4. Methods of Data Analysis

The current study has incorporated qualitative thematic analysis in order to critically analyze the data taken for this study. Basically, it is an analysis technique that involves a careful consideration of the data to identify themes and patterns, thus contribute to drawing specific conclusions. This analysis method proved to be an efficient and straightforward approach as compared to the other analysis approaches and techniques, as it provides accurate patterns for examination. In the current research, the qualitative thematic analysis is employed by bearing in mind the research topic to properly identify functionality of a digital text and its potential creativity.

4. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Fixity and Engendering of Digital Text to New Patterns and Forms of Text Forms and Hypertext

In the digital era, the development of Human-Machine communication has been boosted up, which has turned the tables for traditional literature. This is because this very notion has given rise to hypermedia, hypertext, collaborative web pages, augmented and virtual reality. All these things have changed the ways users interact with text. In the presence of these technologies, users can interact with text in an interactive and different way. This has also challenged the traditional notions of fixity in meanings and authority in digital non-linear texts, and also proved to be conducive to different patterns and form of text forms and hypertexts.

4.1.1. Linking and Branching Structures and Multimodality:

To begin with, digital texts have different linking and branching structures along with multimodality. They have now hyperlinks, audios, videos, visuals, images and other components. This has transformed digital text and the ways users interact with them. According to many researchers, digital text is supposed to be dynamic and can change due to factors like software update and the reader's interaction with it. However, in the previous literature, there was only printed form of a text available. The readers were required to interact with text in order to come up with meanings and interpretations. They were not able to participate in the production of text and its meanings making process. The readers were just there to consume the produced text. But now in the realm of digital texts, this traditional notion has been changed. Digital technologies have resulted in the loosening of relationship between fixity, technology and the social context. The traditional notion of fixity that the reliability of text is not supposed to be changed over time and space, has also been changed. Besides, earlier in times, there was a direct relationship between social rigidity and the immutable technologies, which helped in texts production and consumption, and contributed towards fixity in the communicative contexts. (Summer & Yates, 1997).

On contrary, now digital texts have emerged which are non-linear in nature, and allow users to interact with text and partake in the meaning making process. Talking about the notion of fixity with reference to the first story, *Red Riding Hood*, it can be seen that the story is a combination of audio, video, hyperlinks and other visuals including different colors. These things have added to the users experience and shaping the meanings. Besides, the presence of these multimodal features in the story has added multiple layers of meanings. In simple, the story is a blend of different meanings and has restricted the readers from coming up with fixed interpretations of the story, *Red Riding Hood*. Thus, challenges the traditional notion of fixity. Moreover, the said story starts with clicking on a point which is acting as a hyperlink, and later proceeds towards the building, where a reader has to further click on the yellow color appearing in the building to drive the story. Moving on, a time comes when users are asked to either let the protagonist dream, or wake her up. When the user clicks on the dream hyperlink, the lady starts dreaming and the story gets turned to an altogether different room setting. Additionally, when readers click on the wake her up hyperlink, the story moves towards a house in the forest. It means that digital text is the combination of multiple stories, i.e. a story within a story. Besides, it can be inferred that it is completely a user driven story where the reader has to take part in the meaning making process. Without the active participation of a reader, the story does not proceed. So, it means that the meanings are not fixed and active participation of the interlocutors is inevitable to drive the story.

Therefore, it can be inferred that digital texts have crumbled the house of cards of traditional literature in terms of fixity, where readers only read a text and drive multiple meanings or interpretations, but cannot partake and interact with text. In the case of *Red Riding Hood*, readers themselves drive the story and it also allows them to experience the story in a more comprehensive manner, and also contribute to the meaning making process. This aspect has made the meanings of any digital text unstable and dynamic, as they undergo a constant change when the readers interact with it. Besides, the readers interaction with digital text like the above cited story can also change the intended meanings of the text, and give it different meanings, which were not initially associated with it, as observed in the above story. This has resulted after the development of web 2.0, where readers are allowed to participate and interact with text, and play part in the production of text, instead of just consuming the material. On the other hand, in the previous literature, these things were not there. There were no involvement of audios, videos and other multimodal features. There, the readers had only one part just to read and interpret, but had no choice to be part of the story and participate in the meaning making process.

To talk about the second story taken as a data for this research, it is a story that is in the form of text where multiple hyperlinks are embedded into it, also making it a hypertext, thus, lead the story in a different direction. The readers have to consult multiple pages through the hyperlinks, in order to fully grasp the meanings. To go with this, the hyper-textuality of the story has also challenged the very notion of fixed meanings, as readers can access the story in any order without following the traditional sequencing and infer the meanings based on their interaction with text. This hyper textual feature of digital text has also made it conducive to new patterns and forms of text forms and hypertext. In view of the researchers Fitzsimmons, Dreigh and Weal (2013), hyperlinks in a digital text add additional content to the reading and help highlighting important information in text and sometimes, invite rereading of the preceding text to understand the difficult concepts. This causes the creation of non-sequential narratives and facilitates the hypertext, in the words of Landow (1992). The second story also involves some images which enhance the readers experience and contribute towards the meanings of text. Moreover, the use of hyperlinks in the story completely moves it in different ways which sometimes, confuse the readers in the interpretation of story and to retain their focus. Researchers like Ciccoricco (2007) believes that hyperlinks in digital text may cause disorientation and reorientation in it. While, like Vandendorpe (2009) has demonstrated through his research that having multiple hyperlinks in digital text can make readers cognitively fatigued, as they may struggle to find the real context to interpret the text and to search for the actual hyperlink in text to follow. However, hyperlinks help readers reach out the exposition or para text. Hypertext and hyperlinks also have many other functions and effects like story world exploration and adjustment of focalization. The researcher believes that hyperlinks embedded in a digital text also serve different narrative functions (Ryan, 2015).

Additionally, in the presence of hypertexts, the traditional narrative structure has also been challenged. As per Ryan (2002), narrative is coextensive with literature, it is independent of tell ability and is not restricted only to oral or written storytelling. Talking about the data taken for the study, it can be seen that both the stories have incorporated images, in addition to audios, videos and different multimodal features. In the first story, it is the reader who interacts with the text and helps in the plot, meaning making and character development through multiple participation. The sole purpose of a multimodal digital text is to shape users experience in a more

comprehensive way by providing clear insights to the story. Moreover, the use of multiple hyperlinks as used in the story, allow readers to delve into the details as much as they want, encounter story in non-sequential or non-linear manner, with exploration of information in their own way. While in traditional literature, it is only the author who drives the narratives including characters and plot development, but digital texts have changed this very concept and transformed it into a new and unique form. In this way, it can be said that digital text has challenged fixity in terms of meaning makings and also proves to be conducive to new patterns and forms of forms of text forms and hypertexts, as it introduces change of narratives in digital text by making use of multiple hyperlinks and multimodal features.

4.2. Authority

4.2.1. Interactivity, Reader as Co-author and Remediation:

Basically, the ways in which texts are now presented on the internet have challenged that traditional concept of authorship. According to Foucault (1977), different types of texts like novels, letters, stories and poems are considered to be authored. However, multiple private advertisements, letters and many websites may have writers, but it cannot be said that all these different forms of written texts are also authored. In the presence of digital technology, the boundaries between the original author and the readers have blurred. According to Foucault (1977), an author is not just an individual, but it is a function of a discourse.

To talk about the element of interactivity in digital text, it is basically allowing readers and the text to communicate. With reference to the story, *Red Riding Hood*, it can be seen that this story is not only author driven, but the story is also highly dependent on the readers, in order to proceed. When the story starts, the reader has to click on different points acting as the hyperlinks, to move the story. Without them, story cannot move and will stay incomplete. So, in this manner, it can be inferred that the two-way communication in digital text blurs the demarcation between the reader and the author of the text. It also results in the shift of narratives, as it is the reader who helps the story moves on. Moreover, by doing so, the traditional narrative of *Red Riding Hood*, got challenged, and altogether the interlocutors attained the influence and control over this very story. It is one of the plus points of E-literature or digital texts that it allows readers to shape and reshape the narratives, as it does not have any fixed one. This in return, leads to multiple hermeneutics of digital text, giving it completely different meanings. Resultantly, the author loses control of digital text.

Moreover, the second story taken for the study, *My Body- a Wunderkammer* by Shelly Jackson, also portrays similar features. This story allows the readers to click and discover elements. When readers click on the hyperlinks, it leads them to different text, images and various different objects. In this way, readers get a chance to interact with the story in a non-linear fashion, by leaving behind the author, which is totally different from the traditional or printed story or text. Moving on, in some sections of the story, readers are able to interact with different narratives of the story. It also reveals different stories when the readers click on different body parts given in the text. The story enables the readers to design their own wunderkammer. So, it can be said that this type of interaction with the digital text allows interlocutors to get control of their experience of the story and interact in their own way. Besides, this kind of action has provided readers with immersive experience. So, they get deeply involved in the interaction with the story. However, the user involvement, agency, control over the story have challenged the traditional notion of authorship. This is because it is the reader who drives the story and partake in the meaning making process, giving altogether different meanings and also gains influence over the story's

narratives. Moreover, in this way, the readers de-centre the author, which, thus allows the readers to participate actively in shaping narratives and enhancing their experience of the story.

Furthermore, the notion of reader as co-author also debunks the concept of authority in digital text. After the emergence of web 2.0 technologies, all the traditional forms of texts are being transformed into the digital forms, allowing readers to partake in the storytelling of text and influence it in many dimensions. This has distorted the boundaries between the author and the reader. With reference to the story, *Red Riding Hood*, it has been observed that the reader adds to the meanings and moves the story. Moreover, it is the reader who becomes the co-author and transforms the said story into different narrative forms through multiple multimodal features that have been incorporated in the story. It also allows the reader to add the content to the text and further enhance the meanings which are created by the author himself. In addition, through the use of multiple hyperlinks, the story has allowed the readers to reach out the story in their own non-sequential and non-linear form. So, the meanings which were initially created by the author get different shape and, also results in the loss of authorial control. These all things resulted in a manner that the reader has become a co-author and he himself can drive the narratives of the story, and also come up with multiple interpretations which were not initially devised by the author.

Secondly, the story by Shelly Jackson, *My Body-a Wunderkammer*, is also an example of reader as a co-author. The reason is that the mentioned story allows readers to explore the writer's reflections on identity and body. It allows readers to choose their own path way. This also influences the default narrative of the story and helps reader unfold it in a different manner. Moreover, in the story, the reader makes choices, interprets the fragments of the story in his own way, which results in active participation of readers in the story and in the storytelling process. Last but not the least, the story evolves as soon as the reader interacts with it. It presents different narratives for different readers, resulting in the loss of fixed meanings, the author control and influence over the story.

Additionally, remediation can also be traced out in the digital versions of the selected stories. As per Murray (1997), remediation looks for the ways digital texts incorporate elements from different existing media forms including the available printed versions of them. Both these stories earlier existed in the printed forms, which were later shaped into the digital versions. In this way, both these stories, i.e. *My Body- a Wunderkammer* and *Red Riding Hood*, incorporate different elements from the existing media. The selected stories have changed in terms of communicating the content to the readers unlike the traditional versions. The change in the presentation of the content of these two stories has also changed the ways readers experience and understand the content of the stories. One of the examples of this is that the second story makes use of different hyper textual features, which help the reader navigate through different mediums and contents to reach out the story in different ways.

Besides, the addition of different multimodal features to these stories have also caused the loss of authorial control and the author's agency in them. This is because, digital text has transformed the traditional versions of these stories into different electronic forms, demonstrating the experience in the digital form to the readers. However, in the presence of digital technologies, the digital text has now become a combination of different stories embedded into the single one, causing shift in the interpretations, intended meanings and the author's real involvement in the process of meaning making. As now, the readers also collaborate with the author and partake in the storytelling process, as seen in both the stories, *My Body-a Wunderkammer* and *Red Riding Hood*, where elements from different pages were connected through

hyperlinks, so the real function of the original author gets misplaced.

All in all, it can be deduced that in the presence of different technologies, particularly web 2.0, digital texts have challenged the notion of authority, as it has caused the loss of authorial control over the text and the authority.

4.3. Creative Potential of Digital Text in the Emerging Text-Generating Systems:

It is inevitable to analyse the creative potential of digital text in the presence of emerging text-generating systems. For this reason, the researcher has incorporated the framework of Marie Lauren Ryan to analyse creative potential of digital text.

4.3.1. Non-linearity and Beyond Narratives

In the presence of emerging text systems, digital texts have become non-linear and moved beyond the traditional sequential narratives. It has also added to the potential creativity of digital text. For instance, in both the stories taken for the study, readers are allowed to move on in their own non-sequential manner. The stories do not have singular sequential path. Moving on, both these stories are also embedded with multiple hyperlinks that enable readers to choose their own structure in the text and proceed with the story. The use of hyperlinks in digital text also adds to its creativity in the emergence text-generating systems, as it provides readers with multiple content and allow them to draw their own meanings based upon their interaction with the text. Moreover, in the story, *My Body-a Wunderkammer*, it can be seen that different content has been juxtaposed through the hyperlinks. For example, the story has incorporated hyperlinks to Frankenstein monster, the scar on my upper lip and many more, to help readers create meanings in an unexpected and non-linear way. These things were not present in the printed literature, as there was only single narrative through which the readers had to connect the dots and draw meanings from the text, or reach the logical conclusion.

On the other hand, both the stories have broken the traditional narrative paths. It is observed that *Red Riding Hood* and *My Body-a Wunderkammer*, are acting as labyrinth. By this, it is inferred that digital text in the emerging text-generating systems does not have a single flow. It provides readers with multiple pathways to move in the story. In both the stories, readers were not spoon fed, rather they were driven to be the active participants in the story and move the narratives. Hypertextuality was also present in the stories, which allowed readers to move from one side of the story to another and orchestrate meanings. According to Baricco (2006), hyperlinks in any digital text represents a fulcrum of paradigm shift in the reading process. So, it can be said that digital text has altogether changed the reading process involving any document and has also challenged the single and fixed narrative path way. Furthermore, the stories involving this research study have also made use of multimodal features like audios, images, videos and certain other components. This has also caused the change in the single narrative structure. By doing so, these stories open different possibilities for the readers to move the story in and draw their own meanings. Besides, with the help of these features, the stories evoked the emotional perspectives of the readers and transcended the narratives.

4.3.2. Reader Engagement and User Experience

As per Ryan (2000), digital texts are in the category of Ergodic literature. Basically, this is a kind of literature that demands active participation on behalf of the readers in order to navigate through the story and draw meanings. She says that in the presence of emerging text-generating systems, digital texts should further enhance the readers engagement and experience, in order to make them the active participant, not just the passive consumers of the text. Talking about this with reference to the stories,

it was observed that both the stories allowed readers to navigate, partake in making word choices especially in the first story, *Red Riding Hood*, and come up with open-ended interpretations of both the stories.

Additionally, both the stories offer interconnected path ways to readers to make multiple interpretations and come across certain unexpected turns and elements in the stories. This was done through the incorporation of hypertextual features in the selected stories. In this manner, readers were allowed to explore and discover new insights to the stories. The involvement of such types of techniques like multiple narratives, hyperlinks, multimodal features and others, add to the users experience regarding the story and enhance their aesthetics pleasures. Such techniques were also seen enabling and inviting readers to delve deeper into the stories and partake in the storytelling. The user engagement in any digital text also plays an important role in comprehension of the text. So, as both the stories enabled user's engagement and enhance users experience, it can be deduced that the potential creativity of digital texts in the presence of text-generating systems is quite astonishing and considerable. In digital texts, users are allowed to partake and experience unexpected things in the text, unlike the traditional printed literature. This also adds to their active engagement and help them in getting multifaceted experience of text.

4.3.3. Beyond Traditional Originality

As digital text has brought the element of creativity in the presence of emerging text-generating systems, thus, it has also challenged traditional element of originality. This is because in both the stories, readers were the active participants, collaborative authors and were also partaking in the meaning making process. Different digital multimodal elements were employed in both the stories, which also changed the original interpretations of both the stories, and allowed readers to come up with their own multiple interpretations based on their interaction with the stories. In addition, in the *Red Riding Hood*, the active participation of readers in the story and meaning making process have completely transformed the original narratives, causing death of the originality in the story. This is because in digital texts, readers partake and give new meanings to text with the help of the hypertextual and multimodal features embedded in it. In the cited story, readers were also acting as the collaborative authors. Hence, the creative potential of digital text in the emerging text-generating system is that it allows text, the readers and the human creator of text to interact and shape or reshape the text.

Additionally, the ever changing ability of both the stories can also be viewed as the creative potential of digital text. The narrative structures in the stories evolved differently with the interaction of different readers with the stories. This real time incorporation of the readers words choices and own data to the stories defy the element of originality in the stories. In this way, potential of creativity of digital texts becomes obvious in the emerging text-generating systems. However, the creative potential of digital text can pose certain ethical considerations in terms of originality, as anyone can add and remove the content from the text with the help of characters, chat-bots or other elements powered by artificial intelligence.

5. Conclusion

So in the light of the above given arguments, it is obvious that digital text is way different from traditional printed text, as it allows the meanings to be dynamic and constantly floating. Thus, challenges the traditional notion of fixity. Moreover, it also turns the tables for authority by allowing readers to participate in the meaning making process, storytelling and act as a collaborative author. Besides, it proved to be conducive to different patterns and forms of text forms and hypertexts, by allowing

digital texts to employ hyperlinks and different multimodal features. Last but not the least, it was found out that digital text has creative potential in the presence of text-generating systems, as it moves beyond the narratives, has non-linearity, allows active involvement of the readers and enhances their experiences in unexpected ways, hence, challenges the element of originality through its creative potential. To be very conclusive, the above given arguments and elements clearly proved in a comprehensive manner a multifaceted functionality of digital text.

References

- Almas, N. (2022). Digital Appropriation of Children's Literature: A Postmodernist Critique of Red Riding Hood. *Journal of Gender and Social Issues*, 21(2).
- Arslan, M. F., Abrar, M., Ullah, F., & Haroon, H. (2024). Exploring the Influence of Language on Cultural Identity: A Comparative Linguistic and Literary Analysis. *Harf- o-Sukhan*, 8(3), 900-908.
- Bayne, S. (2006). Temptation, trash and trust: The authorship and authority of digital texts. *E- Learning and Digital Media*, 3(1), 16-26.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063>.
- Brown, S. (2016). Young Learners' Transactions With Interactive Digital Texts Using E- Readers. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 30(1), 42-56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2015.1105887>.
- Conifer | Archived page from the —RedRidinghood| Collection on Conifer (rhizome.org). Eden, S., & Eshet-Alkalai, Y. (2013). The effect of format on performance: Editing text in print versus digital formats. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 44(5), 846-856.
- Fitzsimmons, G., Weal, M., & Drieghe, D. (2013, May). On measuring the impact of hyperlinks on reading. In *Proceedings of the 5th Annual ACM Web Science Conference* (pp. 65-74).
- Fornaciari, F. (2009). Digital Hypertexts vs. Traditional Books: An Inquiry Into Non-Linearity. *Foucault and the Bibliographic Universe: What Really is an Author?* (wiley.com).
- Guzman, A. L. (2018). What is human-machine communication, anyway. *Human-Machine Communication: Rethinking Communication, Technology, and Ourselves*, 1-28.
- Hamlet on the holodeck: The future of narrative in cyberspace: Murray, Janet Horowitz, 1946- : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive.
- Hahnel, C., Goldhammer, F., Naumann, J., & Kröhne, U. (2016). Effects of linear reading, basic computer skills, evaluating online information, and navigation on reading digital text. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 55, 486-500.

- Hypertext: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology- George P. Landow - Google Books. Microsoft Word - Unit 3 Creating Digital Text - What is a digital text.doc (pearson.com).
- Morewood, A. L., Shimek, C., Ankrum, J. W., & Dagen, A. S. (2022). Digital Texts and Student Engagement: What Teachers Need to Know When Planning for Effective Literacy Instruction. In *Cases on Innovative and Successful Uses of Digital Resources for Online Learning* (pp. 96-110). IGI Global. Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media | Guide books | ACM Digital Library.
- Oakley, G., Wildy, H., & Berman, Y. E. (2020). Multimodal digital text creation using tablets and open-ended creative apps to improve the literacy learning of children in early childhood classrooms. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 20(4), 655-679.
- Rosenberg, J. (1996, March). The structure of hypertext activity. In *Proceedings of the Seventh ACM Conference on Hypertext* (pp. 22-30).
- Ryan, M. L. (2002). Beyond myth and metaphor: Narrative in digital media. *Poetics Today*, 23(4), 581-609.
- Skains, R. L. (2010). The Shifting Author—Reader Dynamic: Online Novel Communities as a Bridge from Print to Digital Literature. *Convergence*, 16(1), 95-111.
- The Crucial Impact of Technology on Language and Culture (researchgate.net).
- Van der Bom, I., Skains, R. L., Bell, A., & Ensslin, A. (2021). Reading hyperlinks in hypertext fiction: An empirical approach.
- Vandendorpe, C. (2009). *From papyrus to hypertext: Toward the universal digital library*. University of Illinois Press.
- Yates, S. J., & Sumner, T. R. (1997, January). Digital genres and the new burden of fixity. In *Proceedings of the Thirtieth Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences* (Vol. 6, pp. 3-12). IEEE.