

Influence of flashback on the process of turn taking actualization in the cinematic discourse

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Abstract. The article considers influence of flashback on turn-taking in the cinematic discourse. Functions of flashback have been defined as a marker of transition relevance place in turn-taking actualization as a result of the research. Flashback has also been studied as an intensifier of cinematic codes function as a turn-taking marker, and as an expression of inner speech.

Keywords: Turn-taking, flashback, transition relevance place, turn-taking marker, cinematic discourse.

This article is devoted to the problem of flashback role analysis in the turn-taking process in the contemporary English cinematic discourse.

The problem of turn-taking as an important structure-organizational characteristic of dialogic communication has been introduced by E. Goffman (turn-taking [16]) and it has attracted interest of many researchers. On the basis of communicative-discursive approach turn-taking is considered to be the basic factor of dynamic discourse structuring [6, p.192; 1; 9], nevertheless the problem of turn-taking remains understudied as for the theoretical and practical aspect. The new impulse to the studies of turn-taking has been provided by the increased role of cinema in the modern society as well as increased interest to it, cinematic discourse has been studied by O. Aronson, A. Sonin, G. Slyshkin etc. [2; 8; 7]. It should be noted that verbal and nonverbal code combination with the cinematic codes provides a lot of opportunities for turn-taking studies in the real-time mode. Flashback has also been studied by a number of researches like M. Turim, D. Bordwell etc, but the aspect of flashback influence on turn-taking has not been studied yet.

The **goal** of the article is definition of flashback role in the process of turn-taking, its features and functions in the cinematic discourse.

The **material** of the research is movie scripts, put down and completed with special remarks which concern nonverbal and cinematic components of cinematic discourse taken down while watching the movie itself. Notation system TRUD developed by M. Makarov has been used to take down and analyze the scripts and remarks [6, p. 116].

Prior to the discussion of the results of the research notions of cinematic discourse and turn-taking, as well as flashback should be outlined.

Cinematic discourse is polycode cognitive-communicative form, the inseparable unity of different semiotic units characterized by coherence, comprehension and addressing [5]. Cinematic discourse is actualized by verbal and nonverbal signs including cinematic codes according to the intention of collective author and is structured by means of turn-taking [5].

Turn-taking is operational metadiscursive category which provides structuring and regulation of dialogue discourse in real-time mode by transferring a turn from one speaker to another. Turn-taking is actualized within the exchange of communicative acts [5].

Turn-taking is actualized in the transition relevance place (TRP) [17; 11, p. 159]. It marks the ending of one

turn and beginning of another turn [1, p. 8]. TRP is defined by the speaker to mark the turn transition [14, p. 40]. Turn-taking actualization in TRP follows the analysis of the speaker of the turn and choice of the listener of the planned turn which is constructed in parallel [1, p. 55]. It should be noted that the listener is not a passive partner as the listener encourages the speaker to choose way of delivering information and the behavior style [3, p. 259; 9, p.91]. Turn-taking provides “communicative co-authorship” in the dialogue [4, p. 245-261].

For smooth talk both speaker and listener use signals (verbal and nonverbal) to claim a turn (turn-claiming signals), to suppress a turn (attempt-suppressing signals) or to yield a turn [13].

Basing on communicative means turn-taking signals include verbal, paraverbal and nonverbal ones [10], as well as cinematic signals [5]:

Turn-taking signals are potential, they can mark TRP, but this place will not always coincide with the turn-taking actualization [2]. Flashback relates to cinematic means of turn-taking.

Cinematic codes can mark TRP. Such turn-taking marker can be close shot, music and sound effects etc. [5]. Verbal and nonverbal turn-taking means are combined with cinematic ones; this is unique feature of turn-taking in cinematic discourse.

Events in the cinematic discourse can develop in two opposite directions: prospection (prolepsis) and retrospection (flashback or analepsis) [15]. A cinematic flashback may be:

1. Visual. In this case, the character is shown taking part in some events.
2. Linguistic / acoustic. The audience can hear a voice from the past (voice of a character or other person).
3. Visual and acoustic (combination of a picture and a voice from the past)
4. Textual (text on the screen in the silent movie)

Flashback is used to explain the plot, to create tension, to give flashback a distinctive meaning, to emphasize distinction between the past and the present, to provide missing information for a character or the audience, also by suddenly presenting the past, flashbacks can abruptly offer new meanings connected to any person, place or object [18, p.17].

It should be noted that flashbacks can be accompanied and emphasized by sound effects (music, noise, speech of the character telling about the past), mimics of the character, color change (color movies changes into black-and-white or some color can dominate), close shot (especially

of the character's eyes), slow motion, blurred picture, overlapping picture, subtitles (with the date and place of the events).

The types of flashback listed above have been studied during the analysis of the material in the aspect of turn-taking in the cinematic discourse.

In the following example the flashback is purely visual, it provides missing information about the character, and it represents subjective memories, expresses relation between the past and the present. Flashback in this case does not mark TRP, only provides background information:

@Soldiers lying on the ground@

@Echo of an order@

@Shooting@

@Soldiers are running@

@Close shot of set jaw@

@Echo of an order@

@Close shot of Watson lying on the bed@

@Soldiers are shooting and running@

@Echo of an order@

@Watson sits on his bed@

[Sherlock 1.1]

In the following extract flashback is completely visual, it provides the missing information not only for the audience as in the previous example, but for the character (Henry) as well:

HENRY 1: I thought it had got my dad – the hound.

2: I thought ...

HENRY 3: Oh Je...

4: oh Jesus

5: I don't –

6: I don't know any more!

@Sobbing, he puts his gun into his mouth@

JOHN 7: No, Henry!

8: Henry, for God's sake!

SHERLOCK 9: Henry, remember.

10: "Liberty In."

11: Two words;

12: two words a frightened little boy saw here twenty years ago.

SHERLOCK 13: You'd started to piece things together,

14: remember what really happened here that night.

15: It wasn't an animal,

16: was it, Henry?

SHERLOCK 17: Not a monster.

@close shot of Henry@

SHERLOCK 18: A man

@close shot of Henry@

@fighting@

@close shot of Henry@

@a man wearing a black mask with red eyes is beating his father@

@little boy is watching the fight@

@the boy's father is killed by a man in a mask@

@the killer stands up and the boy can see huge hound on his t-shirt and the word hound@

@the boy is crying when he sees a dog@

@close shot of Henry@

SHERLOCK 19: You couldn't cope

[Sherlock 2.2]

In the provided example the flashbacks play a role of turn for the viewers, as this is the information which could be expressed by the character (Henry) as a reply to

the statement (18), and the audience can see the reaction of Henry and his agreement with the statement from the flashback, but Henry yielded his turn. So, flashbacks can function as such turns, which are known only for audience, not for other characters of the movie. Thus, flashback may be considered to be a part of inner speech in the cinematic discourse expressed with cinematic means.

It should be noted that visual flashback can also mark TRP as in the following example, in which Sherlock does not take turn in the TRP and the flashback explains why he remains silent and thus intensifies the silence effect:

JOHN 1: Er ...

2: I didn't get the shopping.

SHERLOCK 3: What?

4: Why not?

JOHN 5: I had a row in the shop.

6: With the chip and pin machine.

SHERLOCK 7: You had a row with a machine?

JOHN 8: Well, sort of.

9: It sat there and I shouted abuse.

10: Have you got cash?

SHERLOCK 11: @Nodding at the table@ Take my card.

@JOHN goes to the table, but comes back again@

JOHN 12: You could always go yourself, you know.

13: You've been sitting there all morning

14: you haven't moved since I went out.

@close shot of Sherlock@

@overlapping shots of Sherlock and fight@

@Sound effect@

@Fight between Sherlock and a criminal@

@Sherlock close shot@

@Sherlock turns the page of a book@

JOHN 15: What happened about that case you were offered?

16: The Jaria diamond.

@Sherlock closes the book@

@SHERLOCK notices the sikh's blade on the carpet@

SHERLOCK 17: Not interested.

@SHERLOCK kicks the blade under the sofa@

18: I sent them a message.

@Fight between Sherlock and sikh, Sherlock wins@

[Sherlock 1.2]

In the provided example Watson uses stimulating strategy of turn-taking actualized with a reproach (12-14), but Sherlock refuses to take turn. Subjective flashback provides information for the audience, this information could be used to take turn and keep the communication smooth, and the audience can accept this as an answer, but Sherlock prefers to ignore the question not to worry his friend. Second flashback which shows the same fight is meant to add extra information to the answer actualized with statements (17-18), thus it acts as turn-suppressing signal (18).

In the following example the flashback is purely acoustic, it acts as potential mark of turn-taking, nevertheless no turns have been taken:

@LUKE is navigating an aircraft@

@VOICE of OBI VAN Use the Force Luke, let go Luke... Luke trust me@

[Star Wars. Episode 4]

This voice-over flashback provides explanation of the actions to the audience.

In the following example the flashback is a combination of visual and acoustic means, audience can watch a dialogue, Sherlock takes turn using interrogation tactic (1, 2, 3) and flashbacks provide missing information for the audience, clearing the situation up, it should be noted that no verbal information has been provided in the flashback. Thus acoustic (verbal) part is represented by Sherlock questions and visual part provides answers to the questions:

SHERLOCK 1: Who do we trust, even if don't know them?

@Close sot of a taxi-driver badge@

@close shot of Sherlock@

@Overlapping close shots of Sherlock and a cab@

SHERLOCK 2: Who passes unnoticed wherever they go?

@Victim 1 approaches a cab@

SHERLOCK 3: Who hunts in the middle of a crowd?

@Victim 2 is going in front of a cab@

@Victim 3is looking at an approaching cab@

@close shot of Sherlock@

@Victim 4takes a cab@

@Close sot of a taxi-driver badge@

[Sherlock 1.1]

The provided abstract is also accompanied with music, which encourages anxiety, and makes musical accents on the person of taxi-driver. Flashback in the abstract supplies missing information and marks TRP, as Sherlock is ready to yield his turn.

The following abstract represents combination of two types of flashback: linguistic (A) in the beginning and later on combination of both the visual and the acoustic ones (B):

FORD 1: Who is he?

ARTHUR 2: She

FORD 3: She

ARTHUR 4: Tricia McMillan

5: We met at a fancy dress party

@Crowded flat, people wearing costumes, loud music@

(A) @ARTHUR's voice: I can't bear those sort of parties, didn't want to go, would have much rather tayed home and, I don't know, brush the dog. Anything. But there I was - and then, there she was...@

(B) @close shot of Arthur@

@Tricia comes up@

TRICIA 1a: Who are you?

ARTHUR 2a: I'm Arthur.

Arthur Dent.

TRICIA 3a: No, I mean who are you?

ARTHUR 4a: Oh, the costume.

5a: Right...

6a: Livingston, I presume

7a: Granted

8a: Not as clever as Darwin, but the best I could do on short notice

TRICIA 9a: You're the first person who's got it right

10a: Everyone keeps calling me Santa

ARTHUR 10a: Really?

11a: I thought the beagle made it rather obvious

@Arthur pets the dog@

@Tricia smiles@

@Arthur smiles back@

[Hitchhiker's guide to Galaxy]

The first part of flashback is linguistic and it represents memories of Arthur, audience can see the picture and listen to the memories, and in part (B) the interaction between two characters begins and the flashback turns into visual and the acoustic – audience can watch the interaction in the past without any commentaries. In part (A) flashback provides the necessary information for the audience, introduces the other character, it doesn't mark TRP, beginning of the part (B) coincides with close shot of Arthur and later on of Tricia, and the ending of the Arthur's speech in part (A) so flashback type change intensifies cinematic code of close shot which marks TRP.

Flashback function as a narration technique can be objective or subjective. Objective flashback represents collective memory of history inscribed through visual sources and a supplement to that memory [18] thus provides new information. Subjective flashback – subjective experience of the individual or social group [18], thus it explains actions / motives of an individual.

In the previous example the flashback had subjective function, as it provided personal memories of a person. In the following example objective flashback is provided, as far as this is not memory of a person but new information for the audience and the character which has derived this information from the clues, but the audience has been shown the flashback:

@Sherlock enters the house@

@Close shot of dropped staff@

@close shot of scratches on the wall@

@close shot of Sherlock@

@dim cries of a woman@

@Sherlock studies the scratches@

@close shot of a woman being dragged along the stairs@

@Close shot of Sherlock@

@Sherlock goes upstairs@

[Sherlock. 2.1]

This is objective flashback which is constructed as combination of visual and acoustic means, flashback and close shot of the main character which marks TRP, thus flashback intensifies other cinematic codes (close shot in this example) and may mark TRP along with them.

On the basis of the conducted research the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. In the aspect of turn-taking flashbacks can intensify other cinematic codes marking TRP. This type of flashback is more common according to the studied material

2. Flashbacks provide new information which encourages expectation of the character's reaction, thus marking TRP by itself

3. Flashback may be part of inner speech of a character, it marks turns which have not been taken, nevertheless the information was shared with the audience and from the point of view of the audience the interaction was smooth.

Perspectives of the research are seen in further studies of flashback as means of turn-taking as well as other functions of flashback in the cinematic discourse, in the diachronic aspect.

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Влияние флешбэка на процесс осуществления мены коммуникативных ролей в кинодискурсе

И. Н. Лавриненко

Аннотация. Статья посвящена рассмотрению влияния флешбэка на мену ролей в кинодискурсе. В результате исследования были установлены функции флешбэка в процессе мены коммуникативных ролей как маркера точки релевантного перехода коммуникативных ролей. Также рассмотрена функция флешбэка как усилителя функции кинематографических кодов как маркеров мены коммуникативных ролей, и как проявление внутренней речи персонажей.

Ключевые слова: *мена коммуникативных ролей, флешбэк, точка релевантного перехода, маркер мены коммуникативных ролей, кинодискурс.*

Вплив флешбеку на процес здійснення зміни комунікативних ролей у кінодискурсі

І. М. Лавріненко

Анотація. Стаття присвячено розгляду впливу флешбеку на зміну комунікативних ролей у кінодискурсі. В результаті дослідження було встановлено функції флешбеку в процесі зміни комунікативних ролей як маркеру точки релевантного переходу комунікативних ролей. Також було розглянуто функції флешбеку як посилювача функції кінематографічних кодів як маркерів зміни комунікативних ролей, і як прояв внутрішнього мовлення персонажів.

Ключові слова: *зміна комунікативних ролей, флешбек, точка релевантного переходу, маркер зміни комунікативних ролей, кінодискурс.*