



## Transtextual study of cinematic discourse<sup>1</sup>

*The article examines textual connections that cinematic discourse establishes with other precedent discourses. The research is based on the theory of transtextuality developed by the French scientist, Gerard Genette. The paper proves the ability of cinematic discourse to form all types of transtextual connections: intertextual, paratextual, metatextual, hypertextual, and architextual. Based on the analysis of these relations, their specific characteristics and functions are determined. Namely, to convey meanings explicitly or implicitly, make references to literary texts, previous films, movie images, influence the process of perception and understanding of cinematic discourse, guide viewers' expectations in a certain direction, modify discourse of the past using the present, and employing the past, predict the future. In addition, the research contributes to the study of cinematic discourse and reveals the important characteristic of its structure — openness.*

**Keywords:** cinematic discourse, transtextuality, intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality, architextuality.

*Рассмотрены текстовые связи, устанавливаемые кинодискурсом с другими прецедентными дискурсами. В основе исследования — теория транстекстуальности, разработанная французским ученым Ж. Женеттом. Доказана способность кинодискурса образовывать все типы транстекстуальных связей: интер-, пара-, мета-, гипер- и архитектуральные. В результате анализа данных связей определены их специфические особенности и функции: эксплицитно и имплицитно передавать смыслы; делать отсылки к литературным текстам, предыдущим кинопроизведениям, кинообразам; влиять на процесс восприятия и понимания кинодискурса; направлять зрительские ожидания в определенную сторону; модифицировать дискурс из прошлого с помощью настоящего и с помощью прошлого предугадывать будущий. Проведенное исследование позволит внести вклад в дальнейшее изучение кинодискурса и выявить важную характеристику его структуры — открытость.*

**Ключевые слова:** кинодискурс, транстекстуальность, интертекстуальность, паратекстуальность, метатекстуальность, гипертекстуальность, архитектуральность.

### Introduction

Recent developments in discourse studies have given rise to new research areas that has resulted in the emergence of the new types of discourse, e.g. cinematic discourse. As a topic of interest in linguistic studies, cinematic discourse has become only within about the past decade. The majority of academic papers on cinema falls outside the scope of linguistics and discusses mainly cinematographic techniques, graphics, sound effects, film music, visual images, film criticism, etc. In the context of linguistics, scholarship on cinematic discourse applies pragmatic approach [12], sociolinguistic [2; 18], semiotic [8] to explore this type of discourse.

The term 'cinematic discourse' is not a firmly established academic concept. Therefore, we should guard against confusing it with the term 'film discourse'. Many scholars who contribute to the discussion of cinematic discourse define 'film discourse' as dramatic dialogue [10; 16], scripted conversation [5], or verbal interaction of fictional characters in film [7]. A number of articles analyzes film dialogue from the perspective of the narrative theory, drama theory, speech act theory, politeness theory or compare non-authentic, scripted conversations to real-life, non-fictional discourse [6; 9; 10]. In other words, film discourse refers only to the use of language in film. While cinematic discourse is conceived as audiovisual discourse of film narration itself that includes discourse of mise-en-scène, sound and image editing, montage, cinematography [12]. In fact, cinematic discourse conflates film discourse (or film dialogue) and the cinematographic techniques applied in filmmaking process. Therefore, it may be defined as a complex multimodal system that consists of several subsystems, which have their own functions and forms.

Primarily, the differentiation of terms 'cinematic discourse' and 'film discourse' stems from the differentiation of lexical items 'cinema' and 'film'. Christian Metz, a French film theorist and semiologist,

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brings clarity to the semantic relations within the lexical pair 'cinema / film'. The scholar claims that film is opposed to cinema as a referent language to a set of phenomena of industrial, technological, sociological, and economic orders. Metz argues that there is the same relationship between film and cinema as between books and literature, paintings and fine art, sculptures and sculpture, etc. [15]. In this sense, film is a concrete unit of discourse whereas cinema is an ideal set of such units and different structures of signification.

As the distinction between film discourse and cinematic discourse is drawn, we are able to consider the scale of the latter. Due to complexity of this phenomenon, the cinema language integrates its multimodal features (verbal, nonverbal, visual, and audible). Functions of linguistic and audiovisual information in this context are equally important, and their effects are interrelated. Although we mainly attempt to become aware of film dialogue, the amount of nonverbal information provided by other subsystems of cinematic discourse by far exceeds the amount of information conveyed verbally through film discourse, i. e. via characters' speech, off-screen narration, subtitles, etc.

According to Jannis Androutopoulos, we may conceptualise cinematic discourse as the ensemble of film as text and processes of its production and consumption [2]. The important thing to note is that production and consumption are complementary activities. It means that viewers are no less involved in the construction of the meaning of cinematic discourse than filmmakers are. We know that films carry cognitive and emotional meaning for their spectators. Obviously, filmmakers not only send messages to viewers via cinematic discourse, but they also guide their attention and inferences, influence their judgements, colour their opinions, and so on. This communication between spectators and creators results in emergence of a shared meaning. Consequently, it happens not through convergence of viewers' close looks at the screen but through convergence of their perspectives [12].

Genre, director's previous works, critical analysis or commentary, references to other movies and literary texts influence perception and interpretation of a film. The Canadian researcher, Gregory Reid, argues that we are prevented from completely divorcing a film from a piece of literature if it is based on it to interpret and analyze each independently even though we cannot find some definite, meaningful, and assured points of closure and contact between the film and the literary text. He believes that there will always be some sort of relations between them [17].

## Textual transcendence in cinematic discourse

Cinematic discourse constantly relies on textual connections with literary texts as literature demonstrates established and serious structures that supply with cultural and aesthetic values. T. Jefferson Kline suggests that film and literature have deeply rooted intertextual connection [13]. The connection of that kind also binds film with the original film-script. The cinema language like painting or architecture languages involves creation of a system of codes, allusions, echo, and rearrangement of previously established patterns. Graham Allen points out the fact that to interpret, for instance, a painting we have to count on our ability to construe that painting's relations with prior painting designs. The researcher concludes that films, paintings, buildings, symphonies similarly to literary texts interact with each other as well as with other kinds of art. Discussion of cinema has frequently explored kinds of intertextuality across artistic boundaries [1].

The basic feature of intertextual phenomenon is that it is not limited to one semiotic system. In other words, textual connections usually include relations of signs which belong to various semiotic systems. This fact has special significance for audiovisual texts in particular [19]. Another principal feature of intertextuality relates to different ways one text connects to others. Beaugrande and Dressler discuss ways in which recipient's intertextual knowledge may be applied in production and perception of texts. The specific nature of audiovisual system and, notably, its ability to employ the capacity of different semiotic systems implies that audiovisual texts present a special case of intertextuality [4].

Julia Kristeva introduces the term 'intertextuality' and claims that there is no self-born text as every new text is an inter-text connected with some texts of the past. According to Kristeva, intertextuality covers any relation between various texts [14]. Kristeva's intertextual theory was dominant in literal and cultural studies until Gerard Genette elaborated on her studies and widened them. Genette examined relations between texts too, however he involved semiotic, structural, and post-structural theories in his research. As a result, the scholar offered a more detailed, systematic, and comprehensive approach to analyze textual relations. He found out a collection of different relations established by texts and divided them into five types: intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality, and architextuality. They are arranged in an ascending order from the most concrete category to the most abstract one. Genette introduces the generic term 'transtextuality' that comprises all these textual categories. The researcher defines transtextuality as "all that sets a text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed with other texts". In this regard, it is important to pinpoint that these categories are neither universal nor rigidly or neatly distinguished. Indeed, Genette admits that there is a lot of overlapping and reciprocal contact among them. The key point about transtextual categories is that they are never fixed and stable as they depend on the process of interpretation and their status of signification changes with the expansion of the textual orbit [11].

The term "transtextuality" is employed in the studies of literature, music, painting, photography, architecture, so it is practically discussed in the context of every form of artistic production. Hence, it cannot be restricted to the research of only literary art, regardless of the natural association existing between the word 'text' and literature. In order to define types of transtextual relations established by cinematic discourse with some other texts we invoke the concept and taxonomy of transtextual relationships offered by Genette. In this paper, we will demonstrate why transtextuality is an appropriate critical method for this study, as well as how its transtextual categories define interconnections in cinematic discourse.

**Intertextuality.** Intertextuality is not an especially transparent term. This notion has acquired countless meanings whose rich content traces to multiple ideologies and discourses since its emergence. According to Kristeva, any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations as well as any text is the absorption and transformation of another. In Roland Barthes's definition of 'text' we observe a similar conception of textuality as he sees it as a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings blend and clash [3]. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the numerous centres of culture. The intertextual ways in which one text refers to another include reminiscence, parody, echo, allusion, pastiche, quotation, parallelism, etc. It is important to explain that in this study we take a narrow approach to define the concept of intertextuality since we consider it to be a kind of transtextuality. Therefore, quotation and allusion relate to forms of intertextuality in this paper.

The main intertextual unit is a quote that provides special information about a pretext and its modifications. M. Yampolsky notes that a quote opens up the textuality of the film; it allows the recipient to be involved into the hidden process of meaning formation [21]. Citation in cinematic discourse takes forms of references to literary texts or other cinematic discourses. To illustrate intertextual relations in cinematic discourse, we supply some examples containing quotes from different literary works and films. In the episode "The One with the Screamer" of the TV series "Friends" (1994–2004) there is a scene where a theatre director sees his girlfriend leaving with a leading actor, and yells, "A plague on both your houses!". This line originates from Shakespeare's world-famous tragedy "Romeo and Juliet". "Friends" character in his desperation reminds us dying Mercutio who curses both his friends and enemies by saying this phrase. Another example is taken from the animated movie "Zootopia" (2016). The first day at work turns out to be extremely difficult for the main character, Judy Hopps. When Judy comes home, she says, "Tomorrow is another day". This is a quote from the novel "Gone with the Wind" by Margaret Mitchell. The heroine of this novel, Scarlett O'Hara, often repeats it to herself as if prom-

ising that the next day will be better. This line implicitly shows to the viewer that Judy and Scarlett's characters are alike. Thus, we can infer that Judy will persevere despite any obstacles. We assume that these instances demonstrate not just citations but quotation allusions.

There are also allusions to other cinematic discourses in "Zootopia". For example, the image of Mr. Big is a reference to Don Vito Corleone from "The Godfather" (1972). The scene of his daughter's wedding takes us back to the opening scene of "The Godfather" where Vito Corleone marries off his daughter. Similarly to Don Vito's line "You come into my house on the day my daughter is to be married..." Mr. Big utters, "You come here unannounced on the day my daughter is to be married".

Quotes can be included not only into the film dialogues but also appear on diegetic objects (i. e. objects of fiction world that are visible to the characters). For instance, the quote "The world is yours" from the film "Scarface" (1983) inscribed on billboards in the movie "Hatred" (1995). Another line from this movie "Say hello to my little friend" is cited in other film discourses, e.g. "Deadly weapon 4" (1998), "Master of reincarnation" (2002). If the viewers are familiar with the film "Scarface", which is the source of the link, then they instantly correlate the contexts, recognize similar circumstances to pronounce these words, and expect that the speaker will get a weapon and start shooting.

Having analyzed this textual category, we conclude that intertextuality may be explicit and implicit, and vary from verbal to nonverbal elements. We deal with explicit form of intertextuality when there are overt elements from another text like quotations that are easily identified. As for implicit form, we reveal some relations of this kind only by taking a close look and paying more attention to nonverbal images. Allusion serves as the main form of implicit intertextuality.

**Paratextuality.** The category of paratextuality is applied to elements that surround the main body of text. Paratextuality can be divided into two categories: epitextuality and peritextuality. Epitextuality comprises elements that are outside the main text, e.g. interviews, editorial and authorial discussions, reviews, advertisement. Peritextuality, in its turn, includes elements that are part of the text, e.g. titles, subtitles, preface, notes. The main text tends to lose its own identity without paratexts because they function as an interpretative grid. Paratextual categories can reveal the message of the story, give background information, and contribute to an adequate interpretation of the plot. According to L.G. Vikulova, paratext represents the main text as some part represents the whole [20].

Being a paratextual element, the title is relatively autonomous. Nevertheless, it is inseparable from the main text and metonymically represents the context of it. It is worth mentioning that title is a verbal, written, non-diegetic element of film discourse. Title is visible only to spectators who are outside observers, though it is unavailable for film characters. The ability of the title to reveal the content of the entire text determines the importance of this information. Yet, both author and reader's general background knowledge is relevant. Based on this knowledge, the author purposefully selects words for titles in order to influence the recipient's expectations. Title is a strong marker that along with genre introduces the viewer into a certain context at the pre-watching stage.

For instance, episodes of the TV series "Sherlock" (2010 — present) use original titles of Arthur Conan Doyle's stories about the detective, Sherlock Holmes, as prototypes. On the one hand, episode titles are modified, but on the other hand, they maintain phonetic and semantic connection with the original titles of short stories. If we compare the title of the episode called "A Study in Pink" with the title of the story "A Study in Scarlet", we will see that the former changes the name of the color but the semantic connection with the latter is preserved. Therefore, the title contains a reference to the work of fiction and a hint about the content of the episode, which tells a story about a mysterious murder of a woman all dressed in pink.

The episode titled "The Empty Hearse" is based on the story "The Adventure of the Empty House". The phonetic similarity of the words 'hearse' and 'house' keeps the connection between them. Identical textual connection exists between titles "His Last Vow" (episode) and "His Last Bow" (short story).

If the viewer is attentive enough and correlates the title of the episode with its story, then he/she can speculate that Sherlock's funeral is staged since the hearse is bound to be empty. This implicit information included in the paratextual element that is only accessible to the viewer.

Some movies begin with a preface, which provides information about the events that the story narrates. The preface to the film "Argo" (2012) contains a historical reference to the events that became a prerequisite for the actions shown in the film. It includes a voice-over text accompanied by archival photos, video recordings, images, maps, etc. These verbal and nonverbal paratextual elements help to learn about the reasons for the storming of the US Embassy in Tehran. Some scientists note that paratexts can guide the perception of the viewer and make the meaning of the discourse clearer [22].

**Metatextuality.** Paratext has a close affiliation to metatext as both often support and reinforce the main text by rendering extra information. However, whereas paratext introduces a text, metatext is purely a critique or commentary. That is why functions of metatexts are primarily explanatory, interpretative, or descriptive. It is noteworthy that criticism or commentary is integral to the meaning of the main discourse.

Metatextual connection forms between cinematic discourse and discourse of reviews, interpretations, comments given on a film. In texts of this kind, authors write how they understand the plot of the movie, interpret its message, explain characters' actions, or reflect on reasons or consequences of events. In other words, they comprehensively interpret cinematic discourse, while creating a metadescription of it. Such metatexts become especially valuable if they are written on arthouse films. As these movies are often characterized by the understatement and ambiguity of the images shown, after watching them spectators are still trying to decipher the message, ask questions, put themselves in main characters' shoes. For these reasons, metatexts help them correctly interpret of what they have seen.

**Hypertextuality.** According to Genette, hypertextuality involves any relationship uniting a text to an earlier written one upon which it is grafted [11]. Hypertexts are texts derived from other pre-existing texts. It is superimposition of a latter text on an earlier one. Thus, hypertextuality represents the relation between texts or text and genre on which it is based on but modifies, elaborates, transforms or extends. Sequels, parodies, or remakes establish hypertextual relations since subsequent discourses refer to previous ones. The cinematic version of novels is the most straightforward working of hypertextuality. Being an adaptation of a literary text, film as a whole turns into be a big quote. That is to say, a global intertextual link forms between the film and the literary text. There is a great deal of movies that are adaptations of literary works. For example, "The Shawshank Redemption" (1994), "The Green Mile" (1999), "Shine" (1980), "It" (2019) based on novels by Stephen King or the Harry Potter films based on the series of novels by J.K. Rowling.

L.G. Vikulova states that the author's name acts like a primary signal indicating that a book belongs to a certain literary movement, subject matter, or genre. The author's name has a dual effect: on the one hand, it appropriates text, and on the other hand, the text expropriates the author's name, forming an integrated whole with it [20]. We assume that the interdependence of the director's name (one of the authors of a film) and the movie shows a type of hypertextual relations. The director's name appears in the opening credits, preceding the title of a film. For example, the name of the director, K. Tarantino, in the opening credits of the film will encourage the recipient to remember his previous movies and link these stories to what he are going to see. In this way hypertextual connection forms; the viewer seems to anticipate, judging by the previous director's experience, that the new film will be a bloody violent movie.

**Architextuality.** The most implicit and abstract transtextual category is architextuality. Genette defines it as a set of such categories as theme, genre, mode, and form that determine the nature of any individual text. Architextual relationship connects a text with texts of this kind and different discourses this text belongs to. Experts do not have a common opinion on the criteria for selecting genres

in movies, so there are several typologies of movie genres that are based on different approaches. As there are ongoing debates between film critics and audience about film genres, a universal classification of film genres has not been developed so far. Genres have common plot, compositional, stylistic, and other characteristics. Criteria for determining genre of a film may be functional scopus, the degree of generalization of the film narration, emotional and axiological orientation, use of visual and expressive tools.

G. Genette believes that genre can be divided into subgenres, moreover subgenres can be divided into more specific micro-genres. For example, drama is a kind of macro-genre that includes police crime drama, political drama, historical drama, teen drama, etc. However, genre is not the only aspect of architextual relationship. Similarly, there are several modes of representation. Thus, the narrative mode can be homodiegetic, autodiegetic, heterodiegetic, etc. Homodiegetic narration is delivered by a character of the film, whereas autodiegetic – by its main character. In heterodiegetic mode, the narrator who is outside the fictional world tells the story. Two other categories are form and theme. We attribute animation, cartoon, moving picture, short movie, feature-length film, remake, etc. to forms of representation. Thematic variety of cinema is great. For instance, we can mention buddy films, movies with makeovers, or Cinderella story movies. Often, many themes can intersect or overlap each other.

All these criteria are a kind of signal that leads the audience's expectations in a certain direction. Genre identity connects the film that has not been watched yet with other discourses of this type that are familiar to the spectator. Previous experience creates a context for a subsequent one, allowing the viewer to recognize familiar storyline, predict events and interpret the characters' actions.

## Conclusion

The attempt to define numerous connections that cinematic discourse establishes with other discourses, texts, films, has shown the applicability of Genette's transtextual theory for this purpose. All types of transtextual categories, which include intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality, architextuality explain these relations and differentiate them. Through these relations verbal messages, implied meanings, memories, images of the past are conveyed, author's identity is recognized and established, concepts are placed, perception and interpretation are influenced and guided. We think that there is a constant dialogue, which is maintained via either explicit or implicit transtextual connections, between cinematic discourse and precedent discourses, their authors and recipients. Therefore, comprehension of cinematic discourse is like a dynamic structuration that requires some cognitive and intellectual activity. Transtextual categories enable the present modify the past while the past predict the future. Using transtextual theory we have managed to deeper analyze and understand the nature of cinematic discourse itself. Thus, we conclude that cinematic discourse has open structure, as its bounders are not closed and there is always space for new connections, references, allusions, interpretations, etc.

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