

NARRATIVE DISCONTINUITIES IN JAMES JOYCE'S SHORT STORIES

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În ultimele decenii, naratologia este din ce în ce mai studiată de către lingviști de diverse orientări, devenind o știință multidisciplinară. Interesul este generat de noile tendințe în domeniu și de concepte recent introduse. Astfel, termenul Centru Deictic (CD), preluat din situația discursivă reală (eu-aici-acum), ce vine să desemneze perspectiva din care este prezentată narațiunea, este pe larg utilizat în cercetările de naratologie. În articol sunt examinate discontinuitățile (de perspectivă, timp și loc) ce au loc pe axa coordonatelor CD – Cine, Unde, Când și contribuția acestor deplasări la comprehensiunea textului. În baza exemplelor preluate din nuvelele lui James Joyce, sunt expuse mijloacele lingvistice și discursive ce duc la apariția acestor discontinuități.

This paper is concerned with the problem of Deictic Center (DC), its functions and contribution to narrative comprehension. It aims to explore the model of Deictic Shift Theory (DST) and draws upon the notion of "story world". For the purpose of this research the analysis will investigate various linguistic devices that mark the Deictic Shift in J. Joyce's short stories.

Narrative has been thoroughly studied during the last 20 years. It is hardly surprising that narrative has received serious attention from the part of linguists, philosophers, psychologists, cognitive scientists and thus becoming the subject of a multidisciplinary study. This fascination with narrative is entirely appropriate since narratives consist of events that actually occurred or are similar to those from the real world. Consequently, narratives are easy to comprehend and remember, thus generating diverse inferences.

The story as the totality of events and experiences is embedded in a *story world* which surrounds the events of the story. Story worlds are mental representations of readers, inhabited by existents (participants and objects) and events [8, p.576]. Story worlds comprise *the actual story world* (explicit text, what is perceived as objective and implicit assumptions, linguistic, encyclopedic, etc. inferences) and *possible story worlds* (dreams, predictions, belief, etc.). The delineation of the discourse (level of linguistic units combined together as the text un-folds) from story (the text projecting a story world) is important in understanding how readers comprehend a certain narrative.

The separation of these two planes in narratives triggers the postulation of different *deictic fields*, which offer a clear-cut approach of how narratives are comprehended. Deictic fields include 'come' and 'go', 'now' and 'then', and 'I' and 'you'. When these words are used in face-to-face dialogues, their meanings depend, as Lyons says, on "the spatio-temporal co-ordinates of the act of utterance." These co-ordinates originate at a point we call the *deictic center* (DC), consisting of the "origin" of place ('come' and 'go') - the *Where*, time ('now' and 'then') - the *When*, and person ('I' and 'you') - the *Who* [2, p.23; 3, p.38].

Deictic terms occur in third-person narratives, even though, strictly speaking, there is no relevant "act of utterance". They are not understood in terms of a speaker and an addressee. The "here" and "now" of the story do not derive from the spatio-temporal co-ordinates of the author at the time of writing, nor of the reader at the time of reading [1, p.154]. In fictional narrative, readers and authors shift their deictic center (the I-here-now paradigm) from the real-world situation to an image of themselves at a location within the story world. This location is represented as a cognitive structure often containing the elements of a **particular time and place** within the **fictional world**, or even within the **subjective space** of a fictional character [4, p.15]. In this context, P.Stockwell introduces the idea of '**deictic projection**' as a way of understanding a reader's feeling of being immersed in the world of a given text.

The notion of the *deictic center* permits 'access' to the world of the story, and allows shifts that affect not only the characters, but objects, places and times as well, as the *deictic center* is continuously moved and relocated. Thus, the *deictic center*, with its temporal, spatial and personal parameters forms a *focalizing perspective* from which the reader views the unfolding of the story events.

The reader "looks" at the narrative from the perspective of a particular character, temporal location and spatial location – the Who, When, and Where. The DC is an appropriate and useful structure for representing and integrating the information in the narrative and is thus a useful construct for studying how local sentence interpretation is integrated into more global comprehension of narrative text [9, p.6].

One task of the DC is to provide contextual cues allowing the comprehender to relate the information given in each successive sentence to the narrative as a whole. Other tasks of the DC include foregrounding, referencing, building narrative structure, inferring temporal relations, inferring spatial relations, and determining lexical usage.

In order for narrative comprehension to proceed smoothly, the reader must construct and modify successive DCs by making a number of critical inferences about the identity and position of characters and events in narrative time and space. During comprehension, the reader makes these critical inferences on the basis of a variety of linguistic cues in the text. These cues include grammatical information (e.g., verb tense and aspectual class), lexical information (e.g., the use of special deictic words), and syntactic information (such as the positioning of adverbial phrases within sentences) [9, p.12].

The words 'come' and 'go' are considered deictic in narrative text because they are understood only by reference to the objects and events currently unfolding in the constantly changing narrative world. For example, the motion verb 'come' only makes sense by reference to the location of those characters and events currently in the reader's focus of attention; characters 'come' into the currently activated DC. Conversely, when the motion verb 'go' is used, it usually signals movement away from the DC.

Consider the example from James Joyce's short story "A Little Cloud":

The child stopped for an instant, had a spasm of fright and began to scream... The thin walls of the room echoed the sound. He (Little Chandler) tried to soothe it but it sobbed more convulsively. He looked at the contracted and quivering face of the child and began to be alarmed. He counted seven sobs without a break between them and caught the child to his breast in fright. If it died!...

*The door was burst open and a young woman **ran in**, panting. (J. Joyce "A Little Cloud")*

The status of Who-point that belong to Chandler, the focalizer by whom things are directly perceived, is reinforced further by the use of the deictic "ran in". Joyce contextualized the scene from inside the room. The focalizer, together with the reader, is first aware of the door opening with violence, not of the person opening it. He only then sees the woman, Chandler's wife, Annie, "running" in the room. She is not directly named, but vaguely described as a "young woman". This might betray the narrator's voice, but at the same time it can be interpreted as Chandler's viewpoint who is so frightened by the child's sobs, that he does not realize who is running in. The deictic term "ran in" can only be used from inside the lunchroom [3, p.38]. The author represents the event from Chandler's perspective who is inside the room at that time, consoling the crying child. In order to understand the sentence appropriately, the reader has, in some way, to interpret the scene from the same perspective.

The Deictic Shift Theory (DST) assumes that the reader becomes absorbed in the fictive story world, which contains characters, sequences of events, intentional actions, knowledge states of characters, properties of the setting, and other content associated with the story. *The DC window* systematically focuses on the various characters, events, and other referential content as the narrative unfolds from beginning to end. It is important to acknowledge that the moment-by-moment development of the DC is a separate track from the chronological development of the story world. Thus, the DC window might start out at the middle of the story world, then refer to an episode at the end (a flash forward), and then refer to an episode at the beginning (a flashback). However, there normally is a close correspondence between the chronology of the story world and the DC structure, at least in most traditional narratives [9, p.10].

According to P. Stockwell, a deictic shift occurs when, through the use of deixis, the author shifts focus from, for example, the narrator to a location, then to a character or the extra-fictional world of author. He introduces two terms: *pushes* –deictic shifts towards the inside world of the text (characters, time, place) and *pops* - deictic shifts towards the outside world of the text (narrators, authors, readers) [10, p.148].

W. Rapaport uses the terms of *discontinuities* for the deictic shifts. He distinguishes four types of discontinuities: *discontinuities of topic*, *discontinuities of space and time*, *discontinuities of figure and ground*, and *discontinuities of the narrative perspective*. In this paper we are mostly concerned with the last free types of discontinuities.

The most important temporal discontinuities are:

a. A shift from perfective to imperfective sentence perspective accompanied by a shift to a much greater time scale. The corresponding rhetorical move is frequently characterized as "introducing background or descriptive material". The move is frequently accompanied by a topic re-introduction.

b. The reverse shift from descriptive material to the main line of the narrative. This move is signaled by the temporal focus (or When - point) and the entire DC, returning to an established node in the narrative, with an appropriate contraction of the time scale.

c. A backwards move of the temporal focus to an earlier point in time, with or without a change in time scale. Rhetorically, this is known as flashback. This move is frequently signaled by a verb in past perfect or by the *used to + Infinitive construction*, although a shift may occur without such a verb form, and the presence of such a verb form does not necessarily signal a shift: the reference time of the sentence may remain the same as, rather than precede, the current temporal focus [7, p.30].

(1) SHE sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. (2) Her head was leaned against the window curtains and in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne. (3) She was tired. (4) Few people passed. (5) The man out of the last house passed on his way home; she heard his footsteps clacking along the concrete pavement and afterwards crunching on the cinder path before the new red houses. (6) One time there used to be a field there in which they used to play every evening with other people's children. (7) Then a man from Belfast bought the field and built houses in it -- not like their little brown houses but bright brick houses with shining roofs. (8) The children of the avenue used to play together in that field -- the Devines, the Waters, the Dunns, little Keogh the cripple, she and her brothers and sisters. (9) Ernest, however, never played: he was too grown up. (10) Her father used often to hunt them in out of the field with his blackthorn stick; but usually little Keogh used to keep nix and call out when he saw her father coming. (11) Still they seemed to have been rather happy then. (12) Her father was not so bad then; and besides, her mother was alive. (13) That was a long time ago; she and her brothers and sisters were all grown up, her mother was dead. (14) Tizzie Dunn was dead, too, and the Waters had gone back to England. (15) Everything changes. Now she was going to go away like the others, to leave her home. (J.Joyce "Eveline")

The whole abstract is conceptualized from the constant perspective of a single entity – the main character, Eveline. The first three sentences introduce the DC that is situated in the room, the location from which the focalizer captures the scene. In the fourth and the fifth sentences the DC window focuses on the topic or the object of focalization: the people who pass, the street, the houses. The sixth - twelfth sentences contain a backwards move of the temporal focus or *When – point* of the DC, known as *flashback*. In the part of the short story under analysis this shift is marked by well-known clue phrase “*one time*” and the construction “*used to + infinitive*” : “... *there used to be a field there...; children of the avenue used to play...; her father used often to hunt them...; little Keogh used to keep nix...;*”. The shift of the temporal focus is accompanied by the *topic shift* perceived by the same Who – Eveline: the man from Belfast, children of the avenue, her family. The thirteenth and fourteenth sentences, although continue the stretch of descriptive material of the last two previous sentences, are related to the current temporal focus. The last sentence is a return to the event sequence of the first sentence, thus the *When – point* is restored to the initial reference time of the main line of the narrative through the use of adverb “*now*” and present tense “*everything changes*”.

The most obvious spatial discontinuities are discontinuities of scale. The spatial scales, D Herman currently employs, are: one's body (which may need to be further specialized); within arm's reach; room area, such as desk or bed; room; floor; house; household; village /neighborhood; larger area within a between meals round trip; within a day's round trip; staying overnight. A change in spatial scale is frequently accompanied by related phenomena such as a change in temperature or lighting. The most frequent devices that might shift the *Where – point* of the DC to another location are: spatial deictic adverbs ‘*here*’ and ‘*there*’; verbs with directional valence ‘*come*’, ‘*go*’, ‘*enter*’, ‘*bring*’, ‘*take*’; preposed locative adverbials.

When his hour had struck he (Little Chandler) stood up and took leave of his desk and of his fellow-clerks punctiliously. He emerged from under the feudal arch of the King's Inns, a neat modest figure, and walked swiftly down Henrietta Street. The golden sunset was waning and the air had grown sharp. (J.Joyce “A Little Cloud”)

The word combination “*took leave*” announces a subsequent shift of the Who - element, Chandler, from the current *Where – point*, inside of the King's Inn, to the street. The last sentence, expressing the lightening “*golden sunset was waning*” and temperature “*the air had grown sharp*” convey the atmosphere from outside.

The following signals frequently indicate a shift to a character's subjective perspective away from the objective perspective of the implied narrator: (a) attitude reports, which can be further subcategorized into beliefs, desires, emotions, and so on; communication verbs; perceptions; and (b) deictics. Deictics, such as the verbs *bring* or *come*, indicate the position of the WHO-point of the deictic center; a shift of this position to one of the characters signals a discontinuity [11, p.131-138].

(1) Little Chandler quickened his pace. (2) For the first time in his life he felt himself superior to the people he passed. (3) For the first time his soul revolted against the dull inelegance of Capel Street. (4) There was no doubt about it: if you wanted to succeed you had to go away. You could do nothing in Dublin. (5) As

he crossed Grattan Bridge he looked down the river towards the lower quays and pitied the poor stunted houses. (6) They seemed to him a band of tramps, huddled together along the riverbanks, their old coats covered with dust and soot, stupefied by the panorama of sunset and waiting for the first chill of night bid them arise, shake themselves and begone. (7) He wondered whether he could write a poem to express his idea. (8) Perhaps Gallaher might be able to get it into some London paper for him. (9) Could he write something original? (10) He was not sure what idea he wished to express, but the thought that a poetic moment had touched him took life within him like an infant hope. (11) He stepped onward bravely.

The passage from J. Joyce's short story "A Little Cloud" illustrates the shift from narrator's to character's perspective. It is Chandler's perception that orients the narrative. The narrative report of events (1) opens the paragraph and, gradually, through narrative report of thought acts (2, 3) passes to free indirect thought (4, 6-10). The author employs various linguistic devices to present Chandler's inner world. First, the free indirect style is achieved, through the use of *the second person pronoun, usually found in first person narration self-address*, rendering, in this case, the character's revelation.

Second, *lexical items* which are characteristic of the character's idiolect mark the above mentioned shift of perspective. These are the *modals perhaps, could, would*, as we see Chandler constantly questioning his ability to succeed and makes various hypotheses concerning his future glory. The use of *modal auxiliaries* is one of the ways in which Joyce invites the reader to see the character from within. Since *modal verbs* reflect moods, their uses bring the reader close to the character. At the scene along the river banks, described in the abstract under analysis, the use of the third person pronoun *him* after *seemed* (6) betrays the narrator's presence but the use of the *metaphorical language* followed by lexical items conveying value (*a band of tramps, huddle together*), attitude (*old, stupefied*) and poetic cliché (*bid, begone*) suits well Chandler's mood and attitude. So the reader feels that the scene is seen through Chandler's eyes.

Third, *questions* (9) are also obvious direct elements presenting character's inner reality. They keep the reader close to Chandler's perspective of seeing things and feeling things. The use of third person and the past tense, indices of free indirect thought, may betray the narrator's presence but since a narrator cannot ask questions for characters themselves, the reader will usually ignore this presence.

Analyzing Joyce's works one might not fail to notice the difference in understanding his novels and short stories. The degree of comprehensibility of Joyce as a short story writer and Joyce as a novelist varies to a great extent. This phenomenon is due to the fact that in novels, unlike in short stories, the author uses the stream of consciousness, the literary technique that enables him to illustrate the shift to the character's perspective. Further analysis might uncover other linguistic and discourse means that would explain this difference in understanding his works.

The concepts of DC and DS and discontinuities along the DC coordinates seem to be quite productive in understanding the mechanisms of narrative comprehension. The way the author deals with these shifts affects the reader's coping with the text.

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