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EXPLORING CONJUNCTIONS AS COHESIVE DEVICES IN O. HENRY'S
SHORT STORIES

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Abstract: *The thesis explores the use of conjunctions as cohesive devices in O. Henry's short stories, focusing on how they contribute to the grammatical cohesion and coherence of literary discourse. Conjunctions play a crucial role in connecting sentences, clauses, and ideas, allowing the narrative to flow smoothly and logically. By analyzing a selection of O. Henry's stories, this research identifies various types of conjunctions including additive, adversative, causal and temporal and examines their function in linking events, structuring dialogue, and guiding readers through complex plots. The findings reveal that O. Henry skillfully employs conjunctions to enhance the unity and clarity of his narratives, contributing to their engaging and well-organized structure.*

Key words: *grammatical cohesion, conjunctions, cohesive devices, additive, adversative, causal, temporal, literary discourse, discourse analysis*

Cohesion is an essential feature of any well-structured text, as it connects sentences and ideas to form a unified whole. Among the grammatical devices that contribute to cohesion, conjunctions play a key role in linking clauses, sentences, and larger sections of a text, helping writers maintain logical flow and coherence. In literary discourse, especially in short stories, conjunctions guide readers through events, relationships, and shifts in time or perspective. O. Henry, well known for his witty and surprising narratives, skillfully uses conjunctions to organize his stories and maintain smooth transitions between ideas. This study aims to explore the use of conjunctions as cohesive devices in O. Henry's short stories, focusing on how they contribute to the overall coherence and structure of his narratives.

In the story "Two Thanksgiving Day Gentlemen" by O. Henry conjunctions play an essential role in creating grammatical cohesion by connecting ideas, actions, contrasting themes in the narrative. They assist in organizing the sequence of events and establishing cause-effect relationships between the characters' actions and emotions. They help to smoothly guide the reader through the events of the story, illustrating relationships between actions and ideas while reinforcing the underlying themes of tradition, charity, and irony. These conjunctions help maintain the narrative flow, linking events in time and explaining the motivations and consequences of the characters' decisions.

O. Henry uses additive conjunctions to link actions and events, building a continuous narrative flow while reinforcing the story's progression. Additive conjunctions help present the sequence of actions leading up to the Thanksgiving dinner, emphasizing the ritualistic and repetitive nature of the tradition between the old gentleman and the poor man. Example: The Old Gentleman found the same man each Thanksgiving Day, and he always treated him to a lavish meal. Here, "and" links the two related actions – finding the poor man and treating him to a meal. This additive conjunction emphasizes the continuity of the

tradition, suggesting a consistent, yearly practice. The next example includes "also". Example: He had already eaten two large meals, and he knew that he would also be treated to one more. The use of "also" adds a further expectation to the poor man's day, showing that in addition to the previous meals he has already consumed, he anticipates yet another one. This creates a sense of abundance and the buildup of actions, which later becomes important in the twist ending. Example: The Old Gentleman always found him on the same bench. Furthermore, he always brought him to the same restaurant for the feast. The conjunction "furthermore" is used to add another layer of consistency to the tradition. Not only does the old man find the same person each year, but he also brings him to the same place, reinforcing the ritualistic nature of the event.

Additive conjunctions in the story highlight the repetitive, ritualistic nature of the characters' actions. By linking similar actions, such as the old man finding the poor man each year and providing him with a meal, O. Henry reinforces the idea of tradition. These conjunctions help create a sense of continuity, suggesting that the characters have fallen into predictable roles that they feel obligated to maintain.

The next type is adversative conjunctions and they are used to highlight the contrasts and ironies that run through the story. O. Henry employs these conjunctions to underscore the discrepancies between expectation and reality, particularly when it comes to themes of charity, obligation, and sacrifice. Example: He was already full from two Thanksgiving dinners, but he couldn't refuse the old gentleman's kindness. The adversative conjunction "but" shows the contrast between the poor man's physical state (being full) and his emotional obligation to accept the old man's generosity. This contrast sets up the central irony of the story, where the charitable act ultimately causes discomfort. Example: The poor man did not need another meal; however, he could not bring himself to disappoint his benefactor. In this example "however" indicates the poor man's internal conflict between his physical condition (not needing food) and his emotional response (not wanting to refuse the gift). This conjunction highlights the irony and tension in the situation, where an act of kindness becomes a burden. Example: It was an act of generosity, yet it was also a burden to both of them. The adversative conjunction "yet" underscores the dual nature of the old man's gift: while the meal is given out of generosity, it also becomes an obligation that neither character enjoys fully. This emphasizes the irony central to the story – that what appears to be a benevolent tradition comes with unintended consequences. Example: He could hardly eat another bite; nevertheless, he forced himself to continue out of gratitude. "Nevertheless" signals a concession: despite the poor man's physical discomfort, he feels compelled to continue eating out of politeness and tradition. This conjunction stresses the tension between duty and personal well-being, illustrating how the tradition of generosity becomes a source of discomfort.

As we see from above adversative conjunctions emphasize the contrast between expectations and reality, a key element of the story's irony. For example, the poor man is expected to be grateful for the feast, but in reality, it becomes a burden because he is already full. Similarly, the old man's act of charity appears selfless, but it is revealed that he too suffers as a result of his annual gift.

These conjunctions highlight the gap between surface appearances and underlying truths, underscoring O. Henry's characteristic use of irony. Adversative conjunctions are crucial for building the internal conflict of both characters.

The poor man, though physically unable to eat, feels obligated to accept the old gentleman's kindness, and the old man, though financially strained, continues his tradition of generosity. These opposing forces create tension, with the conjunctions helping to articulate the emotional and physical discomfort both characters experience.

The third type is causal conjunctions which indicate cause-and-effect relationships. They answer the question of why something happens, often explaining the reasons or motives behind actions. Common causal conjunctions include "because," "since," "so," "therefore," and "as a result." In "Two Thanksgiving Day Gentlemen" O. Henry uses causal conjunctions to explain the characters' motivations and the chain of events that lead to the ironic twist at the end. Example: The poor man continued to eat, because he didn't want to disappoint the old gentleman.

Here, in this example "because" links the poor man's eating to his emotional motivation, not wanting to disappoint the old man. The conjunction makes clear that his sense of obligation is driving his behavior, despite the fact that he is already full. Example: The old gentleman had performed this act of kindness every year for nine years, so he could not break the tradition now.

In this case, "so" indicates the cause-and-effect relationship between the old gentleman's sense of tradition and his continued charitable gesture. The tradition compels him to repeat the same actions, despite the burden it may impose. Example: He had already eaten two large meals that day; therefore, his stomach was close to bursting. Here, "therefore" signals a direct result of the man's earlier actions. His overindulgence has led to physical discomfort, setting up the irony of the situation – where the act of receiving charity causes distress.

Example: The old man had always treated him to a feast on Thanksgiving, since he believed it was his duty to help those in need. Causal conjunction "since" explains the reason behind the old gentleman's repeated generosity. The causal conjunction provides insight into his belief system and motivations for his annual charitable gesture.

Thus, we can say that causal conjunctions are crucial in explaining the motivations behind the characters' actions and the consequences of those actions. For instance, the poor man's continued eating is directly caused by his desire not to offend the old man, even though he is physically uncomfortable. The old man's repeated generosity is driven by his sense of duty and tradition. These causal links help readers understand the deeper emotional layers of the story, especially the irony that kindness can sometimes cause discomfort.

The use of causal conjunctions also enhances the story's irony. For example, the poor man's decision to continue eating "because" he doesn't want to disappoint the old man creates a sense of dramatic irony – his desire to express gratitude leads to physical discomfort. Similarly, the old man's sense of duty "since" he believes in helping the poor reveals the emotional complexities of his character, who may also be trapped by the expectations of his own tradition.

The last type is temporal conjunctions. They are used to indicate the timing or sequence of events. They help structure the narrative by showing the order in which actions take place and how they relate to one another over time. Common temporal conjunctions include "when," "while," "before," "after," "until," and "as." In "Two Thanksgiving Day Gentlemen" temporal conjunctions are vital in structuring the timeline of the story and emphasizing the importance of routine and tradition. Example: The old gentleman smiled when the poor man accepted his invitation to dinner. In this example "when" connects two actions happening in quick succession: the poor man's acceptance of the invitation and the old man's pleased response. This shows how the old man's happiness depends on the continuation of their Thanksgiving tradition. Example: The poor man ate in silence, while the old gentleman watched him with satisfaction. The conjunction "while" highlights two simultaneous actions: the poor man's eating and the old man's observing.

This simultaneous occurrence emphasizes the dynamic between the two characters – one giving, the other receiving. Example: Every year, the old gentleman would take the poor man to dinner before asking him about his well-being. Here, "before" establishes the sequence in which events take place, showing the importance of the meal as the first step in the old man's Thanksgiving tradition.

The next is the temporal conjunction "after". Example: They had their meal, and after that, they walked back to the park. And in this example, "after" links the action of eating to the later event of returning to the park. This temporal conjunction helps create a clear sequence of events in the story. Example: He did not say anything until the poor man had finished his meal.

"Until" creates a sense of anticipation by showing that the old gentleman waited patiently for a certain action, finishing the meal before he spoke. This highlights the importance of the meal as the focal point of their annual interaction.

So we could see from examples that temporal conjunctions emphasize the importance of routine in the story, particularly in the old man's adherence to his Thanksgiving tradition. By using conjunctions like "before," "after," and "when," O. Henry underscores the predictable sequence of events that have occurred every Thanksgiving for nine years. This temporal structure reflects the characters' roles in a ritual that they feel obligated to continue, even as it loses its original meaning.

Temporal conjunctions allow the author to structure the story clearly, moving it forward in a linear progression. The use of words like "until" and "after" guides the reader through the unfolding events, from the moment the old man finds the poor man on the park bench to the eventual walk back after the meal. These conjunctions provide a clear temporal framework that helps the reader track the actions of both characters throughout the day.

Concluding about the conjunctions used in the story we can say that additive and adversative conjunctions are used to shape the story's structure, build contrast, and enhance the theme of irony. Additive conjunctions emphasize the repetitive nature of the Thanksgiving tradition, linking actions and showing continuity, while adversative conjunctions highlight the ironic contrast between the characters' intentions and the outcomes of their actions. Together, these conjunctions contribute to the story's cohesion,

creating a smooth narrative flow while also enhancing the emotional depth and complexity of the characters' experiences.

As for causal and temporal conjunctions, they are essential for organizing the sequence of events and establishing the motivations behind the characters' actions.

Causal conjunctions explain why things happen, helping to build the emotional depth and irony that define the story.

Temporal conjunctions structure the narrative in time, emphasizing the repetitive nature of the Thanksgiving tradition and the progression of events throughout the day.

Together, these conjunctions create a cohesive narrative that explores the complexities of charity, obligation, and human connection in a humorous and poignant way.

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