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## PROSPECTS AND MAIN TRENDS IN MODERN SCIENCE



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## EXPLORING COLLOCATIONS AS LEXICAL COHESION DEVICES IN SHORT STORIES

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**Abstract:** *This thesis explores the role of collocations as lexical cohesion devices in O. Henry's short stories, emphasizing their function in creating coherence and unity within literary discourse. Collocations, as natural word combinations, help connect ideas, describe characters, and build vivid imagery, contributing to the smooth flow of the narrative. By analyzing selected stories, the research identifies common collocational patterns and examines how they enhance textual cohesion. The findings reveal that O. Henry skillfully uses collocations to maintain cohesion and enrich the literary quality of his texts. This study offers insights into the significance of collocations in literary writing and their implications for discourse analysis and language teaching.*

**Key words:** *Lexical Cohesion, Collocations, Literary Discourse, Cohesive Devices, Discourse Analysis*

Lexical cohesion is an essential feature of any well-organized text, as it connects words and ideas to create a unified and meaningful discourse. Among various lexical cohesion devices, collocations play a significant role in linking concepts and maintaining the flow of a narrative.

Collocations are natural word combinations that frequently appear together and contribute to the clarity and coherence of texts. In literary discourse, particularly in short stories, collocations help create vivid descriptions, convey emotions, and connect events smoothly. This study focuses on exploring how collocations function as lexical cohesion devices in O. Henry's short stories, highlighting their role in enhancing the overall coherence and literary quality of the texts.

Collocations are words that commonly appear together in natural language – plays a significant role in shaping the narrative's tone, enhancing its thematic elements, and providing a sense of authenticity to the dialogue and descriptions.

Collocations help create a natural flow in the text, making it more engaging and relatable. These combinations of words frequently occur together in a language. For example, "strong coffee," "make a decision," or "heavy rain" are common collocations. They reflect natural language patterns and can influence how meaning is perceived and understood.

In the story O. Henry uses collocations to add depth to his descriptions and dialogue, enhancing the reader's experience and underscoring key themes of the story. We have grouped them according to meaning they convey in the context. The first are collocations related to food:

Thanksgiving feast - this collocation emphasizes the festive and abundant nature of the Thanksgiving meal. The use of Thanksgiving feast highlights the importance of the



meal and its cultural significance, reinforcing the theme of generosity. Example: The old gentleman always made sure the poor man had a full Thanksgiving feast, complete with all the traditional dishes.

Roast turkey - this collocation specifies a key part of the Thanksgiving meal, creating a vivid image of the feast. The term roast turkey evokes a traditional image of the holiday, adding to the story's cultural context. Example: The table was laden with a perfectly cooked roast turkey, the centerpiece of the Thanksgiving celebration.

Pumpkin pie - another collocation related to the Thanksgiving meal, pumpkin pie contributes to the sensory details of the feast. By using pumpkin pie, O. Henry enhances the specificity and appeal of the meal, emphasizing its traditional role. Example: He enjoyed a slice of homemade pumpkin pie, its sweetness a comforting end to the hearty meal.

Next group of collocations related to social interaction:

Generous offer - this collocation reflects the nature of the old gentleman's gesture and adds a layer of meaning to his actions. Generous offer underscores the altruistic aspect of the old gentleman's behavior, aligning with the theme of charity. Example: Despite his own struggles, the old gentleman made a generous offer to ensure the poor man had a good Thanksgiving.

Formal greeting - this collocation describes the manner in which the characters interact, highlighting the formality and tradition of their meetings. The term formal greeting adds to the depiction of the annual ritual and the characters' adherence to tradition. Example: They exchanged a formal greeting each year, a ritual that had become deeply ingrained in their Thanksgiving tradition.

Warm welcome - this collocation emphasizes the hospitality extended by the old gentleman, enhancing the narrative's portrayal of kindness. Warm welcome reinforces the theme of generosity and the contrast between the characters' social positions. Example: The poor man was always greeted with a warm welcome, reflecting the old gentleman's commitment to their Thanksgiving tradition.

Collocations related to appearance are the other group that we could notice in our research: Threadbare coat - this collocation describes the poor man's worn-out clothing, highlighting his impoverished state. It helps to convey the character's economic situation and adds a visual element to the story. Example: The poor man's threadbare coat was a stark contrast to the old gentleman's elegant attire.

Elegant attire - this collocation describes the old gentleman's formal clothing, reflecting his social status. Elegant attire provides insight into the old gentleman's social standing and the contrast with the poor man. Example: The old gentleman's elegant attire was a symbol of his wealth and the respect he commanded.

The next group of collocations related to setting:

City street - this collocation sets the urban scene where the story unfolds, adding to the narrative's context. City street helps to establish the setting and the character's place within it. Example: The poor man walked down the busy city street, his thoughts on the upcoming Thanksgiving meeting.



Park bench - this collocation specifies a location where significant interactions occur, contributing to the story's atmosphere. Park bench adds a tangible element to the setting, enhancing the realism of the characters' interactions. Example: They sat on a familiar park bench, sharing stories and reflecting on the significance of the day.

Collocations related to emotions are the last group that we will analyze:

Deep gratitude - this collocation expresses the intensity of the poor man's feelings towards the old gentleman. Deep gratitude emphasizes the emotional impact of the old gentleman's generosity, adding depth to the character's response. Example: Despite his discomfort, the poor man felt a sense of deep gratitude for the old gentleman's annual kindness.

Subtle discomfort - this collocation describes the poor man's feelings about the feast, highlighting the complexity of his emotions. Subtle discomfort captures the nuanced emotional experience of the poor man, adding to the story's emotional depth. Example: As he ate, he experienced a subtle discomfort, knowing that he was burdening the old gentleman's generosity.

Collocations are concerned that they provide a natural flow to the descriptions in the story, making them more vivid and engaging. Terms like roast turkey and threadbare coat add specificity and detail, creating a richer narrative experience. They like generous offer and deep gratitude reinforce the central themes of the story, such as charity, social contrast, and tradition.

They help to highlight the key elements of the narrative and enhance the reader's understanding of the characters' motivations. The use of common collocations adds a sense of realism to the dialogue and descriptions, making the characters' interactions and experiences more relatable.

Collocations related to social interactions, such as formal greeting, help to convey the authenticity of the characters' behavior. Collocations contribute to the overall atmosphere of the story by setting the scene and reflecting the mood.

Terms like city street and park bench help to create a tangible setting, while emotional collocations like subtle discomfort add depth to the characters' feelings. In "Two Thanksgiving Day Gentlemen" O. Henry effectively uses collocations to enhance the narrative by providing detailed descriptions, reinforcing themes, and creating a sense of realism. By employing common word combinations, he adds depth to the story's setting, characters, and emotions, enriching the reader's experience and highlighting the central messages of the narrative.

The analysis of O. Henry's short stories demonstrates that collocations serve as effective lexical cohesion devices that contribute to the unity and coherence of literary discourse. Through the use of natural word combinations, O. Henry skillfully connects ideas, builds vivid imagery, and maintains the smooth flow of the narrative.

Collocations not only enrich the aesthetic quality of the stories but also help readers follow the progression of events and understand the deeper meanings within the text. Therefore, collocations play a vital role in achieving lexical cohesion in short stories and offer valuable insights for both literary analysis and language teaching.



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