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THE ROLE OF SYNONYMS AND ANTONYMS AS MARKERS OF LEXICAL COHESION IN SHORT **STORIES**

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Key words: discourse, coherence, grammatical cohesion, lexical cohesion, synonym, antonym, connotation, marker.



The investigation of cohesion and coherence in discourse has been explored from various theoretical perspectives. These approaches draw on different linguistic, cognitive, social and functional frameworks, each offering unique insights into how meaning is created and maintained in discourse. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), developed by Michael Halliday, emphasizes the functions of language in communication. Halliday views language as a tool for social communication, emphasizing how language serves various functions in specific contexts. He integrates functional and social aspects of language use, viewing cohesion and coherence as context-dependent processes that help convey meanings in particular settings [1, 7]. This approach views cohesion as the way language is used to achieve specific communicative purposes. Cohesion is analyzed through cohesive devices that connect ideas and actions, such as reference. conjunctions and chains. Coherence is understood as the logical consistency of ideas, where sentences are structured to fulfill a communicative function in a context.

Halliday distinguishes cohesion as the linguistic elements that link text and create its internal connectedness. He focuses on cohesive devices, such as (pronouns), reference substitution, conjunctions distinguishing them as grammatical cohesion and lexical

cohesion, repetition, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, meronymy and collocations among others. According Halliday, cohesion is achieved through the use of functional devices that make meaning possible across a text, with a focus on how meaning is built through these devices in context. Cohesion, thus, is viewed as dynamic and interactional, emerging from the context in which it is used. And coherence is the logical and semantic connections between ideas, which can be achieved not only through linguistic devices but also through the context of situation and the social functions that language performs. Coherence is deeply tied to the register (field, tenor and mode) and the speaker's intention in a communicative context. Coherence in SFL is meaning-based, dependent on the interpretation of the discourse by the participants, and the language plays functional roles conveying meaning, rather than just following strict syntactic rules [1, 8].

This article investigates lexical cohesion analyzing how the author plays with words in short stories. It involves examining how the use of similar and opposite words contributes to the text's coherence, thematic development and character portrayal as well as provides insight into how the author uses these linguistic tools to enhance the narrative, create contrast, and enrich the story's thematic elements. "Two Thanksgiving



Day Gentlemen" by O.Henry was chosen as an object of investigation.

"Two In *Thanksgiving* Gentlemen" the of use synonyms contributes to the story's stylistic richness and helps avoid repetition while reinforcing certain themes, such as tradition, generosity and social obligation. By using synonyms, O.Henry maintains narrative variety, ensuring that the reader remains engaged and that key concepts are presented from different perspectives. In the story, O. Henry carefully selects synonyms to highlight nuances character actions, feelings and the social dynamics of the situation. The use of synonyms helps underline the recurring themes in the story, such as tradition, the hunger, and tension between generosity and discomfort.

The concept of *generosity* is central to the story, as the old gentleman annually treats the poor man to a Thanksgiving meal. O. Henry uses various terms to express this idea, each with subtle differences in connotation. "Kindness" and "Charity" are used to describe the old gentleman's act of feeding man. While "kindness" the poor emphasizes the personal, emotional motivation behind the action, "charity" suggests a more formal, perhaps dutydriven, form of giving. Example: It was out of kindness that he fed him every year, but the poor man took the charity with mixed feelings [2, 8]. The subtle difference here is that kindness feels more intimate and selfless, whereas charity may carry a sense of obligation or formality.

Next examples are "generosity" and "benevolence", both suggest a giving nature, but "benevolence" has a slightly more formal and perhaps distant tone compared to "generosity." "Generosity" focuses on the old man's willingness to give, while "benevolence" adds an element of moral or social responsibility. Example: The old man's generosity was well-known, but his act of benevolence this year left the poor man feeling uneasy [2, 9].

The theme of hunger overindulgence is also explored through various synonyms. These terms allow O.Henry to describe the poor man's fluctuating state of physical discomfort in different ways. "Hungry" and "famished", both describe the poor man's condition before the meal, but "famished" conveys a stronger, more urgent need for food. Example: The man was hungry when he arrived at the park, but by the time the old gentleman invited him, he was already famished [2, 11]. "Famished" adds a more dramatic tone to his state of hunger, increasing the reader's empathy for his situation. "Full" and "stuffed" are other synonyms and they describe the poor physical discomfort overeating. While "full" is a more neutral term, "stuffed" suggests more extreme and uncomfortable state. Example: He was already full after his second Thanksgiving meal, but after the old man's feast, he felt completely stuffed [2, 11]. In "stuffed" this example conveys the physical burden of overeating and foreshadows the poor man's discomfort in trying to please the old gentleman.

The story's plot revolves around the yearly tradition of the old man feeding the poor man on Thanksgiving. O. Henry uses a variety of terms to describe the sense of feel duty both characters toward continuing this practice.

"Duty" and "obligation" refer to the sense of responsibility the old man feels toward feeding the poor man. "Duty" suggests a moral or social requirement, while "obligation" feels more formal and perhaps less willing. "Obligation" introduces the idea that the tradition may no longer be entirely voluntary, hinting at the burden of the ritual. Example: The old gentleman considered it his duty to help the poor man, but after so many years, it had become more of an obligation [2, 8].

"Tradition" and "custom" refer to the repeated yearly event, but "tradition" conveys a stronger sense of emotional connection to the past, while "custom"



can feel more routine and mechanical. The shift from "tradition" to "custom" highlights how what was once meaningful may have become an empty ritual over time. Example: It was their Thanksgiving tradition to meet each year, but the old man continued the custom more out of habit than joy [2, 8].

Both characters experience internal conflict: the poor man wants to refuse the meal, but doesn't want to offend the old man, the old man feels compelled to continue the tradition, even though it may no longer bring him joy. O. Henry uses various synonyms to express these conflicting emotions. "Reluctant" and "hesitant" are the words describe the poor man's unwillingness to accept the meal, but "reluctant" suggests a stronger resistance, while "hesitant" implies a moment of indecision. The use of these synonyms shows the poor conflicting feelings, making his internal struggle more complex. Example: The poor man felt reluctant to eat again, yet he was hesitant to decline the old man's offer [2, 11].

The synonyms as "Grateful" and "appreciative" express the poor man's feelings toward the old man's generosity, "grateful" is deeper and more "appreciative" heartfelt, while slightly less intense. The subtle difference here shows that while the poor man feels deeply indebted, he may not fully enjoy or want the gift anymore. Example: He was grateful for the old gentleman's kindness, though he wasn't sure how appreciative he could be of yet another heavy meal [2, 10]. The frequent use of synonyms allows O. Henry to avoid repetition while discussing key themes of generosity, tradition, and obligation. For instance, instead of repeatedly saying "generosity," he uses terms like "kindness" and "benevolence" to keep the language fresh and engaging for readers. Each synonym brings with it a slightly different connotation, allowing O. Henry to add nuance to the characters' emotions and actions. For example, the difference between "stuffed" and "full" or

"tradition" and "custom" helps deepen the reader's understanding of the characters' discomfort or the evolution of their relationship over time. synonyms to express emotions like reluctance, duty, gratitude, O. Henry is able to depict the inner conflicts of his more characters effectively. The variations in word choice reveal layers of feelings - such as the poor man's conflicting sense of gratitude discomfort, or the old man's tension between duty and genuine desire to help. The use of synonyms helps to underscore the irony of the situation. For instance, words like "kindness," "charity" and "benevolence" suggest positive actions, yet they lead to discomfort and obligation both characters. The differences in these words help O. Henry emphasize that what seems to be an act of generosity may also be a source of burden.

"TwoIn *Thanksqiving* Dau Gentlemen," O. Henry's use of synonyms plays an essential role in enriching the language of the story, adding nuance to the characters' emotions and motivations. By carefully selected words with similar but slightly meanings connotations, O. Henry is able to avoid repetition, maintain narrative variety and explore the complex emotional terrain of his characters. The synonyms deepen the thematic exploration of tradition. generosity, and the burdens of social expectation, helping to create a layered and cohesive narrative

The next lexical cohesive device is no less as productive as synonym it is antonym. O. Henry in his story used antonyms effectively to emphasize the contrasts between characters, situations and themes. By juxtaposing opposing ideas and actions, O. Henry highlights the irony, emotional tension and the broader social commentary embedded in the story. The use of antonyms helps to sharpen the contrasts between generosity and discomfort, tradition and change, and



hunger and fullness, all of which are central to the narrative.

One of the most obvious and central contrasts in the story is between "hunger" and "fullness". The poor man, initially hungry, becomes uncomfortably full after being fed by the old gentleman. This shift from hunger to fullness not only affects the poor man's physical state but also represents the complex emotions tied to obligation. generosity and beginning of the story, the poor man is hungry, and by the end, he is full to the point of discomfort. Example: He came to the park each year, always hungry for his Thanksgiving feast, but this time, by the end of the meal, he was more than just full - he was stuffed beyond comfort [2, 10]. This contrast illustrates the irony of how the act of kindness, which was meant to satisfy his hunger, ultimately leads to discomfort physical and emotional unease.

The poor man initially faces the threat of starvation, yet after his multiple Thanksgiving meals, he has overindulged. Example: Earlier in the day, he had worried about whether he might starve before finding a meal, but now he felt as if he had overindulged beyond his limits [2, 11]. This pairing emphasizes the extreme change in his situation, from desperation to excess, and highlights the tension between necessity and abundance.

The contrast between "generosity" "obligation" is central to the relationship between the old gentleman and the poor man. The old gentleman's yearly act of feeding the poor man starts as a gesture of kindness but eventually becomes a social obligation. Similarly, the poor man, while grateful for the meal, feels obligated to accept it, even when he no longer truly needs or wants it. The old man's actions are generous, but the repetition of the tradition becomes almost selfish in its burden on both characters, who feel trapped by the expectation. Example: Though the old man's gesture seemed generous at first, it became clear that his insistence on continuing the tradition had a hint of selfishness - he did it to maintain his own sense of fulfillment, without considering the poor man's comfort [2, 10]. This contrast underscores the emotional complexity of the tradition, where generosity can paradoxically lead to discomfort for both the giver and the recipient.

In the next example while the old gentleman believes he is acting out of kindness, his repeated gestures have become a burden to both him and the poor man. Example: What once felt like an act of kindness had turned into a burden a heavy weight they both carried, year after year, with neither willing to break the ritua. [2, 11]. This pairing reveals the tension between intention and impact, showing how a well-meaning act can become an uncomfortable obligation.

The story centers around the idea of tradition - the yearly Thanksgiving ritual that the old gentleman and the poor man have followed for nine years. However, the continuation of this tradition stands in stark contrast to the idea of change or breaking the cvcle, which neither feels able character to do. The Thanksgiving feast is a deeply traditional act, tied to the old man's sense of duty, but the world around them is becoming more modern and less tied to these customs.

Example: As the world outside embraced more modern ways celebrating, the old man clung tightly to his traditional Thanksgiving routine [2, 8]. This contrast highlights the old man's attachment to the past and his reluctance to adapt to a changing world, which adds a sense of nostalgia and resistance to the story.

The readers can see in the story that the old gentleman insists on consistency in his Thanksgiving tradition, while the poor man wishes for change - a break from the ritual that no longer serves him.

Example: Year after year, they maintained the consistency of their



Thanksgiving meeting, even though both secretly yearned for a change in the routine [2, 8]. The juxtaposition of consistency and change reflects the characters' internal struggles with their in this repetitive tradition, suggesting a deeper desire to break free from the expectations placed on them.

The further example is between "grateful" and "resentful". The poor man gratitude for gentleman's generosity, yet over time, this gratitude is tinged with resentment as the yearly meal becomes less of a blessing and more of a burden. At first, the poor man feels grateful for the meal, but by the end of the story, he is somewhat resentful of the expectation that he must continue accepting it.

Example: Though he was grateful for the old man's gesture, a small part of him had grown resentful of the yearly obligation, which left him feeling trapped [2, 9]. This contrast explores the complex emotions involved in receiving charity, where gratitude can coexist with feelings of resentment when the act of giving becomes an imposed duty.

The next pair of antonyms are "appreciation" and "discomfort". The poor man expresses appreciation for the old man's continued kindness, but he also feels growing discomfort as he is forced to eat yet another meal he doesn't need. Example: He voiced his appreciation for the old man's meal, but his body betrayed his growing discomfort with every bite he forced down [2, 9]. This pairing highlights the physical and emotional strain of the poor man's situation, torn between appreciation for the old man's intentions discomfort with the practical and consequences of overeating.

One of the hallmarks of O. Henry's stories is irony and antonyms which help underscore this irony by presenting stark contrasts. The shift from hunger to fullness and from gratitude to resentment reflects the paradox of the poor man's situation - he receives food and kindness, but these acts ultimately cause him

discomfort unease. and The old gentleman's generosity becomes a burden for both himself and the poor man, emphasizing how good intentions can unintended consequences. lead to Antonyms also help to reinforce the story's central themes. The contrast between tradition and change reflects the characters' internal conflicts and their reluctance to break free from established The story explores patterns. consistency in tradition can sometimes lead to stagnation, while a desire for change remains unfulfilled.

These opposites deepen the reader's understanding of the emotional and psychological tensions within the characters. The use of antonyms creates sense of tension in the story, particularly in the poor man's internal struggle. His gratitude for the old man's charity is undercut by a growing sense of resentment as he feels obligated to continue participating in the tradition. Similarly, the old man's kindness is in conflict with the burden it places on both emotional characters, creating an complexity that makes the story's resolution more poignant. In "Two Thanksgiving Day Gentlemen" O. Henry uses antonyms to create contrasts that deepen the emotional complexity of the story. The juxtaposition of 'hunger' and 'fullness', 'generosity' and 'obligation', 'tradition' and 'change' highlight the irony and tension that drive the narrative. These opposites reflect the characters' internal struggles and help to explore the broader themes of social obligation, charity, and the weight of tradition. Through the use of antonyms, O. Henry effectively conveys the bittersweet nature of the Thanksgiving ritual, making the story both humorous and thoughtprovoking.

In conclusion we can say, synonyms and antonyms play a crucial role as markers of lexical cohesion in short creating bv meaningful connections between words, sentences and larger units of text. Through the



strategic use of synonyms, writers ensure the continuity of ideas and avoid unnecessary repetition, thereby enriching narrative with lexical Antonyms, on the other hand, introduce contrasts and oppositions that enhance the dynamism of the story and clarify relationships between concepts. Together, these lexical devices contribute significantly to the coherence and unity of the text, guiding readers smoothly through the narrative. Thus, the careful selection and placement of synonyms and antonyms are essential tools for authors to maintain cohesion, convey nuanced meanings, and engage readers effectively within the compact structure of short stories.

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Саидова М. Роль синонимов и антонимов как маркеров лексической когезии в коротких рассказах. Лексическая когезия играет ключевую роль в создании связности текста, особенно в художественном прозе. В данном исследовании рассматривается использование синонимов и антонимов как маркеров лексической когезии в коротких рассказах О Генри. Анализ проводится с позиций функционального подхода, что позволяет выявить их влияние на восприятие и интерпретацию текста. Результаты исследования показывают, что синонимы и антонимы не только связывают отдельные элементы текста, но и способствуют его семантической целостности, облегчая понимание читателем.

Saidova M. Qisqa hikoyalarda leksik uygʻunlik belgisi sifatida sinonim va antonimlarning roli. Badiiy diskursda leksik kohesiya matnning yaxlitligini ta'minlashda muhim rol oʻynaydi. Ushbu maqolada O Henrining qisqa hikoyalarida sinonim va antonimlarning leksik kohesiya vositasi sifatida qoʻllanilishi tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot funksional yondashuv asosida olib borilib, ularning matnni idrok etish va talqin qilishdagi oʻrnini ochib beradi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni koʻrsatadiki, sinonim va antonimlar nafaqat matnning turli qismlarini bogʻlaydi, balki uning semantik yaxlitligini ta'minlab, oʻquvchining tushunishini osonlashtiradi.