

Article

Frame Analysis of The Literary Text

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Abstract: This article examines the application of frame analysis within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics to the interpretation of literary discourse. The study focuses on a fragment from *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck and analyzes the cognitive structures underlying the representation of wealth, social mobility, material gains, and literacy. The research is based on the theoretical foundations of frame semantics developed in Cognitive Linguistics by scholars such as Charles J. Fillmore and other representatives of cognitive science. The analysis demonstrates that the pearl functions as a central cognitive trigger activating a hierarchically organized system of frames and subframes. The study reveals how literary meaning is constructed through the interaction of linguistic expression, conceptual structures, and socio-cultural knowledge. The findings confirm that frame analysis serves as an effective methodological tool for the cognitive interpretation of literary texts and contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between language, cognition, and literary representation.

Keywords: Anthropocentric Paradigm, Cognitive Linguistics, Knowledge Structures, Frame Analysis, Literary Discourse, Frame, Higher Level, Component, Slots, Subslots, Superordinate Level, Subordinate Level, Subframe, *The Pearl*, John Steinbeck

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1. Introduction

The establishment of the anthropocentric paradigm led to the formation of new scientific disciplines, particularly within the field of linguistics. As anthropocentric linguistics focuses on the study of the “human factor” in language, language itself should be examined in close interrelation with human - oriented disciplines such as psychology, pragmatics, culturology, sociology, and cognitive science. Consequently, the interaction of linguistics with these fields has led to the emergence of new branches within linguistics, including psycholinguistics, communicative linguistics, linguopragmatics, sociolinguistics, linguoculturology, and cognitive linguistics.

Literature Review

Cognitive Linguistics is regarded as one of the most relevant and influential directions in contemporary linguistics, occupying a prominent place in modern language studies. It investigates the relationship between language, human cognition, and conceptualization, examining how individuals perceive, categorize, interpret, and represent the surrounding world through language. Although cognitive linguistics is considered a relatively new field, its theoretical foundations can be traced back to the works of prominent scholars such as Wilhelm von Humboldt, Alexander A. Potebnya, Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, Louis Hjelmslev, Edward Sapir, Benjamin Lee Whorf, and Noam Chomsky. Since the late twentieth century, the field has been substantially developed through the contributions of leading representatives of both Western and CIS linguistic schools, including Charles J. Fillmore, George Lakoff, Ronald Langacker, Leonard Talmy, Elena S. Kubryakova, Nikolai N. Boldyrev, Valery Z. Demyankov, Vladimir I. Karasik,

Dilfuza U. Ashurova, Shavkat Safarov, M. R. Galieva, and N. M. Dzhusupov. Their research has played a significant role in establishing cognitive linguistics as an independent branch of linguistic science and in further advancing its theoretical framework. One of the fundamental objectives of Cognitive Linguistics is to examine the ways in which knowledge is structured in the human mind and represented through language. In this respect, the notion of knowledge structure occupies a particularly significant place within cognitive linguistic research, as it explains the processes of conceptualization and categorization through which individuals perceive and interpret reality. Moreover, knowledge structures provide a theoretical framework for investigating the linguistic worldview constructed by means of language.

2. Materials and Methods

The foundations of this notion were first established in cognitive psychology by Frederic C. Bartlett, who argued that human beings possess core knowledge in the form of unconscious mental structures. According to his view, this pre-existing knowledge interacts with newly acquired information and gives rise to schemas [1]. The concept was later reinterpreted by Marvin Minsky, who proposed that human knowledge is represented and stored in memory in the form of frames [2]. Subsequently, the notion of the frame gained widespread recognition and became one of the central concepts in cognitive linguistic theory. From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, knowledge is assumed to exist in the human mind in a systematically structured form and to be manifested through various cognitive models, including frames, concepts, scenarios, scripts, and other mental constructs. These cognitive models organize and systematize information within human consciousness and play a crucial role in the comprehension and interpretation of the surrounding world. More specifically, they facilitate the organization, storage, processing, and retrieval of information in the course of human cognitive activity.

Within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics, the concept of the frame occupies a central position among the principal models of knowledge structures. The theoretical foundations of this model were first elaborated by Charles J. Fillmore [3], who conceptualized knowledge as a cognitive schema grounded in specific experiential situations. In this regard, a frame may be defined as a structured cognitive model that systematizes knowledge about typical situations and experiences encountered in human life. There are many definitions offered by various scholars for “frame”: “holistically conceived multicomponent concept reflecting clichéd situations in the totality of corresponding standard knowledge, extensive representations, and all stable associations” [4]; “voluminous, usually hierarchically organized, multicomponent concept representing a ‘package’ of information, knowledge about a stereotypical situation” [5]; “A frame is a cognitive structure that represents knowledge about a stereotypical situation and forms the basis of processes of understanding and interpretation” [6]; Through frames, which represent “packages of knowledge” or information stored in memory, the cognitive interpretation of standard situations is carried out, which implies the adequate establishment of connections between conceptual objects in memory [7]. “A frame as a set of linguistic units and relations organized around a concept” [8]. Despite certain differences in the definitions provided by various scholars, they converge on the general conclusion that a frame is a cognitive model representing knowledge of stereotypical situations within human cognition. In the study of frames, special emphasis is placed on their structural organization. A frame is generally composed of three main elements: 1 a higher-level component, i.e., the frame name; 2 slots, which denote the principal constituents of a given situation; and 3 sub-slot structures, which further specify the attributes of slot components [9]. Scholars stress that frames play a crucial role in the interpretation of literary texts, as they make it possible to uncover knowledge about textual situations that are imbued with subjective and evaluative meaning. During text interpretation, frames are activated. In this process, a particular structural configuration of

the frame is triggered under the influence of linguistic units that constitute it. This configuration is hierarchically organized, comprising a superordinate level the frame name and subordinate levels subframes. The internal organization of a frame is realized through a system of subframes, represented by a network of semantic nodes slots and the semantic and structural relations among them [10]. It should be emphasized that frame elements are interdependent and collectively constitute an integrated cognitive system. While some elements are explicitly expressed in the text, others remain implicit and are reconstructed through the reader's cultural and cognitive background knowledge. These elements facilitate the identification of semantic relations within the text and contribute to a more profound understanding of the author's intent.

3. Results and Discussion

A key focus of this research is the examination of how frame analysis is applied in literary discourse. Therefore, we will consider specific examples that illustrate frame-based interpretation in selected passages from John Steinbeck's *The Pearl*. Before turning to the analysis it's essential to acknowledge factual information of the novel. *The Pearl* is a short novel often referred to as a novella written by American author John Steinbeck and first published in 1947. The story is based on a Mexican folktale that Steinbeck had previously encountered and adapted into a literary narrative. The story follows Kino, a poor pearl diver, who discovers an extraordinarily large and valuable pearl, later called the "Pearl of the World." He believes the pearl will bring wealth and a better future for his family. However, instead of prosperity, the pearl attracts greed, violence, and misfortune, ultimately leading to tragedy. [11]

"... Kino looked into his *pearl*, and Juana cast her eyelashes down and arranged her shawl to cover her face so that her excitement could not be seen. And in the incandescence of the pearl the pictures formed of the things Kino's mind had considered in the past and had given up as impossible. In the pearl he saw Juana and Coyotito and himself standing and kneeling at the high altar, and they were being married now that they could pay. He spoke softly, "We will be married – in the church." In the pearl he saw how they were dressed– Juana in a shawl stiff with newness and a new skirt, and from under the long skirt Kino could see that she wore shoes. It was in the pearl – the picture glowing there. He himself was dressed in new white clothes, and he carried a new hat – not of straw but of fine black felt – and he too wore shoes – not sandals but shoes that laced. But Coyotito – he was the one – he wore a blue sailor suit from the United States and a little yachting cap such as Kino had seen once when a pleasure boat put into the estuary. All of these things Kino saw in the lucent pearl and he said, "We will have new clothes." [12] And the music of the pearl rose like a chorus of trumpets in his ears.

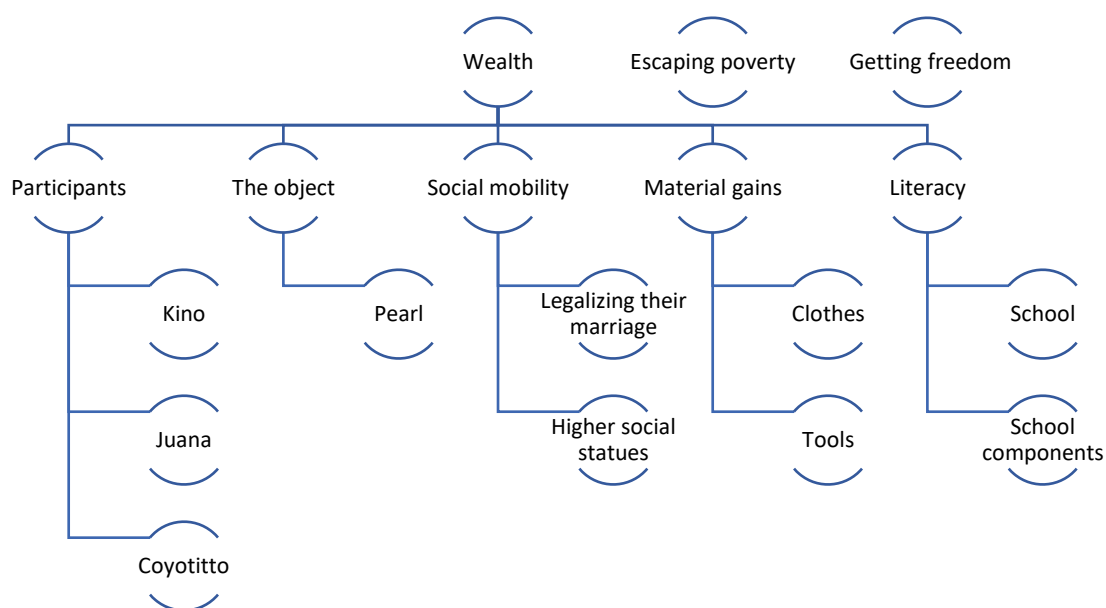
Then to the lovely gray surface of the pearl came the little things Kino wanted: a harpoon to take the place of one lost a year ago, a new harpoon of iron with a ring in the end of the shaft; and – his mind could hardly make the leap – a rifle – but why not, since he was so rich. And Kino saw Kino in the pearl, Kino holding a Winchester carbine. It was the wildest daydreaming and very pleasant. His lips moved hesitantly over this – "A rifle," he said. "Perhaps a rifle." [13]

In the pearl he saw Coyotito sitting at a little desk in a school, just as Kino had once seen it through an open door. And Coyotito was dressed in a jacket, and he had on a white collar and a broad silken tie. Moreover, Coyotito was writing on a big piece of paper. Kino looked at his neighbors fiercely. "My son will go to school," he said, and the neighbors were hushed. Juana caught her breath sharply. Her eyes were bright as she watched him, and she looked quickly down at Coyotito in her arms to see whether this might be possible. But Kino's face shone with prophecy. "My son will read and open the books, and my son will write and will know writing. And my son will make numbers, and these things will make us free because he will know– he will know and through him we will know." And in the pearl Kino saw himself and Juana squatting by the little fire in the brush hut while

Coyotito read from a great book. "This is what the pearl will do," said Kino. And he had never said so many words together in his life." [14]

The fragment from *The Pearl* is composed of 2 layers. The higher level can be interpreted through Wealth, in which the pearl functions as a central cognitive trigger and the symbol impacts on participants and activates a structured network of social mobility, material gains and literacy. The internal structure of the frame is organized into several interconnected subframes such as participants Kino, Juana and Coyotitto, the object the pearl, social mobility legalizing their marriage, material gains clothes, a harpoon, a rifle and literacy school, reading, writing. First of all, within this frame, Kino operates as the primary experiencer and interpreter, whose perception of the pearl generates an expanding field of imagined possibilities, while Juana functions as a secondary emotional participant who responds with restrained awareness and cautious hope. Coyotito is projected as the future beneficiary, symbolizing generational uplift through education and social integration. Next, The pearl itself occupies the role of a triggering object, characterized by luminous "*the incandescence of the pearl*", "*the picture glowing there*", "*the lovely gray surface of the pearl*", "*the lucent pearl*" and auditory "*the music of the pearl rose like a chorus of trumpets in his ears*" metaphors that intensify its cognitive salience and enable the visualization of alternative realities. Moreover, social mobility subframe enables legalizing their marriage standing and kneeling at the high altar, being married, the church. Furthermore, material gains subframe foregrounds slots as the acquisition of status markers such as new clothing a shawl, a new long skirt, shoes for Juana; new white clothes, glowing shoes with laces, new hat of fine black felt for Kino; church clothes a blue sailor suit from United States, a little yachting cap and school clothes jacket, a white collar, a broad silken tie for Coyotitto and tools of survival and power including a harpoon and a rifle. Parallel to this, the literacy subframe constructs entry into the educational system school and its components a little desk, an open door, reading writing, making numbers, a big piece of paper, books, clothes for school. Ultimately, the ideological outcome of this frame is the construction of an imagined trajectory from poverty to freedom, where knowledge, institutional recognition, and economic elevation converge into a coherent vision of generational transformation mediated by the symbolic force of the pearl.[15]

The frame of the fragment can be schematically presented as:



It's note to mention that the frame analysis not only clarifies the cognitive mechanisms underlying Kino's interpretation of the pearl but also illustrates how literary discourse encodes culturally shaped knowledge systems. It further confirms that meaning

in literary texts emerges through dynamic interactions between linguistic expression, cognitive structures, and socio-cultural experience.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study demonstrates that frame analysis constitutes an effective methodological approach for the cognitive interpretation of literary discourse. The analysis of the selected fragment from *The Pearl* reveals that the representation of the pearl is constructed through a hierarchically organized system of cognitive frames and subframes that verbalize culturally conditioned perceptions of wealth, social mobility, material gains and literacy. The study further shows that literary meaning emerges not only from explicitly expressed linguistic units but also from implicit conceptual structures reconstructed through the reader's background knowledge and cognitive experience. In this respect, the wealth frame activated in the fragment organizes Kino's imagined reality and reflects the interaction between individual aspirations and socially significant value systems. Moreover, the analysis confirms that frame structures serve as important mechanisms for the conceptual organization of literary meaning, enabling the representation of complex psychological, cultural, and ideological dimensions of the text. Therefore, the application of frame analysis within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between language, cognition, and literary representation, while also expanding the interpretative potential of literary text analysis.

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