

Narrative Language Microstructure Analysis

VDOE Training Webinar

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Note to Participants

This webinar is the third in a three part series on narrative analysis available from the Virginia Department of Education at www.doe.virginia.gov

Recall: Narrative Assessment Processes

Elicit narrative sample(s)
Transcribe
Analyze
Interpret

Overview of Narration

- Macrostructure
 - Story Grammar
 - Episodic Complexity
- Microstructure

Narrative Microstructure

WEAVING TOGETHER THE IDEAS IN A STORY TO CREATE A UNIFIED AND COHERENT WHOLE.

SENTENCE INTERNAL ELEMENTS

ALSO ENCOMPASSES THE CREATIVITY AND CAPTIVATION OF STORIES

Overview of Narration

- Macrostructure
- Microstructure
 - Cohesion
 - Sentence Structure Complexity
 - Lexical Diversity & Complexity

Cohesion

LINGUISTIC TIES THAT CONNECT STORY PIECES ACROSS
MULTIPLE UTTERANCES

Cohesion

How each proposition or statement relates to the text as a whole.

1. Conjunctive cohesion
 - ✦ Coordinating forms (e.g., and, but, so)
 - ✦ Adverbial forms (e.g., next, later, therefore)
2. Referential cohesion
 - ✦ Personal pronouns (e.g., she, he, they, we, us)
 - ✦ Demonstrative pronouns (e.g., that, this, these, those)

Development of Cohesion

- Cohesive narratives around 6-8 yrs of age
- Adolescence –
 - Sophistication in use of cohesion continues to develop
 - Increase in:
 - ✦ Frequency and variety of forms
 - ✦ Distance between cohesive ties
 - Reductions in ambiguity.

Assessing Cohesion

- Analyze the narrative sample for the types and frequency of conjunctive and **referential** cohesion
- Note the distances between **referential** ties.

Mary was baking cookies in the kitchen. She thought that it was the perfect day to bake because it was rainy and cold outside. The oven was warm and the smell was heavenly. These need more salt, she thought after tasting one.

Assessing Cohesion

- Analyze the narrative sample for the types and frequency of conjunctive and **referential** cohesion
- Note the distances between **referential** ties.

*Mary was baking **cookies** in the kitchen. **She** thought that it was the perfect day to bake because it was rainy and cold outside. The oven was warm and the smell was heavenly. **These** need more salt, **she** thought after tasting **one**.*

Assessing Cohesion

- Analyze the narrative sample for the types and frequency of conjunctive and **referential** cohesion
- Note the distances between referential ties.
- Also look for instances of ambiguity in referential cohesion

*Bill was at the park. Then **John** arrived. The score was close. So the game was really fun. Too bad **he** had to go home early.*

Overview of Narration

- Macrostructure
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 - Sentence Structure Complexity
 - Lexical Diversity & Complexity

Sentence Structure Complexity

SIMPLE
ELABORATED
COMPOUND
COMPLEX

Simple Sentences

- One **independent** clause (a.k.a. **main** clause)
 - “A subject and a predicate”
 - “A noun phrase and a verb phrase in a subject-predicate relationship”
 - Expresses a complete idea
 - One main verb

A man sat on the chair.

Elaborated Simple Sentences

- One **independent** clause
- One main verb
- Expanded noun phrase(s) &/or verb phrase

A cranky, old man rocked quietly to sleep in the afternoon sunshine on grandmother’s soft antique chair.

Compound Sentences

- 2 or more **independent** clauses connected by a coordinating conjunction
 - And, but, or, so
- Each independent clause has a main verb.

Tom ate cookies but Sally drank milk.

Compound Sentences

- 2 or more **independent** clauses

*****each clause could stand alone*****

Tom ate cookies but Sally drank milk.

Complex Sentences

- An **independent** clause with dependent clause(s)
- Dependent clauses
 - Clausal structure (subject + predicate)
 - Would not make sense alone.
 - Serve to support the main clause (explain, complete, describe)

The boy who ate cookies sat alone.

Complex Sentences

- **Independent** clause expresses the main idea
- Dependent clause
 - Logically linked to the main clause but express a lesser idea
 - Incomplete without the main clause
- Types of dependent clauses
 - Subordinate clauses
 - Clausal complements
 - Relative clauses

Complex Sentences

- Subordination
 - The dependent clause begins with a subordinating conjunction.

“Goldilocks made sure nobody was home before she ate the porridge.”

“If you want to catch the rabbit, you have to sneak up behind him.”

- Variable location

Common Subordinating Conj

after	although	as	as if
as long as	as much as	as soon as	as though
because	before	even if	even though
how	if	in as much as	in order that
lest	now that	provided (that)	since
so (that)	than	that	though
till ('til)	unless	until	when
whenever	where	wherever	while

Notice: many of these are adverbials that indicate time

Complex Sentences

- Clausal Complements
 - An idea or suggestion is opened in the main clause **and**
 - Completed by a subject and predicate (which form the dependent clause)

He suggested they eat on the picnic table.

Complex Sentences

- Clausal Complements
 - An idea or suggestion is opened in the main clause **and**
 - Completed by a subject and predicate (which form the dependent clause)
 - Usually follow verbs of
 - ✦ Communication: say, whisper, scream
 - ✦ Cognition: think, know, wonder, wish

Complex Sentences

- Clausal Complements
 - I **know** the store isn't open yet.
 - He **said** she was very funny.
 - They **wished** the show would start.
 - We **believed** this school year was fun.

Complex Sentences

- Not S+V+O
 - I **know** him.
 - He **said** hello to me.
 - They **wished** for rain.
 - We **believed** the story.
- The idea opened in the main clause must be finished by another **clause**.

Complex Sentences

- Clausal Complements
 - I **know** the store isn't open yet.
 - He **said** she was very funny.
 - They **wished** the show would start.
 - We **believed** this school year was fun.

Complex Sentences

- Clausal Complements
 - I **knew** you couldn't stay angry with him for long.
 - The doctor **said** she couldn't eat pie.
 - All of the silly children **thought** the teacher was playing a joke on them.
- (pause to deconstruct the clausal constituents)

Complex Sentences

- Clausal Complements
 - I **knew** you couldn't stay angry with him for long.
 - The doctor **said** she couldn't eat pie.
 - All of the silly children **thought** the teacher was playing a joke on them.

Complex Sentences

- Relative Clauses
 - The dependent clause gives more information about the main clause
- 2 types
 - Subjective - *The boy who told on you got in trouble at recess.*
 - Objective - *I saw the boy who told on you.*

Complex Sentences

- Subjective relative clauses
 - Add a clause that tells more about the subject of the main clause

The boy who told on you got in trouble at recess.

- Main clause: *The boy got in trouble at recess.*
- Dependent clause: *who told on you*

Complex Sentences

- Subjective relative clauses
 - Add a clause that tells more about the subject of the main clause

The boy who told on you got in trouble at recess.

- Main clause
- Dependent clause

Complex Sentences

- Objective relative clauses
 - Add a clause that tells more about the object of the main clause

I saw the boy who told on you.

- Main clause: *I saw the boy.*
- Dependent clause: *who told on you*

Complex Sentences

- Always have 1 or more dependent clauses in addition to the **independent** clause
 - Subordinated clause
 - Clausal complement
 - Subjective relative clause
 - Objective relative clause

Compound-Complex Sentences

- At least **2 independent** clauses joined by a **coordinating conjunction**, and 1 or more dependent clause.

*When it rains, Jack watches sports on tv, **but** Julie bakes cookies.*

*The team wept with joy **and** the fans cheered because the final score was not even close.*

Assessing Sentence Structure

- Analyze the narrative sample for the type, frequency, and adequacy of sentence patterns:
 - Simple sentences
 - Elaborated simple sentences
 - Compound sentences
 - Complex sentences
 - Compound-complex sentences

Overview of Narration

- Macrostructure
- Microstructure
 - Cohesion
 - Sentence Structure Complexity
 - Lexical Diversity & Complexity

Lexical Diversity & Complexity

ANALYZING WORD CHOICES

Lexical Diversity & Complexity

- Sentence conjoining and embedding
 - Coordinating conjunctions
 - ✦ Basic: and, but, or, so
 - ✦ Plus: for, nor, yet (“FANBOYS”)
 - Subordinating conjunctions
 - ✦ Basic: if, before, because
 - ✦ Plus: although, since, while, unless
 - ✦ Advanced: whereas, whenever, rather than

Lexical Diversity & Complexity

- Elaborated Noun Phrases
 - Initiator: only, almost, nearly, all, etc.,
 - Article: the, a, this, that, my, his, etc.,
 - Ordinal: first, last, final, etc.,
 - Quantifier: one, two, twelve, sixty, etc.,
 - Adjectives: big, blue, old, etc.
 - Noun: man, dog, house, etc.
 - Postmodifiers (such as prepositional phrases)

Only the one exquisitely talented princess in the tiny feudal village sang.

Lexical Diversity & Complexity

- Elaborated Verb Phrases (*= optional)
 - Tense and number
 - *Modals: can, may, shall, could, might, etc.,
 - *Perfect aspect (have + en)
 - *Progressive (auxiliary verb to be + ing)
 - Main verb
 - *Noun phrases

A princess *could have been chorally singing on the steeply inclined steps of the medieval castle.*

Lexical Diversity & Complexity

- Elaborated Noun & Verb Phrases reveal
 - Semantic skills
 - ✦ Breadth of vocabulary
 - ✦ Depth of vocabulary
 - Syntactic skills
 - Pragmatic skills
 - ✦ Registers & nuances
 - ✦ Story-telling genre

Lexical Diversity & Complexity

- Mental verbs
 - Thought, believed, hoped, wish, assume
- Linguistic verbs
 - Says, told, whispers, confided, announce
- Especially in dialogue and communicating macrostructure elements
- Theory of mind

Lexical Diversity & Complexity

- Adverbs, adverbial phrases, adverbial clauses

“Literate Language”

Examining Student Language

Basic Sentence	Literate Language
Goldilocks walked on the road and saw the bear’s house.	A little girl named Goldilocks was walking down the road when she saw the house where the three bears lived.
She knocked on the door and went in.	After knocking loudly on the door a few times, she opened it up very quietly and peeked in.

Recall: Narrative Assessment Processes

ELICIT NARRATIVE SAMPLE(S)
TRANSCRIBE
ANALYZE
INTERPRET

Analyzing Microstructure

- Microstructure Elements
 1. Cohesion
 2. Sentence Complexity
 3. Lexical Diversity & Complexity
- Tally types and frequencies
- Correct / errors / not attempted
- How does this compare to community expectations for peers?

A Sample Narrative

The girl in the purple dress, named Ann, was playing hopscotch. Then Beth, the girl sporting the green shirt, wanted to play too. Beth asked, “Can I play?”, but Ann would not let her have a turn. They were not going to be friends, so Beth went home for dinner.



Sample Narrative Worksheet

The girl in the purple dress, named Ann, was playing hopscotch. Then Beth, the girl sporting the green shirt, wanted to play too. Beth asked, "Can I play?", but Ann would not let her have a turn. They were not going to be friends, so Beth went home for dinner.

Identify Cohesion

The girl in the purple dress, named Ann, was playing hopscotch. Then Beth, the girl sporting the green shirt, wanted to play too. Beth asked, "Can I play?", **but*** Ann would not let her have a turn. They were not going to be friends, **so*** Beth went home for dinner.

*Examples of Conjunctive Cohesion

Identify Cohesion

The girl in the purple dress, named **Ann**, was playing hopscotch. Then **Beth**, the girl sporting the green shirt, wanted to play too. **Beth** asked, "Can I* play?", but **Ann** would not let **her*** have a turn. **They*** were not going to be friends, so **Beth** went home for dinner.

*Examples of referential cohesion: pronouns

Identify Sentence Structure

The girl in the purple dress, named Ann, was playing hopscotch. Then Beth, the girl sporting the green shirt, wanted to play too. *Beth asked, "Can I play?",* but Ann would not let her have a turn. They were not going to be friends, so Beth went home for dinner. Elaborated Simple Sentence
Clausal Complement Complex Coordinated

Identify Lexical Complexity

The girl in the purple dress, named Ann, was playing **hopscotch**. Then Beth, the girl **sporting** the green shirt, wanted to play too. Beth asked, "Can I play?", but Ann would not let her have a **turn**. They were not going to be friends, so Beth went home for dinner.

Sample Narrative #2

She playing game. She wants to play. She not sharing. She go home to eat.

- What evidence can you find in this sample that might indicate language difficulty?

Sample Narrative #2

She playing game. She wants to play. Her not sharing. She go home to eat.

- Possible evidence:
 - Ambiguous pronominal referencing
 - No complex sentences, elaborated phrases, or conjunctive cohesion
 - Omitted: articles, models, copulas
 - Pronominal errors
 - Lack of literate language, episodic structure

Evaluation Report

- Summarize:
 - How many samples, contexts
 - How the samples were elicited
 - Each area of microstructure
 - ✦ Counts of correct, incorrect productions
 - ✦ Stimulability, if probed
- Interpret: relative to typical expectations for community

Resources : Books

- Ezell, H. K., & Justice, L. M. (2008). *The syntax handbook: Everything you learned about syntax, but forgot!* Greenville, South Carolina: Thinking Publications.
- Hughes, D., McGillivray, L., Schmidek, M. (1997). *Guide to narrative language: Procedures for assessment*. Eau Claire, WI: Thinking Publications.
- Nippold, M. A. (2010). *Language Sampling with Adolescents*. San Diego: Plural Publishing.

Resources : Articles

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Thank You for Participating

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Additional Microstructure Reading Options

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Additional Microstructure Reading Options

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