

A Profile and Discourse Analysis of an English Short Story

Shin Ja Joo Hwang

This paper presents a discourse analysis of a short story written in English. It shows how the profile of the story with the peak correlates with other features of discourse, such as participant reference, verb ranking, cohesion and coherence, and clause combining.

While nominal forms are used to refer to participants, verb phrases signal different types of information, such as eventline and background. Cohesion and coherence are maintained through conjunctions, adverbial expressions, paraphrases and parallelism, and frame and script. Clause-combining devices are also analyzed.

1. Introduction

This paper takes a holistic approach to linguistics. We assume that units of language, such as noun phrases, particles, and tense, aspect, and mode, are better understood when we view them in their larger context. In this section we present some assumptions of the theoretical framework and a systematic charting method designed to reveal the discourse structure. In sections 2-3 we analyze a short story as a whole as to its macrostructure and its profile with discourse-level slots of stage, episodes, and closure. Then sections 4-8 deal with other relevant topics related to the profile: participant reference, verb and clause ranking, cohesion and coherence, and clause combining.

The discourse-level slots of a profile are correlated with narrative schematic slots such as the inciting incident, climax, and denouement. The climax of this story corresponds to the peak episode, in which normal rules of morphosyntax seem to be broken and various off-normal features occur. We might say that at peak the grammar of discourse

with its higher-order rules takes over the usual rules of the sentence grammar to reflect the notional tension.

In English, pronouns, noun phrases, and zero anaphora are used to refer to participants and props, depending on their rank and the discourse context. These nominal expressions combine with verb phrases to signal different types of information such as events, background, setting, and evaluation. For cohesion and coherence, we focus on conjunctions and other sequence signals, adverbial clauses and phrases (especially those occurring initially in the sentence), paraphrases and parallelism, and frame and script. A variety of clause-combining devices is used in the text: coordination, preposed or postposed adverbial clauses, and participial clauses with nonfinite forms of the verb. Relative clauses, while syntactically representing an embedding relation of a clause within a noun phrase, are sometimes used to report subsequent eventline information in English. We show how a specific type of clause-combining device occurs predominantly at a given discourse-level slot.

1.1. Assumptions

The theoretical framework applied to the analysis of this story is the discourse grammar model developed by Longacre (1996), with further developments and adaptations of my own. We present here some basic assumptions of the model.

First, a typology of discourse is necessary. Rules for one type may be different from those for another type. For example, in Biblical Hebrew the basic word order is VSO (verb-subject-object) in narrative discourse while it is SVO in expository.

Second, there is no randomness or free variation in the surface structure. Any morphosyntactic form in a text represents the author's choice, whether conscious or automatic. We ask questions of several types: *what* (forms and constructions), *how* (how a form is constructed), and *why* (why the form is used--for what purpose and in what function).

Third, the whole is greater than the sum total of its parts. In addition to the analysis of the parts, such as the word, phrase, clause, and sentence, a holistic approach is needed in order to see how the parts function in the whole text. The whole and the parts are mutually

elucidating, i.e., the parts need to be understood in their context. We believe that "comprehension of a story results from multiple processing, including top-down (use of schema) and bottom-up (use of content and cues provided by the text)" (Hwang 1984:136). There are three interacting factors in this holistic approach (Longacre 1981): "macro-structure" (the overall meaning and thrust), "texture" (peak and profile, mainline and supportive information, participant reference, and cohesion and coherence), and "constituent structure" (embedded discourses, paragraphs, sentences, clauses, etc.).

Finally, there are hierarchical levels in the grammar of language from morpheme and stem to word, phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph, and discourse. Each level has its own unique constituent structure, e.g., SVO in the clause level; reason and result in the paragraph; and stage, episode(s), and closure in the narrative discourse. A linguistic unit at any level is like a coin with two sides, one side being the slot/function in the larger structure, e.g., subject, and the other side being the filler/class (what it is in itself), e.g., a noun phrase. We believe that discourse analysis should be based on a solid analysis of the morphosyntax of the text, along with semantic and pragmatic concerns.

1.2. Charting of the Text for Systematic Display

Before we start our analysis, it is a good idea to chart the text in some systematic way so as to see its discourse linguistic structure. The story under study is charted following the method specially developed for discourse analysis (Longacre and Levinsohn 1978), with further modifications of my own.

Four basic columns are set up: introducer, preposed clause, independent clause, and postposed clause. The first column can be divided into two: sentence-initial introducers (e.g., *Then, Suddenly*) and sentence-medial (e.g., *and, but*). The former includes items especially relevant at the discourse level--those with cohesive function of grouping sentences together and marking boundaries of discourse-level slots like episodes. The latter, on the other hand, includes coordinating conjunctions that are less crucial at the discourse level but important in discerning the relationship between clauses within the sentence.

Other columns are divided according to the basic word order, e.g., SVO for English. Dependent-clause columns for a language like English should start with a column for subordinating conjunctions (e.g., *when*, *before*, *as*). The O column contains not only the (direct and indirect) objects but also any adverbial elements or prepositional phrases that occur after the verb. It is usually best to leave the most space for the independent clause, being most frequent.

In addition to the basic charting, it is useful to have a “notes” column for any morphosyntactic and discourse features, such as word order inversion, discontinuity of time, location, or participant span, and unusual use of negatives. We may color-code reference forms of participants (assigning a color for each participant), verb forms (a color for each tense or aspect), or any particles of interest. Any irregularity of word order stands out in the chart, which preserves the surface structure order of the text. The sentence is the basic unit here, and independent clauses are clearly separated from pre- and postposed adverbial clauses. The chart is a tool that can help us by systematically revealing the patterns of the text.

2. The Story and Its Macrostructure

We have chosen for our analysis an English short story of thirty-two sentences.¹The story is printed in eight orthographic paragraphs (¶) in the book, as shown below.

¶1 1 The winter afternoon was dark and grey over old Strasbourg. 2 Little flurries of snow came whirling down between the chimneys and a biting wind blew in the narrow streets. 3 Above the roofs,

¹ The story is taken from *Five Hundred Tales to Tell Again* by H. L. Gee (1955, Roy Publishers, New York, 106-7). For a dozen semesters or so, I have used this story in my discourse grammar class to teach charting and discourse analysis. I would like to acknowledge the input and comments made by those who helped me teach the course and the students who worked on this story as a sample text. I am also grateful to Bob Longacre for his openness to discuss not only this text but any aspect of grammar, and to Marlin Leaders and Rhonda Thwing for their help in editing the manuscript. Needless to say, I alone am responsible for the content of the paper and any errors that remain.

rising high into the clouds, stood the great cathedral, its stones dim in the gathering gloom, its windows catching the lights within.

¶2 4 Fine people were hurrying up the broad steps--ladies with furs, gentlemen in splendid attire, many of them coming in their carriages. 5 Little Hans watched them. 6 Perished with cold, ragged, an unwanted bit of humanity, he snuggled between two buttresses--a retreat from the wind--and wished *he* dare go into the cathedral where all was warm and bright, and where (as he could dimly hear) the organ was pealing loudly.

¶3 7 Suddenly a little girl left her mother as she came up the steps, ran towards him (all loveliness as she smiled) and thrust a big rosy apple into his hands. 8 "That's for you, little boy", she said.

¶4 9 Then she and her mother went in at the great west door, and Hans stared at the apple. 10 He thought at first he would eat it there and then, but he wanted to keep it for a time, so he held it in his hands, and went timidly to the door of the cathedral. 11 Most of the folk were in, and the service had begun. 12 No one turned him away. 13 He plucked up courage and crept inside, slinking into a pew at the back.

¶5 14 Only vaguely could he understand the service, but it was wonderful. 15 He loved the singing, the colour, the warmth. 16 Then something terrible happened. 17 Before he realized it, dignified men coming down the aisles were taking up the collection, and Hans--poor Hans--had nothing to give. 18 He would have run out had he not been too frightened to move. 19 What was he to do? 20 Others were giving money--he could hear it. 21 He had nothing ... nothing to give God except his apple, and he could not give *that*. 22 He dare not. 23 What would all the people say? 24 What would the man in the fine clothes say--the one standing on the steps amid all the bright candles at the far end? 25 And wouldn't God be angry, too?

¶6 26 It seemed to Hans as if all eyes were fixed on him when, in an agony of fear, he timidly placed the red apple on the plate. 27 He held his breath, but no one spoke, and the man who took the apple did

not frown. 28 He allowed it to remain on the plate with the silver coins. 29 Slowly he walked along the aisle and up the steps to the choir, where he handed the plate to the priest, who blessed the gifts and then reverently placed them on the altar.

¶7 30 And behold, as little Hans watched, the apple changed. 31 It became shining gold--the most precious of all gifts, and well-pleasing in the sight of God.

¶8 32 His joy was boundless.

According to the four parameters of discourse typology presented by Longacre (1996, ch. 1), it is a narrative, with plus features for the two basic parameters, Agent Orientation and Contingent Temporal Succession (events are contingent and successive). More specifically, it is a story, with a minus feature for Projection (events are realized rather than contemplated or anticipated as in a prophecy), and it has a climax, giving a plus for Tension (reflecting a struggle). The fact that it is a climactic story is evidenced by a number of surface structure correlates, e.g., past tense dominates the text, there is a running reference to a specific agent or participant, there is some indication of surface irregularities for notional tension, etc.

Any discourse has a macrostructure, that is, a germinal idea or an overall plan at the global level that controls the content structure and the relative elaboration of the various parts (van Dijk 1980). We can generally formulate a macrostructure intuitively first and then check against specific linguistic features of the text.

Next we summarize the content of each paragraph in our text and then present its macrostructure.

- (1) ¶1 (S1-3) Cold winter afternoon in old Strasbourg with the great cathedral
- ¶2 (S4-6) Cold and ragged Hans watching people and wishing to go inside the warm cathedral
- ¶3 (S7-8) A girl giving an apple to Hans
- ¶4 (S9-13) Hans going to the door of the cathedral and creeping inside
- ¶5 (S14-25) Hans in agony at the collection time, having

nothing but the apple

¶6 (S26-29) Hans giving the apple and the priest blessing the gifts

¶7 (S30-31) The apple becoming shining gold, as Hans watched

¶8 (S32) Hans' joy

Eliminating supportive information, such as setting and background that is not on the main eventline, we propose the macrostructure of this story as follows: Little Hans received an apple from a girl, crept inside the cathedral, and gave as an offering the apple, which changed to gold.

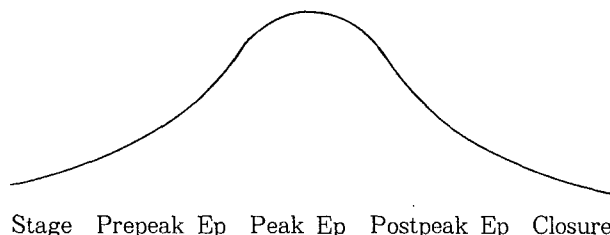
3. The Profile and Peak

The profile analysis, or macrosegmentation into stage, peak, and pre- and post-peak episodes, is based on surface structure (SS) features of various kinds, e.g., boundary markers, expressions of continuity or discontinuity in time, place, event, and agents (participant reference span), etc. These slots would also correspond to notional structure (NS) slots, each with its own thematic unity. Just as in the comprehension process, the analysis involves both top-down and bottom-up processes. We present here the profile analysis before the detailed analyses of specific features such as participant reference and cohesion, but we need to remember that the actual analysis proceeds in both directions with the whole and the parts mutually elucidating each other.

We propose the macrosegmentation of the text as in (2) and the profile diagram as in (3):

(2) SS Slot	NS Schema	Slot	Sentences	Content
Stage	Exposition		S1-6	Coldness & Hans outside cathedral
Prepeak Ep	Inciting Incident		S7-13	Girl giving apple to Hans
Peak Ep	Climax		S14-25	Hans in agony at collection time
Postpeak Ep	Denouement		S26-29	Apple given & taken to altar
Closure	Conclusion		S30-32	Apple turning into gold

(3)



The first two (orthographic) paragraphs set the Stage for the text, introducing the city, the cathedral, people going to church, and little Hans watching them and wishing to go inside. While the first one introduces the larger setting with inanimate objects related to the city and the cathedral, the second introduces the participants: fine people dressed up in warm clothes and then Hans in sharp contrast with these people. Sentence 6 describes his initial state--perished with cold, ragged, an unwanted bit of humanity--along with his wish. Although there are two paragraphs orthographically, they function as one unit at the level of discourse.

The punctiliar adverb *Suddenly* in S7 marks the onset of the eventline beginning the Prepeak episode. The little girl gives an apple to Hans in S8 with a short speech, which is the only direct quotation in this text. This portion of the story is given entirely from the girl's perspective.

After the girl and her mother go in (S9a), Sentences 9-13 describe Hans' gradual movement toward the cathedral following them, ending with his creeping inside and slinking into a pew. It seems that ¶3 and 4 may group together as the first episode. A continuous sequence of events occur: the girl's action of giving the apple, her going in the door (with her mother), Hans' thinking and creeping inside. This episode depicts the Inciting Incident in the schematic notional structure.

There are several simple past tense forms in the Stage, but they are either stative verbs with inanimate subjects (*came whirling down, blew, stood*) or have a non-punctiliar sense (*watched, snuggled, wished*). In the Prepeak episode, however, we find ten punctiliar verbs reporting eventline information (*left, ran, thrust, said, went in, thought, wanted, went, plucked up, crept*), with several more in simple past (such as *came up* in an *as*-clause and the non-punctiliar verb *stared*). Perhaps *He plucked up his courage* in S13 is metaphorical for a process meaning 'be-

came courageous', but *crept inside* and *slinking* tell us the little boy's actions.

A preposed adverbial expression *Only vaguely* in S14 marks the beginning of a new episode. Sentences 14 and 15 together present the setting of this episode in which *something terrible* occurs. We hear how he loved the service—his internal feelings of satisfaction. Then the episode continues promisingly as if we will have action sequences with S16 *Then something terrible happened*, which is a foreshadowing referring cataphorically to what is to follow. Yet, in the entire episode we find not a single eventline verb. There is also a progressive change in vantage point from a third-person perspective (clearly shown by the unique form of reference *Hans—poor Hans*), to he with reflective mode (e.g., S19 *What was he to do?*), and to his direct thoughts without any reference to him at all in S23–25 (e.g., S23 *What would all the people say?*). Notice also the shift in tense from past to present and future, and more use of modals: S18 *He would have run out had he not been too frightened to move* and S22 *He dare not* to S23 *What would all the people say?* The last three sentences are sort of pseudo-dialogue (talking to oneself). Negatives are also featured in this episode with seven occurrences: *nothing* (3 times), *had he not*, *could not*, *he dare not*, *wouldn't God*. There are only two other negatives in the entire text: *no one* in S12 and S27. Two progressives occur in this episode also (with another one in the Stage), perhaps adding the sense of immediacy to the reader—as if it is happening right in front of your eyes. This is not easily achieved with the use of past tense or perfective aspect.

All these features add up to mark this episode as the Peak corresponding to notional Climax, the highest tension point of the story. The eventline is suspended to describe the inner thoughts of Hans in agony.

In addition, sentences in this section are relatively short and choppy—some with dashes, giving a sense of discontinuity and reflecting a series of agonizing thoughts as they pass through the mind of Hans. While five sentences are combinations of clauses (S17, 18, 20, 21, 24), seven are single-clause sentences (S15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25), which is a higher ratio of simple structures than in any other section of the story. It is rather an off-norm feature to have a series of simple sentences in narrative discourse. It helps to mark the episode as peak by

a shift in sentence length in the episode.² These short crisp sentences heighten the boy's dilemma at the offering time. Also note the shortest sentence in the text: S22 *He dare not*.

The Postpeak episode shows a dramatic shift in sentence length and complexity. Now the sentences become longer and more complex. The eventline is resumed after the nonevents in the Peak episode. The postponed *when*-clause encodes the first event (*placed the red apple on the plate*) after the eventline has been suspended at peak. Then a sequence of events occurs with the usher handing the plate to the priest who blesses the gifts.

The Closure (notional Conclusion) starts with *And behold* (both words are eye-catching). Sentence 31 may be an example of juxtaposition in which 'it was' is elided in the second base: *It became shining gold--[it was] the most precious of all gifts, and well-pleasing in the sight of God*. Sentence 32 finishes the text with a short sentence. We have grouped together these three sentences of two short orthographic paragraphs as one discourse unit of Closure. Alternatively, however, one could analyze them as two separate units: second postpeak episode (notional Final Suspense) and closure. Something dramatic happens in S30-31--the apple changed to gold--which might be more than what one would normally consider a closure to a story.

The overall profile structure displays a chiasmic stepped-in structure, shown below with the content viewed from Hans' perspective. It is noteworthy that the two structures, discourse profile and chiasmus, coincide with each other here.³ The first two sections (Stage and Prepeak episode) contrast in content with the last two (Postpeak and Closure) in mirror image. The structure clearly shows the contrasting states of Hans: Cold and ragged at the initial state and joyous at the final state.

² Only four other simple sentences occur in the story.

³ In many other cases scholars have shown that the chiasmic nature of the content has its own structure apart from the grammatical structure of a passage (Longacre 1992b).

- (4) Stage S1-6 Hans cold outside the cathedral
 Prepeak Ep S7-13 Hans receives an apple and goes inside
 the service
 Peak Ep S14-25 Hans in agony in collection time
 Postpeak Ep S26-29 Hans gives the apple which is placed
 on the altar
 Closure S30-32 Hans joyous when the apple became gold

The chiasitic structure could simply be shown as:

- (5) Hans unhappy
 Hans receives the apple
 Hans in agony
 Hans gives the apple
 Hans happy

4. Participant Reference

Each language has its own set of resources that are used in referring to participants. English uses a noun phrase (NP) with varying degrees of qualifying adjectives or relative clauses, a pronoun (frequently used, unlike in a language like Korean, Japanese, or Chinese), or a zero or null reference (less common in English and with more restrictions than Korean). The affixal element in the verb occurs only in present tense of the third person singular, which is relatively infrequent in stories predominantly cast in past tense. Starting with Hans, we discuss how the participants and props are referred to in this story.

Hans, the central participant of the story, is the only one who is given a name. He is first introduced as *Little Hans*, a proper noun with a descriptive adjective (in S5). Then he is mostly kept track of by a pronoun or zero. The zero anaphora occurs in a non-initial clause of a sentence or in a clause with a non-finite verb such as a participial clause with *-ing* (S13). When he is refocused after a series of actions by the girl and her mother (almost like “restaging” although he is never off-stage), the proper noun with no adjective, *Hans*, is used (midsentence in S9), and again in S26 after a series of sentences giving his inner thoughts. At the point of highest tension--when Hans has

no money at the offering time, he is appropriately referred to as *Hans--poor Hans*. This can be attributed to confrontation and/or author evaluation (Longacre 1995). The predicate nominal used in S6 (*an unwanted bit of humanity*) along with other descriptions of him (*perished with cold, ragged*) may be considered author evaluation as well.

The focus is on Hans throughout the story except for two brief moments: the first shift of focus to the girl and the second to the usher and priest after Hans placed the apple on the offering plate. After the second shift, the closing section starts with *And behold* in S30, and *little Hans* is used again, forming an "inclusio" with the identical mention *little Hans* in S5. The last sentence has a pronominal reference to him in: *His joy*.

References to other participants (the girl, people, priest, usher) and props (the apple, cathedral, and plate) may be similarly studied in relation to discourse operations (Longacre 1995). The following chart shows reference forms used for some of the participants and props:

(6)

Discourse Operation	Hans	Girl	People	Apple	Cathedral	Priest
Ist Mention	Little Hans	a little girl	Fine people ... ladies with furs, gentlemen in splendid attire	a big rosy apple	the great cathedral	the man in the fine clothes... the one standing ...
Tracking	he/his/him ∅(in non- initial clause or with non- finite verb)	she/her ∅	them	it	its ∅	
Restaging	Hans little Hans (at Closure)		(most of) the folk	the apple	the cathedral	the priest
Confrontation/ Local contrast	Hans--poor Hans		all the people others	his apple <i>that</i> the red apple		
Evaluation	Hans--poor Hans an unwanted bit of humanity			shining gold--the most precious of all gifts, and well- pleasing in the sight of God		

The girl and the apple are first mentioned with an indefinite article and adjectives, which is typical of English usage: *a little girl* and *a big rosy apple*. Routine tracking for both is accomplished through pronouns (*she, it*) along with zero reference, following the same rule used for the central participant. While the girl exits from the story after her brief role as the agent who gives the apple, the apple, although an inanimate prop, is significant throughout the plot structure. It is referred to at confrontation as: *his apple* and *that* (the latter printed in italics in the book). For local contrast, it is *the red apple* with a color term, apparently in contrast to silver coins on the plate or even to the gold color that it becomes. After restaging as *the apple* in S30, the pronoun *it* is used for the next sentence (S31), followed by a long description of what it turns into: *shining gold--the most precious of all gifts, and well-pleasing in the sight of God*.

The people are first mentioned as *Fine people ... ladies with furs, gentlemen in splendid attire*, and further referred to as a pronoun: (*many of*) *them* and *their*. They are restaged as (*most of*) *the folk* and contrasted with Hans locally as *others* and *all the people*, which may be considered a confrontation usage occurring at climax.

The ushers are described as: *dignified men coming down the aisles* (an NP with a reduced relative clause), and the particular usher who took the apple as: *the man who took the apple* (an NP with a restrictive relative clause). Further reference to him is by the pronoun *he* three times as the subject of the clause. The priest is introduced with a definite article as one who is expected to be present in the foregrounded frame of the service in a cathedral (Jones 1983) or in the immediate deictic situation (Givón 1984), or as an accessible piece of information given the frame (Chafe 1987): *the man in the fine clothes ... the one standing on the steps amid all the bright candles at the far end*. Later he is restaged as *the priest*. Not being a continuous topic in any paragraph, he is never referred to by a pronoun, but only by a relative pronoun *who* in S29 and zero in the successive clause within the same relative clause construction.

The cathedral is introduced as *the great cathedral* with a definite article, presumably because it is such an imposing building in the city of old Strasbourg. Even those who have never visited the city would

easily expect to encounter such a cathedral in large cities of Europe. Notice this first mention occurs in a sentence very unusual in its syntactic structure. The adverb phrase *Above the roofs* is fronted in the sentence (S3), and then the preposed participial clause occurs with zero reference (\emptyset *rising high into the clouds*). The main clause is in an inverted word order of VS (*stood the great cathedral*), and it is followed by two postposed clauses providing further description (*its stones dim in the gathering gloom, its windows catching the lights within*). The inverted order is not unusual after a sentence-initial adverb phrase, as is also seen in S14. But we should still ask the question why the adverb is fronted triggering the VS order, i.e., why not *The great cathedral stood rising high into the clouds above the roofs ...*? The sentence that introduces the cathedral (S3) links the descriptions of the city and its bleak circumstances (S1-2) and the people going to church (S4). Fronting the adverb phrase *Above the roofs* can tie the sentence more closely with S2, which describes the city with *the chimneys* and *the narrow streets*. Tracking of the cathedral within the immediate context is done by the usual pronominal reference (*its*), as shown in the two postposed clauses in the same sentence. Further reference to it in non-continuous sentences is made in an NP with only the definite article and the head noun as *the cathedral* (S6 and S10).

We can now formulate general rules of the English participant reference system based on the patterns found in this story. The rules are sensitive to different discourse operations, e.g., first mention and routine tracking, and to the different ranks of the participants.

- (7) **First Mention** : Nouns (including proper names) plus qualifiers, such as the article, adjective, relative clause, and descriptive sentences.
1. Central participant: Adjective + Proper name
Little Hans
 2. An important participant or prop (singular): Indef. article + Adjective + Generic noun
a little girl; a big rosy apple
 3. A prop or location expected to be known to or shared with the reader: Def. article + (Adjective) + Noun
the great cathedral

4. Participants (plural) in the background: Adjective/Prep Phrase/
Relative Clause + Generic noun
*Fine people ... ladies with furs, gentlemen in splendid attire ...;
dignified men coming down the aisles*
5. Participant (singular) in the foregrounded frame who is identifiable in context: Def. article + Generic noun + Prep Phrase/
Relative Clause
*the man in the fine clothes ... the one standing on the steps
amid all the bright candles at the far end; the man who took the
apple*
6. Participant related to major participant: only in relational
terms, Genitive pronoun + Kin term
her mother

Routine Tracking : Pronouns or zero reference

1. Pronouns
2. Zero reference: in non-initial clauses in the sentence (with
Equi-NP deletion) or in participial clauses with *-ing*

Restaging : Proper name, or noun with a definite article (with-
out qualifiers)

Hans, the apple, the folk, the cathedral, the priest, the plate

Confrontation at climax, overlapping in function with **Local
Contrast**: may bring out a crucial quality that is relevant in
plot: Noun with appropriate qualifier (which is often different
from the one used in first mention)

*Hans--poor Hans; his apple, that, the red apple; all the people,
others*

Narrator Evaluation : Noun with qualifier

*Hans--poor Hans; the most precious of all gifts and well-pleas-
ing in the sight of God*

In conclusion, different forms of participant reference--zero, pronoun, or NPs of varying lengths--are well motivated based on the rank of the participant and on the discourse operation. Especially, we note two points: (1) Ranking of the participant or prop affects most crucially

the forms used in First Mention: central, major, minor, bystander, or prop; and (2) ranking is less crucial to other operations like restaging and tracking so that general rules for each operation can be set up for all participants.

5. Verb and Clause Ranking

We shift our focus now primarily to the verbal forms to discern the ranking of verbs and clauses. A story typically contains two major types of information, events and nonevents (Grimes 1975), or foreground and background (Hopper and Thompson 1980; Tomlin 1985 and 1987; Givón 1987; Hwang 1990). There may be subranking within each, e.g., significant and routine events, and setting, background, evaluation, and collateral (or irrealis), as shown by Longacre (1981 and 1996) and Jones and Jones (1979).

We study here how different verb forms contribute to the story assuming that differing tense, aspect, mood, and voice forms are motivated in discourse. Longacre's (1989b:416) verb rank scheme for English narratives is applied to our text with adaptation. He sets up seven bands of salience from storyline and background to flashback, setting, irrealis, evaluation, and cohesion, reflecting a cline roughly from the most dynamic to static information in narrative.

(8) Band 1 Eventline

Simple past tense (excluding *be*, *have*, Neg, AdvCl, RelCl)
 Agent (Actions), Ag/Patient (Motions): S7-10 (*left*, *ran*,
thrust, *said*, *went in*, *went*), 13 (*crept inside*), 29 (*walked*)
 Experiencer (Cognitive events): S10 (*thought at first*, *wanted*)
 Patient (Contingencies): S30-31 (*the apple changed*; *it became* ...)

Verbs in simple past tense encode eventline information except for stative verbs (like *be* and *have*), verbs in negative statements, and those in adverbial and relative clauses. Highest among those on the eventline are those with a subject that is in the semantic case role of agent (reporting actions), or the coreferential role of both agent and patient (as in motion verbs). Collection of all the information in such clauses (in S7-10, 13, 29) tells us the actions and motions of the

story, as to who did what. We still need to add “cognitive events” that involve the subject as experiencer such as sudden realization. Further to be added to Band 1 is information about the subject as patient. Without it, there would be no contingencies of fortunate or unfortunate happenings (e.g., *The apple changed, became shining gold; we had a flat tire*).

The eventline itself thus includes some details of the actions and motions of the girl, Hans, and the usher, along with cognitive events related to Hans and the final outcome of the apple. Notice that no verbs are included from the Stage setting, or the Peak episode describing Hans in agony at the collection time.

(9) Band 2 Background

Past progressive (Ag) background activities: S4 (*were hurrying*),

17 (*were taking up*), 20 (*were giving*)

Past (Ag or Ag/Ex) Non-punctiliar actions: S5 (*watched*), 6

(*snuggled*) 9 (*stared, held*)

Past (Ex) Cognitive states: S6 (*wished*), 15 (*loved*)

Nonaction in affirmative form: S28 (*allowed it to remain*)

Background activities that are typically reported in past progressives in English add graphic details to the bare skeletal abstract resulting from the eventline information. Band 2 also includes other on-going, non-punctiliar activities encoded in simple past, with the subject in experiencer role, as in *He wished*--all along--a “cognitive state” as opposed to a sudden cognitive event. Or the subject may be agent (*snuggled, held*) or both agent and experiencer (*watched, stared*, in which Hans is actively looking at something as agent as well as experiencing some sensation in his nervous system). Also included here is the nonaction given in affirmative, rather than the usual negative, form in S28: *He allowed it to remain*, which is almost negative in force (‘He didn’t do anything with it’).

When the information of Band 2 is added to that of Band 1, the summary of the story includes information about non-punctiliar activities that clues us in to the tension at climax when Hans found himself without any money at the offering time.

(10) Band 3 Flashback

Pluperfect: S11 with inanimate subject (*the service had begun*)

Flashback occurs only once in this story informing us that ‘the service had already begun by the time Hans went to the door of the cathedral.’ This is in fact setting information (see Band 4) backset in time, providing the setting for his next action of creeping inside and slinking into a pew.

(11) Band 4 Setting (expository)

Stative verbs and descriptive verbs with inanimate subject:

S1-3, 6, 14, 32

Be (equative), *be* (existential), *have* (relational): S11 (*were in*), others with Negative

Setting information is primarily expository rather than narrative. However, all narratives need setting to put the participants in a certain temporal, locational, and circumstantial situation. As such, it tends to occur bunched together at the beginning of a discourse or episode. Typically, it is reported in stative verbs with the copula *be*, which may be descriptive (*was dark and grey* in S1), equative (as in *He was a big boy*), or existential (as in *There was a little girl*). Some verbs in simple past may provide setting when they occur with inanimate subjects: *snow came whirling down* and *wind blew* in S2. The verb *have*, although a transitive taking two arguments, encodes static information often expressing a relational concept, as in *He has an apple*. This story has setting information given in negatives, overlapping with the irrealis band below. When setting is added to that from previous bands, we hear of the states and conditions of the participants.

(12) Band 5 Irrealis (other possible worlds)

Negatives: S12, 27 (*no one*), 17, 21 (*nothing*), 18, 21, 22, 25, 27 (Negative verb)

Modals/futures: S14 (*could*), 18-21 (*would, was to do, could*), 23-25 (*would*)

The irrealis band includes information not about the textual world but about other possible worlds, mostly in the surface form of negatives

and modals. Questions have been raised as to why such information occurs in narratives, whose main purpose is to recount what happened, rather than what did not happen or what could have happened but did not (Grimes 1975, Labov 1972). My earlier work (Hwang 1992b) reports on multiple functions of such forms that may range from marking turning points in the plot to simply providing explanation. Notice in this story negatives occur in a cluster at the climax--reinforcing the tension which is already high at the moment: *Hans had nothing to give; He had nothing ... nothing to give God except his apple, and he could not give that; he dare not;* etc. In the same section occur modals like *could* (3 times) and *would* (4 times), and three of the latter are found in rhetorical questions of parallel structure (S23-25): *What would all the people say? What would the man in the fine clothes say ...* Clearly unrealistic band information adds tension to this story, reporting what could or would have happened but did not and allowing us to go inside the mind of Hans.

(13) Band 6 Evaluation (author intrusion)

Past: S16 (*Then something terrible happened*)

Others only in NPs (S17 *dignified*, 31 *precious, well-pleasing*)

Evaluation by the author may be made with a simple past tense of the verb, as in S16. It is typically expressed in adjectives of some kind: *terrible, dignified, precious*. Notice S16 also functions cohesively as a forshadowing of what is about to happen.

(14) Band 7 Cohesive band (verbs in preposed/postposed AdvCls)

Script predictable: S7 (*as*-clause, cohesive to the steps of Cathedral), 17 (*before*), 30 (*as*)

Information in adverbial clauses tends to be cohesive, as shown by the two *as*-clauses and one *before*-clause. It certainly is not on the eventline, although it can be new information. Most tend to be accessible, predictable information given the frame or script.

There is one adverbial clause that is not simply cohesive but eventline. The postposed *when*-clause in S26 might even be claimed to encode the single most crucial piece of information in the story: *It seemed to Hans as if all eyes were fixed on him when, in an agony of*

fear, he timidly placed the red apple on the plate. After a main clause of not much of significance--but linked to the previous description of Hans' inner thoughts--the *when*-clause reports his action, which has been suspended since his entry into the cathedral in S13. Researchers have found that postposed adverbial clauses in English, unlike preposed, report information that is significant in semantic content (Givón 1990, Hwang 1994). Preposed clauses predominantly serve the cohesive function of linking larger units of the text. Thus in our story, while the three listed under Band 7 are cohesive in function, the *when*-clause in S26 is not. It is promoted to eventline status.

Likewise, the postposed participial clause in S13 is promoted to Band 1: *He plucked up courage and crept inside, sinking into a pew at the back.* The *-ing* clause reports his subsequent action after he crept inside, providing a close temporal (almost simultaneous?) and logical connection between the two events that would not have been possible with all three verbs coordinated in independent clauses.

Finally, there are two relative clauses encoding events in S29, one within another: *Slowly he walked along the aisle and up the steps to the choir, [where he handed the plate to the priest, [who blessed ... and placed ...]].* The events here are subsequent to that in the main clause, but they are rather routine or script-predictable as typical actions of the usher and the priest. These are events on the narrative timeline but are grammatically subordinated in relative clauses, perhaps reflecting their lower semantic significance. The use of relative clauses, however, enables these events to be tied together in a highly integrated manner. Thus tight integration of events may be achieved by skewing from the normal encoding of events in main clauses (Labov 1972, Tomlin 1985) to encoding them in dependent clauses, whether relative or adverbial.

It is noteworthy that eventline information seems to cluster together in certain parts, rather than being evenly distributed throughout the discourse. In terms of dynamicity of information, we see a gradation in each narrative slot:

(15)

	Dynamic	<----->	Static
	Ep 1	> Ep 3	> Closure > Ep 2(Peak) > Stage
Motion/action	X	X	
Contingency		X	
Background			X X
Setting			X X
Irrealis			X

6. Interplay of Verbs and Nouns

Verbs of the highest rank co-occur with nouns of the highest rank in this story, i.e., eventline verbs in Band 1 encode the actions, motions, and cognitive events of Hans and the girl. The only exception is the verb *walked* occurring with the usher in S29, along with those in relative clauses in the same sentence (shown in brackets below). The contingencies in S30-31 are happenings to the crucial prop, the apple. If we write down the eventline verbs in the order of occurrence, it makes a summary of the story of events as follows:

- (16) Girl : *left, ran, thrust, said, went in* (S7-9)
 Hans : *thought at first, wanted, went* (S10), *plucked up, crept inside, slinking* (S13), *placed* (S26)
 Usher/Priest : *walked [handed, blessed, placed]* (S29)
 Apple : *changed, became shining gold* (S30-31)

As we add further information from Bands 2-7 one by one, we have a fuller structure of the story. Notice the above summary does not include the climax of the story--the peak episode of Hans' agony at the offering time. But, can the story be told without the agony Hans goes through at the offering time? This clearly shows that the regular verb ranking rules are broken at peak, which is non-routine and is responding to the higher-level call of marking the climax of the story.

In discourse analysis, therefore, a profile analysis of the whole text is necessary to explain why general rules for participant reference and verb ranking do not work at certain parts of the text. Although the usual rules are not followed all the time, we know that they are still

valid because we expect them to be broken at peak.

7. Cohesion and Coherence

These two terms are closely related, and sometimes even used interchangeably. More recently, however, cohesion is used for explicit devices of the morphosyntax of the language, and coherence for lexical and semantic connections. Conjunctions and sequence signals are cohesive devices, along with adverbial clauses and phrases, but any connection the reader draws from his/her own life experience would be the concern of coherence, such as invoking accessible information given the foregrounded frame and script. There are, however, aspects in which the division between cohesion and coherence is less clear-cut. Paraphrases might be considered a topic of coherence, yet a closely related topic of parallelism is more closely tied to a formal repetition of a syntactic pattern, e.g., the series of three rhetorical questions in S23–25.

Before we deal with each topic, we note that the chains of participant reference and the event sequences, discussed above, contribute greatly to the cohesion and coherence of the text.

7.1. Sentence-Initial Conjunctions and Sequence Signals

The following sentence-initial introducers (conjunctions, sequence markers, adverb phrases and clauses) occur before the subject (those at paragraph-initial are in boldface):

- (17) ¶1 3 *Above the roofs,*
 ¶3 7 *Suddenly,*
 ¶4 9 *Then*
 ¶5 14 *Only vaguely*
 16 *Then*
 25 *And*
 ¶6 29 *Slowly*
 ¶7 30 *And behold,*

The introducers that occur initially in a paragraph contribute to the macrosegmentation of the story into discourse-level slots in the profile

(Sec. 3). Out of the eight total, four occur paragraph (orthographic) initially in S7, 9, 14, 30 (italicized above), and all except *Then* in S9 mark the episode boundaries. Three introducers occur in paragraph-final sentences in S3, 25, 29, and one occurs paragraph-internally in S16.

7.2. Adverbial, Participial, and Relative Clauses

There are no adverbial clauses used for exact repetition or pure back-reference. All adverbial clauses, including the postposed one in S7, provide new information, but they can be considered script-predictable or accessible information in context. Thus, except the when-clause in S26 which is promoted to eventline, they are highly cohesive:

- (18) S7 ... *as she came up the steps,*
 S17 *Before he realized it,*
 S30 *As little Hans watched,*

Participial clauses provide further details in the background, and the preposed ones add cohesion to previous sentences:

- (19) S3 *rising high into the clouds, ... its stones dim in the gathering gloom, its windows catching the lights within.*
 S4 ... *many of them coming in their carriages.*
 S6 *Perished with cold, ragged, an unwanted bit of humanity,*

The restrictive relative clause in S27 (*the man [who took the apple]*) identifies a temporarily foregrounded usher and is cohesive to the previous event in S26 and to subsequent events in S28-29, where he is the subject.

7.3. Parallelism (in form) and Paraphrase (in content)

Parallelism relates to a repetition of a formal structure (saying different things in the same or similar form), and paraphrase refers to reporting the same content in different expressions. The series of rhetorical questions in S23-25 (*What would all the people say? ...*) are not paraphrases of each other in content but are parallel in structure. The question in S19 (*What was he to do?*) is also related to this parallel

structure. In fact, several sentences in the episode have modals and future orientation that help group them together as the same episode. These sentences illustrate paraphrases as well, especially S21-22, 23-25. We repeatedly hear that Hans had nothing to offer.

7.4. Frame and Script

We noted the use of the definite article with the first mention of the cathedral as the accessible information given the frame, the name of the city. The same principle applies to *the chimneys, the narrow streets, and the roofs*. Given the frame of the cathedral, *its steps, the door, its windows, the organ* are easily accessible for the reader.

The items and atmospheres expected in the winter afternoon frame might be: dark and grey, little flurries of snow, a biting wind, a little boy perished with cold, a retreat from the wind. They contrast with the items and atmospheres inside the cathedral frame: warm and bright, organ pealing loudly, singing, aisles, money, dignified men coming down the aisles, the man in the fine clothes/the priest, God, choir, plate, and altar.

The concept of script is related to expected sequences of events in a certain situation. It is illustrated in the story by the usual sequence of a church service, as shown in S17, 20, 29.

Cohesion and coherence are remarkably shown in the story in a wave-like (chain-like) progression in the first six sentences: from the city, the chimneys and streets, the cathedral above the roofs, people going to the cathedral, little Hans watching them, in a cold and ragged situation. As mentioned above, the cathedral is introduced in a marked syntactic construction for cohesion with previous sentences. The cathedral seems crucial to the plot in more than one way: it is the location in which the events of the whole story take place, and the theme is related to Christian love, giving, and offering, which is associated with church. Thus the cathedral might be viewed as an awe-inspiring place where miracles happen.

8. Clause Combining

English uses several clause-combining devices in grammar within the sentence: coordinate conjunctions (*and, but, or, so*), subordinate conjunctions (*as, because, when*), and detached participial clauses (with the verb in *-ing*). Cross-linguistically, participial clauses are similar to medial clauses in chaining languages, in that their verbs are not fully inflected for tense or mood. They seem to have both subordinate and coordinate qualities. They are syntactically dependent in some way, but they are clauses of almost equal rank and with loose semantic connection to the independent clause having no explicit temporal or logical connector (Haiman and Thompson 1984 and 1988; Thompson 1987). Complement and relative clauses represent an embedding, rather than combining, relationship among clauses, the former being a clause functioning as an argument of another clause, the latter a clause within an NP.

The kinds of clause-combining devices used in the story are varied according to discourse-level units. At the Peak episode, sentences tend to be choppy, with seven simple (single-clause) sentences.⁴ The episodes before and after the peak have long sentences with clauses in coordination. The Stage (S1-6) contains long sentences as well (except S5), but more due to participial clauses (seven occurrences) than to coordinate sentences (three). The last three sentences (S30-32) are shorter sentences with simpler structure. The following chart shows some counts of clause combination in each section of the story:

(20) Stage	(S1-6)	7 participial clauses, 3 coordinate sentences (6 clauses), 2 RelCls
Prepeak	(S7-13)	5 long coordinate sentences (13 clauses)
Peak	(S14-25)	7 short simple (single-clause) sentences

⁴ The peak episode has three occurrences of *and*, none of which encodes temporal succession. The two sentence-medial *and*'s (S17 and 21) encode counterexpectation. Instead of the usual conjunction *but* to express counterexpectation, here there is a skewing in having *and*. The sentence-initial *And* is S25 encodes coupling, the non-temporal *and* notion. S20 may be an example of juxtaposition with no conjunction, although semantically the first clause may be interpreted as a complement clause corresponding to *it*.

Postpeak (S26-29) Back to long sentences, 3 RelCls

Closure (S30-32) Shorter sentences with simpler structure

9. Conclusion

This paper has shown how an English short story may be linguistically analyzed from the holistic perspective of discourse.⁵ We have done a profile analysis of the story into discourse-level slots of stage, prepeak, peak, and postpeak episodes, and closure. These slots correspond with narrative schematic slots of exposition, inciting incident, climax, denouement, and conclusion. Then we have dealt with several topics, such as participant reference, verb ranking, cohesion and coherence, and clause combining, and argued that their surface features are correlated with and responsive to the profile of the story.

The concept of profile and peak helps us to explain why general rules for participant reference, verb ranking, and clause combining are not followed throughout the story. The usual rules are broken at peak, precisely because we expect them to be broken and other off-norm features to take over to respond to the higher-level call of marking the climax.

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⁵ The methodology used here can be applied not only to other English stories of various lengths but also to stories in other languages (e.g., Hwang 1987 for Korean stories; Longacre 1989a and Longacre and Hwang 1994 for biblical Hebrew stories of Joseph and Jonah, respectively). Discourse analysis of other types of text like procedural, hortatory, and expository involve the use of other discourse-type specific schematic slots (e.g., Hwang 1996 for procedural; Longacre 1992a, 1992b, and Hwang 1992a for hortatory; Hwang 1997 for expository). Thus, a profile analysis may profitably be applied to a text of any type in any language.

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Summer Institute of Linguistics
 University of Texas at Arlington
 7500 W. Camp Wisdom Road
 Dallas, Texas 75236
 U. S. A.