



## A narrative discourse analysis of soldier's home by Ernest Hemingway: A micro and macro-structural narrative analysis

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### Abstract

This article employs narrative discourse analysis to analyze Ernest Hemingway's *Soldier's Home* by using two narrative analysis frameworks that focus on the Macrostructure and Microstructure aspects of the story. The study aims to unveil the intricate structural and linguistic choices contributing to the meaning and impact of "Soldier's Home" and the simple writing approach that Hemingway utilized to write this story. This analysis has been chosen to explain and understand that stories are not merely a sequence of events but mirrors reflecting the intricacies of our psyche, inviting us to confront our fears, desires, and the enigmatic depths of human nature, and how lexical resources are deployed to express them. The analysis covers the story's generic structure using Paltridge's model of schematic structure, thematic nuances, psychoanalysis, and lexico-grammatical cohesion. Findings show that the writer follows a series of structural moves and uses a variety of narrative strategies such as a high level of involvement and a wide range of lexical and grammatical cohesive ties, which contribute to the creation of a well-formed text that has effectively achieved its purpose and made its intended effect.

**Keywords:** Macrostructure; microstructure; narrative strategies; soldier's home; storytelling.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Structural discourse analysis offers a lens through which we can delve into the multifaceted complexities of literary works, unveiling layers of meaning and societal reflections embedded within narratives (Shaukat et al., 2021; Khalid & Said 2023; Musaev & Mohd 2022; Kotsiubynsky & Galsworthy 2020). One of the most compelling features of his work is its brevity and omission. This article conducts a narrative, structural discourse analysis of Hemingway's (1925) "Soldier's Home," a poignant short story. As a leading figure of the lost generation, Hemingway (1925) delves into the psychological aftermath of World War I, portraying the challenges of reintegration through the protagonist, Harold Krebs. Lamb (2013) notes the short story's lack of space leads to prose that relies heavily on suggestiveness and implication, allowing the reader a greater role in bringing the narrative to life.

Embedded in the collection "In Our Time" by Hemingway (2022), the narrative offers a microcosmic view of post-war societal shifts. The current study employs both micro and macro-structural narrative discourse analyses to unravel the intricate language and overarching themes within "Soldier's Home." The importance of these devices allows Hemingway to create the effect of doubling the story (Booth, 1983). By examining the interplay of these factors, we seek a comprehensive understanding of how these elements contribute to the story's enduring exploration of the human psyche in the aftermath of war and how such wordplay affects the readers and is favorable in writing short stories.

### 1.1. Purpose of study

Hemingway (1925) stands as a compelling exploration of post-war challenges and the psychological impact of combat on individuals. However, existing research predominantly focuses on singular aspects, leaving a gap in comprehensive analyses that merge macro and micro-structural perspectives. The lack of an integrated approach limits a holistic understanding of how both the overarching narrative structure and finer linguistic elements contribute to the thematic depth of the short story. This research seeks to address this gap by conducting a narrative discourse analysis that concurrently examines Partridge's model of schematic structure at the macro level and employs lexical and grammatical cohesive analyses at the micro level. Objectives of the study are as follows:

- To conduct *lexical cohesive analysis*, identifying and interpreting meronymy, hyponymy, and cohesion within the linguistic fabric of the short story.
- To undertake *grammatical cohesive analysis*, scrutinizing the use of references and conjunctions to unravel their role in maintaining narrative coherence and flow.
- To integrate *findings from both macro and micro analyses* to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the narrative structure and linguistic choices in "Soldier's Home" contribute to its thematic richness.

The research questions are as follows:

- What role do *lexical shifts* and *narrative perspective* changes play in the construction of the story's emotional and psychological depth?
- How does the macro-structural organization of the story reflect broader societal attitudes towards returning soldiers and the challenges they face?

## 2. METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study adopts a mixed-method approach to delve into the narrative intricacies of "Soldier's Home" Hemingway (1925). At the *Macro level*, Partridge's model of schematic structure will be employed as a guiding framework. This model facilitates the systematic deconstruction of the short story's overarching narrative, encompassing key elements such as orientation, complicating actions, evaluation, resolution, and coda. Through this macro-structural analysis, the research aims to unveil the underlying plot dynamics, character developments, thematic nuances, and potential psychoanalytical dimensions embedded in Hemingway's narrative.

Simultaneously, at the *Micro level*, the research employs lexical cohesive analysis and grammatical cohesive analysis. The lexical cohesive analysis involves scrutinizing *meronymies*, *hyponymies*, and *cohesive ties* within the linguistic fabric of the short story. This detailed examination aims to uncover the subtle lexical choices contributing to the story's meaning. Additionally, grammatical cohesive analysis focuses on references and conjunctions, unraveling their role in maintaining narrative coherence and facilitating the seamless flow of the storyline. By integrating insights from both macro and micro analyses, this research methodology provides a comprehensive and nuanced exploration of the narrative strategies employed by Hemingway in "Soldier's Home."

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1. Macro-structural analysis

Stories are different from other discourse types and often readers conceive a particular text as being a narrative (not for example a poem or a play). To understand the difference, it is essential to examine how smaller parts of a story are arranged and developed to form the bigger text 'the whole story'. Macrostructural analysis of narrative involves examining the overarching elements such as plot structure, thematic development, and character arcs to understand the broader organization and meaning of a story. It focuses on the higher-level components that shape the narrative's overall coherence, progression, and thematic significance.

##### 3.1.1. Plot Analysis using Paltridge's Model

Discourse analysts and literary critics have tried to analyze the common elements that comprise narratives. For example, Labov (1972), Stein (1982) and Paltridge (2000) have proposed three influential schematic models of the prototypical structure of a story. These three schemes include quite similar constituents. As can be seen from Table 1, different terms are sometimes employed to describe the same move.

**Table 1**

*Related terms applied*

Labov (1972)	Stein's (1982)	Partridge's (2000)
Abstract	Setting	Orientation
Orientation	Initiating action	Complication
Complicating action	Response/Reaction	Resolution
Evaluation	Attempt	Comment
Resolution	Consequences	Coda
Coda	Reaction	

The current research uses Paltridge's model of the schematic structure to analyze the short story "Soldier's Home" by Hemmingway (1925).

##### 3.1.2. Orientation

Orientation gives information about the characters, the place where the characters are taking part in their activities, and the time of their actions. Krebs, a Marine who enlisted in 1917, returns home to Oklahoma in 1919, finding the hero's welcome long gone and struggling to reintegrate into a changed community.

*"Krebs went to the war from a Methodist college in Kansas. There is a picture that shows him among his fraternity brothers, all of them wearing the same height and style collar. He enlisted in the Marines in 1917 and did not return to the United States until the second division returned from the Rhine in the summer of 1919..... By the time Krebs returned to his hometown in Oklahoma the greeting of heroes was over. He came back much too late. The men from the town who had been drafted had all been welcomed elaborately on their return. There had been a great deal of hysteria. Now the reaction had*

*set in. People seemed to think it was rather ridiculous for Krebs to be getting back so late, years after the war was over”.*

### **3.1.3. Complication**

Complicating actions often start with narrative clauses where the information about the different happenings is given. This element of the narrative is a compulsory part of any story. Krebs, reluctant to talk about his war experiences, realizes that his town, having heard many atrocity stories, is uninterested. To be heard, he resorts to lying, leading to a distaste for the war and a loss of internal clarity.

*“Later he felt the need to talk but no one wanted to hear about it. His town had heard too many atrocity stories to be thrilled by actualities. Krebs found that to be listened to at all he had to lie and after he had done this twice, he, too, had a reaction against the war and against talking about it. A distaste for everything that had happened to him in the war set in because of the lies he had told. All of the times that had been able to make him feel cool and clear inside himself when he thought of them; the times so long back when he had done the one thing, the only thing for a man to do, easily and naturally, when he might have done something else, now lost their cool, valuable quality and then were lost themselves..... Krebs acquired the nausea regarding experience that is the result of untruth or exaggeration, and when he occasionally met another man who had been a soldier and talked a few minutes in the dressing room at a dance he fell into the easy pose of the old soldier among other soldiers: that he had been badly, sickeningly frightened all the time. In this way, he lost everything.”*

### **3.1.4. Resolution**

In a resolution, the tension which reaches the climax in the complicating actions starts unpacking and in this way, the tension is released. The listeners conclude the narrative that what comes in the fates of different characters. Feeling disconnected from the complicated world of his hometown, Krebs desires a simple life without consequences. He contemplates going to Kansas City for a job to escape the complexities of home.

*“He did not want any consequences. He did not want any consequences ever again. He wanted to live alone without consequences. Besides he did not need a girl. The army had taught him that. It was all right to pose as though you had to have a girl. Nearly everybody did that. But it wasn't true. You did not need a girl. That was the funny thing. First, a fellow boasted how girls mean nothing to him, that he never thought of them, that they could not touch him. Then a fellow boasted that he could not get along without girls, that he had to have them all the time, that he could not go to sleep without them..... He had tried so to keep his life from being complicated.”*

### **3.1.5. Comment**

Krebs's mother, concerned about his lack of ambition and purpose, urges him to decide his future. Krebs, however, expresses apathy and a lack of love for anyone, leaving his mother in tears.

*“Don't you think it's about time? ... Your father thinks you have lost your ambition... Don't look that way, Harold. You know we love you...”*

### **3.1.6. Coda**

In the last part, coda, the narrative comes to an end and the audience is taken back to where the story started. Despite attempting to maintain a simple life, Krebs finds himself entangled in emotional scenes at home. Contemplating a move to Kansas City, he seeks to escape the complexities that have surfaced in his life post-war.

*“He had tried so to keep his life from being complicated. Still, none of it had touched him. He had felt sorry for his mother and she had made him lie. He would go to Kansas City and get a job and she would feel all right about it. There would be one more scene maybe before he got away. He would not go down to his father's office. He would miss that one. He wanted his life to go smoothly. It had just gotten going that way. Well, that was all over now, anyway. He would go over to the schoolyard and watch Helen play indoor baseball.”*

### **3.1.7. Character development**

In Ernest Hemingway's "Soldier's Home," character development is marked by subtlety and nuance, reflecting the author's minimalist style. The protagonist, *Harold Krebs*, undergoes a profound transformation from a disenchanting war veteran to a detached observer of his unchanged hometown. Hemingway employs spare yet evocative details to illuminate Krebs' internal conflicts and alienation. The minor characters, such as Krebs' family members and acquaintances, serve as narrative foils, highlighting Krebs' isolation upon returning from war. *His mother* embodies maternal concern, attempting to understand her son's wartime experiences, while Krebs' *sisters* symbolize a younger generation untouched by the war's harsh realities. The town's residents represent societal expectations, contrasting with Krebs' desire for a simplistic, consequence-free life. Through this ensemble of characters, Hemingway crafts a narrative that subtly explores the profound impact of war on identity, familial relationships, and societal reintegration.

### **3.1.8. Thematic nuances**

In "*Soldier's Home*," Ernest Hemingway intricately weaves thematic nuances that delve into the profound impact of war on individual identity and societal expectations. The narrative unfolds the complexities of protagonist Harold Krebs's readjustment to a mundane life after World War I, highlighting the *dissonance* between his wartime experiences and the societal norms of his hometown. Themes of alienation, the disillusionment of *heroism*, and the *psychological scars* left by war resonate throughout the story. Hemingway subtly explores the tension between personal *trauma* and societal pressure, offering a poignant commentary on the challenges faced by returning veterans as they grapple with the disquieting aftermath of war on both a personal and collective level. The thematic nuances in "*Soldier's Home*" underscore the enduring and universal struggles of those who, having witnessed the brutality of conflict, find themselves estranged in the ostensibly familiar landscape of home.

### **3.1.9. Psychoanalysis of short story**

Delving into the psychoanalysis of Hemingway (1925) exposes the intricate psychological dimensions of the protagonist, Krebs. Post-war, Krebs grapples with a profound emotional detachment, showcasing symptoms of *trauma* and a *struggle* to reintegrate into civilian life. The narrative subtly unveils his strained relationships, reflecting the disruption war inflicts on personal connections. Krebs's numbness becomes a lens through which Hemingway explores the complexities of identity and societal expectations, shedding light on the enduring psychological toll of combat. This psychoanalytical interpretation unveils the subtleties of Krebs's psyche, offering readers a nuanced understanding of the psychological aftermath of war.

## **3.2. Microstructural analysis**

Microstructure is the use of linguistic devices at the sentence level that convey meaning and promote critical thinking in both stories as well as informational text. Micro-structural narrative analysis refers to the examination and interpretation of the small-scale elements within a narrative, such as individual words, phrases, or specific linguistic and stylistic choices (Ibrahim et al., 2024; Bücking, 2022). This approach delves into the fine details of a text to uncover nuances, patterns, and meanings that might not be apparent at a broader level.

### **3.2.1. Grammatical cohesion**

In Microstructural analysis, we'll analyze grammatical cohesive devices in *Soldier's Home* by Hemingway.

### **3.2.2. Anaphoric reference**

Anaphoric references are used to refer back to something mentioned earlier in the text. Here are some examples of anaphoric references in the provided text:

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1. "He enlisted in the Marines in 1917 and did not return to the United States until the second division returned from the Rhine in the summer of 1919." (Referring to Krebs)
2. "He came back much too late." (Referring to Krebs)
3. "At first Krebs, who had been at Belleau Wood, Soissons, the Champagne, St. Mihiel and in the Argonne did not want to talk about the war at all." (Referring to Krebs)
4. "His lies were quite unimportant lies and consisted in attributing to himself things other men had seen, done or heard of, and stating as facts certain apocryphal incidents familiar to all soldiers." (Referring to Krebs's lies)
5. "His acquaintances, who had heard detailed accounts of German women found chained to machine guns in the Argonne and who could not comprehend, or were barred by their patriotism from interest in, any German machine gunners who were not chained, were not thrilled by his stories." (Referring to Krebs's acquaintances)
6. "Krebs acquired nausea regarding experience that is the result of untruth or exaggeration..." (Referring to Krebs's feeling of nausea)
7. "Krebs felt embarrassed and resentful as always." (Referring to Krebs)
8. "Your father can't read his Star if it's been mussed." (Referring to Krebs's father)
9. "He thinks you have lost your ambition, that you haven't got a definite aim in life." (Referring to Krebs's father)
10. "He had felt sorry for his mother and she had made him lie." (Referring to Krebs's mother and Krebs)

#### 3.2.2.1. How are anaphoric references used?

##### 1. Pronouns

- "He" (referring to Krebs)
- "His" (referring to the possessive form for Krebs)

##### 2. Proper nouns and proper names

- "Krebs" (used as the specific name referring to the character)
- "Father" (used about Krebs's father)
- "Mother" (used about Krebs's mother)

##### 3. Demonstrative pronouns

- "That" (used to refer to a specific thing or idea mentioned previously)
- "This" (similarly used to refer to a specific thing or idea mentioned previously)

##### 4. Possessive determiners

- "His" (referring to something belonging to Krebs)

These instances show how certain words or phrases refer back to previously mentioned people, events, or situations in the text.

#### 3.2.3. Cataphoric reference

Cataphoric references are words or phrases that refer forward to something mentioned later in the text. Here are some examples of cataphoric reference lines from the provided text:

1. "He loved to play pool." (Referring to Krebs's enjoyment of playing pool)
2. "His mother came into his bedroom and sat on the bed. She smoothed her apron." (Referring to the actions of Krebs's mother)



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3. "Krebs took down the paper and folded it." (Referring to Krebs's action with the newspaper)
4. "They knelt beside the dining-room table and Krebs's mother prayed." (Referring to the action of Krebs's mother and Krebs)

How are cataphoric references used?

1. "He" (referring to Krebs)
2. "She" (referring to Krebs's mother)
3. "Krebs" (referring to Krebs's action)
4. "They" (referring to Krebs's mother and Krebs)

These lines use words or phrases that point forward in the text to describe actions or situations that occur later in the narrative.

#### **3.2.4. Homophoric references**

Homophoric references are linguistic elements that refer to the same entity in a text. In the provided text from "Soldier's Home" by Ernest Hemingway, some homophoric references include:

1. *Krebs: Referring to the protagonist of the story.*
2. *He, Him, His: Used to refer to Krebs.*
3. *Mother: Referring to Krebs's mother.*
4. *Father: Referring to Krebs's father.*
5. *Hare: A nickname used by Krebs's sister.*
6. *Charley Simmons: Referring to a character mentioned in the text.*

These references contribute to the cohesion and coherence of the narrative by linking different parts of the text to the same entities.

#### **3.2.5. Exophoric references**

In "Soldier's Home" by Ernest Hemingway, the exophoric references are minimal, but there are a few instances. The story primarily revolves around Krebs, his experiences in the war, and his post-war life. Exophoric references include:

*Methodist College in Kansas: Krebs's background is briefly mentioned, emphasizing his pre-war life.*

*Belleau Wood, Soissons, the Champagne, St. Mihiel, and the Argonne: These are specific locations where Krebs served during the war, providing context to his military experience.*

*The Rhine: Mentioned in the context of Krebs's return from the war.*

*The First National Bank building: Refers to Krebs's father's workplace, giving a glimpse into his family's life.*

*Kansas City Star: The local newspaper mentioned in the story, reflects the hometown setting.*

*Charley Simmons: Mentioned as an example of Krebs's peers who are settling down, highlighting societal expectations.*

These references ground the narrative in a specific time and place, adding depth to Krebs's character and the societal backdrop of the post-war period.

#### **3.2.6. Conjunction**

In "Soldier's Home" by Ernest Hemingway, the conjunctions are:

- "and": 64 occurrences
- "but": 13 occurrences
- "or": 8 occurrences

- "because": 2 occurrences
- "When": 13 occurrences
- "if": 7 occurrences
- "while": 4 occurrences
- "though": 3 occurrences
- "so": 6 occurrences
- "before": 2 occurrences
- "after": 4 occurrences
- "until": 2 occurrences
- "as": 7 occurrences
- "that": 32 occurrences

### **3.2.7. Hyponymy**

Hyponymy is a hierarchical relationship between a hypernym (general term) and hyponyms (more specific terms). In other words, hyponyms are subcategories or instances of a broader category.

Now, let's count the number of times some hyponyms and their hypernyms are used in the provided text:

#### **1. Locations (Hyponyms)**

- Kansas: 3 times
- Rhone: 1 time
- Oklahoma: 1 time
- Kansas City: 2 times
- Total: 7 times

#### **2. Military Ranks (Hyponyms)**

- Corporal: 2 times
- Total: 2 times

#### **3. Activities (Hyponyms)**

- Reading: 5 times
- Talking: 3 times
- Playing indoor: 1 time
- Total: 9 times

#### **4. Family Roles (Hyponyms)**

- Mother: 25 times
- Father: 12 times
- Sisters: 3 times
- Total: 40 times

#### **5. Objects (Hyponyms)**

- Methodist College: 1 time
- Fraternity brothers: 1 time
- Uniforms: 1 time
- Car: 8 times
- First National Bank building: 1 time
- Sporting page: 1 time
- Water pitcher: 1 time
- Cereal dish: 1 time
- Bacon: 3 times
- Buckwheat cakes: 2 time
- Maple syrup: 1 time



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- Mail: 1 time
- Book: 2 time
- Clarinet: 1 time
- Star: 3 times
- Apron: 1 time
- Total: 29 times

#### 6. Emotions (Hyponyms)

- Nausea: 1 time
- Distaste: 1 time
- Love: 7 times
- Crying: 3 times
- Total: 12 times

#### 7. Time (Hyponyms)

- 1917: 1 time
- 1919: 1 time
- Summer: 2 time
- A month after returning home: 1 time
- Total: 5 times

#### 8. Personal Traits (Hyponyms)

- Ambition: 2 times
- Determined: 1 time
- Total: 3 times

These counts give a sense of the prevalence of specific hyponyms and their occurrences in the text.

### **3.2.8. Meronymy**

Meronymy is a term that is used to describe a part-whole relationship between lexical items. For example, A has B means B is a part of A.

In the "Soldier's Home", there is a mention of "fraternity brothers" and "corporal," which can be considered examples of meronymy. Fraternity brothers are part of a fraternity, and a corporal is a rank within the military hierarchy. These terms represent a part-to-whole relationship.

*"Front porch": the porch is part of the house.*

*"First National Bank building": the building is part of the town.*

*"Sweaters and shirt waists with round Dutch collars": components of women's clothing.*

*"bedroom": is a meronym of "house."*

*"Front porch" is a meronym of "house."*

*"Plate of buckwheat cakes" – "Plate" is a part or component of the whole phrase.*

*"Jug of maple syrup" – "Jug" is a part of the whole phrase.*

*In the phrase "God has some work for everyone to do," the meronymy is between "work" and "God's Kingdom," indicating that work is a part of or associated with God's Kingdom.*

*"His mother" is a part of the broader category of "family."*

### **3.2.9. Cohesive ties**

Cohesive ties refer to the linguistic devices and connective elements used within a text to create coherence and maintain the flow of ideas. These ties include words, phrases, and syntactic structures that link different parts of a discourse, ensuring logical relationships and facilitating unified and comprehensible communication.

- And: 64 times
- Or: 8 times

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1. Temporal
  - First: 2 times
  - Next: 1 time
  - Before: 2 times
  - Last: 2 times
  - When: 13 times
  - While: 4 times
  - After: 4 times
2. Causal
  - So: 6 times
  - Because: 2 times
  - When: 13 times

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The narrative discourse analysis of "Soldier's Home," employing Lobov's method for both macro and micro approaches, along with a meticulous examination of grammatical elements, reveals the multifaceted mastery of Hemingway's storytelling. This comprehensive analysis unveils the intricate interplay between the broader narrative structure, character dynamics, and thematic underpinnings, elucidating the profound impact of war on individual identity and societal reintegration.

By scrutinizing the granular grammatical choices, this study elucidates how each syntactic and linguistic aspect contributes to the overarching narrative, emphasizing the author's deliberate crafting of a poignant and thought-provoking tale. This integrated approach not only enriches our understanding of "Soldier's Home" but also underscores the significance of blending macro and micro perspectives in unraveling the complexities of literary discourse.

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