Narrative Conjunction's Junction Function
A Theoretical Model of "Additive" Inference in Visual Narratives

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Visual narratives often break up scenes by only showing individual characters. In (a) and (b), the meaning is the same, they only differ in how the panels create a "window" on the scene.

Because of this, the two panels in (b) "add up to" the single panel in (a)—we must infer that these characters belong to a larger superordinate node.

Environmental (E)-Conjunction combines panels with characters into a larger environment. Entity (N)-Conjunction shows panels with parts of entities, which then build the larger notion of individual characters.

Conjunctions can also combine, such as when N-Conjunction builds the inference of individual characters, which then are involved in the larger inference of a whole environment in E-Conjunction.

E-Conjunction can also create spatial scenes that are then repeated across an iterative event in A-Conjunction.

Visual Narrative Grammar (1) is built on Jackendoff's (2) Parallel Architecture, where structure and meaning are separate yet equal components.

A simple sequence maps a narrative structure to event information, and each panel maps to the whole environment in a spatial structure.

When breaking up a scene, each panel plays a narrative role within a larger superordinate node.

Each panel maps to a part of the spatial structure, and the larger node then maps to the notion of a larger environment.

Action (A)-Conjunction shows repetitions or iterations of a single action or event.

S-Conjunction uses panels that depict semantically associated elements, combined in a superordinate category.

Altogether, Conjunction allows narrative constituents to be composed of several panels of the same category interfacing with various semantic structures.

These interfaces demand inferences in the construction of meaning beyond the represented panels.

This approach allows a series of panels—or single panels—to play the same functional narrative role while conveying different semantic information.

References

Graphic References