



A COGNITIVE SEMANTIC STUDY OF CONSTRUALIZATION IN FANTASY NOVELS

BANEEN FALAH ABDUL AALI

University of Kufa, College of Arts, Department of English, Najaf, Iraq

E-mail: baneen.aali@atu.edu.iq

Asst. Prof. Dr. MUSTAFA ABDULSAHIB ABDULKAREEM

*University of Kufa, College of Education for Women, Department of English,
Najaf, Iraq*

E-mail: mustafaa.alhassean@uokufa.edu.iq

Abstract

This study examines how construal operations contribute to the construction of meaning in fantasy literature. The research addresses the problem that, despite extensive literary analyses of fantasy fiction, little attention has been paid to how readers cognitively process and conceptualize fantastical elements through specific construal mechanisms. Three scenes from J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of The Rings* are selected to reveal the mental mechanisms readers employ in making sense of fictional worlds. As a genre, fantasy fiction is uniquely positioned to explore abstract, metaphysical, and symbolic concepts, which are made intelligible through different construal strategies. Despite extensive literary analysis of fantasy fiction, there remains a gap in research focused on how meaning is dynamically constructed through construal operations in narrative texts. Drawing upon the theoretical models of Talmy, Langacker, and Croft and Cruse, the study proposes a detailed framework to identify how the three systems, configurational, perspectival, and attentional systems combine to form a unified fantasy formation system found in Tolkien's novels. The findings indicate that construal operations are central to the reader's cognitive mapping of secondary worlds, transforming abstract ideas into vivid, believable realities.

Keywords: Cognitive Semantics, Construalization, Configurational System, Perspectival System, Attentional System

دراسة دلالية معرفية لعمليات التأويل في الروايات الخيالية
بنين فلاح عبد العالي

جامعة الكوفة، كلية الاداب، قسم اللغة الانكليزية، نجف، عراق

E-mail : baneen.aali@atu.edu.iq

الاستاذ المساعد الدكتور مصطفى عبد الصاحب عبد الكريم

جامعة الكوفة ، كلية التربية للبنات ، نجف، عراق

E-mail:

mustafaa.alhassean@uokufa.edu.iq

المستخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة كيفية إسهام عمليات التَصَوُّر (Construal Operations)، كما تُعرَّف في علم الدلالة المعرفي، في بناء المعنى في الأدب الخيالي. ويعالج البحث مشكلة مفادها أنه، على الرغم من التحليلات



الأدبية الواسعة للأدب الخيالي، لم يُولَ اهتمام كافٍ لكيفية معالجة القراء إدراكياً وتصورهم للعناصر الخيالية من خلال آليات تصوّر محددة. والهدف الأساسي هو تحليل كيفية توظيف النُنى السردية لدى تولكين في روايتي سيد الخواتم والسلماريليون لعمليات الدلالة المعرفية، وبخاصة الأنظمة التكوينية والمنظورية والانتباهية، في بناء عوالم خيالية غامرة وذات ترابط. وبالاستناد إلى النماذج النظرية لكل من تألمي ولانجاكر وكروفت وكروز، تقترح الدراسة إطاراً تفصيلياً لتحديد كيفية تشكيل الأنظمة الثلاثة - التكويني والمنظوري والانتباهي - للمعنى السردية. وتتكوّن البيانات المختارة من ثماني مشاهد خيالية (أربعة من كل رواية)، جرى اختيارها لغناها بالمحتوى الخيالي، وتم تحليلها تحليلًا نوعياً. وباعتباره نوعاً أدبياً، يتميز الأدب الخيالي بقدرته على استكشاف المفاهيم المجردة والميتافيزيقية والرمزية، وجعلها مفهومة من خلال استراتيجيات التصوّر مثل الاستعارة، والكناية، والتجسيد، والحركة التخيلية. وتسهم هذه الدراسة في مجالي الشعرية المعرفية واللغويات الأدبية من خلال تقديم نموذج منهجي لفهم كيفية بناء المعنى إدراكياً في السرد التخيلي. وتوصلت الدراسة إلى أن الأنظمة التكوينية والمنظورية والانتباهية تعمل بشكل تفاعلي ضمن إطار معرفي متكامل لتدعم نموذجاً موحداً لتشكيل العوالم الخيالية في أعمال تولكين المختارة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: علم الدلالة المعرفي، التصور الذهني، النظام التكويني، النظام المنظوري، النظام الانتباهي.

1. Introduction

This study examines how construal operations contribute to the construction of meaning in fantasy literature. The research addresses the problem that, despite extensive literary analyses of fantasy fiction, little attention has been paid to how readers cognitively process and conceptualize fantastical elements through specific construal mechanisms.

Three scenes from J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of The Rings* are selected to reveal the mental mechanisms readers employ in making sense of fictional worlds. As a genre, fantasy fiction is uniquely positioned to explore abstract, metaphysical, and symbolic concepts, which are made intelligible through different construal strategies. Despite extensive literary analysis of fantasy fiction, there remains a gap in research focused on how meaning is dynamically constructed through construal operations in narrative texts. Drawing upon the theoretical models of Talmy, Langacker, and Croft and Cruse, the study proposes a detailed framework to identify how the three systems, configurational, perspectival, and attentional systems combine to form a unified fantasy formation system found in Tolkien's novels.

2. Construal Operation: An Overview

Construalization has a long intellectual history, dating back to early psychological theories of perception, philosophical investigations of language and meaning, and, eventually, the rich advances of cognitive linguistics in the twentieth century. The notion of 'construal' has become fundamental to understanding how meaning is formed, perceived, and expressed in language, demonstrating that meaning is actively built by humans, often based on their perspective, experience, and cultural



environment. Talmy made substantial contributions to the study of construal through his investigation into how languages encode event structures. In his study "Toward a Cognitive Semantics" (2000), Talmy investigated how different languages generate motion, causation, and other event-related notions, demonstrating how linguistic constructions reveal cognitive patterns. Langacker, a further important figure in cognitive linguistics, developed the notion of cognitive grammar, which highlights the fact that linguistic structures mirror mental representations of the world. Langacker's research in the 1980s and 1990s focused on how meaning is formed through the general structure of sentences, with construal playing an important part in how speakers and listeners understand meaning. His idea stressed the flexibility of construal, or how a single linguistic structure can lead to multiple meanings depending on contexts (Talmy, 2000: 1-45). The ability to comprehend or interpret the same sequence of events in several ways is one of the basic characteristics of human minds.

A number of theories have also been put up to classify construal operations. Among them are Talmy (1988 and 2000), Langacker (1987 and 2008), and Croft and Cruse (2004), as describing in the following sections.

2.1. Langacker's Focal Adjustments of Construal Operations

Langacker (1987: 116–37) distinguished three categories of interpretive activities, which he called focal adjustments: selection, viewpoint, and abstraction. The ability of humans to choose which elements of a scene to concentrate on while disregarding others is known as selection. The chosen item's fundamental domains include time, location, color, pitch, temperature, pressure, pain, odor, and emotion. The point of view used to describe a given scene is called perspective. There are four components to it: subjectivity, objectivity, deixis, viewpoint, and figure-ground alignment. Finally, the degree of accuracy and detail used to depict a situation is related to abstraction.

Langacker (2008: 55-73) updated his classification, which now consists of four operations: dynamicity, perspective, focusing, and specificity. Specificity is equivalent to the earlier abstraction category, and perspective has stayed unchanged. The selection component and the figure-ground alignment (also known as foreground-background arrangement) phenomenon, which were previously classified under the perspective operation, are included in focusing. The saliency of some elements of a scene in comparison to others is referred to as prominence. Under the heading of prominence are the ideas of profiling and trajectory-landmark alignment.

2.2 Talmy's Imaging Systems of Construal Operations



Talmy (1988: 155-206) identified four types of construal operations called imaging systems: schematization, perspective, attention, and force dynamics. There is a conceivable overlap between Talmy's and Langacker's classifications. The categories of schematization, viewpoint, and attention align with Langacker's concepts of specificity, perspective, and prominence. Talmy's classification now includes force dynamics, which examines how things in a scene interact with one another through force. Talmy (2000: 40-84) refined his classification and identified four primary systems: configurational structure, perspectival system, attentional system, and force dynamics system. The new classification is identical to the preceding one, but with more comprehensive branches. The first category covers six patterns: plexity, boundedness, dividedness, degree of extension, pattern of distribution, and axiality. The second category includes four schematic categories: location, distance, mode, and direction. The third construal operation includes three factors: strength, pattern, and mapping. The third group distinguishes between two factors: agonists and antagonists.

2.3. Croft and Cruse's Model of Linguistic Construal Operations

Croft and Cruse (2004: 40-59) found Talmy and Langacker's categories inadequate. They claim that the two groupings share numerous categories. Many categories, including framing, picture schema, and metaphor, do not exist. Croft and Cruse proposed a model that combines Talmy's and Langacker's classifications with revisions. They classify construal operations into four categories. The first category is called 'attention/salience' which involves selection (profiling and metonymy), scope (predication, search domains, and accessibility), scalar adjustment (quantitative and qualitative), and dynamic. The second construal operation is 'judgement/comparison' that involves categorization, metaphor, and figure/ground. The third category is referred to as 'perspective/situatedness' which includes viewpoint and orientation, deixis (spatiotemporal, epistemic, empathetic), and subjectivity/objectivity. The last construal operation is known as 'constitution/Gestalt' which includes structural schematization, individuation (boundedness, unity, multiplicity, etc.), topological/geometric schematization (container, etc.), scale, force dynamics, and relationality.

3. Fantasy Genre

Fantasy is a type of fiction that includes magical or supernatural aspects that are unconstrained by the laws of reality. It frequently features imagined worlds, mythical creatures and heroic adventures, set in settings that may be totally fictional or based on historical or mythical themes. Fantasy frequently addresses themes like good vs evil, the hero's journey, and the power of imagination or magic. Fantasy literature has evolved over centuries, drawing inspiration from ancient myths, folklore, and early storytelling traditions, eventually developing



into the genre we recognize today, shaped by figures like J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and Ursula K. Le Guin. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (1937) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955) are among the most important contributions to the contemporary fantasy genre. Drawing on old mythologies, languages, and folklore, Tolkien built a detailed and immersive secondary world that served as the model for many subsequent fantasy settings.

Fantasy frequently use metaphor, allegory, and symbolic frameworks (Abstract and Symbolic Representation) to get readers to think about universal issues like power, morality, and human nature Fantasy fiction delves into identity issues and encourages empathy by putting readers in the shoes of diverse often non-human characters. Fantasy allows readers to sympathize with characters who suffer hardships that are similar to real-world struggles, even if those characters are very different from themselves. Fantasy frequently mimics real-world conflicts, giving readers a safe area to examine issues of race, gender, and power.

4. Construal Operation Model of Fantasy Scene

The model of studying construal operation of fantasy scene represents a basic level known as 'configurational system', that consists of two aspects: structural schematization (including plexity, boundedness, dividedness, degree of accuracy, pattern of distribution, and axiality) and scanning (including summary and sequential). The configurational system in turn divided into three sub-levels: perspectival system, attentional system, and fantasy formation system.

4.1. Configurational System

4.1.1. Structural Schematization

According to Talmy (2000: 49), this system consists of six additional schematic categories: plexity, boundedness, dividedness, the degree of extension, the pattern of distribution, and axiality. Plexity refers to the number of equivalent elements in a quantity of TIME or SPACE, which might be uniplex or multiplex. The grammatical category number is based on the concept of SPACE or matter. For example, the singular count noun *slipper* denotes a single structure, but the plural count noun *slippers* represent multiplex structure. Mass nouns, such as *champagne*, have multiplex structure. Intrinsically repetitive activities, such as knocking, shaking, ringing, or breathing, are implicit in their meaning and signal repetition, unless influenced by context within which the activity is embedded (Talmy ,2000: 49).

Second, boundedness refers to whether a quantity has inherent boundaries or not. The distinction between count and mass nouns in SPACE is based on this concept. For example, *slippers and canapés* have bounded structure, with distinct 'edges' that can be individuated and counted. Mass nouns, such as *champagne* and *air*, lack inherent 'edges', making them uncountable. In the domain of TIME,



boundedness distinguishes between perfect and imperfect grammatical aspects. According to Talmy, verbs with intrinsic boundedness can be combined with adverbial expressions such as "in four minutes," which suggest a bounded period of time. In contrast, verbs that are intrinsic Unbounded are incompatible with this form of adverbial expression. Talmy suggests that unbounded quantities, such as *water* or *sleep*, cannot be converted into bounded portions. (Talmy, 2000: 50) Certain verbs have inherent unbounded constructions. Verbs such as 'win' can be understood as having an intrinsic 'endpoint' or 'goal.' bounded although the unbounded verb 'sleep' is not. Inherently bounded verbs can be used with adverbial expressions, such as "four minutes" (Evans and Green, 2006: 520).

The third aspect is dividedness which refers to a quantity's internal segmentation and is the basis for distinguishing between discrete and continuous matter. Discrete matter can be split down into distinct parts. If it cannot, it is continuous. It is crucial to note that the terms 'unbounded' and 'continuous' are not synonymous, though they can be correlated. For example, the mass noun *oxygen* is both continuous and unbounded. In contrast, mass nouns like *timber* and *furniture* have a distinct structural structure. (Talmy, 2000, p.55). A discrete entity is one that can be broken down into smaller components from its base. For example, the human body is made up of various sections. If we take portion of similar to the hand, the palm is divided into fingers, each with a fingernail. The last part cannot be broken into smaller pieces; hence we consider it continuous. All entities above the fingernail (body, hand, and palm) are separate entities. The distinction between continuous and discrete is comparable to the distinction made between durative and iterative. Actions might be continuous or discrete. structures. Continuous verbs, such as 'sleep', 'coma', and 'walk', have no interruptions throughout composition. Conversely, verbs like 'breath', 'coughing', and 'continued sneezing' include internal breaks (Talmy, 2000: 58).

The fourth aspect of structural schematization is the degree of extension which refers to the amount of space or time that can be stretched over a given distance. This category interacts with boundedness, but offers a more detailed structure resembling points on a continuum between bounded and unbounded. For example, SPACE or TIME can be either a point (*speck* and *die*), a bounded extent (*ladder* and *wash up*) or an unbounded extent (*river* and *sleep*). *Washing up* is telic and has an inherent endpoint, whereas *sleeping* is an atelic (Evans and Green ,2006: 523).

A further category is pattern of distribution. It refers to how matter is spread in space or how action is distributed in time. These patterns can be described as follows. While dying symbolizes a change of state from which its participant cannot emerge, falling indicates a change of state from which its participant can emerge (if you fall you can get up again, but getting up again is not a required element of falling). A light flash depicts a cyclical change of state, transitioning



from dark to light and back. Flashing does not require repeating the cycle, unlike breathing, which does. Sleep is an unchanging state, unlike the other activities that involve internal changes. This category significantly impacts aspect, similar to the degree of extension, and is reflected in Certain verbs that are compatible or incompatible with specific grammatical structures. (Evans and Green ,2006: 524)
The final schematic category of configurational structure is 'axiality'. This refers to how a quantity of SPACE or TIME is organized along a directed axis. For instance, Talmy contends that the terms healthy and sick are points along a health-related axis. The endpoint of the axis is well, and the remainder is sick. This explains the varying distribution of closed-class degree modifiers (e.g., almost and slightly) in relation to adjectives. For instance, it's possible to be slightly sick or almost well, but not *slightly well or *almost sick. (Evans and Green, 2006:525).

4.1.2. Scanning

Langacker presents the idea of scanning as a basic cognitive process for language processing conceptual structures in Cognitive Grammar. This concept is essential to comprehending how humans interpret and represent various linguistic categories, especially the difference between verbs and nouns. He differentiates between two types of scanning: summary and sequential. The former encompasses the entire scene, and sequential scanning, which scans a scene in a certain time frame. It is not equivalent to objective time (Langacker 1987: 144-45, 248-49). For example, when a verb predicates an action, such as "the Boston Bridge collapsed," the event scanned through time. Langacker suggests that *the road is in the valley*, involves sequential scanning because it is predicated, but summary scanning is used when *the road is winding through the valley*, as the latter is not predicated.

This contrast is similar to the difference between scanning an image (summary) and viewing a film (sequential). A photograph captures all elements of a static scene at once, while a film shows a sequence of scenes that differ from one another (Evans and Green, 2006: 535).

Sequential scanning can be classified into two types: factive and fictive sequential scanning. The former refers to perceived motion in real-world, such as *The monkey climbed the tree*. In this scene, *the monkey* moves from the bottom to the top of the tree. The motion is physically experienced as ascending the tree. However, fictive sequential scanning describes a static physical scene in terms of a real scene, where the displacement is 'mental' rather than real. The hearer reconstructs the scene evoked by the statement. According to Rojo and Valenzuela (2003: 243), individuals mentally track an object in a specific direction. Static scenes are conceptualized as dynamic motion in the real world. For example, *the two streets meet in the city center*. In this scene, the motion verb *meet* is an inanimate object that cannot move. In other words, our understanding of the world suggests that streets cannot move from one location to another.



Motions differ depending on the actions performed. Classifying motion based on its form and direction is a challenging task. Flexibility of moving entities can perform thousands of various types of movements. However, these movements can be classified into three main forms that serve as the foundation for all others. First, verticality refers to the vertical axis of movement which can go upward or downward. The motion of downward can be represented in a variety of actions, including *fall*, *plop*, *slump*, *dunk*, *reduce*, and *sit*. However, the motion of upward describes bottom-up actions like *raise*, *lift*, *elevate*, *increase*, *carry*, and *stand* (Rudzka-Ostyn, 1988: 520). Another form of action is horizontality which refers to the horizontal axis of movement. There are three distinct sub-types of horizontality: directional movement (it happens when a moving entity goes in a specific direction and includes left-right, forward-backward, convergent-divergent, and arrival-departure), non-directional movement (it means that there is no clear direction of movement, as in drawing, dancing, writing, playing, and working), and frictional movement (it refers to the resisting force while rubbing two objects together, as in shaking, trembling, quaking, and fluttering). The third form of motion is trajectory which is the curving movement of an object. This form has both vertical and horizontal movement. For example, in the scene "He fell forward", falling is a vertical movement and forward is considered a horizontally oriented movement. The outcome is an arc-like shape termed trajectory (Rudzka-Ostyn, 1988: 20).

Sequential scanning has also two elements, including distance and geometric schematization. The former it is related to a straight line or along a path. Examples include the distance between two cities or between a person and an object (Evans and Green ,2006: 528). There are three types of distance. The first is proximal in which something located closer to a reference point or origin. Second, intermediate refers to something that falls between two reference points, neither too close nor too far. For example, consider a rest stop located midway between two cities. The last type of distance is distal which refers to something located farther distant from a reference point. For example, consider a city far away from your current location. The second element of sequential scanning is geometric schematization which contributes to spatiotemporal analysis of motion scenes. Spatial and temporal geometric structures are not moving structures, despite our perception of movement. structures. Instead, they serve as transit hubs for moving objects. Geometric schematization has different aspects. The first is source -path- goal. For example, the sentence "The bird is flying over the house" includes a beginning point (source), a set of steps (path), and destination (goal). Evans and Green (2006) define the 'Source-Path-Goal schema' as the mechanism of going from one point to another. The Source-Path-Goal schema forms a coherent whole. However, the three components may not be clearly stated, but there is no dynamic scene without being



a source, a path and a target for the moving object. Another physical attribute is 'containment', which refers to an entity's spatial boundaries. The containment schema is based on human embodied experience, regardless of language, from experience of being physically located ourselves within bound locations like house, room, bed, etc. (Dodge and Lakoff, 2005: 60).

The last aspect of geometric schematization is landmark and trajectory which is used first by Langacker. A trajector is a figure in a relational profile (Langacker 1987: 217). Landmarks serve as grounds for the trajectory, as in cat [figure] is on the table [ground]. The trajector is the element that draws our attention in some way and stands against the landmark, which is the scene's background. (Langacker 2008, p.72).

4.2. Perspectival System

Perspectival system, is one of the most commonly discussed construal operations. Perspective is crucial for spatial descriptions, as it relies on relative position and viewpoint. the speaker is highly known. However, perspective is also found in nonspatial domains: we have a perspective based on our knowledge, belief and attitudes as well as our spatiotemporal location (Langacker 1987: 26-122). The study describes perspectival system in terms of two elements: view point and deixis.

Langacker describes viewpoint as a focal adjustment with two subtypes: vantage point and orientation (Langacker, 1987: 122–26). The former is the specific position or location from which the speaker mentally views a scene or situation. It refers to the observer's spatial or metaphorical positioning. The vantage point influences how objects and events are organized conceptually. Orientation is the spatial arrangement or alignment of items in a situation as conceptualized by the speaker. It determines the spatial relationships between objects, as well as the speaker's mental alignment with them. Orientation focuses on how the speaker explains and mentally positions objects in relation to themselves or other entities.

The second element of perspectival system is deixis. They are linguistic elements that convey meaning based on context, such as "this," "that," "here," "now," or pronouns like "I" and "you." Deixis places entities within the "ground" (the immediate communicative context, including speaker, listener, time, and place). Deictic expressions encode the relationship between the speaker and the scene being described. For example, "this book" suggests proximity to the speaker, whereas "that book" denotes distance, reflecting the speaker's spatial relationship with the object (Croft, and Cruse, 2004: 60).

Langacker distinguishes among three aspects of deixis spatiotemporal dimension, epistemic, and subjectivity and objectivity. Spatial and temporal references come from the speaker's point of view. Expressions like "yesterday" or "next to the



house" rely on the conceptualizer's position in time and space to convey meaning. The dynamic construction of events entails envisioning motion through time and space, which is similar to how individuals mentally imitate actions or scenes. However, epistemic grounding is concerned with how language encodes the speaker's knowledge, ideas, and assumptions about the world. Langacker believes that modal verbs (might and must) and evidential markers (apparently) serve as epistemological anchors, signifying certainty, possibility, or source of knowing. The speaker conceptualizes and communicates different levels of commitment to the truth of a proposition. For example, the phrase "*She must be home*" conveys epistemic certainty based on inference, but "*She might be home*" implies uncertainty (Croft, and Cruse, 2004: 60). On the other hand, subjectivity and objectivity refers to the way a scene involving the speaker himself/herself is conceptualized. Subjectivity means how speaker's presence and stance is evident in construal, while objectivity relates to how speaker's role is hidden or downplayed (Langacker, 1987: 132)

3.3. Attentional System

Attentional system refers to how language guides the hearer's or reader's attention to specific elements of a situation or conceptual scene. It is based on the idea that meaning is not just what is said, but also how focus is managed. Attentional system can be achieved through specificity and selection. Specificity is the degree to which a linguistic expression provides fine-grained detail. Words are grouped according to a taxonomy, known as hierarchy, with more broad terms at the top and more specialized terms at the bottom. A living being → animal → mammal → dog → golden retriever is an example of this taxonomy (Langacker, 2008: 55). Specificity is described in terms of three elements: degree of accuracy and focusing. The former is the degree to which an expression in language accurately captures reality. It refers to how precisely or imprecisely meanings are represented, perceived, and communicated in language. The process of generalizing ideas, frequently by leaving out particular details, is called 'abstraction', while details is related to the specific attributes or concrete elements included in a mental representation (Lakoff, 1987: 632). For instance, *My tabby cat* and *animal* represent the difference between abstraction and details. Focusing, on the other hand, is the process of choosing conceptual content for language presentation and organizing it into what might be roughly characterized (metaphorically) as foreground versus background (Langacker, 2008: 57). The scope of attention and zooming are two elements of focusing. The former impacts whether we process information broadly or narrowly. Broad attention entails taking in multiple details at once such as scanning a crowd. Narrow attention refers to focusing on a particular aspect, as in reading a sentence word by word. However, zooming is the



process of moving from the outside periphery to the point of focus, which narrows the scope like a funnel. Langacker refers to this essential part of the knowledge network as the scope of a lexical concept (Croft and Cruse, 2004: 50).

The second element of attentional system is selection. It focuses on relevant aspects of our experience and ignoring irrelevant ones. There are two types of selection: semantic and grammatical. Semantic selection has two aspects. The first one is figure and ground organization. The trajector is the element that draws our attention in some way and stands, while ground is the background or surrounding region that to the figure. The second aspect is base- profile alignment. The base is the broader conceptual structure or background information that provides context, whereas the profile is a particular element that is highlighted or foregrounded within the base (Croft, and Cruse, 2004: 47-56). However, grammatical selection refers to how grammatical choices are influenced by—and also reflect—cognitive processes and meaning construction in the mind of the speaker. Grammar is not arbitrary; rather, it is motivated by the way we conceptualize experience. Grammatical selection be described in terms of two aspects. First, passivation and activation are two critical processes in this theory that govern how entities are introduced, sustained, or backgrounded in discourse. Passivation is the process of reducing an entity's prominence in a sentence or utterance. It shifts attention away from the agent (the person who performs the action) and toward another object. However, activation is the process of introducing or highlighting an entity such that it becomes prominent in discourse. Second, preposing and postposing are linguistic strategies for structuring information by shifting elements to the start or end of a sentence. These methods improve emphasis, discourse flow, and communication clarity. Preposing puts a word, phrase, or clause to the beginning of a sentence, usually to highlight or emphasize it .Postposing moves parts to the end of a sentence, generally to delay or reduce information (Vallduvi and Engdahi,1996: 459-520).

3.4. Fantasy Formational System

The Fantasy Formational System is a conceptual or analytical framework used to understand how fantasy worlds are cognitively and linguistically constructed in narrative texts. It refers to the set of cognitive, linguistic, and narrative strategies used to construct imaginary or impossible worlds in fantasy fiction. It explains how authors use language to create new realities and how readers mentally simulate or engage with them. This can be achieved through different aspect. First, personification is a literary technique that adds human qualities, emotions, or behaviors to non-human entities, such as animals, objects, forces of nature, or abstract concepts (Radden ,2007, pp.313-342). Second, merging is combining several conceptual structures and meaning-making techniques to produce a



cohesive understanding using multiple frames in cognitive semantics. (Filmore, 1982: 111-137). Third, metaphor and metonymy are two essential figures of speech that appear in language, literature, and ordinary conversation. A metaphor directly compares one object to another, implying that they are similar in some manner, without using the words "like" or "as." It is based on likeness or analogy. A metonymy, on the other hand, is based on association or proximity (Croft, and Cruse, 2004: 48-55). The fourth aspect is overstatement and understatement. Overstatement is the deliberate use of exaggeration to focus on a point or express intensity. However, understatement is the deliberate downplaying or minimization of the significance, size, or impact of something (Colston, 1997: 43-58).

Fifth, clipping involves the mental abstraction or selective exclusion of certain elements, attributes, or subsets from a comprehensive conceptual structure, effectively isolating and retaining only a specific segment of the original representation (Beard, 1998: 44-65). Finally, coining encompasses the transformation or refinement of pre-existing concepts through the invention and integration of novel features. Structurally, this cognitive mechanism operates across two distinct mental spaces: the initial space serves as the generative domain in which new features are formulated, while the subsequent space houses the target concept that undergoes modification. The coined elements, once generated in the first mental space, are transferred and assimilated into the second, thereby altering or expanding the conceptual boundaries of the target. This process not only reconfigures the original concept but also enhances its semantic or imaginative scope through the deliberate infusion of innovative characteristics. (Gries, 2004: 415-428).

4. The Analysis of the Construalization in The Lord of The Rings Novel (The Return of The King)

4.1. Scene One

"They passed Tarlang's Neck and came into Lamedon; and the Shadow Host pressed behind and fear went on before them, until they came to Calembel upon Ciril, and the sun went down like blood behind Pinnath Gelin away in the West behind them. The township and the fords of Ciril they found deserted, for many men had gone away to war, and all that were left fled to the hills at the rumour of the coming of the King of the Dead. But the next day there came no dawn, and the Grey Company passed on into the darkness of the Storm of Mordor and were lost to mortal sight; but the Dead followed them."



This scene viewed through the lens of the configurational system with an emphasis on fine-grained structural schematization, the nominal and verbal elements can be systematically classified according to their ontological and grammatical profiles, revealing deeper conceptual patterns of individuation, boundedness, and spatial dynamics.

Firstly, a distinct category of multiplex, unbounded, and continuous entities is constituted by mass or plural nouns such as “the shadow,” “fear,” “the sun,” “blood,” “the west,” “war,” “darkness,” and “the storm.” These elements do not refer to individuated, countable units but rather evoke diffuse, pervasive, and often abstract entities that lack clear internal boundaries. Their conceptual structure aligns with phenomena that extend across space or time without delimitation, emphasizing thematic continuity and atmospheric saturation within the narrative frame.

In contrast, the nouns “Lamedon,” “Clambel,” “Ciril,” “township,” “the king,” “day,” and “dead” exemplify uniplex, bounded, and discrete referents. These terms designate singular, identifiable entities with well-defined conceptual boundaries, corresponding to localized individuals, places, or temporally bounded events. The noun “dead” in particular—although abstract in some respects—is inherently discrete and bounded in meaning, as it signifies a fixed existential state that can be applied to clearly individuated referents. A third category includes plural count nouns such as “the fords,” “men,” and “the hills,” which are best categorized as multiplex, bounded, and discrete. Each of these refers to a collection of countable, spatially distinct units. Their bounded nature allows for the individuation of components within the group, yet they are treated collectively as multiplex expressions.

Turning to the verbal dimension, actions such as “the host pressed” and “went on” are intrinsically multiplex, unbounded, and continuous. These verbs encode extended, ongoing processes involving distributed agency or motion without a specified endpoint. They reflect emergent or persistent activity that resists closure within the temporal frame. On the other hand, verbs like “came,” “went down,” “found,” “gone away,” “left,” “fled,” “passed on,” “lost,” and “followed” are lexically multiplex and unbounded in their semantic content—implying motion, transformation, or transition—but are deployed grammatically as uniplex, bounded, and discrete. They function narratively as individual events or completed actions, framed within delimited segments of the unfolding story.

From the standpoint of scanning, particularly sequential scanning, the scene is constructed as a sequence of interrelated events that are causally and temporally ordered. This is articulated through frame-relative path schemas, evident in



expressions such as “the shadow-host pressed behind...” and “the sun went down like blood behind Pinnath Gelin...” These linguistic constructions highlight directionality, movement, and unfolding spatial relations. The motion is conceptualized as distal, unfolding across an extended spatial field, as in “fear went on before them” and “the sun went down like blood behind Pinnath Gelin, away in the west”. These expressions evoke not only literal motion but also emotional and atmospheric progression. Within the scene’s spatial mapping, “the Grey Company” functions as the trajector—the entity in focus that is undergoing movement—while “Clambel city” serves as the landmark, the fixed reference point toward which the trajector is oriented. This alignment designates Clambel as a narrative and spatial anchor, functioning both as the spatial goal and as a symbolic site of resistance. In conceptual terms, Clambel embodies the antagonist role, resisting the forward thrust of the narrative force, while the Grey Company, as agonist, actively engages with and moves toward this oppositional locus. This spatial interaction is further modeled through containment schemas. Here, the Grey Company is construed as the contained entity, metaphorically situated within a movement trajectory, while Clambel is envisioned as the container, the terminus or enclosing boundary of that motion. This conceptualization underscores the telic orientation of the scene, where agency and motion are directed into a final spatial envelope.

Finally, viewed through the Source–Path–Goal schema, the scene is anchored by a clear spatiotemporal progression. “Lamedon” represents the source, the point of origin of the movement; “Tarlang’s Neck” is the path, the narrow transitional corridor through which the agonist force moves; and “Clambel” constitutes the goal, the endpoint toward which all motion and narrative tension converge. This configuration not only structures the spatial narrative but also encodes the underlying conceptual trajectory of conflict, pursuit, and resolution.

From the vantage of the perspectival system, particularly in relation to orientation, the scene is construed through an externally anchored viewpoint—namely, that of the narrator—who adopts an observational stance outside the immediate action yet remains cognitively immersed within its spatial and emotional trajectory. This narrative viewpoint allows the writer to map events along a dynamic egocentric frame of reference, whereby elements such as directionality, movement, and spatial contrast are organized relative to the implied observer’s conceptual vantage. In the scene—“the shadow host pressed behind and fear went on before them, until they came to Calambel upon Ciril, and the sun went down like blood behind Pinnath...”—the narrator encodes a directional field in which “the shadow” is positioned posteriorly and “fear” anteriorly to the protagonists, thus constructing a scene with clear front-back alignment. Additionally, the sunset is situated as



descending behind Pinnath, anchoring the narrative space to a western declension and reinforcing a fixed orientational schema. These configurations collectively instantiate the narrator's vantage point—a mental and spatial coordinate system from which the events are filtered, sequenced, and evaluated.

With respect to the spatiotemporal domain, locative references such as Lamedon, Calembel, Ciril, and to the hills function as geographical anchors, segmenting the journey into identifiable and meaningful waypoints. These toponyms serve not merely as passive background settings but as deictic markers that interact with the unfolding motion and path. The phrase “the next day” further contributes a temporal index, marking a transition across a calendric threshold and embedding the spatial journey within a diachronic progression.

Overall, the narrative is shaped by a strong degree of subjectivity, as the spatial and temporal cues are not neutral descriptions but are perspectivized—filtered through the narrator's conceptual lens. The writer's orientation in space and time is foregrounded, and the reader is invited to adopt the same aligned viewpoint, reinforcing a shared experiential frame rooted in selective focus and interpretive anchoring.

In accordance with the attentional system, this scene exemplifies a high level of specificity, particularly in terms of accuracy and precision of detail, as the author employs richly descriptive language to vividly construct the conceptual representation of the unfolding events. The scope of the scene is centered around the imagery of “the shadow” and the city of Calembel, with particular zooming-in on the spatial transition of the characters as they pass through Tarlang's Neck and subsequently enter Calembel.

From the perspective of semantic selection, the “Grey Company” functions as the profile—the focal point of the narrative—while the city of Calembel serves as the base, forming the contextual background against which the actions of the company are projected. The writer employs windowing of attention by selectively highlighting specific elements within the narrative frame—most notably “the Grey Company” and “Calembel”—while grappling, or backgrounding, others. Within this attentional configuration, “the Grey Company” constitutes the figure, standing out as the primary entity in focus, whereas “Calembel” assumes the role of the ground, providing the spatial and narrative setting for the figure's motion and presence. Furthermore, the scene demonstrates activation, as evidenced by the consistent use of the past tense, signaling that the events are dynamically presented as completed actions within the narrative flow.



Lastly, the scene contains instances of preposing, a syntactic strategy whereby the writer foregrounds particular elements—such as “the township and the fords” and temporal markers like “the next day”—by positioning them at the beginning of sentences for rhetorical emphasis and thematic prominence.

Concerning fantasy formation system, Tolkien masterfully layers literary devices to deepen the eerie and epic tone of the march of the Grey Company and the Shadow Host. Personification is used strikingly in the line “fear went on before them,” assigning fear an active, almost sentient presence that precedes the arrival of the Host, amplifying the supernatural dread. The metaphor “the sun went down like blood” evokes violent imagery, linking the natural world to war and death, signaling doom. Metonymy is employed in phrases like “the King of the Dead” and “the Shadow Host,” where titles and collective names stand in for entire beings or forces, allowing the abstract terror they represent to take on a tangible form. Merging is seen in the blending of historical and mythic registers—geographical realism (e.g., “Calembel,” “Pinnath Gelin”) is merged with the spectral and legendary, producing a seamless mythic realism. . Overstatement appears in “there came no dawn,” an apocalyptic exaggeration implying a spiritual blackness beyond natural weather, while understatement is threaded into “were lost to mortal sight,” a quiet, restrained phrase evoking mystery and transcendence. Importation appears in Tolkien's use of Old English, which gives the text an antique, epic feel. In condensed allusions, clipping occurs, as in the phrase “the Dead,” which is a shortened and frightening version of a word that equally simplifies and exaggerates the thing. It may be understood through such coinages as *Grey Company* and *Storm of Mordor*, which are new idioms carrying at a glance complicated notions and emotional tone. These strategies combine to form a dreadful transition in which myth, fear, and destiny meet in the dark before the final conflict.

This scene of *The Return of the King* reveals the excellent mastery of language, which J.R.R. Tolkien cleverly uses, especially by way of linguistic importation and coining. Some names of places, such as *Lamedon*, *Calembel*, *Ciril*, and *Pinnath Gelin*, can be compared with importation since those were invented fictional Tolkien Elvish languages, especially Sindarin, used as a foreign language in the text. These names are kept with the originality in their structure and pronunciation, which offers the feeling of depth and linguistic genuineness. Tolkien, however, makes use of coining to create original compound words that would express novel ideas founded on his mythos. Shadow Host, Grey Company, King of the Dead and Storm of Mordor are recently constructed English phrases, which combine familiar words, so forming new and mythologically weighted terminologies specific only to the Middle-earth. Such expressions created by the coinage help to raise the scene to the level of mystery, horror, and epicity.



4.2. Scene Two

"Day was waning. In the last rays of the sun the Riders cast long pointed shadows that went on before them. Darkness had already crept beneath the murmuring fir-woods that clothed the steep mountain-sides. The king rode now slowly at the end of the day. Presently the path turned round a huge bare shoulder of rock and plunged into the gloom of soft-sighing trees. Down, down they went in a long winding file. When at last they came to the bottom of the gorge they found that evening had fallen in the deep places. The sun was gone. Twilight lay upon the waterfalls."

From the perspective of the configurational system, particularly within the framework of structural schematisation, the selection and grammatical behavior of nominal and verbal elements in the passage reflect distinct cognitive categorizations based on multiplexity, boundedness, and discreteness. The nouns "the sun," "darkness," "the gloom," "rays," "twilight," and "waterfalls" are best understood as multiplex, unbounded, and continuous entities. These terms denote phenomena that are either massive in conceptual scope (e.g., light, atmospheric states) or inherently plural without individual countability, and thus resist precise delimitation. For instance, "twilight" and "darkness" refer to gradational states that unfold temporally and spatially rather than occupying fixed positions. Their semantic indeterminacy reinforces their unbounded character, making them ideal lexical items for constructing fluid, immersive spatial atmospheres.

In contrast, nouns such as "day," "the king," "rock," "mountain," "the end," and "the path" are classified as uniplex, bounded, and discrete. These referents are conceptually unitary, often countable and concretely individuated within the narrative space. For example, "the king" and "the path" are singular, count nouns, fixed within the spatio-temporal framework of the narrative and offering reference points around which motion or change can be structured.

Meanwhile, nouns such as "the Riders," "woods," "trees," and "places" are classified as multiplex, bounded, and discrete since they describe plural, countable entities that retain their internal distinctness (discrete) while simultaneously forming a coherent aggregate. They have bounded positions in space and can be represented in distributed configurations, such as "riders" going in a line or "trees" forming an encircling forest.

In the linguistic system, a comparable configurational distinction exists. Verbs like "cast," "crept," "clothed," "turned," "plunged," "found," "fallen," and "was gone"



are distinguished by their simplicity, bounded, uniplex, and discrete. These verbs express punctual or completed activities that are temporally restricted and lack inherent repetition or durativity. They express specific occurrences or transitions—for example, "plunged" depicts a quick drop into darkness, whereas "was gone" implies the full removal of light. In contrast, verbs such as "waning," "went on," "rode," and "lay" are fundamentally multiplex, unbounded, and continuous, signifying activities or situations that extend temporally or imply continual advancement. For example, "waning" represents the progressive dimming of daylight, whereas "rode" denotes a continuous act of movement that unfolds over time and place with no distinct conclusion.

In terms of scanning, the text employs both factive and fictive processing processes. The sentence "Day was waning" demonstrates factive motion since it refers to a real-world temporal phenomenon—the diminishing of daylight—that readers can easily image based on prior experience. Similarly, "The Riders cast long pointed shadows that went on before them" creates a distant, horizontal spatial progression, prompting the reader's visual cognition to trace light and shadow interaction across terrain. "The path turned round a huge bare shoulder of rock..." initiates a shift in spatial orientation, suggesting a concrete topographical reconfiguration that must be mentally reconstructed in three-dimensional space. The subsequent "plunged into the gloom of soft-sighing trees" deepens the sense of spatial immersion through multi-sensory fictive projection, combining motion, texture, and sound to evoke descent into an increasingly obscured environment. The phrase "Down, down they went in a long winding file" reinforces this vertical progression, prompting the reader to mentally track a recursive, spiraling descent, which spatially and metaphorically echoes the passage into darkness and uncertainty. The final clause—"Evening had fallen in the deep places. The sun was gone. Twilight lay upon the waterfalls."—functions as a closure structure, a fictive encapsulation of the day's end. It situates the narrative in a dim, quiet world of subdued light and auditory texture, wherein "twilight" and "waterfalls" merge in a sensory tableau that is spatially distal yet intimately immersive.

In sum, the interplay of nominal and verbal configurations, combined with layered scanning strategies, orchestrates a rich cognitive mapping of space and time, reinforcing the symbolic descent from clarity into obscurity—both in landscape and in narrative mood. The mountain gorge in this scene is conceptualized as a vast, enclosing container into which the Riders gradually descend. This spatial imagery is emphasized by the line, "Down, down they went in a long winding file... to the bottom of the gorge," which conveys a deep, downward movement into a confined, shadowed space. The gorge not only contains the Riders physically, but also semantically, as it becomes filled with



darkness and tension, restricting visibility and freedom of motion. Surrounding this central descent, the fir-woods serve as another layered container—described as a murmuring canopy under which darkness gathers. The phrase “Darkness had already crept beneath the murmuring fir-woods” evokes the image of a natural vault filling with a creeping, intangible substance, reinforcing the sense of enclosure and advancing obscurity. A key spatial threshold is introduced in the reference to “a huge bare shoulder of rock,” which acts as a transitional boundary between the openness of the upper landscape and the enclosed gloom of the forest. When “the path turned round” this rock and “plunged into the gloom,” it marked a narrative and visual shift: the Riders are no longer merely approaching darkness—they are immersed in it. Prior to this, they are situated in a higher, more illuminated environment—still touched by the sun, as shown in “The Riders cast long pointed shadows...” and “The king rode now slowly at the end of the day.” These phrases suggest their initial position in a space of declining but lingering light. The Riders and the King serve as the agonists in this passage, moving through and reacting to the spatial and temporal environment around them. Their descent is agentive but increasingly passive, as external elements begin to dominate their journey. The antagonistic forces they face include the terrain, time, and above all, darkness. Darkness is personified through the verb “crept,” rendering it a subtle yet active presence that seeps into the landscape and imposes limitations on perception and progress. It is not simply a backdrop, but an encroaching force that marks the transition from day to night, from clarity to obscurity. Through these layered spatial metaphors and directional shifts, the passage evokes a mood of quiet foreboding and immerses the reader in a scene of gradual descent, both literal and symbolic.

From the perspective of the perspectival system, the passage is constructed around an external, elevated, and dynamically shifting vantage point that aligns with the progressive movement of the Riders through the landscape. The viewpoint is third-person omniscient—removed from the internal consciousness of any character—yet it remains closely tethered to the spatial trajectory of the group. This external narrator operates as a mobile observer, tracking the descent of the Riders with a cinematic fluidity. For instance, in lines such as “The king rode now slowly at the end of the day” and “Down, down they went in a long winding file,” the narrative voice follows the motion from behind or above, offering a bird’s-eye or trailing perspective that captures not only the figures in motion but the transforming environmental context around them. The end effect is a visual field that includes both the characters and the changing natural elements—light, topography, and atmospheric conditions—without ever revealing specific subjectivities.



This panoramic scope allows for a wide-angle depiction of the landscape that takes into account both geographical advancement and chronological modification. The passage's temporal orientation is unidirectional and anticipatory, moving slowly from late day to dusk and into night. The use of time indications, such as "day was waning" and "the sun had set." "Twilight lay upon the waterfalls" emphasizes the forward surge into darkness.

Symbolically, the fading light represents a shift not only in time but also in perceptual clarity—a move toward darkness, ambiguity, and the limits of human vision and agency. This forward-leaning chronological motion is mirrored spatially in the Riders' fall from the open, sunny highlands to the gorge's contained shade, supporting a thematic movement from presence to absence, visibility to hiding.

Notably, the narration stays completely externalized. The text avoids using verbs for perception, thought, or emotion. Instead, what is provided is a strictly observable account of behaviors and environmental occurrences. Descriptions like "The Riders cast long pointed shadows..." and "Darkness had already crept beneath the murmuring fir-woods" lack interpretive or emotive remark. This narratorial detachment contributes to the sense of inevitability and quiet fatalism in the scene: the characters do not resist the encroaching darkness, nor is their emotional state articulated—they simply move forward, enveloped by external forces. Thus, the passage maintains a deliberately distanced, godlike perspective that observes but does not intervene, documents but does not internalize—creating a layered visual and temporal tableau in which human agency is subordinated to the larger rhythms of landscape and time.

In terms of attentional system, the descriptive elements embedded in the scene—such as "long pointed shadows," "last rays of the sun," "steep mountain-sides," "huge bare shoulder of rock," "soft-sighing trees," and "twilight lay upon the waterfalls"—serve to render the physical environment with heightened sensory clarity and precision. These phrases not only construct a vivid mental landscape but also establish the temporal and spatial coordinates of the scene: the liminal moment of sunset and a rugged, forested terrain carved by descent. The narrative's temporal design begins with a broad framing—"Day was waning"—signifying the gradual fading of daylight and ends with "Twilight lay upon the waterfalls," a moment of nearly frozen stillness. This journey through time takes a narrowing arc, from the vast continuity of daytime to the silence of dusk, where time itself appears suspended in a liminal space between light and darkness.

The scope reflects the temporal contraction. The poem begins with a panoramic vista of "the Riders... steep mountain-sides," implying a unified visual frame for both persons and scenery. As the voyage advances, the narrative lens narrows: "a



huge bare shoulder of rock" serves as both a physical border and a turning point in the topographical adventure. The Riders move from exposed, bright heights to "the gloom of soft-sighing trees"—a region characterized by shade, texture, and ambient sound. The decline ends with a metaphorical spatial nadir: "the bottom of the gorge," a confined, low-lying zone steeped in darkness and isolation. This drop creates a spatial contraction, like a narrative zoom from wide, lofty openness to deep, gloomy containment. The movement of narrative attention can also be interpreted as a sequence of zooming activities that gradually tighten the visual and sensory fields. The phrase "Darkness had already crept beneath the murmuring fir-woods..." takes the reader down to forest level, immersing them in tactile and auditory detail—the smooth underflow of trees and the quiet march of gloom. There is a near-microscopic specificity in "The path turned round a huge bare shoulder of rock..."—a moment that anchors the reader's attention to a precise geological feature, lending intimacy and immediacy to the terrain. The final visual register—"Twilight lay upon the waterfalls"—acts as a terminal zoom: a distilled, tranquil image, functioning as a focal culmination. This singular visual—both static and symbolic—suggests a moment of resolution or pause, freezing the forward motion of time and collapsing the environmental detail into a singular tableau, rich with atmosphere and quiet significance. The Riders function as the salient figures within this descriptive tableau. Their dynamic nature is emphasized through motion and perceptual prominence, as in the line "The Riders cast long pointed shadows..."—a visual that foregrounds their presence against the diminishing illumination. These figures are agentive and mobile, drawing the reader's attention as they move steadily through a changing spatial and temporal field.

The ground, against which these figures are set, is composed of environmental and atmospheric phenomena—"last rays of the sun," "shadows," "steep mountain-sides." These features, while rich in descriptive texture, are ultimately backgrounded in relation to the moving figures; they serve as the perceptual contrast that enhances the visibility and narrative prominence of the Riders. The interplay between fading light and the emergent darkness forms a visual and affective backdrop that situates and enhances the Riders' motion. At a broader level, the base of the scene comprises the mountainous and forested terrain—the gorge, the path, the fir-woods, and the surrounding escarpments. This base constitutes the fixed spatial substrate upon which movement and change are registered. It is the enduring material geography, functioning as the structural foundation of the scene's spatial logic.

The profile, by contrast, selects certain trajectories and spatial transitions within this base—such as the path that "plunged into the gloom," the descent "down,



down... in a long winding file,” and topographical markers like the “huge bare shoulder of rock” or “the bottom of the gorge.” These features become focalized, narratively and visually extracted from the general spatial field. They chart the Riders’ movement through space and mark shifts in depth, orientation, and spatial enclosure.

Spatial windowing occurs as the narrator orchestrates a narrowing of perceptual scope—from an expansive overview of “the steep mountain-sides” to increasingly confined spatial segments. The reader is guided from the elevated, panoramic view of the Riders in descent to more intimate and shadowed enclosures: a path “plunging into the gloom of soft-sighing trees,” eventually leading “to the bottom of the gorge.” This zooming mechanism functions as a cinematic contraction of frame, collapsing distance and light to bring the reader into a progressively darker and more restricted spatial interior. The narrative thus constructs a movement not just through geography, but through layers of perceptual attention, narrowing the field as darkness deepens and the Riders become enveloped by the terrain they traverse. The sentence “The Riders cast long pointed shadows” exemplifies overt agentive activation. The Riders are presented as the grammatical and semantic agents of the verb “cast,” performing a deliberate, observable action. This structure places them in an explicitly active role within the narrative frame, asserting their presence and agency against the backdrop of diminishing light.

Similarly, in “The king rode now slowly,” the king assumes individual agency as the subject of a simple yet purposeful verb. While the pace of movement is subdued, the syntax affords the king narrative prominence by aligning his personal journey with the broader descent. His slow progression serves as both a time and emotional marker in the emerging scene. The phrase “They went in a long winding file” reinforces this sequential activation. “They”—a collective reference to the Riders and the king—are once more positioned as syntactic and semantic actors. The sentence depicts real-time progression, emphasizing the continuity and direction of their drop. Each sentence contributes significantly to the overall feeling of movement and progression.

“They came to the bottom of the gorge” maintains this activated pattern by connecting agent and action and rooting their movement in spatial resolution. The journey concludes with the structural arrival at a terminal site. These frequent activations strengthen the Riders’ physical interaction with the environment, grounding the story in experiencing motion.

In contrast, Tolkien frequently uses passivation or metaphorical agency to move the focus away from human activity and onto environmental and temporal occurrences. For example, in “Day was waning,” the subject “day” goes through a



diminution process with no suggested or stated external actor. The passive structure allows the emphasis to be on the gentle inevitability of time passing, giving the image a thoughtful and atmospheric quietness.

A more complex type of passivation can be seen in "Darkness had already crept beneath the murmuring fir-woods." While "darkness" is grammatically active, it is used metaphorically—as a creeping presence. The sentence rejects human agency in favor of nature personified, resulting in soft passivation, in which agency is shifted to a nonhuman, abstract force. This stylistic choice fosters an immersive mood and positions natural processes as autonomous entities shaping the environment.

Tolkien also uses syntactic placement to shape perception and control narrative flow. In "In the last rays of the sun, the Riders cast long pointed shadows," the fronted temporal prepositional phrase delays the agent and action, emphasizing the scene's visual and temporal atmosphere. The failing sunlight not only sets the moment, but also serves as a lens through which the Riders are first seen—establishing atmosphere before motion.

Likewise, "Down, down they went in a long winding file" begins with a repeated directional adverbial that comes before the subject and verb. This proposed repetition creates a rhythmic drop, emphasizing the vertical trajectory and establishing a poetic cadence. The agent's deliberate procrastination adds tension and drama to the visual drop. The fronted temporal phrase in the sentence "When at last they came to the bottom of the gorge..." creates anticipation. By prolonging the major clause—"they found that evening had fallen"—Tolkien underlines the significance of the arrival and reinforces the passage's tonal transition from motion to stillness.

Lastly, Tolkien also uses postposed relative clauses in order to control descriptive tempo and improve visual implants. So: "... the Riders made long pointed shadows that went forth before them as they moved,". The reader sees the shadows, and then he/she realizes that they extend in the distance. The same applies to the following phrase: similarly, the passage, Darkness had already crept beneath the murmuring fir-woods which clothed the steep mountain-sides, starts with the fir-woods and then introduces a sequence of space to the image. These postpositions add a recursive, unfolding quality to Tolkien's descriptions, guiding the reader through a landscape revealed in textured increments.

According to fantasy formation system, the phrase *Day was waning* exhibits a fine, though describing, example of personification whereby day and a living thing are given qualities of fatigue or a recession. The verb waning commonly alludes to a



procedure of diminishment or decrease; it is much more likely to relate to the phases of the moon or human lives. Used this way, it is a metaphorical superimposition of time over an organism, and practically means that the day is itself finite, a creature being worn out. This theorizing enhances the naturalness of cyclic time flow as a lived and experienced time and not measure and machine time flow.

Agency is displaced in an interesting way in the following line, which goes, *The Riders cast long pointed shadows which went on before them*. Although the Riders are the grammatical subjects, their shadows are intangible results of their being, and these are what is said to move forward. In this reversal of the agency role, the shadows not only become a visual figuration but turn into living guides or rather, the scouts of the anticipation and in conceptual terms, they are autonomous entities. The visual setting implies that the shadows run ahead of the Riders into darkness, figuratively predicting the fall of the Riders into the unknown. This is part of a larger symbolic encounter between the presence and its absence, shadows forming the border between what can be seen and what exists in the shade, between day and night, life and the possibility of danger.

Tolkien goes deeper into the creation of life in the dead things when he describes the land. In the expression, where, as the mountains formed steep sides, fir-woods in triple metaphorical construction, which were clad thereon, there clearly comes into view a triple metaphorical structure. Anthropomorphism (giving voice to the fir-woods) is used firstly with the verb murmuring, giving them either a voice, or a whisper, thus combining vegetation with speech. Second, they are given a sartorial purpose, to don clothing to the mountain, thereby voluntarily mixing nature with architecture in one action. Third, the mountain itself is implicitly rendered as a corporeal entity, a body capable of being dressed. This conceptual layering collapses distinctions between natural forms and human expression, creating a living topography, where each feature participates in emotional and sensory registers.

A similar dynamic appears in the line "The path turned... and plunged into the gloom of soft-sighing trees." Here, the path—an inanimate object—takes on human-like agency, depicted as if it actively chooses to turn and plunge, implying deliberate movement. The trees, meanwhile, are once again given voice, "soft-sighing," which blends breath, emotion, and sound into a single atmospheric gesture. This mutual animation of landscape and route serves to blur the line between geography and consciousness; the terrain is not merely passive, but appears to react, breathe, and guide.



The metaphor “Day was waning” also draws upon a larger conceptual metaphor: Time is a living entity. In this framework, time behaves as a biological being—one capable of weakening, aging, and ultimately dying. Such a mapping transforms the passage of time from a mechanical progression into an emotional process—something that is felt, mourned, and observed with quiet resignation. Rather than denoting a numerical hour, the waning of the day becomes a lived experience, a soft recession into darkness.

Tolkien’s depiction of the shadows again invokes a conceptual metaphor: shadows as sentient or guiding entities. In describing them as moving “before” the Riders, he elevates them from passive silhouettes to figures of forewarning and movement. This makes the game between light and form a kind of symbolic overture, in which the shadows serve as harbingers of destiny or harbingers of something dark. This has not only visual implications but also thematic implications: the world of tomorrow is becoming darker, and the shades indicate the inroads of the change.

What is more, another criterion, that is, metonymy, is also used in *The Day was waning*, where day means all the temporal and environmental environment. It does not describe the sun sinking down or the sky shifting, but takes the word day as an abridged reference to the whole transitional process of light to twilight. This compression of metonym suggests a noble simplicity, and it leads Tolkien to point all of us toward a greater cosmic change, with only a word.

Similarly, in the use of the last rays of the sun, the metonymy is used since the rays are used to refer to both the sun and sunlight. Rather than using explicit wording about the setting of the sun, Tolkien positions the reader to focus on the aftermath, or the dust of the light as it comes to polish the landscape. This syntactic choice adds immediacy in sensory experience by linking cosmic magnitude (the fact that the sun is there) with geographical context (the light on the Riders), and thus secures what is metaphysical in what is felt.

Cognitive, importation and the use of coining are used in order to establish a rich mental representation of the scene, whereas clipping remains absent as evidenced by the high and poetic nature of the Tolkien style. Not inconspicuous is the importation, in terms inherited or archaic in the English language, like fir-woods and gorge, that are not only to be found but with them attached are certain cultural and sensory connotations, connotations of an older, natural world of Northern European landscapes. These words engage well-known cognitive frames about forested and mountainous landscapes, assisting the reader to place the scene in his or her mind. Coining is also evident in the unusual descriptive formations like soft-sighing trees that evolve the sound and feeling into a new phraseology. This kind of metaphorical language is central in cognitive semantics, prompting readers to



integrate sensory domains (sound, texture, movement) into a unified mental image. Phrases like twilight lay upon the waterfalls also involve conceptual blending, imbuing abstract time (twilight) with physical presence and weight, thus inviting a metaphorical understanding of light as a tangible substance.

4.3.3. Scene Three

"The great shadow descended like a falling cloud. And behold! it was a winged creature: if bird, then greater than all other birds, and it was naked, and neither quill nor feather did it bear, and its vast pinions were as webs of hide between horned fingers; and it stank. A creature of an older world maybe it was, whose kind, lingering in forgotten mountains cold beneath the Moon, outstayed their day, and in hideous eyrie bred this last untimely brood, apt to evil. And the Dark Lord took it, and nursed it with fell meats, until it grew beyond the measure of all other things that fly; and he gave it to his servant to be his steed. Down, down it came, and then, folding its fingered webs, it gave a croaking cry, and settled upon the body of Snowmane, digging in its claws, stooping its long naked neck."

In terms of configurational system, the writer employs the configurational system—more precisely, the mechanism of structural schematization—to organize the semantic properties of both nouns and verbs. Nouns such as cloud, moon, day, evil, servant, steed, and neck are identified as uniplex, bounded, and discrete entities, reflecting their status as countable singular nouns that denote individualized, clearly delimited objects or concepts. In contrast, nouns like shadow, quill, feather, and world are categorized as multiplex, unbounded, and continuous, aligning with their function as mass nouns that denote diffuse, non-discrete substances or abstractions. Additionally, plural count nouns such as creatures, birds, webs, fingers, mountains, and things fall under the classification of multiplex, bounded, and discrete, as they represent multiple distinct units grouped within bounded sets. Turning into the verbal domain, the verbs descended, gave, and cry and settled can be paraphrased as uniplex, bounded and discrete since they are related to activities or events that take place in time and space. Such an understanding is not only basic; it is their grammatical construction, too. The verbs, bear, grew, and fly, in their turn, are regarded as multiplex, unbounded, and continuous because they represent the actions that are defined as having continuous time or flowless course, along with lacking precise time or appearance boundaries. Such subtle application of structuralized schematization proceeds to a denser textual strating and an ontological inscription of acts and things within the narrative sphere.



This graphic scene has diverse types of cognitive semantic structure, such as fictive and factive motion, source-path-goal and container and containment relations, and landmark-trajector relations. In this case, there is fictive motion in the description of the "great shadow" that fell like a falling cloud, since a stationary shadow is imagined in motion, giving it an atmosphere of unstable dynamism and danger of something approaching. The shadow becoming a "winged creature" puts factive motion into action: the thing does in fact sink, which implies true movement in space. This descent follows the source-path-goal schema: the creature starts in the sky (source), travels lower (path), and ends up on Snowmane's body (goal). The movement is vertical and proximal. Furthermore, container and containment imagery arise metaphorically—the sky might be viewed as a gigantic container from which the creature emerges, while Snowmane's body becomes a grim receptacle or platform upon which the beast settles. In terms of landmark and trajector, the creature serves as the trajector—the entity in motion or focus—while the sky and Snowmane act as landmarks, providing spatial and narrative grounding. The sky frames the creature's origin, and Snowmane defines its point of impact. Altogether, the scene uses these spatial and conceptual schemas to amplify the menace and ancient otherness of the winged creature and its role in the advancing darkness.

In terms of agonist and antagonist dynamics—a cognitive grammar framework used to describe forces in opposition—the passage portrays a clear struggle between opposing forces, both explicit and implicit. The agonist, in this case, can be identified as Snowmane (the noble horse of King Théoden) and by extension, the forces of good or life, representing dignity, valor, and the natural order. The antagonist is the winged creature, a monstrous and unnatural beast created by the Dark Lord. It denotes decay, evil, and corruption, acting as both a physical and symbolic force of destruction. The opposing force is portrayed as forceful, intrusive, and dominant: it "descended," "croaked," "settled," and "dug in its claws," each implying an overwhelming and violent intrusion. Snowmane, on the other hand, is passive in this situation, lying still in death, representing fragility and defeat. The imbalance in force dynamics is intentional: the antagonist has not only defeated its immediate agonist (Snowmane), but it also represents the larger advance of darkness and evil on the living universe.

Furthermore, the creature's unnatural origin—"a creature of an older world... apt to evil"—reinforces its role as a malevolent antagonist. It is not merely a beast but a product of dark, ancient forces nurtured by the Dark Lord to overpower the world's defenders. In this scene, the agonist-antagonist relationship thus goes beyond physical opposition, representing a broader moral and existential conflict central to the narrative's themes.



According to perspectival system, this scene is rich in cognitive and narrative perspectives, particularly in terms of vantage point, orientation, spatiotemporal framing, epistemic stance, and the interplay of subjectivity and objectivity. The vantage point is that of an external, possibly omniscient observer situated below or at a distance, witnessing the descent of the creature; the imagery places the viewer looking up at first, then tracking the creature's downward motion. The orientation is vertical and dynamic—first skyward, then plunging downward—reinforcing the ominous and invasive nature of the creature's arrival. Spatiotemporally, the scene unfolds in a linear progression, moving from the moment the shadow descends to its final landing on Snowmane's body, anchoring the motion through space and time and intensifying the suspense.

The epistemic modality—or the narrator's stance toward the certainty of information—is subtly marked by qualifiers such as “maybe it was,” suggesting limited knowledge about the creature's ancient origins. This speculative tone introduces a sense of mythic uncertainty and awe, enhancing the creature's otherworldliness. In terms of subjectivity and objectivity, the writer describes the scene as he saw the event.

Concerning attentional system, this scene demonstrates a sophisticated and layered use of specificity, accuracy, detail, abstraction, focusing, scope, and zooming, all of which contribute to its vivid and unsettling effect. The specificity is notably high when describing the creature's physical features: it is “naked,” with “neither quill nor feather,” and has “pinions... as webs of hide between horned fingers.” These concrete, sensory details evoke a clear, grotesque mental image, lending the scene a strong degree of accuracy within the fictional world, even though it describes a fantastical being. The creature's stench and the tactile descriptions (e.g., “digging in its claws”) further anchor the scene in a tangible, visceral reality.

However, the narrative also moves fluidly into abstraction, particularly in the description of the creature's origins— “a creature of an older world... apt to evil.” These phrases shift away from the concrete and toward mythic or symbolic registers, expanding the creature's significance beyond its immediate presence. This blend of the detailed and the abstract deepens the sense of horror by suggesting that the beast is not merely a physical threat but also a relic of ancient, corrupt forces.

In terms of focusing, the passage gradually narrows its lens. It begins broadly with “the great shadow” and its descent—an image that is vague and ominous—then zooms in progressively on the creature's form, texture, sound, and finally its physical interaction with Snowmane. This zooming effect heightens tension and



horror, guiding the reader's attention from the general (the falling shadow) to the particular (claws digging, neck stooping).

Scope is also layered: while the immediate action is local and moment-specific (the creature landing), the backstory provided—its breeding in “forgotten mountains” and its nurturing by the Dark Lord—adds temporal and mythological depth, broadening the scope of interpretation. The result is a passage that artfully manipulates detail and abstraction, zooming and scope, to create a cinematic and symbolic moment of dread.

This scene is rich with cognitive linguistic dynamics, especially when analyzed through the lenses of figure-ground, base-profile, windowing-grappling, passivation-activation, and preposing-postposing. These elements work together to control the reader's attention, perspective, and interpretation of the scene. Figure-ground organization is clearly established: the figure—the main focus of attention—is the winged creature, while the ground includes the sky, the shadow it casts, and ultimately Snowmane's body, which provides spatial and narrative grounding. The shadow, though initially prominent, transitions from figure to ground as the creature becomes more visually and narratively dominant. This dynamic shift guides the reader's focus smoothly from the ambiguous (shadow) to the concrete (creature).

In terms of base-profile, the passage operates on both conceptual and spatial levels. The base includes broader knowledge of birds, flight, ancient evil, and the natural order, while the profile focuses specifically on this creature's terrifying deviation from those norms. For example, comparing it to a bird (“if bird, then greater than all other birds”) invokes a base schema of avian characteristics, only to highlight its grotesque divergence—no feathers, no quills, wing membranes stretched over horned fingers—thus framing it as abject and otherworldly.

Windowing and grappling appear in the way the narrative chooses what to highlight (window) and what to leave implicit or backgrounded (grapple). The passage windows the descent and physical grotesqueness of the creature, as well as its ancient, corrupted origin and its service to the Dark Lord. It grapples with broader implications—such as the larger battle or the full identity of the servant (a Nazgûl)—leaving them contextually assumed or deferred. The focus remains on immediate horror rather than on the larger narrative arc, which is merely hinted at. Passivation-activation plays a subtle but important role. Most sentences activate the creature as the agent: “it came,” “it gave a croaking cry,” “it settled,” “digging in its claws.” These active constructions heighten the creature's agency and menace. However, when the Dark Lord's role is described, we get a shift into a backgrounding effect: “the Dark Lord took it, and nursed it... and gave it to his



servant.” These lines momentarily transfer agency to Sauron, providing a deeper cause for the creature’s existence but quickly return the spotlight to the creature as the active threat.

Finally, preposing and postposing structure the rhythm and dramatic emphasis of the passage. For example, the clause “Down, down it came” uses proposing to emphasize the direction and weight of the descent, placing the verb phrase before the subject for effect. Similarly, “folding its fingered webs” is proposed before the croaking cry, focusing first on the visual horror before the sound. This manipulation of clause order adds suspense, guiding the reader’s attention in a controlled and cinematic way.

In terms of fantasy formation system, personification is subtle but effective, particularly in how the creature is animated with intent and agency. Although it is a beast, its acts indicate intent and will: it "descended," "gave a croaking cry," and "settled upon the body of Snowmane." These selections portray it as a sentient, malicious entity rather than a normal animal. This narrative also gives the shadow a dynamic presence "descended like a falling cloud" treating it almost as a character in its own right, anticipating the tragedy that follows.

Merging, or the mixing of mental domains, occurs throughout the description. The creature is initially identified ambiguously “if bird, then greater than all other birds” “combining the domains of natural avian existence and monstrous monstrosity. Its wings are not feathered, but rather "webs of hide between horned fingers," a terrifying combination of bird, bat, and demon. This mental fusion causes cognitive dissonance, emphasizing the creature's unnaturalness and eliciting a version.

Metaphor and metonymy are also in play. The entire shadow is metaphorical at first "descended like a falling cloud" evoking fear and anxiety until revealing its real shape. The creature itself becomes a metonym for ancient evil, the forgotten and corrupted vestiges of a world that "outlasted its time.". It is also used metaphorically in the sense of the extension of the will of the Dark Lord, which has been cultivated and preserved as a means of fear. Instead, the body of Snowmane turns into a metonym for dead aristocracy and the extinction of hope, which further underlines the tragedy of the situation.

Overstatement and understatement are used together to regulate tone and tempo. There is some exaggeration in the description of the creature to explain how big it was and how weird it was. It was bigger than the rest of the birds; it grew bigger than everything that has ever flown and fly. Such overstatements help to bring home the enormousness and threat of it. Comparatively, the hypothetical statement, e.g., it was probably associated with the creation of the creature, speaks of



understatement. Such vagueness makes a reader get involved in a mythic ambiguity, alluring the mystery and dread, suggesting that there are things too ancient or dreadful to be fully understood.

The combined effect of these means creates a situation that is simultaneously overwhelmingly palpable in its direct tactilities and heavily symbolic, a combination of terror, wonder, and mythology into a moment that has resonances far beyond the immediate action.

In cognitive semantic terms, this is an excellent example of how Tolkien uses coining and importation to build a meaning and trigger a sensory perception, whereas clipping is sorely missing in that spirit of the huge and ancient effect. Coining is important, especially in the description of the creature as a winged beast with massive pinions that resemble webs of hide between horned fingers. These idioms are not common in English, but they are innovative conceptual blends that combine anatomical words with horrific imagery, allowing readers to imagine an unnatural, terrifying being. The phrase creature of an older world and the invented expression untimely brood are also coined to evoke a deep, mythic past and suggest that the creature is an ancient remnant of a forgotten, malevolent lineage. This activates mental spaces of both time and danger, allowing readers to conceptualize the creature as something outside the natural order, linked to evil. Importation is reflected in phrases such as Dark Lord and eyrie, which, though English, carry archaic or mythic weight and import meaning from both medieval and literary traditions. These terms evoke specific narrative schemas—tyranny, shadow, and dark majesty—that Tolkien draws from ancient linguistic and cultural sources.

5. Conclusions

The analysis has revealed that construal operations play an essential role in shaping narrative meaning and cognitive engagement in fantasy fiction. Through the application of configurational, perspectival, attentional, and fantasy formation systems, Tolkien constructs immersive, meaningful, and cognitively rich secondary worlds. These operations are not used arbitrarily but are intentionally integrated to guide readers' perceptions and conceptualization of the fantastical content. Tolkien's use of the configurational system demonstrates a strong reliance on schematic structuring to build coherent worlds. The elements of plexity, boundedness, and dividedness are frequently used to distinguish between the natural and supernatural, the mundane and the mythical. For instance, unbounded verbs (e.g., "wander", "glimmer") and multiplex nouns (e.g., "shadows", "echoes") contribute to the mystical quality of certain environments, whereas bounded and discrete entities (e.g., "sword", "ring") are tied to plot development and thematic



symbolism. Perspective, including viewpoint and deixis, is dynamically manipulated to construct psychological proximity and narrative depth. Tolkien shifts between internal focalization and external narrative control to highlight characters' moral dilemmas, emotional states, and physical journeys. Spatial and temporal deixis enhances the reader's ability to follow narrative progression while also immersing them within the fantasy setting. The perspectival system offers critical insights into how viewpoint and deixis are manipulated to center the reader's attention on particular narrative elements. In Tolkien's narratives, strategic use of vantage points (first-person vs. omniscient narration) and spatial-temporal deixis situates the reader within or around key scenes. Shifts in subjectivity—such as from Frodo's inner thoughts to the narrator's broader view—create layers of narrative awareness, enabling readers to oscillate between immersion and reflection. The fantasy formation system reinforces the symbolic density of Tolkien's world. The use of conceptual metaphors such as light = purity or journey = transformation resonates with deeply rooted human cognitive patterns, rendering the fantastical both intelligible and emotionally compelling.

References

- Beard, R. (1998). Derivation. In A. Spencer & A. Zwicky (Eds.), *The handbook of morphology* (pp. 44–65). Blackwell.
- Croft, W., & Cruse, A. (2004). *Cognitive linguistics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Colston, H. L. (1997). "I've never seen anything like it": Overstatement, understatement, and irony. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 12(1), 43–58. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327868ms1201_3.
- Evans, V., & Green, M. (2006). *Cognitive linguistics: An introduction*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Fillmore, C. (1982). Linguistics in the morning calm. Hanshin Publishing Company, 111–137.
- Gries, S. Th. (2004a). Isn't that fantabulous? How similarity motivates intentional morphological blends in English. In M. Achard & S. Kemmer (Eds.), *Language, culture, and mind* (pp. 415–428). CSLI Publications.
- Langacker, R. W. (1987). *Foundations of cognitive grammar: Vol. 1. Theoretical prerequisites*. Stanford University Press.



Langacker, R. W. (2008). *Cognitive grammar: A basic introduction*. Oxford University Press.

Radden, G. (2007). Language, consciousness, and culture: Essays on mental structure. In *Essays on mental structure* (pp. 313–342). John Benjamins.

Rudzka-Ostyn, B. (1988). Semantic extensions into the domain of verbal communication. In B. Rudzka-Ostyn (Ed.), *Topics in cognitive linguistics* (pp. 507–554). John Benjamins.

Talmy, L. (1988). The relation of grammar to cognition. In B. Rudzka-Ostyn (Ed.), *Topics in cognitive linguistics* (pp. 165–206). John Benjamins.

Talmy, L. (2000). *Toward a cognitive semantics* (Vols. 1–2). MIT Press.

Vallduví, E., & Engdahl, E. (1996). The linguistic realization of information packaging. *Linguistics*, 34(3), 459–520.