



THE MAIN PECULIARITIES OF DISCOURSE MARKERS IN "A ROSE FOR EMILY" BY WILLIAM FAULKNER

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Abstract: *This paper explores the distinctive features and functions of discourse markers in William Faulkner's short story "A Rose for Emily." Discourse markers play an essential role in shaping narrative organization, guiding readers through shifts in time, and subtly influencing interpretation. By examining temporal, additive, contrastive, and inferential discourse markers, the study demonstrates how Faulkner constructs a complex narrative voice and maintains coherence within a fragmented storyline. The analysis reveals that discourse markers are not merely structural tools but also contribute significantly to the psychological depth and thematic richness of the story.*

Keywords: *discourse markers, literary discourse, narrative structure, cohesion and coherence, William Faulkner, A Rose for Emily.*

INTRODUCTION

Discourse markers are linguistic elements that help organize discourse and signal relationships between ideas within a text. In literary works, they perform an additional stylistic function by shaping narrative flow and reader interpretation. William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" offers a compelling example of how discourse markers operate within a complex narrative framework. The story's non-linear chronology, collective narrative voice, and gradual revelation of events make it particularly suitable for discourse-based analysis. This paper aims to analyze the main peculiarities of discourse markers in the story and to explain how they contribute to coherence, narrative progression, and thematic development.

Scholars generally agree that discourse markers do not add propositional meaning but instead function as signals that organize discourse. Schiffrin defines discourse markers as linguistic devices that operate on multiple levels of discourse, including textual and interpersonal levels¹². Similarly, Fraser argues that discourse markers indicate relationships between segments of discourse and guide interpretation¹³. In the context of literary texts, these markers are especially important in managing shifts in time, perspective, and evaluation. Halliday and Hasan's theory of cohesion further explains how such markers contribute to textual unity and coherence¹⁴.

Types of Discourse Markers in "A Rose for Emily". One of the most prominent categories of discourse markers in the story is temporal markers. Expressions such as when, meanwhile, after, and during are frequently used to signal movement across different time periods. These markers assist readers in navigating the fragmented chronology and reflect

¹² Schiffrin D. Discourse markers. Cambridge University Press. 1987. – P. 31

¹³ Fraser, B. What are discourse markers? Journal of Pragmatics. 1999. – P.98

¹⁴ Halliday, M.A.K., and Hasan, R. Cohesion in English. Longman Book. 1976. – P. 5

the protagonist's detachment from linear time. The repeated temporal shifts mirror Emily Grierson's psychological isolation and resistance to change¹⁵.

Additive and elaborative markers, including and, also, and in addition, play a key role in the gradual accumulation of narrative details. Faulkner often connects events loosely rather than through explicit explanation. As a result, these markers create a slow, layered narrative pace that encourages readers to infer meaning rather than receive it directly.

Contrastive discourse markers such as but, however, and yet highlight conflicts between tradition and modernity, public perception and private reality. Through these markers, Faulkner emphasizes the contradictions inherent in Emily's character and the town's attitude toward her. The contrastive structures reinforce the tension that runs throughout the story.

Causal and inferential discourse markers, including so and therefore, appear less frequently. Their limited use reflects the narrator's tendency to avoid direct judgment or explanation. Instead of explicitly stating cause-and-effect relationships, the narrative relies on implication, which strengthens the story's sense of mystery and ambiguity.

The story is narrated through a collective first-person perspective, represented by the pronoun "we." Discourse markers help sustain this communal voice by signaling shared assumptions and social norms. Markers such as of course and naturally suggest collective agreement and position the reader within the town's mindset. This technique reinforces the social dimension of the narrative and highlights the community's role in shaping Emily's story. In addition, evaluative discourse markers such as indeed and in fact subtly guide reader interpretation. Rather than offering explicit commentary, the narrator uses these markers to influence judgment indirectly, creating a restrained yet critical tone.

From a stylistic perspective, discourse markers contribute to the oral, story-telling quality of the narrative, reflecting how stories are shared within a community. Pragmatically, they manage the flow of information by indicating what is assumed knowledge and what is newly introduced. The frequent use of temporal and additive markers reflects the narrator's attempt to impose order on fragmented memories. Discourse markers also play an important role in maintaining suspense. By delaying causal explanations and relying on contrastive and temporal markers, Faulkner gradually reveals information, keeping readers engaged until the final scene.

Conclusion. The analysis demonstrates that discourse markers in "A Rose for Emily" are central to the story's narrative structure and thematic impact. They guide readers through shifts in time, reinforce the collective narrative voice, and support the gradual construction of meaning. Through the careful use of discourse markers, Faulkner enhances the psychological complexity of the characters and deepens the story's exploration of memory, time, and social change.

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