

The Space of Error: A Semantic Exploration of The Interaction Between Mental Space Theory and Misunderstanding in Kid's Short Stories

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Abstract: This study examines the semantic mechanisms underlying misunderstanding in kid's short stories through the framework of Mental Space Theory (MST). Misunderstanding, frequently employed as a crucial plot element in juvenile literature, acts as a natural laboratory for investigating cognitive processes where interlocutors fail to create congruent mappings between temporary conceptual packets. Utilizing the frameworks developed by Fauconnier and Turner, this study investigates how changes in perspective, failures in reference tracking, and differing scope attachments within narrative mental spaces lead to semantic discord, which is then interpreted by the young reader. The study adopts a qualitative discourse analysis methodology on a chosen corpus of kid's short stories, illustrating instances where characters' cognitive spaces conflict. The findings indicate that writers intentionally leverage the inherent complexity of space creation (particularly Projection and Belief spaces) to generate predictable, yet narratively impactful, breakdowns in communication. This semantic exploration reveals that misunderstanding is not simply a lack of meaning, but rather a structurally traceable intersection of competing, temporarily active conceptual frameworks.

Keywords: Mental Space Theory, misunderstanding, conceptual integration, semantic breakdown, narrative cognition.

Introduction

Communication, even in its most basic form, depends on the swift and fluid alignment of conceptual frameworks between conversant. When this alignment falters, misunderstandings arise. Traditionally, this phenomenon has been examined through the lens of pragmatics (e.g., Gricean maxims); however, a more profound and structured cognitive perspective is necessary to fully comprehend the mechanics of conceptual errors, particularly within controlled narrative contexts. This paper posits that Mental Space Theory (MST), initially formulated by Fauconnier (1994) and further developed by Fauconnier and Turner (2002) through Conceptual Integration Theory (CIT), offers the essential analytical framework to accurately delineate the semantic construction and subsequent breakdown of shared meaning (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). Children's short stories (KSS) are particularly well-suited for this examination. Misunderstanding often serves as the driving force behind comic relief, character conflict, and plot advancement (Herman, 2005). Whether it involves a character taking an idiom literally or failing to recognize a subtle social nuance, these semantic failures.

are deliberate, simplified, and integral to the narrative's allure for emerging readers. The narrative structure necessitates that the reader—who typically possesses privileged information—witness a character operating within a flawed or incomplete mental framework. This deliberate asymmetry between the reader's comprehensive insight and the character's restricted perspective creates the cognitive tension vital for the narrative to progress (Ryan, 2006). This study intends to semantically investigate the interplay between MST and misunderstanding in KSS. Specifically, it aims to address: (1) In what ways can MST diagrams structurally illustrate the distinction between effective communication and narrative misunderstanding? (2) Which types of conceptual spaces (e.g., Belief, Intentional, Hypothetical) are most commonly utilized to produce predictable plot-driven misunderstandings in KSS? (3) How does the resolution of the misunderstanding reflect the realignment of previously clashing mental spaces? By applying rigorous semantic modeling to literary texts, this research seeks to demonstrate that misunderstanding is a systematic cognitive phenomenon, rather than a random error.

The theoretical strength of MST is rooted in its capacity to accommodate dynamic epistemic transitions. Mental spaces are ephemeral conceptual units formed during thought and speech, interconnected by "access relations" that link elements across them. Effective communication occurs when participants create sufficiently analogous input spaces and accurately map the relations into a collectively shared blended space. Misunderstanding, when viewed through this perspective, transcends a mere breach of conversational maxims (Sperber & Wilson, 1995); it arises from incompatible access relations, wherein a character mistakenly associates an element from the current reality space with an unsuitable projection in a belief or pretense space. For instance, a character may neglect to activate the essential conditional space required for contextualizing a metaphorical expression. Implementing this framework within KSS necessitates a clear differentiation between the Narrator's Space (which embodies the complete, shared objective reality of the narrative world) and the Character's Space (which reflects the restricted, often temporally contingent, subjective reality). Thus, the fundamental mechanism of narrative misunderstanding is the formation of a "Flawed Blend." In this flawed blend, the character draws elements from the objective reality (the input space shared with the audience) but amalgamates them with erroneous framing, intentional, or belief spaces. The reader's capacity to identify the flaw—an example of effective Theory of Mind application—fuels the humor or suspense, while the character remains ensnared within the erroneous conceptual framework (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2005). Importantly, the conflict that propels KSS narratives often hinges on the deliberate manipulation of particular space types. Intentional spaces (representing what a character desires or intends to do) are commonly misconstrued as Belief spaces (representing what the character perceives to be true). For example, a character may express their intention to feign sleep, yet the listener, functioning within a restricted belief framework, mistakenly interprets their true condition as slumber, leading to an erroneous response. Additionally, these narrative frameworks present simplified representations of Theory of Mind deficiencies, rendering them ideal instances for illustrating how children acquire the ability to navigate intricate social inferences (Veale, 2003).

The resolution of narrative misinterpretation is also methodical. MST diagrams can accurately delineate the cognitive processes necessary for realignment. Resolution requires the reconciliation of conflicting conceptual frameworks, often achieved by introducing a tangible anchor or a clear linguistic signal that compels the character to relinquish the erroneous amalgamation and establish the correct connection to the objective input space. This procedure frequently entails a moment of cognitive surprise or comedic realization—the abrupt dissolution of the erroneous framework—which serves as a linguistic and emotional indicator of effective information processing (Coulson, 2001). In summary, by transcending conventional pragmatic analyses, this study redefines the examination of narrative errors from an emphasis on superficial semantic vagueness to a systematic investigation of the foundational cognitive structure. The utilization of MST and CIT in the context of the deliberate, intentional misunderstandings present in children's literature not only offers a robust descriptive mechanism for cognitive narratology but also highlights the intrinsic cognitive essence of effective communication.

Grasping how characters fail to synchronize their mental frameworks provides a structured educational model for how emerging readers learn to navigate complex conceptual integration in real-world conversations, affirming that narrative misunderstanding is a predictable, rule-governed cognitive occurrence.

General Overview

Theoretical Foundations and Context To provide context for the analysis, this section examines the fundamental principles of Mental Space Theory, the characteristics of semantic disintegration, the particular cognitive requirements of children's narratives, and the various fictional spaces that authors construct.

2.1. The Fundamentals of Mental Space Theory (MST)

Mental Space Theory (MST) serves as a crucial framework within the field of cognitive linguistics. It asserts that during discourse, interpretation, and cognitive processes, individuals create small, temporary, virtual reality conceptual packets known as "mental spaces" (Fauconnier, 1994). These spaces function as non-linguistic, structured containers that hold elements (referents) and relations (predicates) that are established locally within the immediate cognitive context. All discourse initiates within a Base Space (the current reality or default viewpoint) and produces new spaces that are interconnected by specific connectors or Space Builders (e.g., "In 1990," "John believes that," "If only"). Importantly, elements within one space can be associated with elements in another through Accessors or Identity Links. Effective communication depends on the interlocutors forming the same links and interpreting the scope of the Space Builder consistently (Coulson & Oakley, 2005). When communication breaks down, it typically indicates that the mapping of elements or the interpretation of the predicate across these interconnected spaces has diverged, resulting in semantic conflict.

2.2. Semantic Mechanisms of Miscommunication and Misunderstanding From the perspective of MST

Misunderstanding is characterized as a failure in space alignment. This phenomenon is different from intentional deception, as it stems from a sincere, albeit structurally divergent, interpretation of discourse elements. There are three primary mechanisms for misunderstanding based on MST (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2005):

1. **Failure of Reference Tracking:** Characters assign identical linguistic labels (e.g., "the big item") to various referents within their individual cognitive frameworks.
2. **Divergent Predicate Scope:** A predicate is accurately connected, yet its corresponding scope—the implied action or state—pertains to different elements within the linked framework.
3. **Mismatched Space Type:** One character perceives the discourse as creating a Hypothetical Space ("What if we try...") while the other assumes a Reality Space is being constructed ("We are actually doing..."). In KSS, this frequently occurs concerning Pretense Spaces. These failures underscore that misunderstanding is not merely an absence, but rather a scenario where two structurally complete, yet incompatible, mental maps are concurrently active.

2.3. Cognitive Load and Narrative Structure in Children's Literature Children's literature is defined by streamlined narratives and language that is accessible to developing cognitive systems (Nikolajeva, 2014). Nevertheless, KSS often employs structural complexity—such as embedded narratives, future hypotheticals, and epistemic gaps (the disparity between what the narrator knows and what the character knows)—to impart intricate social skills (e.g., Theory of Mind). In KSS, misunderstanding is often produced by leveraging a child's still-maturing understanding of literal versus non-literal language (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). A character who interprets a metaphor or idiom literally fails to engage the requisite Metaphoric Space Builder and instead constructs a literal space directly derived from the Base Space. This intentional simplification of cognitive failure renders the semantic rupture highly visible and analyzable through MST.

Methodology

This research utilizes a qualitative, comprehensive Semantic-Cognitive Discourse Analysis methodology. The approach emphasizes the identification of particular linguistic markers (Space Builders, Accessors) that create conflicting mental spaces within narrative dialogues.

3.1. Data Collection and Description

The data were gathered from a corpus of both contemporary and classic American and British short stories, specifically aimed at readers aged 6–10 (early chapter books or picture books featuring complex narrative structures). The selection criterion focused on the significance of misunderstanding as a central plot device.

3.2. The Sample

The analysis sample consists of three short stories, selected for their clear and distinct techniques in generating semantic errors:

1. Amelia Bedelia (P. Parish): This story exemplifies a literal interpretation of idioms and metaphors, illustrating a failure to activate the appropriate Idiom/Metaphoric Space.

2. Frog and Toad Are Friends (Arnold Lobel, particularly "The Letter"): This narrative showcases epistemic misunderstanding and the failure to maintain the shared intention/belief space concerning future actions.

3. The Cat in the Hat (Dr. Seuss): This work illustrates the intricate relationship between the Base Reality Space and the highly disruptive, yet explicitly Temporary, Hypothetical/Pretense Space introduced by the main character.

3.3. The Research Model

The central research model employed is the Mental Space Diagramming technique, as articulated by Fauconnier and Turner (2002).

1. Identification: Identify sections where characters explicitly misinterpret each other, resulting in errors in narrative action.

2. Space Construction: Create a diagram of the Base Space (B).

3. Space Building: Determine the Space Builder utilized by Speaker A and diagram the corresponding target space (S_A).

4. Divergent Construction: Diagram the target space as perceived by Speaker B (S_B).

5. Link Analysis: Analyze the mapping between elements in B and those in both S_A and S_B .

6. Semantic Clash Visualization: The resulting diagram visually illustrates the misunderstanding as two parallel, incompatible goal spaces that originate from the same initial Base Space.

3.4. Analysis

The analysis encompasses a thorough transcription and semantic coding of the dialogue segments. Each occurrence of misunderstanding is scrutinized for the particular type of space involved (e.g., Intentional, Belief, Time, Hypothetical) and the nature of the linkage failure (e.g., erroneous reference, predicate misalignment). For instance, in *Amelia Bedelia*, when she is instructed to "dust the furniture," the analysis observes the failure of the predicate mapping: • Speaker's Intentional Space: DUST (Predicate: to wipe clean). • Amelia's Interpretation Space: DUST (Predicate: to sprinkle powder). The analysis illustrates how the semantic divergence directly results in a functional misunderstanding that drives the plot.

3.5. Findings and Discussion

The findings reveal a consistent pattern in which KSS authors utilize cognitive space construction to create narrative tension. The analysis established that three specific types of space failures are prevalent in the genre: Epistemological Misalignment, Literal Space Commitment, and Failed Space Blending.

3.5.1 Epistemological Misalignment

Failure in Belief and Viewpoint Spaces In narratives such as "The Letter" from Frog and Toad, misunderstanding arises from an inability to accurately track the belief space of the other character (S_{Belief}). Toad composes a letter to Frog but subsequently expresses disappointment over the absence of mail. Frog's intervention is necessary to resolve the inconsistency between Toad's cognitive space (the letter exists and has been sent) and the actual situation (the letter remains on the desk). MST analysis indicates that Toad constructs a future-perfect space ("I will have received a letter") but neglects to incorporate the intentional space of the sender (the postman/Frog) into his current reality. The misunderstanding is semantic—the term "mail" represents a concept that has successfully navigated the intentional link between sender and receiver. Toad's inability to track this process creates a brief, narratively necessary reality-gap that must be closed by Frog, demonstrating the instructional role of narrative in teaching complex epistemic reasoning to young readers (Clark, 1997).

3.5.2 Literal Space Commitment

The Case of Idiomatic Interpretation The Amelia Bedelia series provides the most explicit examples of Literal Space Commitment. When linguistic input functions as a Space Builder (for instance, "draw the drapes"), Amelia constructs a precise, literal space (the act of creating a picture of the drapes) instead of the typical, metaphorical space (the act of closing the drapes).

Space Builder	Intended Space (S_{Intended})	Constructed Space (S_{Amelia})	Link Failure
"Draw the drapes"	Predicate mapping: DRAW $\rightarrow$ CLOSE	Predicate mapping: DRAW $\rightarrow$ SKETCH	Relies on activating Metaphoric Frame, which Amelia ignores.

This systematic semantic failure underscores the structural distinction between primary (literal) and secondary (idiomatic) conceptual integration networks. The humor arises specifically from the audience's (and the employer's) effective construction of S_{Intended} in contrast to Amelia's unwavering dedication to S_{Amelia} . The resolution frequently entails the incorporation of tangible items (e.g., cakes, food), which adeptly re-anchor Amelia's interpretation to a more stable, edible Base Space.

3.5.3 Failed Space Blending and Pretense

The Cat in the Hat poses a complex scenario that involves the establishment of a significantly disruptive, albeit temporary, Blended Space. The Cat's entrance creates a vast Hypothetical/Pretense Space (S_{Chaos}) where conventional rules are suspended, gravity becomes optional, and animals are portrayed as anthropomorphic agents (Turner & Fauconnier, 1995). The internal struggle faced by the children—to either embrace or reject the chaos—represents a conflict between committing to the Blended Space and upholding loyalty to the Base Space (S_{Reality}), symbolized by the fish. Misunderstanding arises when elements from the two spaces collide (e.g., the Fish's realistic fear juxtaposed with the Cat's playful indifference). The children momentarily engage with the blend, yet the Fish's persistent vocal opposition acts as a reminder to both the children and the reader of the essential boundary separating the Blended Space from the Base Space. The ultimate resolution—the cleanup and restoration of normalcy—serves as a clear, narrative-driven dismantling of the Blended Space, semantically affirming the temporary and fictional nature of the event.

3.5.4 Discussion: The Pedagogical Function of Semantic Error

The regular incorporation of identifiable semantic errors in structured children's narratives (KSS) plays a vital, yet frequently neglected, educational role. By intentionally showcasing characters who do not synchronize their mental frameworks or accurately incorporate their contextual knowledge, authors achieve more than just eliciting humor or confusion; they actively illustrate the intricate cognitive processes necessary for effective communication in real-life situations. The temporary lapse in comprehension serves as a key narrative challenge, and the ensuing journey towards resolution—the reconfiguration of those cognitive frameworks—offers the reader a practical lesson in adapting their own interpretive strategies. This semantic investigation affirms that the apparent "simplicity" of children's narratives often conceals a complex, architecturally designed manipulation of cognitive functions aimed specifically at fostering developmental learning.

This educational value is grounded in fundamental theories of conceptual structure, particularly the mental space theory framework (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). In this context, a semantic error is not simply a misapplied term but rather a failure of two characters to convey parallel information from their immediate context or long-term knowledge into a shared conceptual framework. The narrative illustrates this misalignment as a source of friction. For example, when Character A interprets a broad meaning while Character B interprets a specific, unshared meaning, the resulting conversation underscores the unspoken assumptions inherent in language use. Consequently, the error transforms into a concrete subject of analysis, compelling the reader to reflect on the reasons behind the communication breakdown.

Structurally, the semantic error serves as the main narrative catalyst, converting a potentially dull exchange into a lively scenario. Once the miscommunication occurs, the focus of the story shifts from the sequence of events to the interpretive effort involved. The narrative does not merely depict two characters speaking past one another; it urges the young reader to distinguish between what one character articulated and what that character intended, in contrast to what the other character perceived and comprehended. This distinction is crucial for fostering pragmatic competence, which necessitates viewing language not as a static code, but as a versatile instrument negotiated within shared contexts (Clark, 1996). Importantly, the conflict arising from the semantic error exemplifies the often-unseen cognitive effort required to establish "common ground." Effective communication depends on participants actively overseeing shared knowledge, assumptions, and conversational objectives. When the characters in the narrative fail in this endeavor, the story offers an external depiction of the internal struggle. Readers, especially those in the early phases of literacy, partake in what Gerrig (1993) referred to as "narrative absorption," enabling them to safely practice complex social interpretation. By witnessing the failure and its repercussions (e.g., frustration, delays, or unintended outcomes), the reader learns to identify the subtle signals that indicate cognitive discord. The educational benefit becomes apparent during the resolution phase. The narrative leads the character—and consequently, the reader—through the process of spatial realignment. This may involve explicit prompts ("Wait, I meant the other red wagon") or observational cues (Character A displays confusion, prompting Character B to clarify their intention). This scaffolding reflects effective learning strategies (Bruner, 1990), where the challenging cognitive task is rendered manageable through intentional, step-by-step correction. The resolution explicitly teaches the reader how to backtrack, identify the point of divergence, and adjust their interpretive lens to match the speaker's original intent.

This manipulative process is intricately linked to the evolution of Theory of Mind (ToM)—the ability to ascribe mental states (beliefs, intentions, desires) to others. Semantic errors underscore the disparity between one's own mental state and that of another individual. Children who are regularly exposed to stories that distinctly outline and resolve these misconceptions exhibit enhanced social competence, as they acquire essential practice in perspective-taking (Cutting & Dunn, 1999). The complex framework embedded within these narratives is specifically designed to cultivate this developmental ability, demonstrating that the simplicity of vocabulary does not correspond to a simplistic conceptual structure. By engaging children in these structured settings of communicative failure, the narrative equips them for the chaotic, unpredictable nature of actual social interactions. Recognizing that a semantic error is identifiable—that it possesses logical foundations and a resolvable

path—alleviates the personal weight of miscommunication and transforms it into an analytical challenge. This practice transitions the child from being a passive recipient of language to an active participant adept at monitoring, diagnosing, and rectifying communicative disruptions, a skill that is fundamental to collaborative learning and social integration (Tomasello, 2008).

In summary, the strategic use of semantic error enhances children's literature, transforming it from simple entertainment into a significant educational tool. It serves as an effective, organized guide for cognitive alignment and pragmatic inference. The narrative tension that emerges from mismatched mental spaces acts as a purposeful instructional strategy, illustrating the fundamental work involved in communication, supporting the process of understanding different perspectives, and ultimately guaranteeing that the reader acquires the interpretive adaptability required to succeed in intricate linguistic and social contexts. The intricate framework of these ostensibly straightforward tales underscores their vital importance in cognitive and linguistic growth.

Conclusions

The examination of narrative structure frequently interprets misunderstanding in juvenile literature as a mere, spontaneous component intended solely for humor or basic plot progression. Nevertheless, this semantic investigation, utilizing the comprehensive framework of Mental Space Theory (MST), effectively challenges such a reductionist perspective. The research confirms that misunderstanding in children's short stories is anything but a random narrative tool; instead, it represents a meticulously organized, systematic cognitive error that can be accurately mapped, analyzed, and deconstructed. By employing MST, which was formulated to explain the fluid, real-time construction of meaning in discourse (Fauconnier, 1994), scholars acquire an exceptional instrument for illustrating the intricate, simultaneous, and fundamentally conflicting interpretations present within the narrative landscape. The primary conclusion of this study is that authors skillfully, yet intentionally, leverage the fundamental principles of space creation—particularly the establishment and preservation of Belief, Intentional, and Hypothetical spaces—to craft highly localized, impactful semantic conflicts that propel both character evolution and narrative progression.

The significance of Mental Space Theory in this context stems from its intrinsic ability to represent cognitive states essential for understanding narratives. MST asserts that listeners and readers of discourse are in a constant process of creating 'mental spaces'—small, temporary realms of thought—to organize information based on specific criteria such as time, location, reality, or psychological condition. In the examination of fictional communication, the Base Space denotes the collective, objective reality of the narrative universe, whereas embedded spaces handle the subjective realities of individual characters. The utilization of three pivotal embedded spaces is particularly prominent in children's literature: Belief Spaces, which encapsulate what a character perceives as true; Intentional Spaces, which delineate a character's aspirations or objectives; and Hypothetical Spaces, which investigate counterfactual or possible scenarios. Consequently, misunderstanding arises not from a deficiency of information, but rather from a character's (or the reader's) failure to accurately project and reconcile elements across these distinct spaces. The ensuing semantic conflict serves as the primary driving force of the plot, frequently acting as the main source of narrative tension, irony, and humor concurrently (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2005).

The examination of the chosen corpus, which consists of widely popular children's literature, indicates that the authors' ability to create conflict relies significantly on the careful manipulation of spatio-cognitive boundaries. The nature of the misunderstanding is not arbitrary; it follows discernible patterns determined by how various characters engage with or dismiss the propositions situated within distinct spaces. For instance, a character's remark regarding a possible future occurrence (situated in a Hypothetical Space) may be misinterpreted by another character as a present reality (referred back to the Base Space). This intentional narrative technique compels the reader to engage in intricate cognitive modeling, navigating multiple, conflicting interpretations held by different characters, thus enhancing the understanding of 'Theory of Mind' within the narrative context. The conflict is systematic because the processes of spatial construction and element identification offer a reliable framework for categorizing the exact point of communication breakdown (Stockwell, 2002). A significant example of

structured misunderstanding recognized through this analytical lens is Epistemic Misalignment. This type of failure entails a disruption in tracking the referents utilized across various mental spaces.

In children's narratives, Epistemic Misalignment often arises when a character is unable to accurately follow a particular entity or concept (the referent) as it is introduced in, and subsequently projected between, different cognitive realms. For example, Character A may discuss "the monster under the bed" from their Belief Space, which is associated with a personal memory space, while Character B interprets the term "the monster" within the immediate Base Space, resulting in panic and a chase sequence. The cognitive error lies in the failure to identify the referent ("the monster") within the appropriate spatial context. This intricate utilization of referential opacity—a challenge even for proficient language users—illustrates authors engaging the evolving reader's ability for perspective-taking, a vital developmental milestone commonly known as Theory of Mind acquisition (Lidz & Musolino, 2002). A second, equally systematic failure mechanism is Literal Commitment, which arises not from erroneous referent tracking, but from a refusal, whether deliberate or inadvertent, to activate culturally conventional predicate mappings.

Literal Commitment manifests when a character strictly adheres to the semantic meaning of a word or phrase, neglecting the necessity for pragmatic enrichment, conventional idiom interpretation, or metaphorical projection. For instance, a narrative may depict a character instructed to "hold their horses," who then spends the remainder of the text literally attempting to locate nearby horses to restrain, rather than engaging the conventional Intentional Space predicate meaning "be patient." MST interprets this failure as a localized spatial blockage: the character does not incorporate the relevant, culturally shared background knowledge (from a Global Knowledge Space) needed to enhance the Base Space interpretation. This mechanism is often employed for humor in children's literature, as the stark disparity between the narrative's objective reality and the character's obstinately literal interpretation creates narrative irony and alleviates cognitive tension in the reader (Culpeper, 2011). Beyond simple textual analysis, the findings possess substantial pedagogical and cognitive implications. By illustrating that narrative misunderstanding constitutes a structured cognitive task rather than a random occurrence, this research provides a novel avenue for evaluating and enhancing reading comprehension. The capacity to effectively track and distinguish concurrent, potentially conflicting mental spaces—a skill essential for understanding the irony embedded in literature—is fundamental to advanced reading.

When young readers immerse themselves in narratives characterized by these MST-defined conflicts, they are effectively honing their cognitive systems to navigate informational complexity and manage ambiguity (Gerrig, 1993). Educators can leverage this MST framework to create targeted interventions that specifically address challenges in epistemic tracking or predicate activation, advancing beyond general comprehension tasks to focus on the particular cognitive mechanisms that underlie narrative engagement and its failures. Future investigations into this model hold the potential for exciting cross-linguistic developments, especially regarding how grammatical features affect the emergence of semantic misunderstandings. MST fundamentally links linguistic expressions, referred to as Space Builders (e.g., "if," "perhaps," tense markers, adverbs), directly to the formation of new cognitive spaces. A comparative analysis across languages with strong evidential systems (grammatical markers that indicate the source of information, such as direct observation versus hearsay) could uncover highly specialized patterns.

For instance, languages that mandatorily encode evidentiality may compel a higher incidence of Epistemic Misalignment due to conflicting sources of visual or reported evidence, thus affecting the predominant type of cognitive misunderstanding present in their children's literature (Aikhenvald, 2018). Examining these linguistic interfaces will shed light on the nuanced ways in which structural grammar shapes the narrative techniques authors use to cognitively organize meaning for developing readers worldwide. In conclusion, this study affirms that the complex interaction between mental space construction and communication failure constitutes an exceptionally rich and fruitful area for cognitive semantic inquiry. The effective application of MST substantiates its efficacy as a diagnostic instrument, propelling the study of narrative beyond mere thematic and structural analysis into the domain of quantifiable cognitive computation. This research makes a substantial contribution to a more profound

and practical understanding of how narrative structures influence cognition in developing readers by offering specific mechanisms (Epistemic Misalignment and Literal Commitment) for illustrating the systematic encoding of narrative conflict. It reinforces the perspective that children's literature serves as an advanced laboratory for examining perspective-taking and the intricate framework of human thought (Turner, 1996).

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