

## Episodes Coherence in the Moving Image Text

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### Abstract

This paper titled "Episodes Coherence in the Moving Image Text" explores the concept of coherence in film narratives and the moving image text. It highlights the theoretical perspectives presented by Cummings, Greenberg, and Kelly (2017) and Baumgarten (2008) in understanding episode coherence in films. Drawing on these theoretical frameworks, the paper reviews how filmmakers employ semiotic features and pictures to achieve coherence within and between episodes in film narratives. Examples of these features and pictures are presented to illustrate their effectiveness in enhancing the overall narrative structure and coherence. The theories put forth as reviewed provide insights into the role of episodic coherence in shaping viewers' perception and understanding of a typical film. This paper also highlights the importance of narrative structure and its impact on audience engagement in tandem with other patterns of semiotic features which emphasize the visual storytelling elements and how they contribute to coherence in film narratives. The findings of this study underscore the significance of carefully crafting semiotic features and pictures to maintain coherence within episodes, as well as creating a smooth transition between them. The narrative structure and visual elements play crucial role in ensuring that viewers can follow and understand the story being presented on screen. Finally, based on the analysis conducted, further recommends that future research could explore the impact of different semiotic features and visual techniques on audience perception of coherence in film narratives. Additionally, comparative studies between different genres or time periods could provide valuable insights into the evolving nature of episode coherence in the moving image text.

**Keywords:** Episodes, Moving Image Text, Coherence, Film and Discourse

### Introduction

The concept of coherence in moving image texts refers to the smooth and logical flow of episodes or scenes within a film. It involves the spatial and narrative connections between shots, scenes, sequences and episodes that make storylines logical. Spatial and episodes coherence in film refers to the unity, continuity, or connectedness of the film space, providing viewers with a vivid and stable sense of space and comprehension (Martinec and Salway, 2005 and Kolstrup, 2009). Narrative coherence, on the same note, involves the logical and meaningful

progression of events within the story. The coherence of moving image texts then becomes essential for creating a seamless and engaging viewing experience. As a simple linguistic term, the concept of episodes coherence is found and further summed and defined as a systematic or logical connection or consistency: 'an integration of diverse elements, relationships, or values which commonly includes logicity of messages' (Pilus, 1996).

In narrative film, spatial coherence plays a central role, particularly within scenes, which express narratively unified chains of events

relatively inferred from the insight of proponents in the field of language and linguistics (Halliday and Hasan 1976, Finch 2000 and Johnstone 2008). Most scenes are expected to be spatially coherent, providing viewers with a clear sense of space and location. However, in recent years, spatial incoherence has become part of the editing style for mainstream action movies, where it often permeates entire scenes.

The concept of coherence in moving image texts is also related to the representation of time, movement, and stillness in cinema. It involves the relationship between movement and stillness, as well as the aesthetics of cinema across its historic body in the face of new media technologies and new ways of watching films on handsets, cinema halls and related video games gadgets. In the context of filmmaking and moving image arts, the coherence of episodes or scenes is crucial for conveying ideas through time and establishing convincing motion (O'Halloran, 2008 and Rowsell and Collier, 2017). It involves the use of basic design techniques, material manipulation, movement and timing, color, and idea development to create a coherent and engaging visual narrative (Ngamsa, 2012).

Overall, coherence in moving image texts is essential for creating a meaningful and immersive viewing experience, ensuring that the spatial and narrative connections between episodes or scenes are logical, smooth, and engaging for the audience. It is therefore essential to put in perspective the importance and significance of this study for the benefit of researchers and learners in the fields of multimedia studies, film analysis, multimodal discourse analysis and language/linguistics.

### **Theoretical Perspectives of Coherence**

Based on the provided sources, four theories and models on the concept of coherence in the moving image text have been found and are undergoing patronage by developments in film discourse. Branigan (1992) on narrative comprehension in film, Chandler (2008) on

semiotics for beginners and Baumgarten (2008) on theoretical perspectives of image/text bonding, all proffer theories and models found to explain trends and developments in the analysis of film discourse. Their submissions have enabled the reality of logicity in supporting placement sequences for comprehension wherever image and text exist to make meaning. The theories and models are sufficiently provided for by Halliday and Hassan (1976), and Jahn (2021) where differently they all dwell on narratological analysis basically accounting for both grammatical linkages and inter semiotic relations in the moving image text. In analyzing the Logical Form of Multimodal Narrative Discourse particularly, coherence plays a vital role presenting a generalized system of image-text relations that applies and functions in different genres of multimodal discourse where images and texts co-occur (Zheng, Liu and Shi 2021). The theories practically applied as models for analytical procedures include conventions, implications, inferences and other aspects spatial coherence. The bonding devices used for coherence equally exist not only at intra unit/frame basis but also at inter and cross-discoursal levels. Four of the related theories are hereby listed:

- i. Conventions of Viewpoint Coherence in Film

This source discusses the coherence relations of discourse coherence theory and their application to filmmaking. It explores the conventions of viewpoint coherence in film and the semantic view of coherence relations between shots, including those of time, space, and action (Cumming, Greenberg and Kelly 2017).

- ii. Image-text Coherence and its Implications for Multimodal Discourse

This work explores coherence theory as an approach to multimodal discourse, arguing that multimodal discourse recruits numerous fine-grained inferences to enrich the interpretation of communicative contributions in context. It also discusses the interpretation of visual communication and coherence relations between panels in comics (Zheng, Liu and Shi 2021).

iii. Introducing Cohesion in Multimodal Discourse

This aspect and source focus on the orientation to visual and/or moving image and the kinds of cohesion enacted through word-image relations, providing insights into the innovative approaches to coherence in multimodal discourse, particularly in relation to visual and moving images (Schubert and Sanchez-Stock-hammer, 2022).

iv. Patterns of Inter Semiotic Cohesion

This theory focuses on the facilitation of meaning by cohesive devices in film discourse. At functional level, grammatical connectives and lexical items provide chain and sequences of unfolding images *in vitro* and matching texts *in vivo* which according to Ngamsa (2012) appeal to the mind through the eye and the ear respectively.

These theories and models offer diverse perspectives on coherence in moving image texts, encompassing the logical form of multimodal narrative, conventions of viewpoint coherence in film and the cohesion of text and image relations in film discourse. The application of these theories over time keeps developing to meet up the challenges of interpretative techniques in film studies. Additionally, other perspectives in the area of multimodal discourse analysis have also

been found and developed, appreciate and set standard of understanding spatial and narrative coherence making comprehension and logical sequencing easy.

**Spatial Coherence in Film Discourse**

Spatial coherence in moving image texts refers to the unity, continuity, or connectedness of the film space, providing viewers with a vivid and stable sense of space. It is similar in nature to basic description of grammatical coherence illustrated by Pilus (1996) where a typical text is afforded the connectivity, connectedness and appropriateness in terms of form and content. Pilus' standpoint on coherence like of any film discourse in the same context equally justifies the implicit and explicit factors of logical thinking and imagination commonly directing spatial comprehension. At the same level, spatial coherence is also defined as ability of the viewer to self-locate within the space, ensuring that the viewer "stays oriented," "keeps their bearing," or "knows where they are" (Greenberg, 2022). In a typical narrative film text, most scenes therein are expected to be spatially coherent, giving rise to a vivid and stable sense of space, allowing viewers to clearly and confidently locate the events depicted in relation to the previous action.

The importance of spatial coherence in creating a vivid and stable sense of space lies in its role in providing viewers with a clear understanding of spatial relationships within the film. Spatial coherence allows viewers not just to understand what is happening but also to know where it is happening, contributing to a deeper and clearer viewing experience. Examples of spatial coherence in moving image texts can be observed in scenes that provide a clear and stable sense of space, allowing viewers to easily follow the spatial relationships between different elements within the film. The representation of space in film according Baumgarten (2008) is further sculpted from the narrative which is a meaningful construction of emotional and physical space within the context of the story.

Similar to experiencing meaningful construction in real space, a film's sophisticated language is found to facilitate the ability to transport the audience to the time and place of the story in good time therein accounting for what is precisely known as episodes coherence for meaning making in integrative multimodality (Peeters, 2010).

Ventola, Cassily and Kaltenbacher (2008)



Picture 1



Picture 2

**Source of Movie Pictures:** <https://www.shutterstock.com/search/movie-poster->

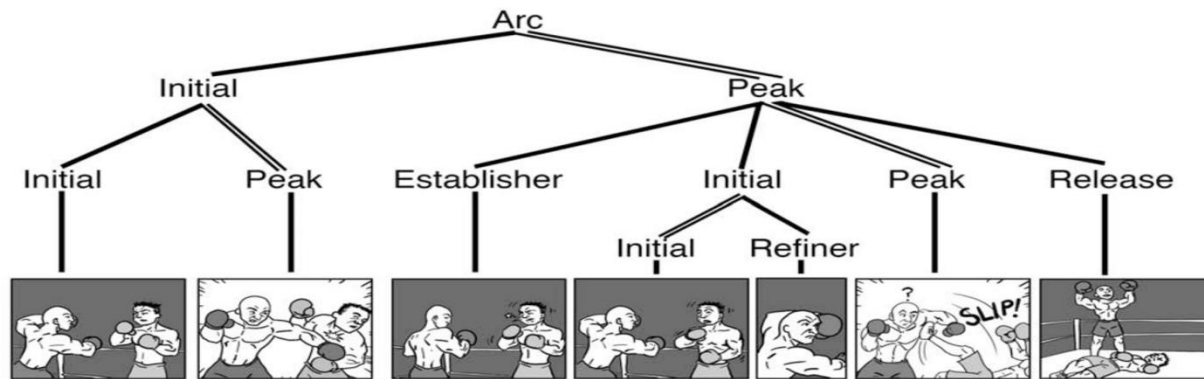
This example of spatial coherence in the moving image text is demonstrated from picture 1 and picture 2 above depicting contrasting expressions on faces of the real time engaged viewers of a movie. Clear as the expressions are, the commonest interpretation “allowed” here is the impact of spatial coherence suggesting the startling nature of an active moving image frames in episodes preceding the scenes that all the viewers are watching. In summary, spatial coherence in moving image texts becomes crucial for creating a vivid and stable sense of space, allowing viewers to stay oriented and engaged with the spatial relationships within the film. It is an essential element in providing a seamless and immersive viewing experience mutually common to both the viewer and the real time show in film discourse.

#### **Narrative Coherence in Episodes Progression**

Narrative coherence refers to the logical and meaningful progression of events within a story, ensuring that the narrative is well-structured and easy to follow. It involves the clear

provided an operational premise of orientation, perception and reception film and narrative genres. With every new shot, viewers and readers can clearly and confidently locate the events depicted in relation to the previous action, demonstrating spatial coherence in just one-shot action. For instance, the movie pictures below typify robust spatial coherence:

organization of events, the establishment of cause-and-effect relationships, and the development of characters and their relationships over time (Gurkis, 2007 and Deagon, 2008). Narrative coherence further becomes essential for creating a compelling and engaging narrative that resonates with audiences. Dunleavy (2005) shows how at cohesive level it is crucial for creating a logical and meaningful progression of events within a story. A well-structured narrative therefore allows the audience to easily follow the story's development, understand the relationships between characters, and appreciate the consequences of the characters' actions. Cohn (2016) in his seminal presentation on the narrative structure of static and moving image text, provides an illustrative arc with **Initial** (Beginning of the boxing) and **Peak** (the action) that established a **Refiner's** stunt in a boxing ring that knocks down an opponent. The figure below demonstrates a parade of narrative coherence in sequence of seven picture frames that leads to **Release** (Climax of the narrative):



**Source: Cohn (2016)**

**Figure 1.** A narrative sequence with two narrative constituents and one subordinate modifying constituent with a Refiner

In the figure above, narrative sequence of the seven frames/pictures, two moving images tagged **Peak** as 2nd and the 5<sup>th</sup> with white background show the action of the ball-headed man jabbing the hairy opponent in a boxing bout. The other five pictures with dark background represent three phases of the match seeking coherence to the **Initial, Establisher, Refiner and the final action, Release**. In the final action, it took the **peak** representative pictures to link the entire narrative on the storyboard thereby standing and modifying the constituent, **release** or final victory of the **refiner**. By so doing a sampled domain of narrative coherence is established. The subordinate modifying constituent of the tree diagramme equally adds to the cohesive texture of the narrative further achieved through the two tendered pictures tagged **initial** (4<sup>th</sup> picture) and **refiner** (5<sup>th</sup> picture). This illustration in figure 2 entirely exemplifies a typical structure and form of narrative coherence commonly found in and moving image text of film discourse.

This sense of coherence patronized in typical film discourse contributes to a more immersive and engaging viewing experience, as the audience can better understand and invest themselves in the

narrative. Examples of narrative coherence in film discourse can further be achieved through the following:

- A clear and logical sequence of events, ensuring that the story unfolds in a coherent manner and the audience can easily follow the narrative's progression.
- The establishment of cause-and-effect relationships between events, allowing the audience to understand the consequences of the characters' actions and the development of the story's plot.
- The development of characters and their relationships over time, providing the audience with a sense of depth and complexity in the story's narrative.
- The integration of themes and motifs throughout the film, tying the story's events and characters together and providing the audience with a coherent and meaningful narrative experience.

Eventually, narrative coherence in moving image texts is found essential for creating a logical and meaningful progression of events within the story, ensuring that the narrative is well-structured and easy to follow. By understanding and applying the principles of narrative coherence, filmmakers create compelling and engaging narratives that encourage audience perception.

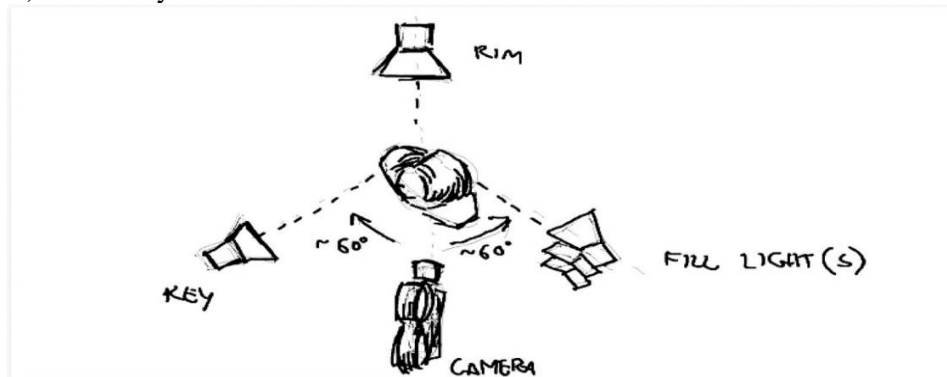
### Techniques for Creating Coherence in Film Text

The concept of time, movement, and stillness in moving image texts and film discourse in general encompasses the temporal and spatial elements that contribute to the creation of visual narratives. There are some details based on theories, methodology and application in film discourse analysis that provide insights into the philosophical, artistic, and technical aspects of stillness, time, movement, and their significance in the creation of visual narratives in film discourse (Smith,1980, Morton Ann and Givón, 1995 and Toolan, 2019). A cursory look at a few

of the techniques used in creating coherence in the moving image text are as follows:

#### i. Basic Design Techniques

These techniques involve the use of visual and auditory cues to create a seamless and engaging viewing experience. Examples include consistent lighting, camera angles, and sound design. The use of color, composition, and balance in the visual design of the film helps to create a coherent and aesthetically pleasing narrative. An example of the basic design technique functional in films and found to promote episodes coherence is the three-point lighting- a classic setup featuring a key light, fill light and backlight (Rim). The rim which stands as the backlight equally highlights the image for clarity as a basic design technique that facilitates episodes coherence the many frames of a typical film text:



**Figure 2.** Basic lighting techniques: Back, Key, and Fill lighting arranged around a camera

Source: <https://www.perplexity.ai/search/sample-of-pictures-B7>

These lighting sources are positioned around the scene to create an appealing and flattering system. This is further illustrated by the figure 3 below where the 3-dimension lighting aids the camera facing the image at 60-60-degree range between the key and the fill lights. This

traditional method is standard for several film and photography types. Its effect can vary based on the light qualities used and equally create transitions and demarcations for that help in bonding episodes.

#### ii. Material Manipulation

This technique involves the physical manipulation of materials, such as film stock, exaggerated props, graphics and symbols digitally imposed on cameras, or editing software, to achieve the desired visual effect. The choice of film stock, camera settings, and editing tools can significantly impact the overall coherence of the moving image text or pictures set for all narratives. A typical example comes in handy with a 'transition shot' of picture 4 below

elaborating and predicting the next episode in the film captioned: *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*. The picture 4 depicts about seven images and profiles of natural features including an aspect image of the backside of a man holding a sword with his right hand and facing a pool of water surrounded by mountains. There is also a three-pronged image separating the ground where the man is standing with anticipated steps to move on or into the pool of water ahead of him



Source: LUCASFILMS Ltd

Picture 3: *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*

From the same picture 3 above the next episode stands demarcated by the white image of the three-pronged providing a half circled-image. The whole shot at a view therein stands as the end of one episode expecting the next episode. Picture 4 in this context is noted clearly as material manipulation of features and symbols typically used to achieve episodes coherence in film texts. A thousand of transitional shots typically exemplified by picture 4 are found to be commonly used in film narratives of loaded moving images known as material manipulation.

### iii. Movement and Timing

The timing and coordination of visual elements, such as camera movements, shot transitions, and editing patterns, contribute to the coherence of

any narrative. The use of precise timing and well-coordinated camera movements can create a sense of rhythm and flow in the film, making the narrative more engaging and coherent. While it difficult to track down a myriad of musical notations for such purposes, it is however easier to mark the transitional patterns of inter-semiotic cohesion by movement and timing of visual elements.

Movement and timing in film and television are used to create a coherent narrative and convey the passage of time. This can be achieved through techniques such as editing, camera movement, and the pacing of scenes. While the search results did not yield specific samples, the use of these techniques can be observed in various films and

television shows. If you have access to specific films or TV shows, you can analyze them to observe how movement and timing are used to achieve episode coherence.

A photographic image culled from a motion shot in a video scene, obviously, can represent a single recorded moment in movement and timing. What is depicted at that moment shows an impression

of the series of events that led to that moment on a chess board that can be deduced by a viewer to make comprehension predictable. An image of a chessboard, with a black queen holding the white king in check is quite typical of in this context. The white king has been laid down while others keep standing. Take this image, picture 4 for example:



**Source:** “Black Queen” (© Mark Ali)

Picture: 4

Those that play chess understand the sequence better than the black queen has the opposing king in check. Though you cannot see all the black pieces on the entire board, the fact that the king has been laid on its side implies that it is, in fact, a checkmate (or at least that the player has resigned). Chess pieces in this scenario imply movement (that’s what they’re for, after all). So, the image depicts a state of affairs on this chessboard that was obviously preceded by many movements (line up episodes), resulting in the end of the game. It’s left to the viewer to imagine how that came to be by vividly connecting the entire game together. This example therefore implies, connects and directs how both movement and timing episodes cohere.

#### iv. Colour

Color plays just like movement and timing also

plays a crucial role in creating coherence in moving image texts. It is used to establish mood, set the scene, and guide the viewer's attention. The choice of color palette, lighting, and color grading can significantly impact the overall coherence of the film, as it helps to create a consistent and visually appealing narrative. Color plays a crucial role in creating coherence in moving images and texts. According to Callow (2023) color is a semiotic mode that can be used to convey meaning in visual design. The visual mode, which includes color, layout, style, size, and perspective, is used to instruct, persuade, entertain, and represent. The use of color in moving images and texts can enhance comprehension, aid retention, and improve readability.

On a practical note, composition and structure of the image clearly provides how a



visual text can be organised to create a cohesive, coherent whole, through choices of salience (what the viewer's attention is drawn to first), colour, and viewing path.

Saliency is how the viewer's eye is drawn to what is important in the image. An aspect of an image can be highlighted by placement in the foreground, size of the object, and contrast in tone or colour.

For example, what you notice first in the image below from "Into the Forest" episode, by Anthony Browne is the red hooded cloak that draws our eye. The line of the trees leading towards the cottage on both right and left of the red hooded person leading to open door. That then leads the eye along a path heading to the white roof small house:



**Picture 5:** Saliency example  
Source: Into the Forest' (2004)

From the picture 5 above three colours of white, red and brown dominate the entire profile shot of the anticipated episode. The subtitle tagging the picture stating 'At last- there it was!', primarily connects the previous episodes from where the character in red emerged, seeking to reach or locate the house in the forest. Here the picture links the episodes cohering the previous actions/episode with the anticipated ones ahead in the film process and narrative through the effective usage of colours profiling.

By understanding and applying these techniques, filmmakers can create compelling and engaging narratives that resonate with audiences and contribute to the overall coherence of the moving image text. These techniques have been variously

although differently used by film script writers to effectively engage audience perception, retention and interpretation of narratives/episodes to be palpable.

### **Conclusion**

Episode coherence is crucial for creating a seamless and engaging viewing experience in moving image texts. It is also reviewed and noted to have improved the smooth and logical flow of episodes or scenes within a film, ensuring that the spatial and narrative connections between shots, scenes, and sequences are logical and well-structured. A well-cohered narrative therefore allows viewers to easily follow the story's development, understand the relationships between characters, and appreciate the sequences

of the characters' actions. Future directions for research on episode coherence in the moving image texts could explore:

1. The impact of different visual and other cues on the perception of episode cohesion in moving image texts.
2. Investigate the role of various filmmaking techniques, such as camera movements, shot transitions, and editing patterns, in creating coherence and smooth transitions between episodes or scenes.
3. Examine the influence of cultural and social factors on the perception of episode coherence in moving image texts, considering the potential for cross-cultural differences in narrative comprehension and appreciation.
4. Delve into the potential of emerging technologies, such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence, in enhancing episode cohesion in moving image texts through more immersive and interactive storytelling experiences.

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