

**A literary semiotic practice of O. Henry's "The Skylight Room" in language teaching\***

[Dil Öğretiminde O. Henry'nin "The Skylight Room" adlı eserinin yazınsal göstergebilimsel bir uygulaması]

[Une pratique sémiotique littéraire de "The Skylight Room" de O. Henry dans l'enseignement des langues]

**Hilâl YURTSEVEN\*\* , Bilge TERTEMİZ\*\*\*****Geliş Tarihi/ Received:** 13.10.2024 **Kabul Tarihi/ Accepted:** 18.11.2024 **Yayın Tarihi/ Published:** 31.12.2024 **Makale Türü/ Article Type:** Araştırma makalesi/ Research article**Abstract**

Whether it is a work of art or a text, a message to be conveyed is delivered to its addressee in various ways. Here, a communication is established. Communication is a transmission, and the message is conveyed to the addressee through verbal or non-verbal signs. Hence, not solely written texts but also paintings, sculptures, or instructive visuals can be regarded as texts in terms of establishing a communication. These types of texts have also emerged through the meaningful sequence of the signs that constitute them. Along with educational materials created through verbal and/or non-verbal signs, literary texts, which are accepted as artistic products, have also begun to take their place in teaching methodologies over time. These kinds of literary texts, commonly employed in classroom applications, provide a dynamic approach to language acquisition and the process of signification, thereby enhancing the learning experience. In the process of developing this learning experience, different theoretical methods and techniques are utilized. At this point, the theory of semiotics also offers the possibility of interdisciplinary study in classroom practices. Semiotics studies have also been carried out across different disciplines within literature, and in this study, it is interrelated with literature and educational sciences. Accordingly, the examination object of this study is a literary work which is in communication with its readers. Therefore, the primary objective of the study is to suggest a methodology for integrating literary semiotic theory, along with its methods and techniques, into classroom practices. The current study also aims to analyze O. Henry's (William Sydney Porter) short story "The Skylight Room" in line with the principles of literary semiotics and to shed light on its importance and advantages in terms of language teaching.

**Keywords:** Semiotics, literary semiotics, O. Henry, The Skylight Room, language teaching**Özet**

İster bir sanat eseri olsun ister bir metin, iletilmek istenen bir mesaj çeşitli yollarla alıcısına ulaştırılır. Burada bir iletişim kurulmaktadır. İletişim bir aktarımdır ve mesaj sözlü ya da sözsüz göstergeler aracılığıyla alıcıya iletilir. Dolayısıyla sadece yazılı metinler değil, resimler, heykeller ya da öğretici görseller de iletişim kurma açısından metin olarak kabul edilebilir. Bu tür metinler de kendilerini oluşturan göstergelerin anlamlı bir şekilde dizilmesiyle ortaya çıkmıştır. Sözlü ve/veya sözsüz göstergeler aracılığıyla oluşturulan eğitim materyallerinin yanı sıra sanatsal ürünler olarak kabul edilen edebi metinler de zaman içerisinde öğretim metodolojilerinde yerini almaya başlamıştır. Sınıf içi uygulamalarda sıklıkla kullanılan bu tür edebi metinler, dil edinimine ve anlamlandırma sürecine dinamik bir yaklaşım sunarak öğrenme deneyimini zenginleştirmektedir. Bu öğrenme deneyiminin geliştirilmesi sürecinde farklı kuramsal yöntem ve tekniklerden yararlanılır. Bu noktada göstergebilim kuramı, sınıf içi uygulamalarda disiplinler arası çalışma olanağı da

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\*\* **Corresponding Author:** Hilal YURTSEVEN, İstanbul University, Faculty of Letters, Amerikan Culture and Literature Department, Türkiye, [hilalyurtseven@gmail.com](mailto:hilalyurtseven@gmail.com), <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-2661-3590>.

\*\*\* Bilge TERTEMİZ, Mardin Artuklu University, Faculty of Letters, Translation and Interpreting Department, Türkiye, [bilgetertemiz@artuklu.edu.tr](mailto:bilgetertemiz@artuklu.edu.tr), <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2941-9408>.

sunmaktadır. Göstergebilim çalışmaları edebiyat içinde farklı disiplinler arasında da yürütülmüştür ve bu çalışmada edebiyat ve eğitim bilimleri ile ilişkilendirilmiştir. Buna göre, bu çalışmanın inceleme nesnesi, okurlarıyla iletişim halinde olan bir edebi eserdir. Dolayısıyla çalışmanın temel amacı, edebi göstergebilim kuramını, yöntem ve teknikleriyle birlikte sınıf içi uygulamalara entegre etmek için bir metodoloji önermektir. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda O. Henry'nin (William Sydney Porter) "The Skylight Room" adlı kısa öyküsünü yazımsal göstergebilim ilkeleri doğrultusunda çözümlemeyi ve dil öğretimi açısından önemine ve avantajlarına ışık tutmayı amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Göstergebilim, edebi göstergebilim, O. Henry, The Skylight Room, dil öğretimi

## Résumé

Qu'il s'agisse d'une œuvre d'art ou d'un texte, un message à transmettre est délivré à son destinataire de différentes manières. Il s'agit ici d'une communication. La communication est une transmission, et le message est transmis au destinataire par des signes verbaux ou non verbaux. Ainsi, non seulement les textes écrits, mais aussi les peintures, les sculptures ou les visuels instructifs peuvent être considérés comme des textes en termes d'établissement d'une communication. Ces types de textes sont également apparus grâce à la séquence significative des signes qui les constituent. Parallèlement au matériel pédagogique créé à l'aide de signes verbaux et/ou non verbaux, les textes littéraires, qui sont considérés comme des produits artistiques, ont également commencé à prendre leur place dans les méthodologies d'enseignement au fil du temps. Ces types de textes littéraires, généralement utilisés en classe, offrent une approche dynamique de l'acquisition de la langue et du processus de signification, améliorant ainsi l'expérience d'apprentissage. Dans le processus de développement de cette expérience d'apprentissage, différentes méthodes et techniques théoriques sont utilisées. À ce stade, la théorie de la sémiotique offre également la possibilité d'une étude interdisciplinaire dans les pratiques scolaires. Les études sémiotiques ont également été menées dans différentes disciplines de la littérature et, dans cette étude, elles sont liées à la littérature et aux sciences de l'éducation. Conformément à cette approche, l'objet d'examen de cette étude est une œuvre littéraire qui est en communication avec ses lecteurs. Ainsi, l'objectif principal de l'étude est de suggérer une méthodologie pour intégrer la théorie sémiotique littéraire, ainsi que ses méthodes et techniques, dans les pratiques de la classe. La présente étude vise également à analyser la nouvelle "The Skylight Room" d'O. Henry (William Sydney Porter) à la lumière des principes de la sémiotique littéraire et à mettre en lumière son importance et ses avantages en termes d'enseignement des langues.

**Mots-clés :** Sémiotique, sémiotique littéraire, O. Henry, The Skylight Room, enseignement des langues

## 1. Introduction

Semiotics, which focuses on examining signs and meanings behind them, engages with virtually every field of study, offering a wide-ranging interdisciplinary relevance. Given that the field of semiotics interacts with various disciplines, it also holds a substantial position within foreign language teaching (FLT). Semiotics plays a pivotal role in FLT as it bridges the gap between language and culture (Sert, 2006). A comprehensive understanding of a language necessitates contextualizing it within its cultural milieu; therefore, the integration of semiotics into language instruction emerges as a vital pedagogical tool. This integration facilitates the incorporation of key cultural indicators from the target culture into the language teaching process, thereby enriching the learning experience. Moreover, in language teaching, semiotics can offer the opportunity for learners to study the meaning-making process of language with the help of educators.

In this way, it also enables students to perceive the cultural and contextual implications inherent in language. The use of literary texts is one of the most effective and common methods for integrating semiotics into language teaching. Literary texts are authentic materials that enable students to realize distinctive features of the language and, as a result, to make visible contributions to language development (Altun, 2018). Utilizing literary texts in language teaching can also lead students to develop an artistic understanding because the aesthetic aspect of literary works gives them insights into the complexity of language.

As a matter of fact, a literary text is created by using a tool called language, which is the transmitter of culture, it contains sub-systems belonging to the culture in which it is written. As each sub-system is a sign, their amalgamation results in a coherent and a meaningful entirety, implying an order of signification. As Danesi (2000) puts it "a text is a representation consisting of an arrangement of signifiers[...]" (p. 37). Accordingly, the inclusion of symbolism, metaphor, allegory, person, time, and space into a literary text, leads to the formation of complex layers of meaning because each of these elements are signs. Thus, semiotics offers a method to reveal layers of meaning in a given text allowing students to analyze the text in depth within this framework. Analyzing literary texts semiotically gives students the ability to think critically, to identify and interpret certain patterns.

Thanks to literary semiotics, students can develop their own interpretations of the text they examine based on evidence and reasoning. Therefore, this allows them to develop higher level skills such as analyzing and synthesizing. As they develop these skills, so do their comprehension ability and analyzing the various levels of meaning of the text allows them to move into other areas of language learning and beyond. Considering the enhanced learning experience and the potential for long-

term success in language learning which integrate semiotics into language teaching, a significant number of scholars have shown significant interest in the field of semiotics.

This study delves into the relevance of O. Henry's short story "The Skylight Room" to language teaching, focusing on its semiotic elements. By analyzing the story within the framework of literary semiotics moving deeper in its meaning layers, this study aims to uncover how this analysis can be effectively used in language teaching.

## 2. Theoretical framework

In the field of language education, literary semiotics serves as a conduit linking language pedagogy with the interpretation of signs, symbols, and semantic nuances inherent in linguistic discourse. Given semiotics' characteristic of combining signs and symbols to convey meaning, educators and learners make use of a spectrum of signs ranging from iconic to symbolic (Erton, 2006). In his study, Erton (2006) discusses the evaluation of language teaching methodologies and teaching strategies within a semiotic framework and emphasizes that learners acquire both linguistic and sociological dimensions of language through these methodologies. As delineated in his research, there is a highlighted emphasis on the necessity for language instructors to prioritize the integration of semiotics within their pedagogical strategies, aiming to foster a language acquisition process. This pragmatic application of semiotics goes beyond mere theoretical abstraction and provides a concrete benefit in the classroom, especially in language teaching contexts. Furthermore, academic research into the intersection of semiotics and language teaching has produced a corpus of literature describing strategies for the integration of semiotic theory into pedagogical practice (Abushibab, 2012; Altay & Karaazmak 2018; Erton, 2006; Natsir, 2016; Sert, 2006; Şenel, 2007).

Among these strategies, the use of literary texts emerges as a prominent way. The use of semiotics in language teaching, especially through the integration of literary texts, offers promising prospects for language teaching. Literary texts offer a reservoir of signs and they are extremely useful in foreign language teaching. The inclusion of literature in language teaching has strong support in academic discourse and academic research confirms its effectiveness (Altun, 2018; Ghosn, 2002; Mart, 2017; McKay, 1982). Literary texts are authentic materials that provide an opportunity for students to master real language (Altun, 2018). Offering students 'these authentic materials' with diverse linguistic structures, lexicons, and cultural references greatly contributes to their learning. This contribution enriches not only linguistic proficiency but also enhances cultural literacy, fostering students' communicative competence, and intercultural awareness.

In this sense, considering literary texts as aesthetic cultural products of a society, they are likely to contain signs of the culture to which they belong. Each literary text is a product embedded in a cultural context that constitutes the beliefs, values, ideologies, and norms of the society in which it is produced, so the signs that make up the text reflect these elements. Accordingly, the way characters are portrayed, the places and time in which the narratives take place are all signs. With a close reading of the text and the systematic analysis offered by the method of literary semiotics, these signs, behind each of which meanings are hidden, will help to explain the process of meaning formation of the text. Therefore, the integration of semiotic theory with language teaching can also help students not only understand the language but also gain a deeper understanding of the language and its culture. At this point, it is crucial to highlight the theoretical foundation of semiotics.

Semiotics has its roots in the early 20th century, thanks to the contributions of two prominent figures who are Charles Sanders Peirce in the US and Ferdinand de Saussure in Europe. After these two leading figures, semiotic activities have also shown new developments and interdisciplinary studies in semiotics have begun to emerge. Some important scientists who contributed greatly to these new developments have taken the lead in certain fields. One of these prominent scientists is Louis Hjelmslev: "the scientist who developed the linguistic principles put forward by Saussure and the semiotics he designed by equipping them with theoretical features is the Danish Louis Hjelmslev, one of the founders of the Copenhagen Linguistic Circle" (Rifat, 2020, p. 125).

In the following years, the semiotic theory designed by L. Hjelmslev was developed in France by Roland Barthes and Algirdas Julien Greimas. Especially Greimas brought a new dimension to semiotic theory and laid the foundations of the Paris School of Semiotics. This theory developed by Greimas has played an important role in the acceptance of semiotics as an independent science by trying to reveal the formation of meaning and the process of signification from a structuralist perspective. When each text is considered as a structure, the layers that make up this whole are articulated ordinally, meaningfully, and sequentially in the emergence of this meaningful structure. So, literary semiotic analysis offers a systematic method for analyzing the deep structures of narratives and revealing the production process of the meaning universe of a narrative. The analysis of meaning in a literary text or the semiotic analysis of a literary text tries to reveal how the process of signification takes place and in what order it occurs. In this regard, Greimas's semiotic analysis method follows a path from the deep to the surface layer of meaning in the process of formation of "the structural order of the narrative and the meaning produced within this order" (Kalelioğlu, 2024, p. 116). The layers of meaning from deep to surface are respectively thematic, narrative, and descriptive, and Greimas argues that the progression of the meaning

universe of each text is according to this systematic order. This generative process is a process in which interconnected and interrelated layers articulate to form meaning.


However, Denis Bertrand’s proposal for analysis, a novelty in the theory, follows the opposite path of Greimas’s generative process, from the surface to the deep meaning layer (2000, p. 29). Each semantic layer of a literary text has its own formative elements, and these elements will be discussed in detail under “Analysis” title. While the descriptive meaning level includes the thematic roles of persons, space, and time, the narrative meaning level includes all kinds of components of the narrative, such as actants and their fields of action, the relations of actants with each other, the function of space and time, the actantial schemas, and narrative programs. The thematic meaning level includes the semiotic square, which represents the constituent elements of meaning and helps to understand how meaning is constructed depending on the oppositions.

The path from the descriptive meaning layer to the thematic meaning level offers a systematic method of progression from visible to invisible in a literary text. Accordingly, a semiotic analysis of a literary text provides a systematic road map to be followed in classroom practices, which will help practitioners to understand and scrutinize the text in depth in terms of language teaching. Following such a systematic road map will also help to reveal invisible meaning structures while moving from concrete data to abstract in-depth understanding of the subject in classroom applications. Such a practice will also enable practitioners to facilitate the learning process through a literary semiotic analysis method that progresses from simple to complex by interacting with the text.

### 3. Analysis procedure

Denis Bertrand’s proposed analysis as outlined in Table 1 below, will serve as the foundation for conducting a semiotic analysis of O. Henry’s narrative “The Skylight Room”. This process will explore the three meaning layers of the text, utilizing various methods and tools. The analysis process can be shown in a table as follows:

Analysis Process		
Descriptive Level	Narrative Level	Thematic Level (Deep Structure)
Narrative person (actor), space, time and thematic roles of actors	Actants (subject, object, sender, receiver, helper, opponent), narrative program (contact, competence, action, sanction), modalities (wanting to do, having to do, knowing how to do, being able to do, and negative cases of these modalities)	Basic structure and meaning (semiotic square)



**Table 1:** The process of analysis involving the formative elements of each meaning layer of a literary text (Adapted from Bertrand, 2000)

As seen in Table 1, the analysis process is carried out by starting from the descriptive meaning level (plane) and moving to the other meaning layers in the light of the data obtained at each meaning level. In classroom applications, this semiotic analysis model can be employed up to the thematic level (deep structure). Undoubtedly, language teaching methodologies greatly contribute to teachers in effectively addressing the four language skills (Erton, 2006). Given the inherent presence of semiotic elements in many of these methodologies, the application of semiotic analysis methods serves to enhance students’ comprehension of the target language. Furthermore, this method of analysis followed from concrete to abstract, will provide a painstaking understanding of the text being inspected and will enable accurate data to be obtained. At this point, information about the elements that compose each meaning layer, what semiotic analysis methods and tools are, and what they do, will assist to form the guiding questions about any narrative in terms of classroom practices. These guiding questions will also help to obtain the references to the formative elements.

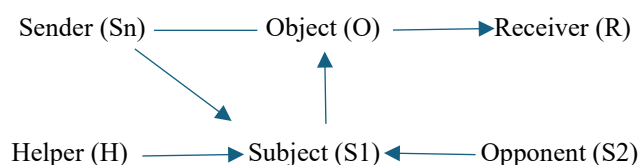
The most basic elements of a literary narrative such as person (actor), time, and space are signs and these meaningful signs form the subsystems of a narrative. These signs that come together have prominent roles in the formation of the meaning universe of a narrative. Therefore, Descriptive level is the semantic layer where “...functional narrative units appear in terms of person / space / time: themes and figures that decorate the themes emerge” (Rifat, 2011, p. 58). This semantic level of a narrative is the level at which the structures in the narrative are put into words, the characteristics and thematic roles attributed to the actors are determined, the spaces where the actors and transformations are placed and the data on a set of values system in which the intended object is placed, can be accessed. That is why these constituent elements, which are part of a meaningful whole, are in a close relationship with each other. In order to identify and reveal the constitutive elements of person, time, space, and their features that establish the descriptive meaning level and contribute to the formation of the narrative, possible guiding questions can be asked as follows:

- 1) How does the author introduce the characters and their features in the narrative? What descriptive attributes do the characters possess, and what thematic functions do they serve?
- 2) Do any of the characters undergo significant changes or growth throughout the story? If so, how does the author illustrate this transformation?
- 3) How does the author establish the physical setting as a space within the narrative? Is the space described through tangible attributes? What role does the space play in shaping the overall atmosphere or mood of the narrative?
- 4) What method does the author follow when constructing the temporalization of the narrative? How do the descriptive features of temporalization manifest themselves in the narrative?

The guiding questions derived above can be recognized during the first reading of the narrative. Additionally, these questions will be useful for practitioners to acquire the answers to how the personalization, temporalization and spatialization are constructed in terms of their functions.

There are also constituents that form the Narrative level as in the Descriptive meaning level. Narrative persons at the descriptive meaning level, are now actants in the context of their actions and interactions at the level of narrative meaning. Therefore, “an actant can be thought of as that which accomplishes or undergoes an act, independently of all other determinations” (Greimas & Courtés, 1982, p. 5). Thus, the actions of the actants are of great importance at the narrative level.

In fact, “Greimas’s six actants can be said to be a reinterpretation of Propp’s actants” (Günay, 2002, p. 61). Accordingly, in narrative semantic level, action fields of actants, the roles he/she undertakes, his/her interactions with other actants, and some situations transformed as a result of this interaction are tried to be revealed with the aid of ‘actantial scheme’ which is a semiotic analysis tool. A representation of Greimas’s scheme of actants, which includes his six actants, is as follows:



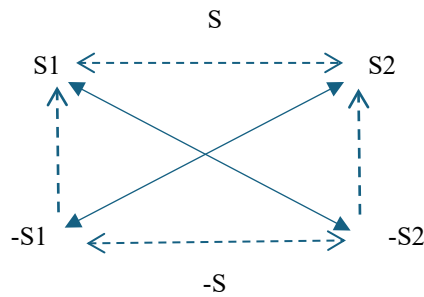
**Figure 1:** A representation of an actantial schema

The actantial schema above is the representation in which the relations of the actants with each other are evaluated, and according to this representation, the action of one actant affects another. And some changes, transformations, and events in the narrative, progress as a result of cause and effect. Thus, it would be appropriate to talk about the concept of narrative program because “the narrative program is to be interpreted as a change of state effected by any subject (S1) affecting any subject (S2)” (Greimas & Courtés, 1982, p. 245). Therefore, some guiding questions can also be asked as follows to reveal, analyze, and interpret changes and what causes them and which action or event triggers and transforms what in the context of cause-effect relationship:

- 1) Are there distinct stages or phases that can be identified in the progression of events considering the main narrative person(s)? If so, how can these stages or phases be identified or determined?
- 2) How do the actions of the actants within the narrative program lead to changes /transformations in the overall situation or circumstances of the story?

With the help of these guiding questions and semiotic analysis tools, progressing and penetrating from one meaning layer to another can be maintained in a systematic way. After the data obtained from the narrative meaning level in the analysis process, the next layer of meaning is analyzed. Herein, thematic meaning level, that is, the deep structure, which we can call the most abstract plane, harbors temporal, spatial, and personal values and features. Therefore, it also includes linguistic and non-linguistic signs. “This is the level of abstract or conceptual syntax where the fundamental values which generate a text are articulated” (Bronwen & Ringham, 2006, p. 15).

The foundation of the meaning formation process is formed at this stage and forms the basis for the other stages (meaning levels). And determining the relationships in this basic layer of structure is achieved through semiotic square. The semiotic square is formed by utilizing the principle of oppositions. The meaning based in the deep structure of the text is formed by oppositions and this also provides the shaping of the surface structure. According to the meaning in the deep structure, an author starts to construct his / her text placing the actors in specific spaces and times. In this construction, the actors have room to move due to their roles, and as a result of their interactions, there is a dynamism in the narrative. Accordingly, we will employ the semiotic square, a representation of which is shown below, to reveal the ideological, cultural, political, and social aspects of meaning in the deep structure:



**Figure 2:** A representation of Greimas's semiotic square

In the representation above, the S and -S axes are the axes of contrariety. The axes between S1 and -S1 and between S2 and -S2 are the implication axes. According to this representation, the process of signification emerges through the relationship and connection between opposites, and the ideological and philosophical foundations on which the narrative is based, are interpreted and analyzed through the semiotic square.

A couple of guiding questions that can also be asked in determining the opposite relations to be used in revealing the meaning constructed in the deep structure can be as follows:

- 1) Considering descriptive and narrative semantic layers, how can the opposing poles be represented within the framework of the semiotic square of the narrative? How do these opposing elements interact and contribute to the narrative's depth and complexity?
- 2) What are the underlying motivations and intentions of the narrative persons when delving into the deep structure of the narrative? How are these invisible intentions in relation to the ideological and psychological underpinnings of the narrative based on the most abstract meaning layer (thematic level)?

By means of the aforementioned method, semiotic analysis tools and guiding questions, semiotic analysis can be integrated into in-class language teaching practices in a way that is compatible with the participants' background knowledge. The integration of semiotics into language teaching offers students a comprehensive framework to delve into the multifaceted dimensions of a foreign language. Beyond linguistic structures, semiotics allows for an exploration of the cultural and social intricacies embedded within the language. As a result, incorporating semiotics not only cultivates the linguistic awareness among learners but also enriches the educational experience by conducting lessons with a profound sense of authenticity and engagement. In the light of all these reasons, this study will discuss the role of semiotic analysis of "The Skylight Room" by O. Henry in foreign language teaching.

#### 4. Analysis

The short story "The Skylight Room" was analyzed at three levels respectively descriptive level, narrative level, and thematic level (basic structure), taking into account the tripartite structure of the narrative.

##### 4.1. Descriptive level analysis

The main elements that constitute the descriptive level of the text are person, time and space. "Descriptive meaning consists of the semantic values and roles signified by figure and figurative isotopies" (Akata, 2021, p. 114). So, the process of analyzing these elements by describing them gives us the descriptive syntax. Accordingly, the questions determined for the descriptive level under the previous title will facilitate to understand the process of actorialization, spatialization, temporalization, and the thematic roles of the narrative persons within the confines of the narrative structure.

In this direction, with the guiding questions below developed to determine the functions and roles of the person, time, place and narrative persons specified at the descriptive meaning level under the title of "Analysis procedure", answers to how these elements are constructed, are tried to be sought.

- 1) How does the author introduce the characters and their features in the narrative? What descriptive attributes do the characters possess, and what thematic functions do they serve?
- 2) Do any of the characters undergo significant changes or growth throughout the story? If so, how does the author illustrate this transformation?
- 3) How does the author establish the physical setting as a space within the narrative? Is the space described through tangible attributes? What role does the space play in shaping the overall atmosphere or mood of the narrative?
- 4) What method does the author follow when constructing the temporalization of the narrative? How do the descriptive features of temporalization manifest themselves in the narrative?

Through relevant tables to be figured and guiding questions above, the characteristics of the forming elements of person, time and space and the thematic roles of the narrative persons are tried to be demonstrated. In the light of these guiding questions, the elements that compose O. Henry’s (William Sydney Porter) narrative “The Skylight Room” can be displayed as in the table below:

		<b>Descriptive features</b>	<b>Thematic roles</b>
<b>Characterization (Actorialization)</b>	Miss Elsie Leeson	Little girl (p. 16), has an angel smile (p. 17), a full of tender and whimsical fancies, gay-hearted (p. 17), too weak, fragile body, heavy eyelids (p. 19), young (p. 21).	A poor working girl, a roomer of Mrs. Parker, star-gazer, a typewriter (p. 17).
	Mrs. Parker	Has a demon’s smile (p. 17), has the incredulous, pitying, sneering, icy stare (p. 16).	Owner of the parlours / a rooming house (p. 15).
	Clara	Coloured (p. 16-20).	Maid of Mrs. Parker (p. 16).
	Miss Longnecker	Tall and blonde (p. 17)	Teacher in a public school, a roomer (p. 17).
	Miss Dorn		Department store worker (p. 17), a roomer (p. 18).
	Mr. Hoover	Forty-five years old, fat, flushed and foolish (p. 17).	A roomer (p. 18).
	Mr. Evans	Very young (p. 18)	A roomer (p. 18).
	Dr. William Jackson	Young, wearing white linen coat, active, confident, with a smooth and half grim face (p. 19).	The ambulance doctor / physician, young medico (p. 20).
	Mr. Skidder		A roomer and a playwright (p. 15)
<b>Spatialization</b>	The Skylight room	7 by 8 feet of floorspace at the middle of the hall, has an iron cot, a washstand, a chair, a dresser, bare walls, a little skylight. A suffocating atmosphere (p. 16), like the shaft of a coal-mine (p. 19).	
	Mr. Skidder’s room	Large hall room, on the third floor, not vacant (p. 16).	
	Second floor	the double front room with private bath, not cheap (p. 16).	
<b>Temporalization</b>	Every night	a period of time when the blue star appears next to the big twinkles one (p. 18).	
	An evening	The evening of a day without eating anything after looking for jobs all day (p. 19).	
	At ten (o’clock) the next day	The morning after the evening when Miss Leeson came to her skylight room, almost starving to death (p. 20).	

**Table 2:** A representation of the discursive syntax of the narrative

Table 2 illustrates the actors involved in forming the characterization, spatialization, and temporalization within the narrative, detailing their names, traits and thematic roles, along with the depicted particular spatial and temporal aspects. In responses to the guiding questions **1**, **3**, and **4**, Miss Elsie Leeson, Mrs. Parker, Clara, Miss Longnecker, Miss Dorn, Mr. Hoover, Mr. Evans, Dr. William Jackson and Mr. Skidder appear as narrative persons with their descriptive features and thematic roles. In addition, The Skylight room, Mr. Skidder’s room and the second floor are viewed as important spaces in the narrative. Phrases like *every night*, *an evening*, and *at ten the next day* are notable for their temporal significance within the narrative. The concrete data about the narrative persons, space, and time showcased in Table 2 are regarded as the

specific information extracted during the initial reading of the narrative. This information is derived from the first semantic layer, known as the descriptive level.

The spaces where the actors are positioned offer them a space to perform, interact, and reveal their social standings. In particular, the position of Mr. Skidder's room on the third floor and the other space of the second floor hint the societal hierarchy in Mrs. Parker's house. The fact that Mr. Skidder's room is on **the third floor** (p. 16) and is described as a **large hall-room** (p. 16) may imply hierarchical affordability. The second floor is where the rooms are higher in price and status than Miss Leeson's room but is "...something still cheaper" (p. 16). One can say that this floor of the house is not a floor where Mrs. Parker or the upper strata of society reside. As for the skylight room where Miss Leeson, the main narrative person, resides, has a meaning beyond its physical attributes because it almost occupies a central position in the narrative. It is the cheapest room that costs two dollars (p. 16) in Mrs. Parker's house compared to the other rooms. It would not be wrong to say that this skylight room is a space that contains both sadness and hope due to the difficulties and poverty in Mrs. Leeson's life. "Everyday Miss Leeson [goes] out to work. At night she [brings] home papers with handwriting on them and [makes] copies with her typewriter" (p. 17) because she has to generate income to improve her standard of living. Therefore, the skylight room as a space represents her dreams, hopes, and aspirations for a better life because Miss Leeson is the one who "...can see it every night through [her] skylight. [she] named it Billy Jackson" (p. 18). Billy Jackson is a "steady blue" (p. 18) star seen through the skylight room where Miss Leeson looks at it every night.

Regarding time as one of the constituent elements in the narrative, every night (p. 18), an evening (p. 19), and at ten the next day (p. 20) are the prominent time expressions that are in close contact with Miss Leeson's circumstances and her transformation. *Every night* is a time period that "[she] can see [Billy Jackson] every night through [her] skylight" (p. 18). For Mrs. Leeson, "every night" may represent a time when she seeks solace from the difficulties of her daily life, or it may be a sign of an unending hope that is always there for her. The expression of "an evening" refers to a singular event in the narrative, indicating a specific period of time. This is the evening when Miss Leeson returns to her room, almost starving because "...she went from office to office..." (p. 19) for finding a job all day and "...she had had no dinner" (p. 19). And after this evening she undergoes a transformation. This particular time reference of "at ten the next day" might signify a significant juncture in Miss Leeson's story because this is when she is found fainted/unconscious from hunger in the skylight room.

In the analysis of this narrative, some narrative persons were not included in the analysis because of not having functions and thematic roles. In addition, some spaces and time signs were not included in the analysis as they were not specified in Table 2 due to the lack of their descriptive features and not having functions.

Within the thematic roles of the narrative persons, Mr. Evans, Mr. Hoover, Miss Longnecker, Mr. Skidder, Miss Dorn are Mrs. Parker's tenants. Mrs. Parker is the owner of the boarding house in which many tenants live and "would show you the double parlours" (p. 15). Mrs. Parker exposes a keen interest in her prospective tenants' professions to rent out rooms, discriminating other occupations like the job of Miss Leeson as a typewriter. "[Her] manner of receiving the admission was such that you could never afterward entertain the same feeling toward your parents, who had neglected to train you up in one of the professions that fitted Mrs. Parker's parlours" (p. 15). Therefore, her role as the owner of the boarding house and her attitude towards people coincide with her physical features like "demon's smile" (p. 17), "the incredulous, pitying, sneering, icy state" (p. 16). Thus one might think that Mrs. Parker's attitude in choosing a tenant contributes to the internal conflicts between sadness and hope for Mrs. Leeson as she struggles the hardships of finding an affordable place to live and social acceptance.

Miss Longnecker, Miss Dorn, Mr. Hoover, Mr. Evans, and Mr. Skidder are the tenants of the rooms in Mrs. Parker's boarding house in terms of their thematic roles. The attitude of some of these characters, especially Miss Longnecker's defining characteristic, may have parallels with her condescending attitude towards Miss Leeson. She sarcastically comments that "I didn't know you were an astronomer, Miss Leeson" (p. 18) on the name Miss Leeson gave to the star. As a teacher in public school, stating that "the star you refer to is Gamma, of the constellation Cassiopeia" (p. 18) perhaps is an attempt to assert her superiority with her knowledge over Miss Leeson. Miss Dorn is a department store worker "who shot[s] at the moving ducks at Coney every Sunday" (p. 17). She also comments as "I wonder whether it's a shooting star" (p. 19) even after being informed by Miss Longnecker about the star. This narrative person might be thought to have a different social status compared to Miss Longnecker. The other narrative persons, Mr. Hoover, Mr. Evans, and Mr. Skidder, are also male characters who have rooms in Mrs. Parker's boarding house. Apart from Mr. Hoover and Mr. Evans, Mr. Skidder is a playwright. In reaction to Miss Longnecker's condescending demeanor towards Miss Leeson about naming the star, these male characters somehow defend Miss Leeson. Mr. Evans, "I think Billy Jackson is a much better name for it" (p. 18) and "'same here,' said Mr. Hoover, loudly breathing defiance to Miss Longnecker" (p. 18).

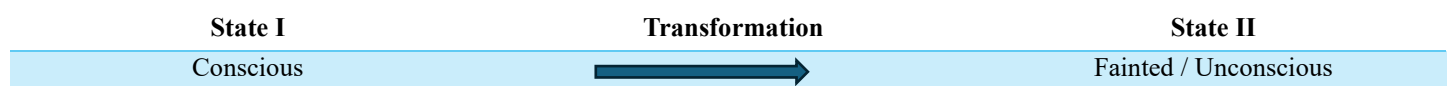
Another narrative person is Clara, who is described based on her complexion as colored (pp. 16-20). She works as a maid in Mrs. Parker's boarding house and "Clara, the coloured maid, would escort you up the carpeted ladder that served for the



fourth flight, and show you the Skylight Room” (p. 16). Clara is the narrative person who “found the door locked at ten the next day...” (p. 20) and she might be considered the one of the ones who saved Miss Leeson. In addition, the fact that Clara is described as colored and has the role of a maid in the boarding house, may be a reference to racial and social status in a cultural context. The ambulance doctor Dr. William Jackson is another narrative person who appears at the end of the narrative. As a *confident* and *active* doctor, he is the one who hospitalizes Miss Leeson and “says the patient will recover” (p. 21). Considering the narrative persons mentioned so far, it is not observed that any character, except Miss Leeson, undergoes any noticeable change at the descriptive level.

Miss Leeson is actually the main narrative person because she is the only one who undergoes a situational change in the narrative. She has to rent the cheapest room, which is the skylight room, in Mrs. Parker’s boarding house because she is “just a poor working girl” (p. 17). Due to her financial difficulties and poverty, where she cannot even afford food other than rent, she wanders from office to office every day, looking for a job. “Everyday Miss Leeson went out to work. At night she brought home papers with handwriting on them and made copies with her typewriter ... [She] was not intended for a skylight room when the plans were drawn for her creation” (p. 17). The impoverished circumstances she is in are the source of sadness and unhappiness for her because she has to find a roof over her head and feed herself in order to survive. But on the other hand, the presence of a star that only she can see, whom she calls “Billy Jackson” (p. 18), through the skylight of this cheap skylight room she rents, is like a ray of hope for Miss Leeson. “At night [her] room is like the shaft of a coalmine, and it makes Billy Jackson look like the big diamond pin...” (p. 19). Despite her adversity, poverty, and the conditions of the room she is staying in, she still has hope to cling onto. One could argue that her life continues along a path oscillating between sadness and hope.

But “an evening” (p. 19) of a day when Miss Leeson could not buy food due to not finding any typing job and not earning money, “step by step she went up, dragging herself by the railing” (p. 19). Almost exhausted from hunger, “she [falls] upon the iron cot...” (p. 19), but she still smiles because “Billy Jackson [is] shining down on her, calm and bright and constant through the skylight” (p. 19). Unable to bear it any longer, she says “Good-bye, Billy Jackson” and passes out.



**Table 3:** Miss Leeson’s change in her vital / health situation

In response to the guiding question 2, as depicted in Table 3, Miss Leeson undergoes a transformation as a result of the conditions she is in. Unable to find job, she struggles to cover her expenses and even starves herself to death that leads to the change in her vital state. No other person in the narrative is seen to bear the difficulty that Miss Leeson is experiencing, therefore the only change is in Miss Leeson’s situation, making her the main and most significant narrative person. No matter how weak and faint she falls, she actually clings to the light of the star she sees through the skylight of her room, that is, to hope. At the end of the narrative, even though Miss Leeson faints almost to death undergoing a transformation, “Dr. William Jackson, the ambulance physician who attended the case, says the patient will recover” (p. 21). It is possible to say that this is a sign of hope for Miss Leeson.

The determination of the change (transformation) shown above, the characteristics and thematic roles of the narrative persons, spaces, and temporal expressions are the concrete data obtained at this stage of the analysis. These data and semiotic analysis tools will be guiding, accessible, and applicable elements in moving deeper into the meaning universe of the narrative. On the basis of the thematic roles of the narrative persons, the transformation in Miss Leeson’s situation is inevitable as she grapples with the challenge of securing employment in the societal context of being a young poor working woman.

In this part of the analysis, within the scope of guiding questions, descriptive plane analysis was conducted in terms of person, time, and space elements. Benefiting from literary semiotic analysis, the method practiced here can be transferred to classroom applications and guide practitioners in terms of text analysis throughout their courses. One of the most prominent ways to transfer the method applied here to classroom practices and to analyze text is to use literary texts in foreign language teaching. Including the short story as a literary work in the language learning process has a positive effect on the development of the four language skills of the learners (Turan & Çolak, 2018). At this point, the inclusion of descriptive analysis, which focuses on the elements of person, time and place in literary texts, in English language teaching can benefit students' development of the four language skills. For instance, in terms of the reading skill, it fosters a deeper comprehension of texts and expands vocabulary and language structures. In terms of the other language skill, writing, this analysis encourages students to incorporate detailed and creative descriptions in their own writing, boosting their expressive capabilities and creativity. Furthermore, by having them listen to these texts aloud in the classroom using appropriate teaching methods and techniques, their listening skills improve as they become better at understanding and focusing on

detailed descriptions. Finally, for the speaking skill, the analysis enriches speaking skills by enabling students to use descriptive language more effectively, and also it boosts their confidence.

Also, Başar and Küçükali (2021) claim that using literary texts in English as a foreign language courses helps student comprehend different cultures and native language-like contexts, and examining and analyzing literary texts will improve their critical thinking skills (p. 172). Integrating literary semiotic analysis into language teaching contributes to vocabulary teaching as well as gaining literary awareness. Similarly, teaching other languages through literary texts is considered one of the most effective approaches (Soyer, 2016, p. 306). Using such approaches and examining sign system of a text is crucial to understanding the nuances of the text, and it makes perfect sense to use semiotics for this type of analysis. If the signs in “The Skylight Room” are integrated into language teaching, it will not only broaden students’ perspectives on literature, but also allow them to learn the target language with a different learning experience. In this way, it allows comprehensive research of the complex set of signs present in the text. This implication aligns with Kalelioğlu and Yurtseven (2023) who state that, “a semiotic analysis of a literary text in language classrooms will allow applicants to overcome difficulties in understanding the text deeply as they need to follow from seen to unseen structures” (p. 2). For all these reasons, it is obvious that integrating semiotics into the language teaching process has many benefits.

#### 4.2. Narrative level analysis

In a narrative, the transition from one state to another due to the interaction between the subject of the narrative and its object, are the transformations and changes that constitute narrativity. The transformation or opposition between the beginning and the end of “The Skylight Room” is manifested in the transformation of Miss Leeson in the context of actants. So, Miss Leeson’s situation to achieve a better life, which she lacks due to her poor living conditions, poverty, and inability to find a job, and the situation she goes through in order to reach that life, constitute the narrative program of “The Skylight Room”.

Based on the situational transformation in Table 3, the narrative progresses dynamically as a result of the actions of the actants and their interactions with each other. Accordingly, the narrative of “The Skylight Room” should be divided into stages in determining the narrative program to trace the initial, development, and final stages of the narrative.

At this point, the following guiding questions can be asked in order to disclose and analyze the transformations in terms of cause-effect relationship in relation to the events in the narrative:

- 1) Are there distinct stages or phases that can be identified in the progression of events considering the main narrative person(s)? If so, how can these stages or phases be identified or determined?
- 2) How do the actions of the actants within the narrative program lead to changes /transformations in the overall situation or circumstances of the story?

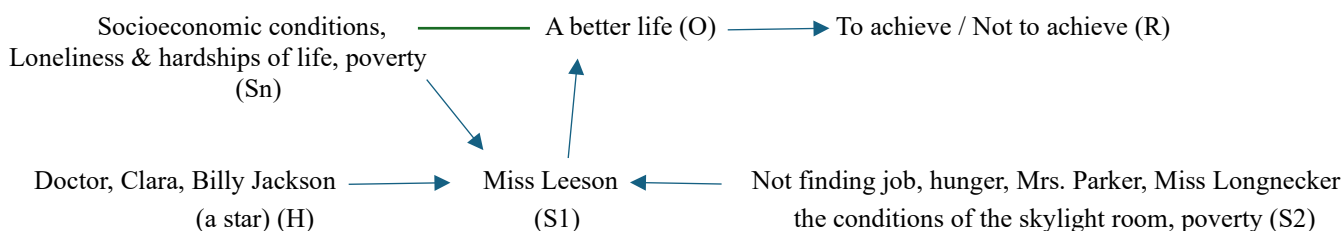
Taking into consideration the guiding questions 1 and 2, as a response, an example of a segmentation can be as follows:

Initial	Development	Final
Miss Leeson looks for a room for herself and comes to Mrs. Parker's boarding house.	She wants to rent a nice and affordable room to stay in, but he can't afford it. She has to rent The Skylight Room because of the price, searches all day long for a typing job but cannot find one.	She does not eat anything because she has been looking for work all day and returns to his room hungry. At the end she faints from hunger. She is hospitalized and told that she will recover.

**Table 4:** Stages of the narrative of “The Skylight Room” depending on Miss Leeson’s transformation

The segmentation shown in Table 4 is based on the main narrative person Miss Leeson because she is the one experiencing a transformation in the narrative. This transformation serves as marker of the narrative stages above.

Drawing from Table 4 and in response to the guiding questions 1 and 2, an actantial schema for the main narrative figure, Miss Leeson can be constructed as follows which the relationships among the subject, object, and other narrative actants are examined:



**Figure 3:** Actantial schema of “The Skylight Room”

Figure 3 reflects the agreement between the Sender (Sn) and the Subject (S1), which basically refers to the Object (O), namely “a better life” for Miss Leeson. Thus, as illustrated in the figure above, the relationship between the subject and the object hinges on the agreement established between the sender and the subject. As difficult as her circumstances are, Miss Leeson always has hope for a better life, so every day she searches tirelessly for a typing job. Miss Leeson abides by her agreement with the sender and continues to hope and work hard for a better life. Hence, a purposeful connection is established between Miss Leeson (S1), the subject of doing, and socioeconomic conditions, loneliness, difficulties of life, and poverty (poverty can be both sender and opponent) (Sn) as the sender.

The narrative revolves around Miss Leeson, whose aspirations are thwarted by her impoverished circumstances and her obstacles to reach a better life. Again, Figure 3 shows Miss Leeson’s (S1) helpers (H) and opponents (S2) in reaching the value object. Mrs. Parker is one of the opponents (S2) because she has a rigid view of room rental and her money-driven approach seems to heighten (exacerbate) Miss Leeson’s difficult circumstances. “Mrs. Parker gave her [Miss Leeson] the incredulous, pitying, sneering, icy stare that she kept for those who failed to qualify as doctors or dentists, and led the way to the second floor back” (p. 16). Mrs. Parker displays a disrespectful attitude towards Miss Leeson because she is “just a poor little working girl” (p. 17) and does not have a respectable profession. So, Mrs. Parker doesn’t want to show Miss Leeson all the rooms in the apartment because she thinks Miss Leeson cannot afford the fee. Despite Mrs. Parker’s attitude toward her, “I’ll take it!” sighed Miss Leeson, sinking down upon the squeaky iron bed” (p. 17). Miss Longnecker, one of the other boarders, is another opponent (S2) in her indifference towards Miss Leeson. She says “Well, really!” said Miss Longnecker. “The star you refer to is Gamma, of the constellation Cassiopeia...” (p. 18) about naming a star viewed through Miss Leeson’s room’s window. Miss Longnecker’s hostile and arrogant attitude, and possibly based on her own ambitions, create an atmosphere of tension and competition for Miss Leeson (S1) rather than support and friendship in terms of the hardships of life. Although these attitudes and behaviors seem to prevent Miss Leeson from having hope and a positive outlook on life, she seems to have overcome this obstacle by saying “I think Billy Jackson is a much better name for it” (p. 18). Factors such as *not finding job, hunger, poverty, and the conditions of the skylight room* (S2) are significant and powerful impediments to Miss Leeson’s hope for a better life. The fact that the skylight room is cramped, has a stifling and “suffocating” (p. 16) atmosphere, and is isolated from the other rooms in the boarding house, represents her isolation in a way. As this leads to a physical loneliness and misery, it further increases the sadness of Miss Leeson’s situation in order to achieve a better life. This room represents the last resort for someone who has nowhere else to go, and this desperation emphasizes the general feeling of sadness for her. Miss Leeson, who has to go to work, types copies at home, and earn a living [everyday ... [and] ... [a]t night...]” (p. 17) without losing hope for a better life due to the difficulties of life, the socio-economic conditions she is in, and the impulse of being alone, cannot find a typing job and gets “cold refusals” (p. 19) from the offices she asked for. The day Miss Leeson looks for a job but cannot find one, she is unable to cover her expenses and even reaches a point where she can neither pay her rent nor buy food to feed herself. In this severe situation, Miss Leeson’s body succumbs to these obstacles, so “[s]he f[alls] upon the iron cot ... [h]er arm f[alls] back limply” (p. 19) and faints because of hunger because “...[s]he had had no dinner” (p. 19).

For Miss Leeson, this may seem like the end of hope or a situation in which hope is replaced by sadness or anguish. However, there are those who are the opponents to Miss Leeson in continuing to hope for a better life, as well as there are those who help her maintain hope in achieving an improved life. Although the poor condition of this room, which “is like the shaft of a coal-mine” (p. 19), and its lack of comfort underline the cruelty of life, the skylight room may represent the feeling of hope, as it has a window that offers a view and a glimpse of the sky, and the view of a star, namely Billy Jackson. Before fainting, Miss Leeson nevertheless “slowly lift[s] her heavy eyelids, and smile[s]” (p. 19) because “...Billy Jackson [is] shining down on her, calm and bright and constant through the skylight” (p. 19). Billy Jackson is one of the helpers (H) of Miss Leeson giving her hope even in a room like “... a pit of blackness” (p. 19). This star represents Miss Leeson’s dreams and aspirations, her longing for something beyond her current reality, because it appears to her brightly every day, like a helping hand reaching out from the window of a room in poor conditions. Clara, the black maid of Mrs. Parker, is one of the other helpers (H) of Miss Leeson because she is the one who finds her fainted and unconscious in the skylight room “...at ten the next day” (p. 20). Clara’s timely arrival to the skylight room may have played a major role in Miss Leeson’s survival and still hoping to achieve her aspiration. The doctor (H), “...the young medico...” (p. 20), who rushes Miss Leeson, who is unconscious and almost dead, to the hospital in time is another significant helper. “The ambulance physician str[ides] with his burden through the pack of hounds that follow the curiosity chase...” (p. 20) and carries Miss Leeson’s fainted body to the ambulance. Miss Leeson is not defeated to the “...debility induced by starvation” (p. 21) thanks to the ambulance doctor and “Dr. William Jackson, the ambulance physician who attended the case, says the patient will recover” (p. 21). Miss Leeson will be able to continue to live and hope for a better life despite the hardships she undergoes.

In fact, the transformation in Miss Leeson’s situation into unconsciousness reflects a negative connotation, giving the impression that the narrative program (S1 V O  $\wedge$  S2) will probably end negatively. The way the narrative program is concluded depends on the relationship between the subject and the object, and this representation [(S1 V O)  $\rightarrow$  (S1  $\wedge$  O)]

shows that “the Subject, which is separate from the Object at the beginning, eventually meets the Object” (Rifat, 2011, p. 95). However, the fact that Miss Leeson’s condition does not result in death and the doctor states that the patient will recover causes the narrative program to end positively ( $S1 \wedge O \vee S2$ ) because Miss Leeson still has the chance to reach the value object. Therefore, the indication between the positive outcome of the narrative program is as follows:

$(S1 \vee O \wedge S2)$  (probable)  $\longrightarrow$   $(S1 \wedge O \vee S2)$  (actual)

The data obtained in the analysis of this semantic layer is the interpretation and expansion of tables 2 and 3, which were formed at the descriptive level. On this wise, a relationship is established between different meaning layers. The reason for the transformation displayed in Table 4 is detailed, and the interactions of the actants with each other are interpreted in the actantial schema in Figure 3. Accordingly, the signification process is based on the actans, their roles, their actions and interactions with each other, and the cause-effect relationship between different meaning layers. Based on Table 3, which reflects the situational transformation, the actantial schema in Figure 3 providing an understanding of the cause-effect relationship, is related to Miss Leeson’s situational transformation. Although the opponents (S2) in Figure 3 are among the factors that lead to Miss Leeson’s (S1) situational transformation, the helpers (H) in the same schema are also the elements that play a major role in her continuing to hope in achieving a better life. Based on this analysis at the narrative level, it would not be wrong to say that each action causes a transformation and its result leads to a narrative program that includes a cause-effect relationship. As a result, this meaning layer can be taken into consideration as a semiotic-narrative plane based on the active actions of the actants, how they influence each other, and the interpretation of the experienced transformations.

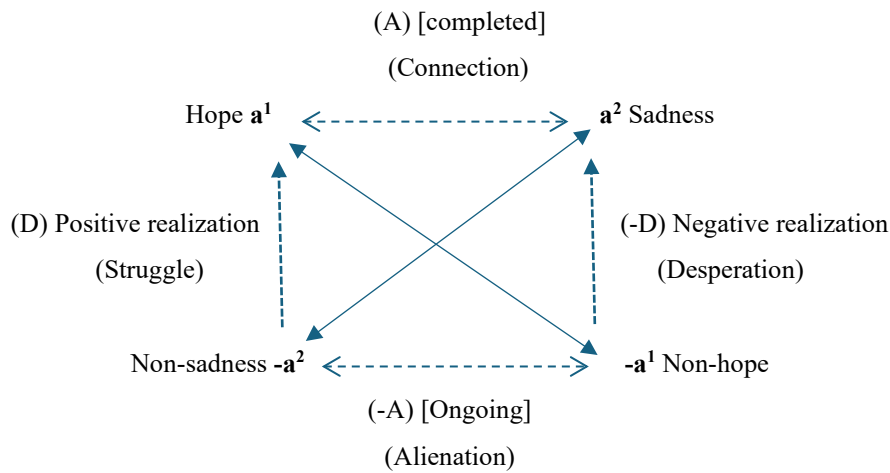
This narrative level analysis of “The Skylight Room” serves as an invaluable tool for delving into the underlying meanings of this short story. According to Kumral (2021), the way to delve this underlying meaning behind the words “only be reached by moving from the sense to the value, the theme of the work at hand” (p. 521). By examining the events and character interactions within the story, narrative-level analysis provides a nuanced understanding of how these elements contribute to the story and the transition from meaning to value. The reader analyzes the narrative text as a whole by examining the sequence of events, which progress logically and coherently from the beginning to the end of the plot (Aydn, 2023). This narrative analysis employs semiotic and actantial schemas to illustrate the cause-effect relationships and transformations within the story, emphasizing the dynamics between characters and their impact on Miss Leeson’s narrative program. The integration of narrative analysis into foreign language learning and teaching process enhances students’ ability to engage deeply with texts and develop comprehension. By developing their analytical skills, learners go beyond basic comprehension to interpret themes, characters, cause and effect relationships, and cultural contexts. This approach not only strengthens language proficiency, but also develops critical thinking and intercultural competence. It encourages learners to explore different perspectives and understand how language reflects cultural values, leading to a deeper appreciation of literature and improving overall language skills.

#### 4.3. Thematic level analysis

The basic structure (the thematic level), which is the first stage in Greimas’s generative process but the final stage in Denis Bertrand’s proposal for analysis, is the abstract meaning layer of the three meaning planes of the narrative of “The Skylight Room”. “If surface structure (discursive [descriptive] structure and narrative-semiotic structure) is thought to correspond to the signifier, the deep structure [thematic level] corresponds to the signified” (Akata, 2022, p. 107). In other words, the deep structure can be considered the signified of the narrative, and the detected and obtained data obtained in the descriptive and the narrative meaning layers are discussed here. And since the basic structure is defined through oppositions that play a role in the formation of meaning, the connections between these oppositions are concretized on the semiotic square. Thus, in analyzing “The Skylight Room”, it is consistent to utilize the semiotic square and apply the theory of opposition to uncover the abstract logic and implicit meaning within this deep structure.

In order to concretize and define these oppositions and the relationship between them to showcase the meaning constructed in the deep layer, the guiding questions below previously established (within the analysis process section), will be effective:

- 1) Considering descriptive and narrative semantic layers, how can the opposing poles be represented within the framework of the semiotic square of the narrative? How do these opposing elements interact and contribute to the narrative’s depth and complexity?
- 2) What are the underlying motivations and intentions of the narrative persons when delving into the deep structure of the narrative? How are these invisible intentions in relation to the ideological and psychological underpinnings of the narrative based on the most abstract meaning layer (thematic level)?



**Figure 4:** A semiotic square for “The Skylight Room”

The semiotic square shown in Figure 4 is created to answer the questions 1 and 2 above and to display “abstract units that constitute the basic structure of any meaning universe and the relationship between them...” (Rifat, 2019, p. 79). The oppositions placed on the axes of the semiotic square were decided on the basis of Table 3 on the descriptive level and Figure 3 on the narrative level. Considering the factors such as the society, living conditions, and economic inequality in which Miss Leeson lives throughout the narrative, the semiotic square on the above is based on the opposition of hope and sadness in general. Although the opponents seem to be a source of sadness, distress, and negativity for Miss Leeson to achieve a better life, she also has helpers who enable her to maintain hope for the life she wants.

Miss Leeson has to work and earn money in order to sustain her life and even to have a better life in the difficult social, class, and economic conditions she is in. According to the data obtained from the examinations on the thematic and narrative planes, Miss Leeson, as a woman, struggles individually to find a typing job day and night and to complete the job she finds even in her room in the evening. Thus, the core of the narrative, in terms of basic, abstract, and logical relations, is based on Miss Leeson’s oscillation between hope and sadness as she strives to achieve a better life. The difficult living conditions, the attitudes of some people who demotivate her in the boarding house, her loneliness, her poverty, and the poor conditions of the stifling room she rents for a very low wage are the factors that lead her into desperation and sadness. On the other hand, her relentless pursuit of a job that promises better conditions and a more secure future, and the star shining through the skylight that does not stop her from hoping, encapsulate Miss Leeson’s struggle. And the basic syntax displayed in Figure 4 is based on the main narrative person Miss Leeson’s struggle in life. At this point, her process between hope and sadness can be inspected as follows by going through the relational values between the axes of the semiotic square on Figure 4:

- |                             |   |   |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| □ Opposite axes:            | Positive realization / Negative realization | (D) / (-D)                              |
| □ Opposite axes:            | Completed / Ongoing                         | (A) / (-A)                              |
| □ Contrariety relation:     | Hope / Sadness                              | (a <sup>1</sup> ) / (a <sup>2</sup> )   |
| □ Sub-contrariety relation: | Non-hope / Non-sadness                      | (-a <sup>1</sup> ) / (-a <sup>2</sup> ) |
| □ Contradiction relation:   | Hope / Non-hope                             | (a <sup>1</sup> ) / (-a <sup>1</sup> )  |
| □ Contradiction relation:   | Sadness / Non-sadness                       | (a <sup>2</sup> ) / (-a <sup>2</sup> )  |
| □ Implicative relation:     | Hope / Non-sadness                          | (a <sup>1</sup> ) / (-a <sup>2</sup> )  |
| □ Suppositional relation:   | Non-sadness / Hope                          | (-a <sup>2</sup> ) / (a <sup>1</sup> )  |
| □ Contradiction relation:   | Sadness / Non-hope                          | (a <sup>2</sup> ) / (-a <sup>1</sup> )  |
| □ Suppositional relation:   | Non-hope / Sadness                          | (-a <sup>1</sup> ) / (a <sup>2</sup> )  |

Regarding the relational values on above, according to Greimas’s deep structure analysis, the opposition relation between the axes (a<sup>1</sup>) and (a<sup>2</sup>) in Figure 4 is considered a suppositional relation. Meaning emerges where these opposing concepts presuppose each other; without this opposition, the sign remains meaningless. In other words, sadness cannot make sense without hope, and hope cannot make sense without sadness. The narrative program in Figure 3 can be said to have ended in success for Miss Leeson because she is not dead and is told by the doctor that she will recover. This means that she will keep hope in her to attain a better and improved life. Based on Figure 3, despite all the opponents (S2), her clinging onto life thanks to the helpers (H), moves Miss Leeson’s situation from (-D) axis to (D) axis on Figure 4. This positive realisation can be defined as -D → D = positive realisation. In addition, all transformations and actions occur along the axis of (-A), representing the ongoing process. Hence, this axis signifies the perpetual and unfinished dynamics. In this case, according to the outcome of the struggle in this axis, two endings can be predicted for Miss Leeson: either she will reach axis (a<sup>1</sup>) and maintain her hope for attaining a better life, or she will face sadness on axis (a<sup>2</sup>) and will not endure the severe conditions

in which she lives. While the axes  $a^1$  and  $a^2$  are in a relation of opposition in terms of relational values, in the process of realisation, a relation of sub-contrariety appears in the axes  $-a^1$  and  $-a^2$ .

According to Figure 4, there should be a semantic transition in the direction of  $a^2 \rightarrow -a^2 \rightarrow a^1$ , which is the representation of a transition that proceeds in a positive direction for Miss Leeson. From the positive axis to the negative axis, there is a transition from  $a^1 \rightarrow -a^1 \rightarrow a^2$  for the subject of doing, which is the opposite of this order. The transition from  $a^2$  to  $-a^2$  ( $a^2 \rightarrow -a^2$ ) signifies a growing chance for the main narrative person Miss Leeson, to maintain hope in accomplishing a better and improved life. Therefore, Miss Leeson must do her best not to succumb sadness on the axis of  $-a^2$  and still maintain hope on the axis of  $a^1$ . At this point, Miss Leeson faces many opponents that will lead her to sadness, but on the other hand, there are helpers supporting her in keeping her hope. In the context of her struggle, the situation continuing on the (-A) axis according to the semiotic square reaches the (A) axis and the narrative is accomplished. It appears that Miss Leeson's journey is transitioning from  $a^2$  to  $-a^2$ , and finally to  $a^1$  along the axes, namely  $a^2 \rightarrow -a^2 \rightarrow a^1$ .

At this stage, Clara, the Doctor and Billy Jackson are the helpers who enable Miss Leeson to continue to maintain hope, which is her coping mechanism in the moments of sadness. Hope provides Miss Leeson with the motivation to keep searching for a job despite numerous rejections to boost her living conditions and fuels her persistence and resilience. Hope and sadness together create a rich, complex narrative that underlines her struggle to achieve a better life as shown and interpreted depending on the thematic syntax in the Figure 4.

Incorporating this thematic analysis into language teaching can significantly improve students' comprehension and critical thinking skills. By engaging with the semiotic square and key oppositions within the narrative, learners develop a deeper understanding of narrative structure and character development. This analytical method encourages a nuanced understanding of literature by encouraging the identification and examination of abstract concepts and the relationships between them. Additionally, analyzing Ms. Leeson's socioeconomic struggles within the narrative can serve as a catalyst for broader discussions on social issues, thereby improving students' cultural awareness and empathy in classroom application. This pedagogical approach not only helps achieve linguistic competence, but also develops interpretive and analytical abilities that are vital for advanced language studies. Integrating these complex analytical frameworks into language teaching enables students to approach texts critically and develop complex analytical skills.

## 5. Conclusion

The narrative of "The Skylight Room" reflects how the complex realities of urban life in the early 20th century affect the individual's life, individual struggle, and resilience through the construction of hope and sadness opposition. The narrative focuses on the elements of person, space, and time at the descriptive level and how these elements affect the overall narrative, focusing on Miss Leeson's renting a room in a boarding house and the economic inequality, social hierarchy, harsh realities of living, and socioeconomic conditions she experiences. In fact, in the deep structure of the narrative, it can be said that the narrative emphasizes the point that no matter how difficult the conditions a person is in, one should not lose hope and that this hope can be a driving force for the better in life. Throughout the narrative, which is the object of analysis in this study, Miss Leeson barely has enough money to rent a room and she has to look for a job without eating anything all day. Despite all these difficulties, we can say that Miss Leeson's positive mental world is reflected by the fact that the star she names Billy Jackson through the skylight is a ray of hope for her.

In the present study, the narrative "The Skylight Room" is analyzed at the descriptive, narrative and thematic meaning layers with the method of literary semiotics. It is also shown how the process of meaning formation takes place by analyzing different meaning layers separately. At this point, the articulation of the constituent elements in each meaning layer and ultimately the construction of the meaning universe of the narrative requires a systematic study. Because this systematic semiotic analysis study to reveal the universe of meaning of the text, also provides practitioners with a systematic reading acquisition in classroom practices and language learning.

Since one of the characteristics of a text is that it is the product of a system of signs (Ince, 2002, pp. 70-71), the incorporation of semiotics into foreign language education using literary texts is of considerable importance as it develops an educational environment that emphasizes not only language acquisition but also the development of critical thinking and analytical skills. This approach encourages learners to delve deeper into texts, examining symbolic meanings and narrative structures, thus developing their capacity to interpret and analyze content beyond superficial comprehension, making hidden points more explicit and understandable. It is therefore reasonable to argue that the use of semiotics as a pedagogical tool in language teaching offers numerous advantages.

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