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A Multimodal Cognitive Stylistic Framework for Analyzing Narrative Techniques in George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*

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ABSTRACT: This article proposes an integrated multimodal cognitive stylistic framework for analysing narrative techniques in George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*. The proposed framework synthesizes narrative theory, cognitive stylistics, multimodal stylistics, and corpus-assisted linguistic analysis into a unified analytical model capable of examining both verbal and non-verbal semiotic resources. Drawing upon theories of mind style, mind-modelling, multimodal stylistics, and narrative techniques, the study demonstrates how multiple semiotic modes cooperate to construct fictional worlds and facilitate readers' mental representations. The framework further incorporates quantitative evidence generated through Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) to complement qualitative interpretation. The paper argues that narrative techniques cannot be adequately understood through linguistic analysis alone because cognitive interpretation emerges from the interaction between language, visual organisation, material presentation, and readers' inferential processes. The proposed model contributes to cognitive stylistics by offering a comprehensive analytical procedure suitable for contemporary multimodal literary texts and provides a transferable framework for future stylistic investigations of fantasy literature.

1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing convergence of linguistics, literary criticism, and cognitive science has transformed stylistics from a primarily descriptive discipline into an interdisciplinary field capable of explaining how readers construct meaning during literary interpretation. Rather than viewing literary language merely as an artistic arrangement of linguistic structures, contemporary stylistics seeks to explain how language activates cognitive processes that shape readers' perceptions of fictional worlds. Cognitive stylistics, in particular, investigates the relationship between textual features and the mental operations involved in reading, offering explanations for how readers infer intentions, construct characters, interpret events, and negotiate multiple perspectives.

At the same time, literary texts have become increasingly multimodal. Modern novels are no longer composed exclusively of continuous verbal narration; instead, they frequently incorporate maps, illustrations, typography, chapter layouts, symbols, spatial organisation, and other visual resources that contribute directly to meaning construction. Such multimodal elements are especially prominent in fantasy literature, where readers are required to navigate unfamiliar geographical settings, complex political systems, invented cultures, and extensive fictional histories. Consequently, narrative comprehension depends not only upon linguistic interpretation but also upon readers' integration of multiple semiotic resources into coherent mental representations.

George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* represents one of the most sophisticated examples of multimodal contemporary fantasy literature. The series combines multiple narrators, shifting focalisation, complex temporal structures, elaborate world-building, genealogical references, maps, heraldic symbols, and distinctive chapter organisation to create an immersive fictional universe. These features challenge conventional stylistic approaches because narrative meaning emerges through the interaction of verbal language with visual and material components of the text.

Although previous scholarship has extensively examined Martin's narrative strategies, characterization, political themes, morality, and world-building, comparatively little attention has been devoted to explaining how linguistic and non-linguistic modes cooperate during readers' cognitive processing. Existing studies frequently analyse either narrative techniques or multimodal resources independently, leaving the interaction between these dimensions insufficiently explored. Consequently, an integrated analytical model capable of accounting for both cognitive and multimodal aspects of narrative remains necessary.

The present article addresses this gap by proposing a multimodal cognitive stylistic framework that combines cognitive stylistics, multimodal stylistics, narratology, and corpus-assisted linguistic analysis into a unified methodological model. Rather than treating visual and verbal resources separately, the framework conceptualises narrative meaning as the product of coordinated semiotic interaction. Language, typography, layout, imagery, material design, narrative perspective, and readers' inferential mechanisms jointly participate in constructing fictional experience.

The proposed framework is designed not merely as an interpretative model for *A Song of Ice and Fire* but as a transferable analytical procedure applicable to contemporary multimodal fiction more broadly. By integrating qualitative stylistic analysis with quantitative linguistic evidence, the framework provides a comprehensive methodology capable of explaining how narrative techniques influence cognition, emotion, immersion, and literary interpretation.

The contribution of this article is therefore threefold. First, it advances cognitive stylistics by incorporating multimodal resources into cognitive models of literary interpretation. Second, it extends multimodal stylistics beyond descriptive analysis by explicitly connecting semiotic choices with readers' mental processing. Third, it introduces an integrated analytical framework that combines narrative theory, cognitive linguistics, multimodality, and corpus linguistics within a single methodological procedure. Collectively, these contributions offer a more comprehensive account of how contemporary fantasy narratives generate meaning through the interaction of language, visual communication, and cognition.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Cognitive Stylistics and Literary Interpretation

Cognitive stylistics has become one of the most influential approaches within contemporary literary linguistics because it explains not only *what* linguistic patterns occur in literary texts but also *how* readers mentally process them. Emerging from the convergence of stylistics, cognitive linguistics, psychology, and literary criticism, cognitive stylistics shifts the focus of textual analysis from purely descriptive accounts of language towards the cognitive mechanisms that underlie literary interpretation.

Unlike traditional stylistics, which primarily examines linguistic deviation, foregrounding, and stylistic choices, cognitive stylistics argues that meaning is jointly constructed by textual structures and readers' cognitive activities. Literary interpretation therefore becomes an interactive process in which readers continuously activate background knowledge, build mental representations, revise expectations, and construct coherent fictional worlds.

Within this perspective, reading is regarded as a dynamic cognitive activity rather than passive reception. Readers constantly update mental representations of characters, settings, temporal relations, and narrative events through inference, prediction, and conceptual integration. Consequently, stylistic choices function not merely as aesthetic devices but as cognitive cues guiding interpretation.

Recent developments have expanded cognitive stylistics beyond linguistic analysis to include emotion, embodiment, empathy, reader immersion, and conceptual simulation. These developments have significantly enriched literary studies by explaining why particular stylistic techniques produce distinctive cognitive and emotional responses.

2.2 Multimodality and Literary Narrative

While cognitive stylistics explains readers' mental processing, multimodality explains how different semiotic resources collaborate in meaning construction. Contemporary literary texts increasingly employ multiple communicative modes beyond

written language, including typography, spatial organization, illustrations, colour, maps, diagrams, chapter design, and material presentation.

Multimodal stylistics argues that these resources should not be treated as decorative additions to language. Instead, each semiotic mode contributes specific communicative functions that interact with verbal narration to produce unified meaning.

Fantasy literature provides an ideal environment for multimodal analysis because fictional worlds frequently require visual orientation before readers can successfully process narrative information. Maps, genealogies, heraldic symbols, chapter headings, and spatial layouts frequently function as cognitive scaffolding that reduces processing difficulty while simultaneously increasing narrative immersion.

Consequently, literary meaning emerges from coordinated interactions among linguistic, visual, material, and spatial resources rather than from language alone.

2.3 Narrative Techniques as Cognitive Strategies

Narrative techniques have traditionally been examined from structural and narratological perspectives. Concepts such as focalisation, point of view, temporal manipulation, characterization, dialogue, flashback, foreshadowing, suspense, and narrative pace have been extensively described within narratology.

However, recent scholarship increasingly views these techniques as cognitive strategies that regulate readers' attention, memory, expectation, and emotional engagement.

From a cognitive perspective, focalisation determines information accessibility, point of view shapes mental simulation, temporal shifts reorganise episodic memory, and suspense influences predictive processing. These techniques therefore operate simultaneously as literary devices and cognitive mechanisms.

Fantasy narratives intensify these cognitive demands because readers must construct unfamiliar worlds while continuously integrating new political systems, social relationships, geographical locations, magical rules, and historical information.

2.4 Mind Style and Mind-Modelling

Mind style represents one of the central concepts within cognitive stylistics. It refers to the distinctive conceptual worldview encoded through recurrent linguistic patterns that reveal how fictional characters or narrators perceive reality.

Rather than describing personality alone, mind style reflects systematic patterns of conceptualisation manifested through lexical choices, grammatical preferences, metaphorical structures, and discourse organisation.

Complementing mind style, mind-modelling explains how readers construct evolving mental representations of fictional characters throughout narrative progression. Readers continuously revise these models as additional textual evidence becomes available, allowing increasingly sophisticated interpretations of intentions, beliefs, motivations, and emotions.

Together, mind style and mind-modelling provide complementary explanations for literary cognition: the former describes textual representation, whereas the latter explains reader construction.

2.5 Corpus Linguistics and Quantitative Stylistics

Although literary interpretation remains predominantly qualitative, corpus linguistic methods increasingly provide valuable empirical support for stylistic analyses.

Tools such as Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) enable researchers to quantify lexical categories associated with cognition, emotion, social interaction, temporal orientation, and psychological processes.

Quantitative evidence cannot replace interpretative analysis; however, it strengthens analytical reliability by identifying systematic linguistic tendencies that may otherwise remain unnoticed.

The integration of corpus linguistics with cognitive stylistics therefore represents an important methodological development, allowing qualitative interpretations to be supported by measurable linguistic evidence.

3. RESEARCH GAP

Despite the rapid development of cognitive stylistics, multimodal stylistics, and narratology, existing research remains fragmented.

First, most cognitive stylistic studies concentrate primarily on verbal language while paying limited attention to visual, spatial, and material dimensions of literary texts.

Second, multimodal literary analyses frequently describe visual resources without explicitly explaining how they influence readers' cognitive processing.

Third, narratological investigations often classify narrative techniques structurally without integrating cognitive theories capable of explaining why these techniques affect interpretation.

Fourth, corpus-assisted literary studies typically quantify linguistic patterns without embedding quantitative findings within broader cognitive theories of reading.

Finally, scholarship on *A Song of Ice and Fire* has focused predominantly on political themes, ethics, characterization, adaptation studies, mythology, and world-building. Comparatively few studies have attempted to explain how Martin's linguistic choices, multimodal resources, narrative techniques, and readers' cognitive processes function together within an integrated analytical framework.

Accordingly, there remains no comprehensive model capable of simultaneously analysing:

- narrative techniques,
- multimodal resources,
- mind style,
- mind-modelling,
- readers' cognitive processing,
- and corpus-based linguistic evidence.

The present study addresses this methodological gap by proposing an integrated multimodal cognitive stylistic framework that unifies these analytical traditions within a single procedure.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The proposed framework synthesises four complementary theoretical traditions.

The first component derives from cognitive stylistics, which explains how readers mentally process literary discourse through inference, conceptualisation, simulation, and mental representation.

The second component is multimodal stylistics, providing analytical tools for examining interactions among linguistic, visual, material, and spatial semiotic resources.

The third component consists of contemporary narratology, supplying the analytical vocabulary required to describe narrative techniques including focalisation, narrative voice, temporal organisation, characterization, and narrative structure.

Finally, corpus-assisted stylistics contributes quantitative evidence through LIWC analysis, allowing qualitative interpretations to be empirically supported by measurable linguistic patterns.

Rather than functioning independently, these four perspectives operate as interconnected analytical layers. Narrative techniques organise discourse; multimodal resources enrich semiotic communication; cognitive stylistics explains reader interpretation; and corpus analysis validates observed linguistic tendencies. Their integration produces a comprehensive analytical framework capable of accounting for both textual organisation and cognitive meaning construction.

This integrated perspective represents the principal theoretical contribution of the present article. Instead of treating literary language, multimodal resources, and cognition as separate domains, it conceptualises them as mutually dependent components of narrative meaning-making.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design integrating qualitative stylistic analysis with quantitative corpus-assisted linguistic analysis. The rationale for employing a mixed-methods approach is that narrative techniques function simultaneously as qualitative literary phenomena and measurable linguistic patterns. While qualitative analysis enables an in-depth examination of stylistic and multimodal features, quantitative analysis provides empirical evidence supporting interpretative findings.

Rather than treating these approaches independently, the present framework integrates them into a single analytical procedure in which qualitative interpretation informs quantitative analysis and quantitative evidence subsequently reinforces qualitative observations. This reciprocal relationship increases analytical reliability while preserving the interpretative richness required for literary studies.

The methodological orientation is exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. It is exploratory because it introduces a new analytical framework, descriptive because it systematically identifies narrative techniques and multimodal resources, and explanatory because it accounts for the cognitive mechanisms through which these features influence literary interpretation.

5.2 Corpus and Data

The corpus consists of George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* series, including:

- *A Game of Thrones* (1996)
- *A Clash of Kings* (1998)
- *A Storm of Swords* (2000)
- *A Feast for Crows* (2005)
- *A Dance with Dragons* (2011)

The entire series was selected rather than isolated excerpts because narrative techniques evolve across successive novels. Character development, focalisation, world-building, and cognitive complexity progressively expand throughout the series. Consequently, analysing complete texts preserves narrative continuity and avoids fragmentation of stylistic patterns.

For the purposes of this article, illustrative examples are primarily drawn from *A Game of Thrones* because it establishes the principal narrative architecture that governs the subsequent novels.

5.3 The Proposed Multimodal Cognitive Stylistic Framework

The principal contribution of this study is the development of an integrated analytical framework that combines four complementary theoretical traditions into a unified model.

The framework consists of four interconnected analytical dimensions:

Dimension One: Narrative Techniques

This dimension identifies the structural organisation of the narrative, including:

- focalisation
- point of view
- narrative voice
- temporal organisation

- characterization
- dialogue
- flashback
- foreshadowing
- suspense
- narrative pace
- setting
- thematic organisation

These techniques establish the structural architecture through which narrative information is distributed.

Dimension Two: Multimodal Resources

The second dimension investigates the interaction between verbal and non-verbal semiotic resources, including:

- typography
- layout
- chapter organisation
- maps
- heraldic symbols
- illustrations
- spatial organisation
- material presentation
- visual sequencing

Rather than functioning as decorative elements, these resources actively contribute to readers' construction of fictional worlds.

Dimension Three: Cognitive Stylistics

The third dimension explains readers' mental processing through concepts including:

- schema activation
- mental spaces
- conceptual integration
- mind style
- mind-modelling
- inferencing
- conceptualisation
- cognitive simulation
- perspective-taking

These mechanisms explain how readers transform textual information into coherent mental representations.

Dimension Four: Quantitative Validation

The final dimension incorporates corpus-assisted linguistic evidence through LIWC.

The quantitative analysis examines linguistic categories associated with:

- cognitive processes
- affective processes
- social interaction
- perceptual language
- temporal orientation
- psychological processes

These measurements provide empirical support for qualitative interpretations without replacing literary analysis.

5.4 Integrated Analytical Procedure

The analytical process proceeds through six successive stages.

Stage 1

Identification of narrative techniques operating within the selected narrative episode.

Stage 2

Identification of multimodal resources accompanying verbal narration.

Stage 3

Interpretation of cognitive mechanisms activated by these textual features.

Stage 4

Construction of reader mind-models through interaction between textual cues and background knowledge.

Stage 5

Quantitative validation through LIWC analysis.

Stage 6

Integration of qualitative and quantitative findings into a unified cognitive explanation.

Unlike previous approaches, these stages are recursive rather than strictly linear. Findings from later stages frequently require refinement of earlier interpretations, producing an iterative analytical process.

6. THE ECLECTIC MODEL

The proposed model may be represented conceptually as follows:

Narrative Techniques



Multimodal Resources



Cognitive Processing



Mind Style & Mind-Modelling



Corpus Validation (LIWC)



Integrated Narrative Interpretation

Unlike earlier stylistic models, the present framework does not privilege language over other semiotic resources. Instead, verbal language, visual communication, material presentation, and cognitive processing are conceptualised as mutually dependent components within a unified meaning-making system.

7. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability is enhanced through the use of explicit analytical procedures, clearly defined theoretical constructs, and corpus-assisted linguistic measurements. The integration of qualitative interpretation with quantitative evidence reduces researcher subjectivity while preserving the flexibility required for literary analysis.

Validity is strengthened through methodological triangulation. Narrative theory explains structural organisation; multimodal stylistics accounts for semiotic interaction; cognitive stylistics explains reader interpretation; and corpus linguistics provides empirical confirmation of linguistic tendencies. Together, these complementary perspectives offer a comprehensive explanation of narrative meaning construction.

The framework is also transferable beyond *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Because it analyses relationships among narrative techniques, multimodal resources, cognition, and linguistic evidence, it can be adapted for the investigation of other fantasy narratives as well as multimodal literary texts in general.

8. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

8.1 Narrative Architecture and Cognitive Processing

George R. R. Martin's *A Game of Thrones* exemplifies a narrative architecture that departs from conventional fantasy fiction through its extensive use of multiple focalization, distributed characterization, and fragmented narrative progression. Instead of employing an omniscient narrator, Martin constructs the fictional world through successive point-of-view (POV) chapters, each of which grants readers access to the consciousness of a single character. This narrative strategy transforms reading into a process of continuous cognitive reconstruction. Readers do not receive an objective representation of events; rather, they assemble an evolving mental model by integrating the partial, and occasionally conflicting, perspectives of different narrators.

From the perspective of cognitive stylistics, each POV chapter functions as a distinct conceptual frame that activates a unique interpretative schema. Readers are required to update these schemas continually as they move between characters such as Eddard Stark, Catelyn Stark, Tyrion Lannister, Daenerys Targaryen, Arya Stark, Bran Stark, Jon Snow, and Sansa Stark. These transitions involve repeated processes of inference, expectation revision, and mental simulation. Consequently, the narrative does not merely present information; it actively engages readers in constructing coherence across dispersed narrative segments.

This dynamic interaction illustrates the explanatory value of the proposed framework. Narrative techniques provide the structural organization of the text, while cognitive processes account for how readers transform fragmented information into a coherent fictional world. Meaning therefore emerges from the interaction between textual organization and readers' inferential activity.

8.2 Mind Style and Character Construction

One of the most significant findings concerns the interaction between linguistic choices and mind style. Martin differentiates major characters not only through dialogue or external description but also through systematic differences in lexical selection, syntactic organization, metaphorical patterns, and evaluative language. These recurrent stylistic preferences create distinctive conceptual worlds that guide readers' interpretations of individual characters.

For example, Eddard Stark's narrative discourse is characterized by lexical fields associated with honour, duty, justice, family, and responsibility. These linguistic patterns construct a conceptual worldview in which moral obligation consistently overrides political expediency. Readers consequently develop a stable mind model that interprets Ned's decisions as internally coherent, even when they produce strategically disadvantageous outcomes.

By contrast, Tyrion Lannister's chapters exhibit frequent irony, metalinguistic reflection, evaluative humour, and analytical reasoning. His discourse foregrounds observation and interpretation rather than direct action, encouraging readers to conceptualize him as intellectually adaptive and psychologically resilient. Daenerys Targaryen's narrative, in turn, gradually shifts from uncertainty and dependency toward confidence, leadership, and strategic thinking. These changes are reflected in evolving lexical choices, modality, and patterns of agency, demonstrating that mind style is not static but develops in parallel with character growth.

The proposed framework therefore treats mind style as a dynamic cognitive phenomenon rather than a fixed stylistic feature. Readers continuously revise their mental representations of characters as new linguistic evidence becomes available, illustrating the reciprocal relationship between textual cues and cognitive processing.

8.3 Multimodal Resources and World Construction

Although the narrative is primarily verbal, its interpretation is substantially supported by multimodal resources. Maps, chapter organization, typography, heraldic symbols, and material design provide essential information that readers integrate with linguistic discourse to construct the fictional world.

The maps appearing before the narrative exemplify this interaction. Rather than functioning merely as illustrative paratexts, they establish spatial schemas that enable readers to organize geographical information, anticipate journeys, and understand political relationships among regions. Throughout the narrative, references to Winterfell, King's Landing, the Wall, the Riverlands, and Essos acquire cognitive significance because readers have already developed spatial mental representations based on these cartographic resources.

Similarly, the chapter structure reinforces cognitive organization. Every chapter is titled with the name of its focal character, immediately activating a corresponding conceptual frame before reading begins. This recurring pattern reduces processing complexity while strengthening readers' ability to maintain separate yet interconnected mental models for multiple protagonists.

These findings support the central assumption of multimodal stylistics: visual and material resources contribute directly to meaning construction. The proposed framework extends this insight by demonstrating that multimodal elements facilitate cognitive processing rather than merely complement verbal narration.

8.4 Narrative Time, Suspense, and Reader Inference

Temporal organization constitutes another important narrative strategy. Martin frequently delays critical information, interrupts narrative sequences, and alternates between simultaneous events occurring in different geographical locations. Such temporal fragmentation creates suspense while requiring readers to infer causal relationships across dispersed episodes.

From a cognitive perspective, suspense emerges because readers continually generate predictions concerning future developments. When these predictions are postponed or contradicted, readers revise their mental models, increasing engagement with the narrative. The repeated cycle of prediction, revision, and confirmation represents a central mechanism through which the text maintains attention across its extensive narrative structure.

Foreshadowing further strengthens this process. Symbolic dreams, prophetic statements, recurring metaphors, and indirect references encourage readers to establish long-term expectations that may only be fulfilled hundreds of pages later. Consequently, narrative comprehension depends upon the maintenance of complex memory structures capable of integrating temporally distant information.

8.5 Quantitative Evidence from LIWC

The qualitative observations were supported by corpus-assisted analysis using Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC). The quantitative analysis identified systematic variation across character narratives in categories associated with cognitive processes, affective language, social interaction, and perceptual expressions.

Narratives centered on politically active characters exhibited comparatively higher frequencies of cognitive-process vocabulary, reflecting strategic reasoning and decision-making. Chapters emphasizing interpersonal relationships showed increased use of affective and social categories, while scenes involving exploration or conflict contained elevated frequencies of perceptual and spatial expressions.

Importantly, the quantitative findings do not replace qualitative interpretation. Instead, they provide empirical confirmation that stylistic differences observed during close reading correspond to measurable linguistic tendencies across the corpus. This triangulation enhances the reliability of the analytical framework and demonstrates the value of integrating corpus linguistics with cognitive stylistics.

8.6 Integrating the Four Analytical Dimensions

The principal contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that narrative meaning emerges through the interaction of four analytical dimensions rather than through any single component in isolation.

Narrative techniques organize textual information; multimodal resources enrich the semiotic environment; cognitive mechanisms explain readers' construction of mental representations; and corpus-assisted analysis validates recurrent linguistic patterns. Together, these dimensions produce a comprehensive explanation of literary meaning-making that exceeds the explanatory capacity of traditional stylistic approaches.

Instead of analysing language, visual communication, cognition, or quantitative evidence independently, the proposed framework conceptualizes them as mutually reinforcing processes operating simultaneously throughout literary interpretation. This integrated perspective enables researchers to explain not only how narrative techniques are constructed but also why they successfully generate immersion, empathy, suspense, and coherent fictional worlds.

9. CONCLUSION

This study has proposed and demonstrated a **Multimodal Cognitive Stylistic Framework** for analyzing narrative techniques in George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*. By integrating cognitive stylistics, multimodal stylistics, narratology, and corpus-assisted linguistic analysis into a unified methodological model, the framework addresses an important gap in contemporary literary stylistics. Existing approaches have generally examined these perspectives separately; in contrast, the present framework conceptualizes narrative meaning as the product of interactions among verbal language, multimodal resources, readers' cognitive processes, and quantitative linguistic evidence.

The analysis of *A Game of Thrones* demonstrates that narrative techniques such as focalization, characterization, temporal organization, and perspective are not isolated stylistic devices but cognitive mechanisms that guide readers' interpretation. Readers actively construct and revise mental models through inferencing, schema activation, and conceptual integration, while

multimodal elements—including maps, chapter organization, and material design—provide additional semiotic cues that facilitate orientation within the fictional world. Quantitative evidence derived from corpus-assisted analysis further confirms that stylistic patterns identified through close reading correspond to measurable linguistic tendencies, strengthening the reliability of qualitative interpretation.

The principal contribution of this article is therefore methodological. Rather than introducing another descriptive taxonomy of narrative techniques, the study offers an integrated analytical procedure that can explain how narrative techniques operate across multiple semiotic modes and how these modes influence readers' cognitive engagement. This integration extends the explanatory scope of cognitive stylistics and demonstrates the value of combining qualitative literary analysis with quantitative linguistic evidence.

10. THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The study contributes to the literature in several significant ways.

First, it expands cognitive stylistics by explicitly incorporating multimodal resources into the analysis of literary cognition. Previous research has often focused on verbal language, whereas the present framework demonstrates that visual and material elements are integral to the construction of fictional meaning.

Second, the study develops a comprehensive analytical model that synthesizes four complementary traditions—narratology, multimodal stylistics, cognitive stylistics, and corpus linguistics—into a coherent methodological framework. This integration provides a more holistic account of narrative meaning-making than approaches that examine these dimensions independently.

Third, the article contributes to fantasy literature studies by showing how Martin's complex narrative architecture depends upon the interaction between linguistic choices, multimodal organization, and readers' evolving mental representations. This perspective offers a richer understanding of narrative complexity than analyses based solely on thematic or structural description.

Finally, the framework is designed to be transferable. Although demonstrated through *A Song of Ice and Fire*, it can be adapted to the analysis of other contemporary novels, multimodal literary texts, graphic narratives, and digital fiction.

11. LIMITATIONS

Despite its contributions, the present study has several limitations.

First, the empirical analysis presented in this article focuses primarily on *A Game of Thrones* as a representative text within the larger series. Although the framework was developed with reference to the complete *A Song of Ice and Fire* corpus, future applications should examine all novels in greater detail.

Second, the quantitative component relies on LIWC as the principal corpus-assisted analytical tool. Incorporating additional computational approaches, such as semantic network analysis, sentiment analysis, collocation analysis, or transformer-based language models, could provide complementary insights into narrative style.

Third, the study examines textual features and inferred cognitive processes rather than collecting empirical reader-response data. Experimental research involving eye-tracking, think-aloud protocols, or reader-response studies could further validate the proposed cognitive interpretations.

Finally, because the framework integrates multiple theoretical traditions, its application requires substantial methodological expertise. Future studies may refine individual analytical stages to facilitate broader adoption by literary researchers.

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