

Cognitive Discourse Analysis of Autistic Identity Construction in Martin's Rain Reign

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Abstract

Identity construction is a dynamic, socially mediated process by which individuals construct and express their sense of self through language, narrative, and interaction. Combining identity studies, especially those related to the autistic identity type, with cognitive analysis would highlight how language is used to construct, access, and modify mental representations of oneself and others. Through a qualitative descriptive analysis of language, including thirty-six extracts in Martin's novel 'Rain Reign', the current study explores how the autistic protagonist, Rose Howard, communicates and engages with others. The study follows Hart's (2015) four-dimensional cognitive discourse model, in which only two dimensions, identification and positioning, of the four dimensions are used to analyze the selected data. According to the findings, Rose's identity is constructed through a complex interplay between these two strategies. Additionally, a close examination of Rose's linguistic choices reveals how they reflect and shape her unique perspective, emotional growth, and social adaptability. As a result, a positive autistic identity is constructed that refutes the negative autistic traits hypothesized. The findings also suggest that cognitive discourse analysis is a comprehensive approach, offering a robust framework that combines analytical depth and social relevance for understanding identity in neurodiverse discourse.

Keywords:

Autism,
Identity Construction,
Cognitive Discourse Analysis,
Identification,
Positioning



About the Journal

Zanco Journal of Humanity Sciences (ZJHS) is an international, multi-disciplinary, peer-reviewed, double-blind and open-access journal that enhances research in all fields of basic and applied sciences through the publication of high-quality articles that describe significant and novel works; and advance knowledge in a diversity of scientific fields. <https://zancojournal.su.edu.krd/index.php/JAHS/about>

1. Research Problem

People express their sense of self through language in a complex, socially mediated process of identity construction. For individuals with autism spectrum disorder, this process becomes highly challenging as they have to navigate the conflict between identifying themselves and using preexisting, identifiable cultural characteristics (Bottema & Smith, 2013). In recent years, there has been a growing scholarly interest in how neurodiversity, which includes differences in how people's brains work, particularly autism, is portrayed in literature, especially in children's and young adult fiction. However, many representations emphasize deficiencies rather than cognitive differences, depending on stereotypical and clinical frameworks.

1.1 Research Questions

The study has been designed mainly to answer the following questions:

1. How does the autistic figure's linguistic and cognitive construction in *Rain Reign* challenge traditional portrayals of autism in literature?
2. How do the identification and positioning strategies construct the autistic protagonist's identity?

1.2 Research Aims

The present study examines:

- Ann Martin's novel, *Rain Reign*, features an autistic protagonist, Rose Howard.
- The portrayal of Rose by closely aligning with her language and cognitive structures.
- The interaction between language and cognition in the expression of autistic identity in literature, given the limited discourse-based research on the construction of autistic identity in literature, particularly from a cognitive perspective.
- How Rose's autistic identity is constructed and communicated through language and how cognitive structures, such as attention and perspective, play a significant role in this process.
- The dimensions of identification and positioning through the cognitive structure of attention and perspective in depicting the identity construction of the autistic protagonist.
- An autistic figure with Asperger's syndrome (now classified as ASD level one). It is chosen because people with Asperger's can speak fluently but often face challenges in social interactions, such as interpreting body language, humor, or sarcasm (Joon, 2021). They also tend to discuss their specific interests in great detail. Therefore, this helps the researchers to investigate the language of the autistic figure to serve the aim of the study.

1.3 Hypotheses

The study hypothesizes that:

1. The autistic protagonist constructs a negative autistic identity, in which she is stubborn, aggressive, and rude.
2. The protagonist is identified as an unsociable, inflexible, and rigid person, who is positioned as an object to be viewed.

1.4 Value of the Study

It is hoped that this study is to step forward to help teachers, parents, and caregivers understand autism and how to deal with autistic individuals.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Martin's '*Rain Reign*'

Ann Martin is an American children's fiction writer whose most famous novel is *Rain Reign*, which is based on her experience of Hurricane Irene in 2011. She has a dog, and after the Hurricane, she thinks about those pets who have become separated from their owners. From this, the story of *Rain Reign* begins which is about a young girl, Rose Howard, who has Asperger's syndrome. She navigates life's challenges with her unique perspective. She lives with her father and her dog. Her most beloved friend is her dog, Rain, and she finds comfort in patterns, rules, prime numbers, and especially homonyms. At school, she is the only student who has an aide and often needs to step into the hallway to regulate herself when she becomes overwhelmed, particularly when her excitement about homonyms disrupts the classroom environment. The story's central part is when a devastating hurricane happens, and she loses her dog during the storm. The narration is from a

first-person perspective, making Rose the narrator of the story. According to the structure of the novel, it is divided into five parts with forty-nine chapters, exploring themes of unconditional love, family dynamics, resilience, and the power of hope in the face of loss.

2.2 autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder that originates from the Greek word 'autos', meaning 'self'. In the past, it was associated with self-isolation and repetitive behaviors (Volkmar, 2014, cited in Joon, 2021). However, in today's world, it is recognized as a heterogeneous and multifactorial disorder, which is a combination of genetic, environmental, and neurological factors (Park HR, 2016, cited in Joon, 2021). One of the major challenges in researching and diagnosing ASD is the absence of a known single cause and the lack of medical tests, such as a blood test or other medical procedure, to identify it (Boucher, 2008). Consequently, behavioral observation becomes the subject of diagnosis, particularly in early childhood. The main diagnostic features are listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5) (2013, cited in Bhatti, 2024), which includes difficulties in social interaction, communication, a tendency toward social isolation, and restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, and activities, such as rigid routines, intense fixation, and sensory sensitivities. It is observed that these features often appear in the first two years of life, when parents notice their child's lack of communication compared to the other children of the same age (Hansen, 2015).

According to Hodges (2020), the concept of 'spectrum' is introduced when the DSM-5 updates the diagnostic criteria for autism from those in the previous DSM-IV. Therefore, the multi-categorical system of DSM-IV consists of:

- Autism disorder
- Asperger's disorder
- Pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified
- Childhood disintegrative disorder (CDD)

Except for Rhett syndrome, is replaced with a single diagnostic dimension: autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Additionally, Weitlauf et al. (2014) explain that DSM-5 introduces three severity levels to help categorize the level of support an individual with ASD may require, including:

- Level 1: Mild (requiring support),
- Level 2: Moderate (requiring substantial support), and
- Level 3: Severe (requiring very substantial support).

Clinicians utilize these severity levels not only to tailor interventions for individuals with ASD, but also to guide the parents and caregivers in understanding and managing their child's unique needs. This framework becomes particularly crucial because, as Hayes and Watson's study (2012) indicates, parents and caregivers of children with ASD experience significantly higher stress levels compared to those of neurotypical children or children with other disabilities (cited in Lai & Oei, 2014). The challenges clinicians observe, including diagnosis, social communication difficulties, behavioral differences, and sensory sensitivities, often translate directly into daily caregiving challenges. In addition to these challenges, the families and the caregivers also face social exclusion and stigma (DePape & Lindsay, 2015).

2.3 Identity Construction

Identity is defined as a dynamic, ongoing process that involves social categories such as gender, race, and nationality, as well as personal features like cultural heritage or beliefs that individuals see as unchangeable and socially meaningful. Social categories shape group perceptions, while personal identity relates to valued or innate qualities that influence societal position. One can say that these external labels and internal self-conceptions often intersect, making identity a dynamic interplay between internal meaning and societal classification (Fearon, 1999). According to Wenger (1999), we develop our sense of self through a dual perspective: how we view ourselves and how others perceive and define us. Additionally, theories of identity construction suggest that interactional, situational, socio-historical, and cultural settings all play a role in the production and modification of identity (Taylor, 2015). Furthermore, identity construction processes, both

conscious and unconscious, are driven by identity motives or needs, which push individuals toward certain identity states and away from others (Vignoles et al. 2006; Vignoles 2011, cited in Ashforth, 2016).

Bucholtz and Hall (2010) argue that personal self-conception is important, but it only becomes meaningful when it is communicated and negotiated through language and social interaction. Alshehri (2023) states that there is a strong, unbreakable link between identity and language; both influence each other, and this relationship affects everyone. Recently, researchers have shown that language is used to symbolize our various social identities. According to Cameron (2001), when people speak or write, they relate to others in specific ways, revealing something about themselves to them. Through language, they express their social roles, the social groups to which they belong, and often the contradictory beliefs they hold (Holmes, 1997). Moreover, it is believed that people use language's symbolic power to express their acceptance or rejection of prevailing norms and values as well as to construct a particular identity or identities in any given interaction, including casual conversations. (ibid). Thus, this understanding sees every interaction as a collaborative effort where identities are constantly negotiated, adapted, and rebuilt.

2.3.1 Autistic Identity

Within the field of autism research, identity has been examined through various theoretical perspectives, assessing overlapping traits. According to Davies et al. (2024), autistic identity has two main aspects: personal identity and social identity. Personal identity is a reflection of an individual's perception of themselves through their characteristic, values, and experiences, guiding their choices in education and social interactions. For many people with ASD, integrating autism into their personal identity demonstrates that autism is a fundamental part of who they are rather than a disease to be cured (ibid). They embrace their neurodivergent characteristics and develop strategies to navigate them, allowing for greater self-regulation and a stronger, more positive self-concept (Large & Serrano, 2018). On the other hand, Crompton et al. (2020) state that autistic people may also choose to identify with the autistic community, making autism a social identity; asserting that people define themselves through group membership, and associating with a positive group increases self-esteem and well-being. Individuals with an autistic social identity may feel a strong sense of solidarity with other autistic people and prioritize the positive aspects of group membership, including a sense of connectedness.

According to Albarello et al. (2018), personal and social identities are contextually dependent and reciprocal. For example, if an autistic person grows up in a negative social situation, they may struggle to embrace their autism as a fundamental element of their unique identity. Similarly, people for whom being autistic is not a central aspect of their identity may be less inclined to associate with other autistic people, thereby diminishing their autistic social identity. Despite this, there are different views on their diagnoses. Some view them as restrictive and unjust, while others find them empowering, as they help them understand themselves better. Many have mixed feelings: they may be proud of who they are, but still frustrated by stereotypes or judgment by others. Some do not feel strongly about either way; it is just a fact of life, not something they think about much. There is no 'right' way to feel; everyone's experience is unique (Davies et al., 2024). Moreover, autistic people develop a positive autistic identity when they get support from loved ones like family and friends, and feel accepted by society. Yet, many autistic individuals lack this crucial support that is essential to mental health (MacLeod, 2013).

2.4 Cognitive Discourse Analysis

Cognitive linguistics (CL) is the study of the relationship between language and mind, focusing on how mental processes are reflected in the language system (Tenbrink, 2020). Within CL, discourse refers to a structured knowledge at a specific or higher level than the sentence. It emerges from cognition and is expressed verbally or in writing through the application of cognitive linguistic conscious understanding. While cognition is the deliberate application of knowledge, discourse is the structure and administration of that knowledge. These two elements interact dynamically, with discourse developing as cognition deepens (Orouji, 2024). Discourse analysis (DA) builds on this basis, which is the study of language in use; it refers to a collection of standards, inclinations, and

expectations that link language to context. It can also be defined as the organization of language at the level above the sentence (Kamalu & Osisanwo, 2015).

Among the various approaches to DA, cognitive discourse analysis (CODA) specifically studies the relationship between discourse and cognition. The foundation of language use in CODA is thought, examining the language that speakers use to convey their thoughts. Regarding mental representation, CODA employs recognized cognitive strategies to conceptualize experienced situations and events. Furthermore, CODA is inspired by the structural idea that what we say is systematically dependent on what we think (Tenbrink, 2020). As a result, this refers to how individuals use language to express themselves and how the linguistic repertoire represents thought within a speech community. According to Tenbrink (2015), the CODA approach serves as a bridge between DA and CL. In dealing with DA, CODA applies well-established discourse analytic strategies to highlight issues that discourse analysts have not often addressed. However, in addressing CL, CODA uses knowledge from linguistic theory, particularly cognitive linguistics, as well as functional grammar and other relevant sources to determine the significance of specific linguistic choices within the larger network of possibilities.

Considering the scope of CODA, any meaningful linguistic expressions can be productively examined through the application of systematic linguistic procedures (Tenbrink, 2015). While humans' comprehension of language is often predicated on linguistic background knowledge, CODA treats language as a data resource for learning about cognition (ibid). For instance, when describing a visual scene, the speakers' language choices systematically mirror how they conceptualize it. Through CODA, the information structure can be analyzed, revealing which elements are new or assumed, and which are foregrounded or left implicit.

2.4.1 Model of Analysis and Scope of the Analysis

Christopher Hart is a scholar who studies the connection between discourse and cognition by bridging the field of (critical) discourse analysis and cognitive linguistics. He develops a four-dimensional framework that combines the cognitive systems of gestalt, comparison, attention, and perspective with the discursive techniques of configuration, framing, identification, and positioning (Hart, 2015). Although Hart's model (2015) combines cognitive linguistics and *critical* discourse analysis, the current study excludes its critical dimension, as the primary focus is on integrating DA and CL rather than on ideology and power. The aim is to examine how language reflects and shapes identity, particularly how individuals construct their identities through linguistic choices. This study only examines the two dimensions of identification and positioning through the cognitive lenses of attention and perspective. The combination of these two selected dimensions is shown in the following table:

Table 1:
The adapted model

System		Attention	Perspective
Strategy			
Identification	Construal operation	Profiling	
		Scanning	
Positioning			Viewing Arrangement
			Deixis

2.4.1.1 Identification

The identification strategies assess how language makes social actors salient within its conceptual framework. This involves examining the linguistic choices that make certain individuals or social

groups more or less salient in a conversation. In cognitive grammar, these choices are realised through a number of construal operations, including profiling and scanning, which are based on the attention system (Hart, 2015). Profiling is the process by which linguistic constructions highlight (foreground) certain aspects of a conceptual structure from a broader conceptual base (Langacker, 2008). According to Langacker, every expression highlights a specific part of a bigger idea; the highlighted part is called the profile. The larger part that it comes from is called the base. The base is needed to understand the profile fully (2008). For example,

(1) a. *Floyd broke the glass with a hammer.* b. *The hammer broke the glass.* c. *The glass broke.*

In (1a), the entirety of the action chain is in profile; the success of the action is attributed to the agent, Floyd. In (1b), the agent is left unprofiled, while the rest of the chain is in profile. The success of the action is inherent in the nature of the hammer. In (1c), the agent and the instrument are left unprofiled, while the patient is profiled alone. As Langacker (2008) puts it, “when one participant is left unspecified, the other becomes more salient just through the absence of competition. On the other hand, augmenting the salience of one participant diminishes that of others (in relative terms)”. Scanning, on the other hand, refers to human mental processing of events. According to cognitive grammar, humans conceptualize events by mentally scanning the series of relations that develop between participants at different (continuous) stages in the process that constitutes an event (Hart 2015). There are two modes of scanning: sequential scanning and summary scanning. Cognitive grammar posits that an event is *scanned sequentially* when the conceptualizer examines the different phases of the complex scene one by one. By contrast, *summary scanning* occurs when the various phases of a complex scene are presented as a single gestalt (Broccias et al., 2007). For instance,

(2) a. *The ball rolled down the hill.* b. *The roll of the ball was sudden.*

(2a) is a sequential scanning where we mentally scan the whole process of the ‘*rolling ball*’ as it is unfolding over time. However, in (2b), we see ‘*the roll of the ball*’ as an object or thing rather than a series of processes. And since things do not pertain to time, we do not scan it sequentially, but as a single concept, which is summary scanning (Biên, 2021). Thus, through the construal operation of profiling and scanning, the goal of identification strategies to make specific social actors more or less prominent in the conceptual framework has been achieved. Profiling controls identification by selecting which aspect is placed in the foreground of attention, while scanning controls identification by determining how an event is presented conceptually.

2.4.1.2 Positioning

Positioning strategies involve how individuals situate themselves and others within a context that requires place, time, and social relationships, utilizing their cognitive abilities to perceive things in a stimulated manner. This enables people to adopt various mental perspectives, facilitating their understanding of their position in relation to others and their actions. They are realised in two construal operations, including viewing arrangement and deixis, which are based on the perspective system. (Hart 2015).

The first aspect of perspective is viewing arrangement. Langacker (2008) describes viewing arrangement as the overall relationship between the “viewers” and the situation being “viewed.” The viewers are the speakers and the receivers who comprehend the meanings of linguistic expressions and conceptualize them. One of the basic components of a viewing arrangement is the vantage point, which describes the actual, physical, or conceptual location from which the viewer observes the situation (ibid). A number of vantage points can be used to observe and describe the same objective situation, leading to different construals that may have obvious consequences. Moreover, in language, lexical and grammatical items, such as deictic adverbs, demonstrative pronouns, and tense exponents, are used to indicate the viewer’s position in space and time relative to the situation being viewed (Wiraszka, 2021). For instance, in examples (3a) and (3b), the same scene is construed in two different vantage points, depending on the viewer’s position:

(3) a. *The tree is in front of the house.* b. *The tree is behind the house.*

However, the examples in (4a) and (4b) show the viewer’s position on the time axis concerning the situation that is referred to:

(4) a. *We have no choice now.* b. *We had no choice then.* (Wiraszka, 2021).

In cognitive grammar, **subjectivity** and **objectivity**, which are important parts of construal, are closely related to the vantage point. The viewing subject is said to be construed with maximal subjectivity, and the object with maximal objectivity. The subjective construal differs from the objective construal in the sense that the former reflects the viewer's role as an offstage observer, the one who perceives but is not perceived, while the latter applies to the focal point of attention, the onstage, which is being viewed rather than doing the viewing (Langacker, 2008).

The second aspect of perspective is **deixis**. It is examined as a construal operation that emphasizes the "situatedness" of discourse and the strategic "positioning" of actors and events within the communicative context relative to the speaker (Hart, 2011b). According to Croft and Cruse (2004), the speaker's identity, location, and the time of the speech events; for instance, words like 'here,' 'there,' 'now,' 'then,' 'us,' 'them,' 'this,' and 'those' are deictic, defining and shifting their meaning based on the speaker's perspective. Additionally, Chilton (2004) states that deixis is crucial for establishing the deictic centre, which serves as a reference point for spatial, temporal, and social positioning. Deictic expressions, such as personal pronouns and possessive words, can place the addressee in the same context as the speaker, indicating a sense of connection. At the same time, these expressions can refer to other people or groups that differ from the speaker, highlighting differences in social categories, physical distance, and values, and creating a sense of separation between in-groups and out-groups (cited in Hart 2011b). For example,

(5) *They are coming to our country.*

In this example, the speaker's perspective, which is the central reference point, creates an in-group and out-group identity. The speaker's use of "our" creates a sense of belonging and ownership, including the addressee in the same social group and as the speaker. However, the deictic "they" refers to the out-group, the one that does not share the same social group with the speaker and the addressee. Thus, the construal operations of viewing arrangement and deixis realize the positioning strategies' goal of situating oneself and others within spatial, temporal, and social context by encoding a specific perspective into language.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

By applying a cognitive discourse analysis approach, the current study employs a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the selected data, an American children's narrative featuring an autistic protagonist. It focuses on the meaning-making processes within it and examines how the autistic character's identity is constructed and portrayed. Specifically, the study investigates how this character interprets and responds to their experiences, relationships, and environments. This involves analyzing the character's thoughts, feelings, interactions with others, and the language used to describe them. Therefore, thirty-six extracts throughout the five parts of the novel are chosen that represent the figure's autistic identity. After reading the entire novel, the instances of identification (attention) and positioning (perspective) are noted and categorized by profiling/ scanning and viewing arrangement/ deixis, respectively. The extracts will be analyzed, and the results will be shown.

3.2 Data Collection

This study examines Ann Martin's American children's novel, *Rain Reign*, as its only data source. The data is selected due to its autistic protagonist, Rose Howard, who serves as a first-person narrator and provides an authentic portrayal of neurodivergent experiences. Rose has Asperger's syndrome and can speak fluently, allowing researchers to analyze her language and cognitive patterns to fulfill the current study's aim. The analysis uses a digital PDF version of the text, allowing close examination of how the narrative represents the construction of neurodivergent identity.

4. Data Analysis

Following Hart's adapted (2015) model, the study examines the dimensions of identification and positioning through the cognitive lenses of attention and perspective. After reading the novel, each dimension is examined individually, and extracts will be chosen that show the construction of the autistic figure's identity. The researchers analyze how the autistic figure has been identified and positioned within these dimensions.

4.1 Identification (Attention) in Martin's Novel

Identification (attention), in Martin's novel, signifies Rose Howard's highly selective and intense focus on specific details and patterns. It is an active direction of focus that brings her a sense of control, understanding, and security. Her attention operates through a profiling process, continuously foregrounding specific stimuli while backgrounding ambiguity and complexity, and scanning processes, which enable her to observe and categorize details or follow predetermined sequences. This section explores how Rose's attention to various aspects shapes her identity through profiling and scanning.

4.1.1 Profiling

Highlighting certain aspects of the conceptual system by word and grammatical construction is a reflection of foregrounding those aspects in one's cognition. Ann Martin illustrates how to recognize and identify an autistic individual by portraying the protagonist's extremely intricate, well-organized, and selective frameworks. The narrator and protagonist, Rose Howard, consistently highlights specific aspects of her experiences, such as a rule system, a rigid routine, linguistic patterns (especially homonyms), and quantifiable data, including numbers and distances.

In the first two parts of the novel, Rose's distinctive profiling is manifested through external structure such as homonyms, prime numbers, rules, and rigid routine. These are actively profiled in her mind, which organize her chaotic world into a manageable system and regulate her emotions.

Extract (1): *I'm going to tell you a story. It's a true story, which makes it a piece of non-fiction... My first name has a homonym, and I gave my dog a homonym name too. Her name is Rain, which is special because it has two homonyms – rein and reign. (chapter 1:10)*

Rose frequently uses active voice in her story to assert control and highlight her conscious agency, presenting herself as an agent who maintains complete control over her narrative and an identity characterized by her autism, but defined by her actions and reflections. This active sentence structure in extract (1) mirrors her active profiling of homonyms: as she notes, her name has a homonym, Rows, and she deliberately selects and applies this linguistic pattern to name her dog Rain precisely because it has two homonyms, namely homophones: rein and reign (words having the same pronunciation but different spellings and meanings). This reveals that her attention to linguistic patterns is profiled in her mind, showing how she structures her language to align with her cognitive preference. It is worth mentioning that Rose explicitly states that she has high-functioning autism, suggesting that she is aware of her autism and it is profiled in her cognitive framework.

Extract (2): *My official diagnosis is high-functioning autism, which some people call Asperger's syndrome (chapter 1:11).*

Moreover, for Rose, prime numbers (those numbers that can only be divided by one and themselves) constitute a source of absolute order and predictability that adheres to rigid, set norms. Her obsession with these numbers is a clear example of profiling, as her brain deliberately prioritizes these numbers and gives them a high level of salience within her attentional system through a methodical cognitive procedure.

Extract (3): *"That if you assign numbers to the letters in "Weldon" like 23 for W because it's the 23rd letter in the alphabet, and 5 for E, and 12 for L, and 4 for D, and 15 for O, and 14 for N – the numbers add up to 73. Guess what 73 is. Uncle Weldon: A prime number? Rose Howard: Yes! (chapter 6:26).*

This context reveals how prime numbers are profiled as the most salient and interesting aspect of her daily life. When she encounters any word, she automatically converts linguistic elements into

numerical values, demonstrating the prioritization of these numbers in her brain. Furthermore, for Rose, rules are another distinctive feature of her language. They create a structured, predictable, and comfortable environment for her. Their violation triggers anxiety precisely due to their prominent profiling in her cognitive framework. This reflects that her mind actively organizes information. Extract (4) is evident for this.

Extract (4): *“I interrupt him right there. “Mrs Kushel!” I cry. “Mrs Kushel, Josh broke a rule. He wrote, ‘for my sister and I’ and that’s not right”(chapter 8:32).*

Similarly, her cognitive profiling extends to her daily routines, which provide predictability and control over her environment. For instance, when her father asks her to go to bed, she responds that her ‘*routine calls for walking Rain in 45 minutes*’ (extract 5). This specific timing highlights how deeply routine is foregrounded in her cognition.

Extract (5): *“Why don’t you go to bed now?” “Because it’s too early.” My routine calls for walking Rain in 45 minutes, then changing into my pyjamas, and after that going to bed”(chapter 14:48).* However, backgrounding emotional states or social subtleties is a distinctive feature of Rose’s language. She does not highlight them the way most neurotypical narrators do. For instance, when her father talks about the dangers of the storm and that it cannot miss them, she tells him about breaking the rules. The way of profiling rules over emotions reveals how she redirects her attention from the reality of danger to her preferred, predictable, and structured domain.

Extract (6): *“We’re right in the path,” I hear my father say. “It can’t miss us.” “Morgan broke a rule today,” I tell him, without turning around. “She didn’t raise her hand, and she interrupted Mrs Kushel”(chapter 17:55).*

It is worth mentioning that although these aspects (homonyms, rules, routines, etc.) are actively profiled in her cognition, in some situations, they are sometimes not profiled. This does not mean they are not important to her, but rather that there are more pressing things at that time. This is clearly illustrated in extract (7) when her typical cognitive profiling pattern is temporarily suspended.

Extract (7): *“Rose!” he calls. “Bring Rain. I don’t have to go into work today. Rain can spend the day with me.” This is not part of the routine. I stand on the porch for a moment and look at Rain/Reign/Rein. Come on!” my uncle calls. “Rain and I will have fun together. And she won’t be lonely.” “Okay.” I lock the door behind me since my father has already left for the garage, and I lead Rain to the truck... Even though this is not the routine, I’m glad Rain will have a nice time with Uncle Weldon (chapter 11:38).*

Rose acknowledges that ‘*This is not part of the routine*’, but she does not show resistance to this change. She briefly pauses and then profiles Rain’s emotional needs, not to be alone, over her routine structure. Repeating that it is not part of the routine and showing her happiness even though her routine is disrupted proves that she can adapt to some minor changes for the sake of important aspects.

As the novel progresses, Rose’s cognitive profiling begins to improve, particularly when Rain disappears. Her language begins to reveal the loss of control and emotional detachment.

Extract (8): *“Rain is lost outside and she isn’t wearing her collar. She has no identification” (chapter 20:61).*

The passive construction here expresses perplexity. Her attention is on the outcome (Rain is lost), but at that precise instant, her mind is not processing or addressing the entire causal chain. A clear logical flow of actions is subordinated to the emotional impact (panic, chaos, and helplessness).

In part three of the novel, her cognitive profile begins to shift to label her emotional states rather than just reacting to them. Still, she finds it difficult to profile emotional states and social subtleties, but with external help, she begins to change. When her uncle asks her how she feels without Rain, she struggles to answer because the emotional states are not naturally profiled in her mind. However, with his guidance, she finally acquires the vocabulary she needs to describe her feelings.

Extract (9): *“How are you doing without Rain?” I’m not sure how to answer that... “Well, without Rain I don’t have to feed her, and I don’t have to walk her” “But how do you feel?” “I feel that I*

would like to find her.” “It sounds like you’re a little lonely,” says my uncle. Now I understand. “Yes, and worried. And sad. (chapter 24:73)

Looking at extract (9) above, one can see that her uncle’s interference provides a crucial bridge between her internal experience and emotional vocabulary. This demonstrates how external support can help autistic individuals foreground and highlight their feelings and emotional states.

Rose’s profiling extends further from external structures to her own emotions, marking a turning point in her identity. She starts to name her emotions and feelings, demonstrating that she is no longer just reacting to external stimuli but pausing to identify and recognise how she feels internally.

Extract (10): “He was right. Is there anything you want to tell me?” I feel confused, but more than that, I feel frightened. “No,” I say” (chapter 41:115).

This context shows that she can observe her internal state and categorize it. Her behaviour shifts from being directed by others to reflecting her feelings. This demonstrates an evolved identity that is self-aware and emotionally mature. This cognitive process is a significant step towards understanding her own mind and feelings.

Part five provides further clarification on this shift as she starts to encode emotion through structured thought. She develops a greater emotional awareness.

Extract (11): “There is an ache inside of me, a pain. Is this what bravery feels like? Or loneliness? Maybe this is an ache of sadness” (chapter 45: 126).

This extract shows that Rose does not simply feel; she actively profiles her emotions. This is identified as a change from her previous avoidance of self-reflection. At the beginning, she navigates her world through external structures such as homonyms, rules, and routines; however, now she starts navigating through her internal emotions, trying to combine emotional concepts like bravery, loneliness, and sadness with the physical sensations of ache and pain.

In sum, the shift in profile shows that Rose’s cognitive attentional frame has expanded. While she relies on external structures to navigate her daily life rather than emotions or social dynamics, at the end of the story, she begins to recognize her feelings and describe more emotive and abstract elements of her experiences. This development demonstrates that her identity is characterized by difference rather than deficiency as she navigates the world through a unique autistic lens.

4.1.2 Scanning

The process of construing a situation in relation to its unfolding over time is what can be understood as “scanning,” a technique used to mirror Rose’s autistic cognitive processing. Ann Martin identifies Rose as a character whose ideas develop systematically, as she processes events selectively, filtering out uncertainty and focusing on things that offer control, predictability, and structure.

Her cognitive processing is characterized by both sequential and summary mental scanning, involving a linear, step-by-step interaction with the external world, which emphasizes rules, precise details, and predictable patterns. It thereby creates a stable, categorized framework for understanding the world. These modes of thinking reflect her autistic identity, where structure provides stability in this emotionally and sensory-overloaded world. Her attention system scans every available data point, treating each piece of information as a distinct, important unit.

Extract (12): “Rain weighs 23 pounds. This is how you weigh a dog: You stand on the scales and weigh yourself. Then you pick up the dog and weigh yourself and the dog together. Then you subtract your weight from the weight of you and the dog together, and that’s how much the dog weighs” (chapter 2:14).

In this context, Rose describes weighing Rain in precise, sequential steps. She gives details of the exact process, transforming a simple task into a rigid, rule-bound procedure that highlights her need for structure and predictability. Moving her attention to each action ensures a complete and accurate representation of the process. It is a reflection of her cognitive process that each step must be processed to understand the whole. Her instructional tone, ‘This is how you weigh a dog’ (extract 12), demonstrates her literal thinking that others require explicit, step-by-step guidance. Moreover, she acknowledges that her rule-bound thinking, especially her fascination with homonyms, sounds unusual among her peers. It is worth mentioning that she does not feel inferior but different from

her peers. She sees her differences as positive.

Extract (13): *“I am the only student in my classroom who’s interested in homonyms. This suggests to me that most kids are not interested in homonyms”* (chapter 3:16).

She mentally summarizes her uniqueness, confidently identifying her difference. She adopts a summary scanning, compressing complex observation into a singular, atemporal truth, *‘I am the only student...’* (extract 13), without expressing her emotions. She understands that others dislike homonyms; however, she does not explain why she loves them or how her affinity for them affects her. This indicates that her attention is on categorizing facts rather than exploring emotional motivations. This mirrors her autistic cognition, in which she analytically notices social patterns but does not instinctively connect them to feelings such as loneliness. She also acknowledges her need for an aide but describes it simply without any emotion (extract 14). Therefore, this demonstrates that she can scan the surrounding events and sense her difference, yet she cannot express her sense of difference in an emotive language.

Extract (14): *“I’m the only student in fifth grade at Hatford Elementary with an aide. This leads me to believe that most fifth-graders don’t need aides* (chapter 9:33).”

Furthermore, processing events objectively rather than subjectively is another characteristic of her mental scanning, which is reflected in her language. The author portrays Rose as someone who relies on measurable, objective information rather than subjective interpretation or emotional frame to construct others’ identities. This is vividly illustrated in extract (15), as she identifies her father’s identity through some objective facts about his age, height, and scar without expressing her emotions or feelings towards him.

Extract (15): *“Wesley Howard is my father and he’s 33 years old. He was born on March 16th during a quarter moon. He’s 6’1” tall. He has a scar on his cheek that is 1.5 inches long”* (chapter 4:19).

As the novel progresses, especially after Rain gets lost, Rose’s mental scanning undergoes significant evolution, adapting, expanding, and integrating new dimensions, particularly in processing uncertainty, emotion, and social complexity. This change is a considerable step in her identity, in which it does not erase her autistic identity but expands it.

Extract (16): *“Rain is lost outside and she isn’t wearing her collar. She has no identification. My father is the one who let her out. That’s why I’m mad at him”* (chapter 20:61).

Rose’s cognitive development highlights that she begins to integrate emotional understanding into her characteristically autistic mental scanning. While she previously scanned the situations in isolated facts, now she extends this to include emotional causation. She mentally scans Rain’s loss as a single gestalt, *‘Rain is lost’*. What is important is that she expresses her anger towards her father, who is the cause of Rain’s loss, showing her emotional causation *‘That’s why I’m mad at him.’* This is a significant step for her to recognize her emotional state and her subjective interpretation of the situations. This is also evident in extract (17), as she expresses her loneliness through logical cause-and-effect reasoning.

Extract (17): *“Uncle Weldon arrives at my house at the usual time. I am waiting for him on the front porch, only now I am alone. This is because my father let Rain outside without her collar during a superstorm”* (chapter 27:82).

Rose’s language reflects her mental scanning of the events as she states her loneliness without Rain, *‘only now I am alone’* (extract 17), which is not part of her routine. She explains the cause of her feelings sequentially, *‘This is because my father let Rain outside...’* This demonstrates that she acknowledges the impact of Rain’s absence on her, showing her cognitive and emotional development. This highlights her growing capacity to hold both factual and affective dimensions in her mental scanning.

Her emotional awareness deepens further as she begins to recognize others’ distress and anxiety. At first, she struggles to scan and recognize others’ emotions; however, she begins to identify this gradually. This shows how the author demonstrates Rose’s autistic identity’s capacity for growth in a unique way. This is clearly illustrated in Rose’s interaction with one of her classmates, Parvani.

Extract (18): *“Tears make wet tracks down Parvani’s cheeks. The room grows quiet...”* *“Do you*

need to step into the hall?" I ask her... "Yes," she replies... Parvani leans her forehead against the wall. I realize I should say something that will comfort her. "Parvani, I thought of a new homonym this morning. A triple. 'Praise', 'prays' and 'preys'. Isn't that good?" Parvani nods her head. "Thank you, Rose"(chapter 27:84).

Here, first, she observes the physical signs of emotion objectively, noting the tears, then the silence. Instead of only reporting them as a neutral fact, she reacts to them, and her question, *'Do you need to step into the hall?'* highlights her awareness and understanding of others' feelings. Her realization to comfort her classmate further illustrates how she gradually begins to recognize social and emotional complexities, although her attempt reflects her neurodivergent mental scanning. In addition, Parvani's response *'Thank you, Rose,* 'suggests that Rose's unique way of caring, while unconventional, can still provide comfort and connection.

Part four of the novel shows that Rose's social interaction with the strangers begins to improve, demonstrating her expanding capacity for social courage and independent action.

Extract (19): *"Can I help you?" Standing behind the counter is a young man wearing overalls and a flannel shirt. My heart starts to pound, but I step up to the counter anyway, and I say, "My name is Rose Howard and I'm looking for the Hendersons who used to live at #2 Slide Road"(chapter 38:109).*

Here, she mentally scans the situation step by step with detail. Although she faces different challenges in social situations, and despite her fear, her attempt to interact with a stranger reveals her remarkable growth in navigating uncertain social situations. Her statement, *'but I step up to the counter anyway (extract 19)'*, indicates a conscious decision to overcome her discomfort.

Finally, from someone whose loneliness is part of her life because of her uniqueness, she shifts to someone who makes a friend and shares the same social interests.

Extract (20): *"Rose, I thought of a triple homonym – 'raze', 'raise' and 'rays'!" I have thought of that triple homonym before, but I know this is not the time to mention it. Instead, this is the time for the feeling of friendliness. Since a friend would probably not say, "I already thought of that," I grin at Parvani and exclaim, "That's a great one!" I put enthusiasm into my voice (chapter 40:114).*

Rose creates a mental sequential scanning so that each action of the event is portrayed and understood. This becomes a significant turning point in her social development, highlighting her growing ability to engage in reciprocal relationships. It shows that she has a moment of connection with her classmate over their shared interest in homonyms. Her statement, *'this is the time for the feeling of friendliness,'* demonstrates her understanding of social dynamics, where the emotional context of the interaction and the feeling of friendliness are prioritized over her desire to show her knowledge, signifying her transition from a state of isolation to one of companionship.

In conclusion, Rose's journey demonstrates that autistic cognition is not fixed but capable of meaningful growth; her mental scanning expands from rigidly structured processing to a more flexible framework that incorporates emotional awareness and social adaptability without erasing her neurodivergent way of thinking. She proves that identity is not about conformity but about the expansion of one's uniqueness in processing the world.

4.1.3 Summary of Identification (Attention) in Martin's Novel

Through the construal operations of profiling and scanning, Rose's attention system in Martin's novel demonstrates a complex cognitive framework that evolves from a rigid, externally structured approach to a flexible, emotionally integrated one. The following table summarizes Rose's attention system:

Table (2)
Rose's attention system (Profiling and Scanning)

Stage	Attention		Identification
	Profiling	Scanning	
part 1&2	Rose profiles external structures. Active voice dominated and she redirects her attention from emotions to a preferred structured domain.	Rose uses sequential scanning and summary scanning. She relies on measurable, factual information rather than emotional interpretation.	Rose's identity is framed as an autistic individual who is identified through distinctive cognitive patterns
part 3	Rose's language expresses loss of control and emotional detachment. She begins to name feelings rather than just reacting to them. She moves from external direction to internal observation.	Rose's scanning extends to include emotional reasoning. She begins to identify and categorize internal feelings. She starts to recognize others' feelings and emotional needs	Transitional identity: shifting from a purely structured to an emotionally aware individual
part 4&5	She actively profiles emotions and analyses internal states. She uses the same systematic approach for feelings as for external	Rose overcomes fear to interact with strangers despite anxiety and prioritizes friendliness and shared interests.	Rose is portrayed as an independent individual engaging in emotional and social strategies.

Rose's cognitive progression from a rigid, structured mind to an emotionally integrated one demonstrates her journey toward adaptation. Initially, she avoids emotional engagement, redirecting her attention to a structured domain. Her language reflects her structured mental landscape that frames her identity around actions and factual information rather than feelings. However, her cognitive pattern shifts after Hurricane Susan and Rain's loss. She begins to profile and scan her emotional states, and uses emotive language to describe them. This progression underscores her identity as dynamic, challenging the notion of autism as a static deficit.

4.2 Positioning (Perspective) in Martin's Novel

The story is narrated from Rose's first-person perspective, allowing readers to experience the world directly through her unique cognitive lens and gain insight into her autistic identity. Her view of the world differs from that of individuals without ASD, giving the reader insight into how she positions herself in the world. This section sheds light on her unique perspective through the construal operations of viewing arrangement and deixis.

4.2.1 Viewing Arrangement

The relationship between the "viewer" and the "viewed" situation helps to understand and emotionally engage with the events. The viewer is the conceptualiser, in this case, Rose Howard, who conceptualises the events and allows the reader to engage and respond emotionally. Focusing on the events, the author, Ann Martin, is the designer who designs the viewing arrangement, and through Rose's voice, she manipulates the reader's stance.

In the early chapters, Rose's viewing arrangement is central to the novel, which is firmly established through her distinctive way of processing information. She conceptualises the events in precise detail, introducing herself using declarative language, and explains that she tells a true story in which the main character is herself. Through this, she allows the reader to view the conceptualized events from two different vantage points: from inside Rose's mental framework, experiencing events as she conceptualizes them, while also being positioned as an external observer.

Extract (21): *“I am Rose Howard, and my first name has a homonym. To be accurate, it has a homophone, which is a word that’s pronounced the same as another word but spelled differently. My homophone name is Rows...I’m going to tell you a story. It’s a true story, which makes it a piece of non-fiction. This is how you tell a story: First you introduce the main character. I’m writing this story about me, so I am the main character” (chapter 1:10).*

In this context, Rose introduces herself as the narrator of the story and the main character. Through her declaration, ‘*I am Rose Howard,*’ she positions herself as the subject of perception, the conceptualizer, and simultaneously, through ‘*I am the main character*’ as the object of perception, the one being viewed. This dual positioning indicates that the reader not only views the world through Rose’s eyes but also sees how Rose perceives herself. Moreover, Rose explicitly introduces her diagnosis, which is high-functioning autism (extract 22), which further shapes this arrangement.

Extract (22): *“My official diagnosis is high-functioning autism, which some people call Asperger’s syndrome” (chapter 1:11).*

In the given extract, the situation “being viewed” is her own neurological identity. She objectifies her condition by stating ‘*official diagnosis.*’ Additionally, by saying ‘*which some people call Asperger’s syndrome,*’ she acknowledges that her object of perception can be viewed from different vantage points. This specific viewing arrangement is crucial because it evokes the interaction between the author and the reader. The author intentionally creates Rose’s narrative voice to state her diagnosis objectively, thereby ensuring the reader interprets Rose’s subsequent actions through the lens of autism, rather than misconstruing them as simple stubbornness and rudeness. This is clearly demonstrated when Rose explains her acute hearing and her behaviour towards noises; the reader can understand Rose’s irritation and experience her sensory overload.

Extract (23): *The clicks our refrigerator makes bother me, and so does the humming sound that comes from Mrs Kushel’s laptop computer... One day in school, I put my hands over my ears and said, “I can’t concentrate! Please turn that thing off.”... I hear clicks and humming and whispers. And conversations in the psychologist’s office when the door is almost closed (chapter 8:31).*

Rose’s conceptualization of her hearing sensitivities demonstrates that her vantage point is dynamically tied to her hypersensitivities to auditory stimuli. She is the invisible viewer, whose internal state of overwhelm, frustration, and pain reflects her language, highlighting that the sounds that neurotypical individuals may overlook overwhelm her. Consequently, the reader is not only told about her hearing sensitivities, but they also experience it.

Furthermore, her struggle with interpreting social cues and understanding emotions is another characteristic of her character. Her list of prepared conversation starters suggests that she views conversation as a task to be accomplished, rather than a social engagement.

Extract (24): *“I ...say, “I live in a house that faces north-east. Which direction do your houses face?”...Flo shrugs her shoulders and leans away from me. “Um, I don’t know.”...she turns to Anders and rolls her eyes at him. Anders rolls his eyes back at Flo and says, “I don’t know either”(chapter 9:34).*

Extract (24) above shows how Rose’s viewing arrangement creates a disconnection between her logical approach to conversation and the social expectations of her peers. She assumes that her peers view the world the way she does. She attempts to construe the concept of ‘house’ as an object of perception, construing it with maximal objectivity. She positions herself as the subject of perception, the one who asks questions and perceives answers; however, her peers refuse this viewing arrangement, as evidenced by their nonverbal cues, such as eye-rolling and shrugging. Here, the author intentionally puts Rose’s behaviour onstage with high objectivity for the reader to observe. The reader’s vantage point is from the outside of Rose, as an external observer. From this position, they can see the failure of the conversation since Flo and Anders express disengagement, a social cue that Rose herself completely misses.

As the novel progresses, especially after Hurricane Susan, Rose’s pre-existing cognitive structure is disrupted by the superstorm and, more importantly, Rain’s loss. As a result, Rose’s viewing arrangement begins to shift slightly, as it expands to include more objective observations of the

physical surroundings and the emotional effect of the storm. Extract (25) is the evidence of this:

Extract (25): *“The wind grows louder and louder. It’s as loud as a train...The rain falls harder until it’s thundering on our roof. Beside me, Rain begins to shake... Something heavy blows against my window. It makes a bang and I grab Rain, but the window doesn’t break (brake)” (chapter 18:57).*

In this extract, the viewing arrangement and its assumed vantage point invoke the dimension of perspective. Both the object being ‘viewed’, which is the storm, and its effect on the viewer, Rose, are included in the viewing arrangement. Here, Rose’s vantage point construes the event through dynamic sensory processing rather than a static one. Her emotional and physical state gradually becomes the object of perception. As a result, the reader can witness her first hesitant step towards emotional recognition as she grabs Rain during the storm’s violence. They have two different vantage points: one from Rose’s perspective, where she experiences the storm through her heightened sensory lens, and another, where she simultaneously recognizes the danger and emotional stakes. In addition to this, recognizing Rain’s loss leads her to deal with emotional consequences.

Extract (26): *“Rain is not there. I call her name again.... I stand at the top of the steps and call, “Rain! Rain! Rain! Rain!” into the grey morning. The only sound I hear is dripping. I begin to breathe very fast. I think this is a sign of panic” (chapter 19:59).*

Here, perspective can be evoked by a vertical viewing arrangement between the overall scene of “Rain’s absence” and its effect on Rose’s emotional state as an object of conceptualization, the viewer, or the conceptualizer, and the reader. The viewer, Rose, perceives the event, ‘*Rain is not there,*’ from her vantage point, then her own body’s response becomes the object of perception. This indicates that she is no longer a viewer; she has become the viewed. The reader’s vantage point is from Rose’s experience of the emotional consequences of ‘panic.’ The author deliberately designs this viewing arrangement to elicit empathy from the reader for Rose.

The viewing arrangement is further expanded so that the reader witnesses Rose’s growing capacity for empathy and her developing moral compass. The discovery of Rain and the realization that Rain belongs to another family introduces a crucial moral dilemma. Her internal conflict is presented with sharp clarity, transforming the reader’s perspective to one of ethical concern.

Extract (27): *But Rain isn’t my dog. Rain is the Hendersons’ dog. She belongs to them.....I know what I have to do. I don’t want to do it, but rules are rules, and I must follow them (chapter 35:102).*

Rose’s perspective is evoked by the viewing arrangement in which she engages, as well as the vantage point she occupies. Rose has two vantage points; one is that she views Rain as her friend, while the second is that rules are rules and she must follow them. This demonstrates that Rose’s perspective shifts from her desires to adherence to higher moral principles. Her rules now extend to profound ethical decisions. The reader can feel her internal struggle and her brave, albeit painful, decision to prioritize what is right over what she wants.

Finally, the viewing arrangement culminates in a broadened perspective that shows Rose’s emotional maturity and growth, as she begins to understand the feelings of others and the complexities of human relationships.

Extract (28): *“I try to think about things from the boy’s and the girl’s perspectives. I decide that they must have been as sad to lose Rain as I was, and that they must feel as happy now as I did on the day Uncle Weldon and I first came to Happy Tails. I think that they still don’t have their home, but now they have their dog back” (chapter 44:123).*

Rose develops from her earlier literal interpretations to attempt to understand others’ perspectives. This shows a progression in her ability to consider perspectives beyond her own. She even establishes a connection between her emotions and others. The reader’s vantage point enables engagement with the emotional complexities of the situation and fosters a deeper understanding of the themes of loss, connection, and the importance of companionship.

In conclusion, through Rose’s dual positioning as both the conceptualizer and object of perception, a dynamic viewing arrangement is constructed that evolves throughout the narrative, mirroring Rose’s emotional and cognitive growth. Additionally, the reader not only learns about autism but

also develops a genuine emotional connection with Rose's unique way of experiencing the world.

4.2.2 Deixis

Deixis is a crucial analytical tool that demonstrates how the reader interprets the speaker's position in a discourse, including their identity, location, and the time they are speaking. Ann Martin creatively characterizes Rose's language as distinctive in using deictic expressions that reveal her perception of the world, her positioning, and her autistic identity construction. Through her precise use of deictic expressions, she constructs a worldview that prioritizes order, security, and predictability while distancing herself from chaos, uncertainty, and social discomfort.

At the beginning of the novel, Rose establishes a distinct deictic centre that is based on her external world of rules, numbers, and homonyms. Her frequent use of deixis 'I' immediately positions her as the central reference point, and her explanations are often directed explicitly to the reader, positioning them as an audience to be educated in her particular worldview.

Extract (29): *"I like homonyms a lot. And I like words. Rules and numbers too. Here is the order in which I like these things: 1. Words (especially homonyms) 2. Rules 3. Numbers (especially prime numbers)" (chapter 1:10).*

As it is shown in this context, the repetition of 'I' establishes her as the deictic centre. This perspective highlights her primary focus on her own unique cognitive processes and interests. Moreover, the deictic 'you' refers to the reader to whom she shares her knowledge and understanding directly. Through this, she positions the reader within her mental framework to view the world through her precise, hierarchical lens, in which this is her system and there is no room for doubt in it. Additionally, her use of personal deixis, especially her strategic employment of the personal pronouns like 'we,' 'us,' 'they,' and 'them,' provides a deep insight into her complex understanding of social relationships and her construction of belonging. These pronouns distinguish between her intimate in-groups and the larger, sometimes confusing out-groups that make up her world. For Rose, the pronouns 'we' and 'us' are only used for a small group of people, those who share some interests with her, indicating her limited and strong in-group bonds. The most prominent example of this in-group bond is Rain.

Extract (30): *"When Rain and I are at home alone together, we sit inside or on the front porch and Rain puts one (won) of her front feet (feat) in (inn) my lap...Rain and I have routines. We like routines" (chapter 2:14).*

The repetition of 'Rain and I' and the subsequent 'we' immediately establishes Rain as an undeniable member of Rose's core in-group. This deictic choice raises the dog to the level of friendship, reflecting Rose's strong emotional bond and shared routine with Rain. This linguistic choice also highlights Rain's role as her guide in a confusing world. Similarly, her relationship with Uncle Weldon is consistently framed in this in-group bond.

Extract (31): *"Then I climb up beside my uncle and tell him if I've thought of any new homonyms... If I have, Uncle Weldon says, "That's great!" Then we try to think of other new homonyms that sound like the new pair... After we discuss homonyms we look out the windows for a while...Finally, we drive up in front of Hatford Elementary"(chapter 6:25).*

Rose's in-group expands to include Uncle Weldon. This inclusion is not arbitrary but explicitly predicated on a shared, deep engagement with her special interest: homonyms. The way she shares homonyms with her uncle and how he encourages her demonstrates their strong bond, reinforcing the inclusive 'we' that Rose uses. This mutual validation highlights the significance and strength of this particular in-group bond for Rose's emotional well-being and her sense of self. However, her father is not part of her in-group because they do not share any interests except for the fact that they share the same circumstances. This categorization reflects her autistic tendency, where people who understand her, respect her routine, and engage with her passions are drawn into her intimate circle. In contrast, those who do not fit into this category, like her father, remain part of a more distant and less understood 'out-group.'

Extract (32): *He looks at me and then at the paper. "I've had just about enough," he says quietly.*

Rain edges herself between my father and me. "If you can't control yourself here, at least control yourself at school. I'm sick of this. I'm sick of the notes. I'm sick of the meetings."... My father stoops down and picks up the crumpled paper. "Not another word about homonyms"(chapter 17:56).

This extract provides an effective insight into the strained relationship between Rose and her father. Here, she uses the phrase *'my father'* to emphasize that although he is her father, he does not share her interests or understand her. She shows that his frustration indicates that he feels overwhelmed by her behaviour and interests, and that he does not recognize her unique way of thinking. This lack of engagement reinforces Rose's perception of him and positions him firmly as part of the out-group. In addition, her father's repetition of *'I am sick of'* emphasizes that he views her interests and behaviours as burdensome rather than as part of her identity that deserves understanding and support. Mentioning Rain here emphasizes the line between Rose's in-group and the out-group represented by her father. Besides her father, her classmates and teachers also fall into this out-group category because they do not share her intense fixations or comprehend her perspective. Furthermore, the use of spatial deixis, particularly words like *'here'* and *'there'*, demonstrates her need for control over her environment. For Rose, the deictic *'here'* denotes not only a geographical marker but a profound psychological connection that defines her zones of safety, familiarity, and control. It refers to a space where her structured routines are upheld, where she experiences comfort, and where her most significant relationships are nurtured. For Rose, her house is the place where she feels comfortable and safe. It is the place that she associates with *'here.'*

Extract (33): *"When Rain and I are at home alone together, we sit inside or on the front porch and Rain puts one (won) of her front feet (feat) in (inn) my lap" (chapter 2:14).*

Looking at the extract (33) above, one can see that the phrase *'at home'* immediately establishes a deictic centre *'here'* for Rose. It is her comfort place where she feels secure and in control, and also a place where her routines are preserved, like sitting with Rain or listing homonyms. In contrast, for her, the deictic *'there'* often represents uncertainty, discomfort, or even danger, where her rigid structure breaks down.

Extract (34): *"One day in school I put my hands over my ears and said, "I can't concentrate! Please turn that thing off." "What? What thing?" asked Mrs Leibler. "I want Mrs Kushel to turn off her computer," I said clearly, in the way Mrs Leibler has taught me" (chapter 8:30).*

For Rose, the deictic expression *'there'* situates school as a distinct and separate environment from her home. It is a place where she feels out of control and vulnerable. Her action of putting her hands over her ears is a physical manifestation of discomfort in the school environment. Her statement of *'I want Mrs Kushel to turn off her computer'* represents the disturbance of her expected routines, and her request to turn it off reflects her desire for a structured environment that aligns with her needs.

As the novel progresses, especially after the superstorm, Hurricane Susan, happens, some great changes happen in Rose's life that affect her language and her use of deictic expressions. One of the significant shifts is that Rose's in-group expands to include a friend who shares an interest with her. This shift is crucial to Rose's identity, illustrating her capacity to grow and change.

Extract (35): *Parvani cries, "Rose, I thought of a triple homonym – 'raze', 'raise' and 'rays'!" I have thought of that triple homonym before, but I know this is not the time to mention it. Instead, this is the time for the feeling of friendliness. Since a friend would probably not say, "I already thought of that," I grin at Parvani and exclaim, "That's a great one!" I put enthusiasm into my voice... I give her a high five, and then we go back to our compositions. We are both smiling (chapter 40:114).*

This interaction with her friend marks a pivotal moment in her life. Rose is introduced to a friend who shares the same interest. This expands her in-group, which signifies a crucial development in her social identity, as she begins to form a meaningful connection with peers who appreciate her interests. She uses the deictic *'we'*, which represents a sense of inclusiveness with a peer, and it also indicates that she acknowledges a collective identity that includes both herself and Parvani. This reflects her growing sense of belonging and the importance of shared experiences in her life.

In addition, her deictic ‘here’ expands beyond her own home to include Uncle Weldon’s house, where she experiences the same predictability, acceptance, and emotional security. This highlights her emotional growth, in which she learns that safety is not limited to one place.

Extract (36): *Uncle Weldon and I sit on his front porch on a day that seems too hot for early June...Every evening we make dinner together and every morning we talk about homonyms. On the weekends we go for rides in his truck – to the state park, to the museum in Ashford, to an outdoor music festival (chapter 48:131).*

In this context, the language Rose uses to describe her uncle’s house and their routine shows that she feels safe and comfortable and that his home meets all the criteria of her deictic ‘here.’ The structured repetition gives her a sense of predictability and order.

At the end of the novel, Rose’s identity undergoes significant changes while maintaining the core of who she is. Her use of deictic expressions reveals that she learns to navigate the complexity of life without abandoning her need for structure and meaning. Her most significant development in her identity is her realization that she belongs in this world as someone whose unique perspective has value and deserves acceptance, not as someone who constantly adapts or hides her true nature.

4.2.3 Summary of Positioning (Perspective) in Martin’s Novel

The sophisticated positioning strategies position the reader directly within Rose’s autistic perspective. The following table summarizes Rose’s unique perspective through viewing arrangement and deixis:

Table (3)
Rose’s perspective (viewing arrangement and deixis)

Stage	Perspective		Positioning
	Viewing Arrangement	Deixis	
part 1&2	The reader views the world and experiences Rose’s sensory overload and social struggles through her perspective.	Rose establishes a deictic center and a limited <i>in-group</i> (Rain and Uncle Weldon) and an <i>out-group</i> (he father, teachers, and classmates).	Rose positions herself as the center of her narrative.
Part 3	The superstorm, Hurricane Susan, and Rain’s loss disrupt the viewing arrangement. The vantage point expands to include the objective observation of the physical surroundings.	Rose establishes ‘here’ and ‘there’ spatial deictic expressions, in which ‘here’ represents her own home, where she feels safe and comfortable, and ‘there’ represents other places outside her house, where she feels threatened and uncertain.	The reader is positioned to witness Rose’s shift in her character.
Part 4&5	Perspective shifts from Rose’s desires to adherence to moral principles. Growing capacity to understand others’ feelings and relationship complexities.	Rose’s <i>in-group</i> and ‘here’ expands to include a friend, Parvani, and Uncle Weldon’s house, respectively.	Autism is positioned as an identity and a strength.

The reader experiences the world directly through Rose’s cognitive framework. Through the viewing arrangement, they experience her struggles and sensitivities firsthand, and sometimes observe them from an external viewpoint. This intimate positioning allows the reader to understand autism from the inside out. In addition, the deictic expressions reflect her internal boundaries. Both viewing arrangement and deixis evolve when Rose’s identity develops. Expanding the viewing arrangement beyond her internal experience, growing the deictic centre, and widening the in-group demonstrate that personal growth does not require abandoning autistic traits, but rather finding a context where they are valued.

5. Result and Discussion

It is clear from the analysis that examining Rose's language through the cognitive lenses of attention and perspective fundamentally reshapes the literary representation of autism, moving away from stereotypes of autism. The analysis demonstrates that Martin represents autism differently, using negative portrayals positively. For instance, Rose, as an autistic protagonist, is depicted as someone who processes the world differently rather than as a deficient person. Her language usage presents her as a normal person with a unique cognitive pattern who confidently embraces her autistic identity. She follows a rigid routine; however, her need for routine is not stubbornness, it is a reflection of managing her anxiety and creating predictability in a chaotic world. Additionally, her sensory sensitivities are reflected in her language, which is not a sign of aggressiveness, but a different way of processing the world. Her adherence to rules, homonyms, and prime numbers is not an act of rudeness or deficiency, but a structured system that brings her comfort and control. Her literal thinking is also valued for precision and clarity. Thus, it is suggested that Rose's cognitive patterns, which are systematically reflected in her language, highlight that she is not a stubborn and aggressive person, but someone who experiences the world differently. This representation creates a positive autistic identity, refuting the first hypothesis of the study.

Additionally, Rose is identified as a flexible person, as she develops from backgrounding her emotional states to using emotive language to describe her emotions, and from adhering to a rigid routine to someone who gradually learns to adapt to changes. She is also identified as someone who can engage in social relationships when her unique interests and communication style are valued. Moreover, she is positioned as an active narrator of her own story, not as someone of diagnosis or pity. She controls her narrative and expresses her opinions. She is the one who guides the reader to understand and engage with her experiences. This result refutes the second hypothesis of the study. Overall, by combining language structure and cognitive patterns in a complex way, the narrative creates an authentic autistic character who challenges prevailing perceptions and stereotypes. Rose is portrayed as a fully realized individual whose autistic characteristics are essential to her identity and worldview, rather than as a collection of symptoms or limitations. The findings reveal that autistic individuals are ordinary people, possessing brilliant minds and unique perspectives. They have the right to be accepted the way they are and deserve to be treated well.

6. Conclusion

Based on the results and discussions, the current study concludes that the cognitive discourse analysis approach in the representation of autism in Ann Martin's *Rain Reign* exemplifies creating an authentic and empowering neurodivergent voice. Through a comprehensive analysis of the identity construction of the autistic figure, the study demonstrates that autistic identity is portrayed in *Rain Reign* as a highly complex cognitive framework, characterized by precision and ordered cognition rather than as a collection of impairments. Additionally, it is noted that language reflects neurodivergent cognitive patterns systematically. This portrayal challenges stereotypes by reframing the autistic characteristics as cognitive strength that provides stability and meaning. It also shows neurodivergence as a lens through which the world may be viewed differently, and no less meaningfully. It is concluded that the protagonist constructs a positive autistic identity, demonstrating that she is not defined by the negative traits, such as rudeness, stubbornness, aggressiveness, and unsociability, initially hypothesized.

Moreover, to further validate and expand upon these findings, the study recommends that future studies investigate autistic representation in literature based on gender by conducting a comparative analysis applying the same cognitive discourse analysis.

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شيكاريه كى گوتارى مه عريفى بى بنياتنانى ناسنامهى ئوتيزم له رومانى رومى مارتندا

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پوخته

بنياتنانى ناسنامه پرۆسه يه كى دينامىكى و نيوه ندگيرى كومه لايه تيبه كه تاكه كان به هويه وه ههستى خويان له ريگهى زمان و گيرانه وه و كارليكرده وه بنيات دهنين و دهریده بېرن. تيكه لكردى تويزينه وه كانى ناسنامه، به تايبهت ئه وانى په يوه ندييان به جورى ناسنامهى ئوتيزم وه هيه، له گه ل شيكاري مه عريفيدا، ئه وه ده خه نه روو كه چون زمان به كارده هينريت بى بنياتنه وه، ده ستر اگه يشتن و ده ستر اكردى وينا كرده دهر و نوبه كانى خوت و ئه وانى ديكه. له ريگهى شيكاريه كى وه سفى چونايبه تى بى زمان، له وان هه ده وه رگيرا وه كانى رومانى رومى رومى ئان مارتن، ئه م تويزينه وه ليه ليكوليه وه له وه دهكات كه چون كاراكتهرى سهره كى رومانه كه، رۆز هاوارد، كه ئوتيزمى هه يه په يوه ندى له گه ل ئه وانى ديكه ده به ستيه. تويزينه وه كه مؤدبلى گوتارى مه عريفى چوار ره هه ندى هارت (2015) په يره وه دهكات، كه تيبدا ته نها دوو ره هه ندى، پينا سه كردن و جيگير كردن، له چوار ره هه نده كه به كارده هينريت بى شيكرده وهى داتا هه ليزير درا وه كان. به پيى دوزينه وه كان، ناسنامهى رۆز له ريگهى كارليكي ئالوزى نيوان ئه م دوو ستراتيزيه وه بنيات دهنريت. سهره راي ئه وه ش، له ريگهى ليكوليه وه يه كى ورد له هه ليزاردنه زمانه وانويه كانى رۆز، ئه وه مان بى دهر ده كه ويت كه چون هه ليزاردنه زمانه وانويه كان له ديدگاي ناوازه ي رۆز و گه شه كردنى سوزدارى و گونجاني كومه لايه تى ئه ودا رهنك ده ده نه وه. له ئه نجامدا، ليكوليه وه له زمان و شيوازه مه عريفه كانى رۆز ئه وه مان پيشان ده دات كه رۆز ناسنامه يه كى ئوتيزمى ئه رينى بنيات دهنيت. هه روه ها ئه نجامه كان پيشنبارى ئه وه ده كه ن كه شيكاري گوتارى مه عريفى رييازى كى گشتگيره، چوار چيوه يه كى به هيز پيشكش دهكات كه قولى شيكاري و په يوه ندى كومه لايه تى پيكه وه ده به ستيه بى تيكه يشتن له ناسنامهى گفتوگوى دهمار جياوازا.

وشه سه ره كيه كان: ئوتيزم، بنياتنانى ناسنامه، شيكاري گوتارى مه عريفى، پينا سه كردن، جيگير كردن

تحليل الخطاب المعرفي لبناء هوية التوحد في رواية مارتن "رين رين"

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المخلص

بناء الهوية عملية ديناميكية، تتم بوساطة اجتماعية، يبني من خلالها الأفراد شعورهم بذاتهم ويعبرون عنه من خلال اللغة والسرد والتفاعل. يُوضح الجمع بين دراسات الهوية، وخاصة تلك المتعلقة بنوع الهوية التوحديّة، والتحليل المعرفي كيفية استخدام اللغة لبناء التمثيلات الذهنية للذات والآخرين، والوصول إليها، والتحكم فيها. من خلال تحليل وصفي نوعي للغة، يتضمن مقتطفات من رواية آن مارتن "رين رين"، تدرس هذا البحث كيفية تواصل الشخصية الرئيسية في الرواية، روز هوارد، المصابة بالتوحد، مع الآخرين. اعتمدت الدراسة على نموذج هارت (2015) الخاص بالخطاب المعرفي ذي الأبعاد الأربعة، حيث تم استخدام بُعدين فقط من هذه الأبعاد الأربعة، وهما، التعريف والتموضع، لتحليل البيانات المختارة. ووفقاً للنتائج، تُبنى هوية روز من خلال تفاعل معقد بين هاتين الاستراتيجيتين. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، ومن خلال دراسة دقيقة لاختيارات روز اللغوية، نكتشف كيف تنعكس هذه الاختيارات في منظور روز الفريد وتطورها العاطفي وتكيفها الاجتماعي. وبالتالي، يشير فحص لغة روز وأساليبها المعرفية إلى أنها تبني هوية توحديّة إيجابية. كما تشير النتائج إلى أن تحليل الخطاب المعرفي نهج شامل، يوفر إطاراً قوياً يجمع بين العمق التحليلي والأهمية الاجتماعية لفهم الهوية العصبية الحوارية غير المتجانسة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التوحد، بناء الهوية، تحليل الخطاب المعرفي، التعريف، التموضع