



The Use of Figurative Language in Film: Exploring Metaphors and Imagery in *Dora and The Lost City of Gold*

Putu Gayatri Dewi^{1*}, Dewa Ayu Kadek Claria¹ and I Wayan Budiarta¹

1. Faculty of Letters, Universitas Warmadewa

*Coresponding author: gayatridewi14@gmail.com

Abstract. *Dora and the Lost City of Gold* presents various forms of figurative language that contribute to the construction of narrative and thematic meaning both visually and verbally; however, studies examining its application in film remain limited. This research aims to analyze the types and functions of figurative language and the meanings embedded within the film. A descriptive qualitative method was employed, utilizing content analysis to examine both visual and verbal elements. The results show that figurative language in the form of simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, and metonymy is used to support character development, plot progression, and thematic expression. Based on Leech's (1981) framework, the analysis reveals the presence of conceptual, connotative, affective, and social meanings intertwined throughout the narrative. These figurative expressions are visually represented in ways that enhance the film's emotional depth and audience engagement. In conclusion, the figurative language in *Dora and the Lost City of Gold* not only enriches verbal meaning but also deepens the visual and emotional layers of storytelling. Thus, the film presents a valuable object for linguistic and semiotic analysis in cinematic studies.

Keywords: Figurative language; metaphor; meaning; semiotics; qualitative analysis

1. Introduction

Film is a rich medium for storytelling, combining various forms of artistic expression such as cinematography, music, dialogue, and visual effects. Among these elements, figurative language plays a significant role in deepening the meaning of the story and evoking emotions. By using metaphors, similes, and imagery, filmmakers can add layers of meaning beyond the literal interpretation of scenes, allowing the audience to connect more profoundly with the narrative. As Rabiger (2009) suggests, visual metaphors are central to film storytelling because they help represent complex ideas through symbolic imagery. This shows how metaphors in dialogue and visuals can shape how viewers perceive characters and conflicts (Claria & Rajistha, 2020).

Figurative language, especially metaphors and imagery, is commonly found across many film genres, but it becomes particularly powerful in fantasy films, where imagination is already abundant (Claria et. All, 2022). One of the most iconic examples of this is *the Dora and the Lost City of Gold*, a fantasy franchise known for its intricate use of metaphors that enrich the magical world depicted in the films. For example, the phoenix, especially Dumbledore's companion Fawkes, serves as a metaphor for rebirth and resilience, symbolizing the cycles of struggle and triumph seen throughout the series (Ostenson, 2014).

In addition to metaphors, visual imagery in *the Dora and the Lost City of Gold* films plays a crucial role. Hogwarts, for instance, is not merely a magical castle but serves as a metaphorical landscape

that represents the complexity and unpredictability of the magical world. McCaffrey (2010) explains that Hogwarts illustrates the interwoven themes of knowledge, power, and mystery, making it more than just a background setting—it becomes a symbolic representation of the characters' journeys of self-discovery.

Dark metaphors also appear frequently throughout the series, particularly surrounding the character of Voldemort. His name alone evokes fear, and as Bailey (2013) notes, Voldemort becomes a metaphor for evil itself, symbolizing the inner and external battles characters face. This ties into Jung's (1969) idea of the 'shadow,' representing the darker parts of human nature that must be confronted. In *Dora and the Lost City of Gold*, Voldemort is the ultimate embodiment of this darkness (Claria, 2021).

Visual cues further enhance the story's emotional depth. Color symbolism is used to great effect, such as the dark tones associated with Dementors or the bright glow of the Patronus charm. As Shanley (2007) points out, the Patronus not only acts as a shield against fear but visually represents hope and inner strength. This type of figurative language adds emotional weight to key scenes, creating a richer and more immersive experience for the audience.

These examples highlight the importance of studying how figurative language, especially metaphors and imagery, functions in the *Dora and the Lost City of Gold* film. While there is ample analysis of the books, less attention has been paid to how these literary devices are visually translated and expanded in the films. This thesis will focus on how the filmmakers adapted James Bobin metaphors and imagery through cinematic techniques, thus creating a layered and deeply engaging narrative experience.

Based on the background of the problems described, this research seeks to address two primary issues. First, it aims to identify the types of meaning present in the film *Dora and the Lost City of Gold*. Second, it explores the various types of figurative language employed throughout the film. These issues are intended to provide a foundation for a deeper understanding of the linguistic and semiotic features that shape the narrative and thematic construction of the film. In particular, the focus will be placed on how meaning is conveyed and reinforced through the use of figurative expressions, such as metaphors and imagery.

The general aim of this research is to enhance the comprehension and appreciation of figurative language, with particular emphasis on metaphors and imagery, as utilized in *Dora and the Lost City of Gold*. This study also aims to contribute to the academic discourse on figurative language in films, especially those adapted from literary or animated sources. More specifically, the research seeks to analyze the types and functions of figurative language in the film, examining how these devices support narrative progression, character development, and thematic expression. Furthermore, this study will explore the visual representation of these figurative elements and their influence on the audience's emotional response and interpretive engagement.

2. Method

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, which is suitable for analyzing figurative language in film. As defined by Bogdan and Biklen (1990), qualitative research is descriptive in nature and relies on data in the form of words or visuals rather than numbers, a view supported by Miles and Huberman (1994). The goal of this method is to gather relevant qualitative data that align with the research objectives. The data will focus on observed phenomena within the film and are collected through visual and textual sources. These will be analyzed using procedures aligned with qualitative content analysis, ensuring that each element of figurative language is interpreted in context.

The primary research instrument used in this study is qualitative content analysis, which systematically examines both visual and verbal elements in *Dora and the Lost City of Gold*. This framework identifies metaphors, imagery, and symbols across selected scenes and focuses on how these elements contribute to character development, plot, and themes. Supplementary materials, including film transcripts and screenplays, will be analyzed to locate verbal metaphors and similes. These findings will then be cross-referenced with the visual representation in the film to understand how linguistic

elements are transformed into cinematic techniques.

The data collection process involves repeated viewings of the film to identify key scenes with prominent figurative language. Special attention will be given to symbolic visuals and dialogue that reflect core themes, such as identity and the journey of self-discovery. These observations will be categorized and compared to the screenplay to trace how verbal metaphors are visually adapted. The final analysis integrates insights from film theory to evaluate how metaphors and imagery enhance the narrative, thematic depth, and emotional resonance of the film's storytelling.

3. Discussion

This chapter will discuss the use of figurative language in the film *Dora and the Lost City of Gold*. In this section, the results will outline the various types of meaning and figurative language present in the film. The analysis will be based on the identification and interpretation of metaphors, imagery, and other forms of figurative expressions that contribute to the narrative and character development. This examination aims to provide a deeper understanding of how these linguistic tools enhance the overall storytelling and thematic elements of the film.

Analysis Types of Figurative Language in the Dora and the Lost City of Gold Film

In this section, we will analyze the types of figurative language used in the film *Dora and the Lost City of Gold*, focusing on how the words and metaphors convey deeper emotional, social, and conceptual layers beyond their literal meanings. This will be based on Perrine's (1977) framework, focusing on Simile, Metaphor, Hyperbole, Personification, Metonymy, Understatement, and Irony.

Simile

Simile is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two unlike things using connecting words like "like" or "as" to highlight specific similarities.

Data 1:

"Exploring the jungle is like unlocking a puzzle." 05:22

Explanation:

Dora compares her exploration of the jungle to solving a puzzle. The use of the word "like" draws a parallel between the act of exploring the jungle and solving a puzzle, suggesting that both activities require patience, critical thinking, and a step-by-step approach. The jungle is not just a physical space but a complex challenge that must be pieced together through careful observation and understanding of the environment.

Data 2:

"You're like a little kid in a candy store." 08:45

Explanation:

This simile compares Dora's excitement and energy to that of a child in a candy store using the comparative marker *like*. The sentence vividly illustrates the character's unfiltered enthusiasm and wonder. According to Perrine (1977), simile is a figure of speech in which a similarity between two essentially unlike things is directly expressed using comparative words such as *like* or *as*. Here, the imagery highlights Dora's emotional innocence and highlights the contrast between her jungle upbringing and the structured urban world. The comparison intensifies the audience's perception of her playful personality through familiar cultural imagery.

Data 3:

"You're running around like you're still in the jungle." 09:30

Explanation:

The phrase uses *like* to compare Dora's behavior in a structured school setting to the unregulated movement typical of jungle survival. The simile functions to underscore her difficulty adjusting to a formal educational environment. Perrine argues that simile helps sharpen perception by making abstract or unfamiliar ideas more concrete through comparison. In this case, the figurative comparison not only illustrates the character's physical energy but also emphasizes the cultural dissonance between wilderness and modern schooling.

Data 4:

"That sounded like a dying walrus." 12:11

Explanation:

This simile, which uses *like* to compare an awkward vocal sound to the noise of a *dying walrus*, functions humorously. It evokes a vivid auditory image and exaggerates the unpleasantness of the sound to enhance comedic relief. According to Perrine, simile enhances communication by encouraging imaginative engagement, and here it adds levity to a scene, reinforcing the film's family-friendly tone while creatively mocking a character's action.

Metaphor

Metaphor is a figure of speech that makes a direct comparison between two unlike things without using connecting words, creating a stronger and more profound connection.

Data 1:

"High school is a jungle." 25:50

Explanation:

This metaphor compares high school to a jungle, emphasizing its chaotic and survival-based nature. The metaphor implies that high school, like a jungle, is an unpredictable, potentially dangerous environment where one must constantly adapt to various challenges. The chaotic nature of high school is reflected in the metaphor, suggesting that students must navigate through social dynamics, pressures, and obstacles, much like animals must survive in a jungle.

Data 2:

"You carry the jungle within you." 27:45

Explanation:

This metaphor suggests that Dora's adventurous spirit is an intrinsic part of her identity.

Context of Figurative Explanation: The "jungle" here symbolizes Dora's courage, curiosity, and inner strength. By stating that she carries the jungle within her, it means that her adventurous, free-spirited nature is not external but deeply embedded in her character. The metaphor implies that Dora's ability to face challenges comes from within, as the jungle represents her ability to embrace risk and adventure wherever she goes.

Data 3:

"Knowledge is the real treasure." 30:05

Explanation:

This metaphor redefines the conventional quest for material wealth by suggesting that *knowledge*—not gold—is the ultimate reward. This shift reframes the adventure narrative into an intellectual journey. Perrine notes that metaphors can revalue concepts by substituting the literal object with an abstract one. Here, the metaphor enhances the moral theme of the story by advocating wisdom over greed, aligning the film with educational and ethical storytelling traditions.

Data 4:

"This school is a jungle." 82:22

Explanation:

This metaphor equates the school environment to a *jungle*, indicating chaos, unpredictability, and the need for adaptation. It uses ironic reversal, turning a supposedly civil institution into something wild. According to Perrine, such metaphors are powerful for their capacity to subvert expectation and offer commentary on social structure. The metaphor supports the film's overarching theme of survival in unfamiliar territory, whether natural or social.

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is an exaggerated figure of speech that emphasizes a point or emotion by overstating something beyond its literal meaning, often used for dramatic effect.

Data 1:

"The jungle is a teacher." 47:18

Explanation:

The jungle is exaggerated as a teacher, highlighting how it provides important life lessons. By calling the jungle "a teacher," this hyperbole elevates the role of the jungle in Dora's development. Instead of merely being a setting for her adventure, the jungle is portrayed as a central force in shaping Dora's character and survival skills. The jungle is seen as an educator imparting wisdom and knowledge through the experiences Dora undergoes, teaching lessons that go beyond what a traditional teacher could offer.

Data 2:

"We're gonna die out here!" 45:00

Explanation:

Spoken during a moment of panic, this line exaggerates the danger of their predicament to heighten tension and drama. Though the characters may not face immediate death, the hyperbole communicates the urgency and seriousness of the situation. Perrine explains that hyperbole intensifies language when ordinary description fails to capture emotional or narrative stakes. Here, it signals escalation and engages the audience viscerally.

Data 3:

"I told you like a million times!" 39:12

Explanation:

This is a clear example of numerical hyperbole, meant to emphasize frustration or repetition. The speaker's exaggeration expresses impatience, not factual quantity. Hyperbole, as per Perrine, enhances emotional expression through absurdly large quantities. The phrase reflects real human dialogue, making characters relatable while adding pace to the interaction.

Data 4:

"That is the biggest bug I've ever seen!" 34:20

Explanation:

Hyperbolic in size description, this line dramatizes the character's encounter with an unfamiliar creature. It reflects fear, disgust, and astonishment in one exaggerated statement. As Perrine notes, hyperbole amplifies sensory experiences for emphasis, particularly effective in visual storytelling where exaggeration matches reaction shots or camera cues.

Personification

Personification is a figure of speech in which non-human things, animals, or abstract concepts are given human traits or characteristics.

Data 1:

"The trees in the jungle seemed to whisper secrets as they swayed in the wind." 33:40

Explanation:

Dora or another character may observe the jungle, noticing the movement of the trees. The trees are personified by suggesting they can "whisper secrets," which gives them human-like qualities. This portrays the jungle as a mysterious, sentient being, as if the trees themselves are alive and holding hidden knowledge. The metaphor evokes a sense of the jungle being a living entity that communicates with those who listen carefully, enhancing the atmosphere of intrigue and adventure.

Data 2:

"The map will show us the way." 42:22

Explanation:

This line personifies the map as an agent with the power to guide. While maps are inanimate, attributing such autonomy suggests destiny or magical realism. Personification, as described by Perrine, enables abstract ideas to be dramatized, and here it enhances the enchanted tone of the film by making objects seem sentient or fated.

Data 3:

"The door groaned open." 65:18

Explanation:

By attributing the human action of *groaning* to a door, the sentence anthropomorphizes the object, emphasizing atmosphere and tone. It contributes to a sense of unease or suspense. Perrine identifies personification as a means to enhance sensory engagement, and in this case, it enriches auditory imagery.

Data 4:

"Time is running away from us." 70:40

Explanation:

Here, *time* is treated as a being capable of movement and escape. This personification dramatizes the sense of urgency and evokes anxiety. It aligns with Perrine's idea that personification can intensify abstract concepts, making them more accessible and emotionally resonant.

Metonymy

Metonymy is a figure of speech where something closely related to an object is used to stand for the object itself, simplifying the message while maintaining meaning.

Data 1:

"Trust is the key that opens all doors." 55:11

Explanation:

This phrase is likely spoken in a moment of reflection on the importance of trust in their journey. In this metonymy, "key" represents trust, symbolizing its essential role in unlocking opportunities and solving problems. The "doors" are metaphors for the various possibilities and challenges one may encounter in life. By using "key" in place of trust, the message is simplified: trust is the necessary tool to access new opportunities and navigate complex situations, making it the gateway to success and progress in relationships or adventures.

Data 2:

"We must protect Parapata at all costs."

Explanation:

In this example, *Parapata* is used metonymically to refer not just to the physical city, but to the sacred knowledge, heritage, and cultural legacy it represents. The character is not solely defending a location but an entire set of values tied to that place. As Perrine suggests, metonymy functions by replacing a concept with something closely related or emblematic. In this case, the city is standing in for the civilization and history it preserves, condensing ideological weight into a single place name.

Data 3:

"Hollywood has no idea what it's like in the jungle." 67:45

Explanation:

Here, *Hollywood* is a metonym for the film industry or mainstream Western media. The speaker uses the place name to critique cultural representations produced by that industry. Perrine (1977) emphasizes that metonymy often uses proper names—particularly of places—to signify institutional systems. In this instance, *Hollywood* represents the creators and perspectives of cinematic storytelling, thus functioning as a critique not of a location but of a worldview.

Data 4:

"Keep your eyes on the compass." 44:11

Explanation:

This utterance uses *compass* as a metonym for direction or orientation. While the compass is a physical object, its use here represents maintaining purpose and staying on the correct path. The focus is not on the tool itself, but on its symbolic role in navigation. Perrine's definition of metonymy includes using instruments or associated tools to represent the action or process they enable. Therefore, the compass here metonymically stands for the concept of staying guided amidst uncertainty.

Analysis Types of Meaning in the *Dora and the Lost City of Gold* Film

In this section, we will analyze the types of meaning used in the film *Dora and the Lost City of Gold*, focusing on how the words and metaphors convey deeper emotional, social, and conceptual layers beyond their literal meanings. We will base our analysis on Leech's (1981) framework of meaning, specifically focusing on Conceptual Meaning, Connotative Meaning, Social Meaning, and Affective Meaning as they relate to specific examples from the film.

Conceptual Meaning

Conceptual meaning refers to the literal or denotative meaning of a word—the basic, dictionary definition. In the context of the film, several metaphors and phrases are used to convey clear and direct concepts, often linking the adventure and themes of discovery with basic, tangible meanings.

Data 1:

"We need to decode the symbols to open the temple door." 03:15

Explanation:

This sentence carries conceptual meaning as it provides a literal instruction about the characters' task in the film. The word "symbols" refers to visual signs or codes that must be interpreted, and "temple door" denotes a specific, physical object. The utterance communicates clear, factual information required for progress in the adventure. According to Leech (1981), conceptual meaning is concerned with the logical or cognitive content of language—what is said literally and objectively. There is no metaphorical, emotional, or social implication here; it is a straightforward reference to solving a real puzzle within the story.

Data 2:

"We must drink the water from this plant to stay hydrated." 06:42

Explanation:

This sentence also reflects conceptual meaning because the words are used in their literal, denotative senses. “Drink,” “water,” “plant,” and “hydrated” are all used based on their dictionary definitions, referring to a survival action based on biological needs. The purpose of the utterance is practical and informational: it tells the characters (and audience) that hydration is necessary and achievable through a known method in the jungle. There are no symbolic or emotional overtones; the meaning is clear and unambiguous. In Leech’s (1981) terms, this represents a classic case of conveying cognitive truth, grounded in physical reality.

Data 3:

"We need to follow the compass to find the ruins." 10:20

Explanation:

This utterance represents conceptual meaning because the lexical item *compass* is used in its literal sense, referring to a real-world navigational instrument. The sentence conveys a clear direction that is factual and objective. There is no metaphor or emotional value attached to the word; it functions strictly to inform the listener about the method used in finding the ruins. According to Leech (1981), conceptual meaning is concerned with the logical, cognitive content of an expression, and this utterance exemplifies such by maintaining its dictionary definition without relying on any associative or figurative dimension.

Data 4:

"We are looking for Parapata, the lost Incan city." 13:55

Explanation:

The phrase *the lost Incan city* is a direct and explicit reference to Parapata, a legendary location in the storyline. The utterance is delivered with factual intent, aligning with the conceptual framework of meaning where terms denote specific entities in the real or fictional world. This sentence is devoid of symbolic or connotative undertones. It simply identifies the geographical objective of the characters, fulfilling the function of delivering clear, referential information in accordance with Leech’s classification of conceptual meaning.

Data 5:

"It's just quicksand. Stay calm and move slowly." 16:40

Explanation:

In this line, the word *quicksand* is employed literally to denote a type of terrain that poses a physical danger by pulling objects downward. The statement is made to inform and instruct, lacking any metaphorical or emotional overlay. It is an objective description based on physical reality, thus classifying it under conceptual meaning. The speaker’s intention is to convey scientific or practical information about how to handle the situation, matching Leech’s definition of conceptual meaning as the basic, core content conveyed by language.

Connotative Meaning

Connotative meaning refers to the emotional or cultural associations that words carry beyond their literal definition. It adds depth and symbolism to words based on the context, emotions, or societal perceptions associated with them.

Data 1:

"Trust is the real treasure." 22:22

Explanation:

This phrase is a metaphor, comparing trust to a treasure. In a literal sense, treasure refers to valuable physical objects like gold or jewels. However, in this context, "treasure" symbolizes trust as something precious, rare, and essential for survival. The connotative meaning highlights the non-material

value of trust in human relationships. The phrase suggests that trust is more valuable than material wealth. Throughout the film, Dora must navigate friendships, betrayals, and alliances, reinforcing that trust is the foundation of teamwork and success. The phrase emotionally resonates with the audience, reminding them that strong relationships, not riches, are the true rewards of any journey.

Data 2:

"The golden treasure glimmered, reflecting the hopes of the explorers." 24:10

Explanation:

Here, the golden treasure is not just gold but a symbol of the explorers' hopes and dreams. The glimmering treasure metaphor suggests that the explorers' aspirations and desires are intertwined with their material goal. This phrase strengthens the connotative meaning by connecting material wealth with emotional desires. The glimmering treasure reflects the dreams, aspirations, and success that the explorers hope to find, highlighting how the material goal is imbued with personal significance. The audience understands that while the gold is physically valuable, it is the emotional fulfillment of achieving their goals that gives it meaning.

Data 3:

"Jungle changes you." 28:00

Explanation:

This utterance is rich in connotative meaning. Literally, a jungle is a physical environment, but here it implies a deeper transformation of the human spirit and perspective. The statement suggests that enduring life in the jungle alters one's character, making a person stronger, wiser, or more aware. The jungle connotes challenge, survival, and personal growth, which are not inherent in its denotative meaning. This aligns with Leech's (1981) view that connotative meaning reflects the associative values and emotional undertones carried by words due to cultural and psychological factors.

Data 4:

"They only want the gold, not the truth." 29:45

Explanation:

In this sentence, *gold* symbolizes more than just a precious metal—it represents greed, corruption, and materialistic intent. The utterance implies a moral judgment about the antagonists' motives. The word *truth*, in contrast, connotes integrity, knowledge, and authenticity. This juxtaposition enhances the connotative meaning by contrasting shallow desire with deeper value. The use of *gold* and *truth* thus reflects meanings shaped by ideology and societal values, which fall under the connotative dimension as described by Leech (1981).

Data 5:

"She's not just a kid, she's a warrior." 32:30

Explanation:

The word *warrior* is not used in its literal sense to describe someone who fights in wars but rather to represent inner strength, bravery, and resilience. It carries strong connotative meaning, portraying Dora as a courageous individual who defies her young age and societal expectations. The utterance elevates her status and invokes admiration, indicating that the term *warrior* has acquired an affective and cultural connotation beyond its conceptual definition. This is a prime example of how language acquires power through association, as proposed by Leech.

Affective Meaning

Affective meaning conveys the speaker's emotions, attitudes, or feelings through word choice. This type of meaning is used to express emotional states and influence the audience's perception of the characters and their actions.

Data 1:

"Fear is a trap you set for yourself." 36:11

Explanation:

This phrase is a metaphor, equating fear with a trap. While fear is an emotion, a trap is a physical object that captures or restrains. The phrase suggests that fear is self-imposed and can prevent people from progressing. The affective meaning here highlights fear as an internal struggle rather than an external threat. The metaphor evokes feelings of restriction and helplessness, emphasizing that fear is something individuals create in their own minds. This concept aligns with Dora's personal journey of bravery, as she frequently faces danger but chooses to push forward despite fear. The phrase inspires the audience to view fear as a mental barrier that can be overcome.

Data 2:

"The thick fog rolled over the path, swallowing their footsteps." 40:05

Explanation:

This imagery creates a sense of uncertainty and foreboding. The fog metaphorically represents emotional confusion and fear, as it obscures the path and makes navigation difficult. The affective meaning of the fog conveys a feeling of anxiety and unpredictability. It symbolizes the emotional state of the explorers, who must navigate both literal and metaphorical uncertainty. This image enhances the emotional depth of the scene, as the fog represents the mental blockages and fear the characters must face in their journey. It emphasizes the emotional struggle against internal and external obstacles.

Data 3:

"Seriously, you're sending a teenager into a death trap?" 43:22

Explanation:

This utterance exhibits affective meaning through its emotionally charged tone and lexical choice. The phrase *death trap* exaggerates the danger of the situation and communicates fear, outrage, and disbelief. The speaker is emotionally invested, and their feelings of anxiety and criticism are evident. According to Leech (1981), affective meaning reveals the speaker's attitude and emotional state, and this line clearly illustrates such emotion through its rhetorical question and loaded language.

Data 4:

"I miss the jungle. It's the only place that makes sense." 48:33

Explanation:

In this statement, affective meaning is present through the expression of longing and emotional attachment. The speaker is not merely describing a location but conveying a deep personal connection to the jungle as a place of comfort, identity, and meaning. The phrase *makes sense* implies emotional coherence rather than logical structure, indicating that the jungle represents an emotional refuge. This aligns with Leech's affective meaning, where language serves to communicate the speaker's feelings directly.

Data 5:

"This is all my fault." 49:50

Explanation:

This emotionally loaded utterance reveals the speaker's internal guilt and self-blame. The phrase has strong affective meaning because it reflects Dora's psychological state in a moment of crisis. It is not meant to inform others but to release or confess an emotion. The emotional impact is central to the understanding of this line, which illustrates Leech's idea that language can be used to project the speaker's emotional self into discourse.

Social Meaning

Social meaning reflects the social context in which a word or phrase is used, indicating aspects of the speaker's identity such as social class, regional background, or formality.

Data 1:

"High school is a jungle." 25:50

Explanation:

This phrase is a metaphor, directly comparing high school to a jungle without using "like" or "as." It suggests that high school is an environment filled with challenges, competition, and the need for survival skills. The social meaning of this phrase reflects how teenagers perceive high school as a place full of complex social hierarchies and peer pressure. Dora, who grew up in a literal jungle, finds high school even more difficult to navigate because of social norms, cliques, and unwritten rules. The phrase resonates with a universal teenage experience, reinforcing that social survival in school can feel just as unpredictable as surviving in the wild.

Data 2:

"The thick jungle swallowed them whole, its towering trees casting endless shadows." 19:35

Explanation:

This imagery not only describes the physical jungle but can also be interpreted as representing the social pressures that people feel when trying to fit in or adapt. The jungle's overwhelming nature parallels the complicated social dynamics of high school, where individuals can feel lost or overwhelmed. The jungle serves as a metaphor for social environments that are hard to navigate. The towering trees and endless shadows reflect how social interactions can sometimes feel overbearing and inescapable. Dora's struggle to adapt socially in high school is mirrored by her sense of being overwhelmed by social expectations, much like the feeling of being lost in an actual jungle.

Data 3:

"Come on, nerds!" 21:00

Explanation:

This utterance reflects social meaning as it highlights social labeling and peer dynamics. The term *nerds* is commonly used to categorize individuals who are academically focused but socially awkward. Although the term can be humorous or derogatory depending on context, its use here is informal and reveals a speaker's social identity and attitude towards others. According to Leech (1981), social meaning arises from language choices that indicate social relationships, class, or context. This line illustrates how speech reflects in-group and out-group distinctions among adolescents.

Data 4:

"Hola, señora." 17:10

Explanation:

This phrase is a formal greeting in Spanish used to address an older woman respectfully. Its use indicates adherence to cultural norms and polite speech, conveying the speaker's awareness of social roles. Social meaning is evident as the utterance reveals not only linguistic choice but also cultural identity and social intention. As Leech (1981) notes, social meaning relates to the situational use of language, and this greeting demonstrates the function of language in maintaining social decorum and hierarchy.

Data 5:

"You're weird, Dora." 18:45

Explanation:

This line exhibits social meaning as it reflects peer judgment and the use of informal speech to express social deviation. The word *weird* implies nonconformity, and in the social setting of school-age characters, it functions as a label that marginalizes or isolates the addressee. It conveys a social attitude

and relationship—particularly the speaker’s perception of Dora as outside the group norm. This demonstrates how social meaning can be embedded in even short, casual utterances.

4. Conclusion

In *Dora and the Lost City of Gold*, multiple layers of meaning are embedded within the narrative to enrich the story beyond its surface-level adventure. Conceptual meaning is evident in metaphors such as “The map is a key to the past,” where the map is not just a navigational tool but a symbolic object representing the journey toward uncovering historical truths. This aligns with the film’s central theme of discovery and personal growth. Connotative meanings also emerge, particularly in expressions like “Trust is the real treasure,” where abstract concepts such as trust are elevated to a level of symbolic wealth, suggesting that emotional integrity and human connection are more valuable than material gain.

The film further incorporates affective meaning to convey emotional states through figurative language. The line “Fear is a trap you set for yourself” reflects how internalized fear can hinder progress and act as a self-imposed barrier, evoking both psychological tension and emotional vulnerability. Social meaning is also present, particularly in the context of adolescence and high school life. For instance, the metaphor “High school is a jungle” captures not just the physical chaos but also the social complexities and emotional challenges faced by teenagers. These metaphorical comparisons enhance the relatability of the narrative, making the audience reflect on their own personal and social experiences.

Figurative language in the film includes simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, and metonymy, all of which serve to deepen the narrative and thematic content. A simile such as “Exploring the jungle is like unlocking a puzzle” conveys the intellectual and emotional challenges of the journey, emphasizing the skills needed to navigate both the physical and symbolic landscape. Metaphors like “Trust is the key that opens all doors” reinforce the value of interpersonal relationships, while hyperbolic expressions such as “The jungle is a teacher” elevate the natural environment into a source of wisdom. Personification, seen in “The trees in the jungle seemed to whisper secrets,” transforms nature into an active, almost mystical character. Metonymy, particularly in the symbolic use of the “key,” represents trust as a means to gain access to new possibilities. These linguistic choices collectively enhance the emotional resonance and thematic depth of the film.

References

- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1990). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Allyn & Bacon.
- Claria, D.A.K. & Rajistha, I.G.N.A. (2020). Optimalisasi Penggunaan Media Daring dalam Pelatihan Bahasa Inggris Bidang Pelayanan untuk Para Pengemudi Taksi di Desa Sanur Bali. *Dedication: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*. Vol. 4. No. 2. P. 81-92
- Claria, D.A.K. (2021). Leksikogramatika pada Iklan Parfum Power Musk. *LINGUISTIK: Jurnal Bajasa dan Sastra*. Vol. 6. No. 1. Pages 160-168.
- Claria, D.A.K, Artawa, K., Satyawati, M.S., & Putra, A.A.P. (2022). Lexical Borrowing of Covid-19 Terminologies in the Indonesian Language. *Academy Publication Co.Ltd*. Vol. 13, No. 6, P. 1222-1231
- Jung, C. G. (1969). *The archetypes and the collective unconscious*. Princeton University Press.
- Leech, G. N. (1981). *Semantics: The study of meaning* (2nd ed.). Penguin Books.
- McCaffrey, M. (2010). Hogwarts: A metaphorical landscape of magic and mystery. *Film Studies Quarterly*.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. SAGE Publications.
- Ostenson, J. (2014). Metaphors of magic in *Dora and the Lost City of Gold* film: Power, identity, and the battle of good and evil. *Modern Fantasy Journal*.
- Perrine, L. (1977). *Literature: Structure, sound, and sense* (4th ed.). Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Rabiger, M. (2009). *Directing: Film techniques and aesthetics*. Focal Press.
- Shanley, K. (2007). Color symbolism and its role in cinematic visual studies.