

Exploring the Meanings of the Figurative Language in A Dog's Way Home Movie

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates how figurative language expresses deeper meanings and emotional dimensions in the film. While figurative language is widely used in cinematic works, studies that explore its types, implied meanings, and narrative contributions are still limited. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the types and meanings of figurative language found in *A Dog's Way Home*, using M.H. Abrams's classification of figurative language and Geoffrey Leech's theory of meaning. A qualitative descriptive method was employed to analyze selected dialogues and scenes that contained figurative expressions. A total of 64 figurative expressions were identified, with personification (21.9%) and irony (20.3%) as the most frequent types, followed by simile, metaphor, hyperbole, metonymy, paradox, and synecdoche. Each expression was examined to reveal conceptual, connotative, affective, and social meanings. The findings show that figurative language in the film not only serves stylistic functions but also deepens the thematic and emotional aspects of the story. It conveys themes of loyalty, loneliness, resilience, and the strong bond between humans and animals, especially through the portrayal of the protagonist's internal struggles. This study contributes to the field of film and language studies by highlighting the significant role of figurative language in enriching narrative depth. The implication suggests that figurative language analysis can be a useful approach in educational contexts to foster deeper interpretation of film texts.

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INTRODUCTION

Figurative language is a powerful narrative tool that enables authors and filmmakers to convey deeper meanings, evoke emotional responses, and enhance the aesthetic value of storytelling beyond literal interpretation. In cinematic works like

the 2019 film *A Dog's Way Home*, figurative expressions are used to enrich the emotional landscape and thematic depth of the story, particularly in depicting themes such as loyalty, resilience, and the bond between humans and animals. The purpose of this study is to explore how figurative language in *A Dog's Way Home* contributes to the emotional and thematic layers of the film, specifically by identifying and analyzing the types of figurative language used and examining their implied meanings. This research contributes to the broader understanding of figurative language as a narrative tool in cinema, highlighting its role in conveying complex emotional experiences and life values that resonate with the audience. While previous studies have examined figurative language in various films, such as *Kung Fu Panda 3* and *Moana*, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding how figurative language operates in *A Dog's Way Home*, particularly in its portrayal of the relationship between humans and animals, making this study an important contribution to filling this research gap.

The role of figurative language in literature and cinema is not merely ornamental; it serves to deepen the connection between the text and the audience. According to Khadifa et al (2022), figurative language can be classified into figures of thought, which are related to the processing of ideas and imagination, and rhetorical figures, which pertain to the arrangement of words. Both types play a significant role in constructing layered meanings that can be interpreted in multiple ways depending on the audience's perspective. Fardeni & Maulina (2025). argue that figurative language acts as a bridge between the creator and the audience, facilitating the communication of abstract emotions and universal truths in a more engaging and memorable manner. In film, as stated by Ayu & Simanjuntak, (2025), expressions such as metaphors, similes, personifications, and hyperboles not only enhance the aesthetic quality of the narrative but also serve as tools for conveying moral lessons and complex emotional experiences. This is especially true in *A Dog's Way Home*, where figurative language enriches the storytelling by evoking empathy and connecting the audience to the protagonist's emotional journey.

Furthermore, Abrams & Harpham, (2009) explains that figurative language's power lies in its ability to move beyond literal interpretation, prompting viewers to engage cognitively and emotionally with the text. Figurative expressions like metaphors and similes allow filmmakers to create vivid imagery that resonates deeply with the audience. Rofiq & Khasanah, (2022) highlight that figures of speech, such as metaphor and personification, are essential in creating emotional resonance, as they allow abstract concepts to be understood through concrete imagery. In cinematic narratives, these figurative expressions contribute significantly to the emotional depth of the story, fostering an atmosphere where viewers are encouraged to interpret the narrative on a more personal and emotional level. As Sejati & Wijaya, (2024) suggest, understanding figurative language in films provides a lens through which deeper, often implicit meanings can be uncovered, inviting the audience to reflect on the broader themes and values being conveyed. Thus, in *A Dog's Way Home*,

figurative language does not simply embellish the story it serves as a critical element in the exploration of themes such as loyalty, isolation, and the human-animal bond, enriching the viewer's emotional engagement with the narrative.

Figurative language is not only a tool for expressing overt meanings, but it also plays a crucial role in revealing hidden meanings within literature and cinema. Hidden meaning refers to the implicit messages or symbolic interpretations embedded beneath the surface narrative of a literary work, which are not directly stated but must be inferred through careful analysis. Foster, (2014) suggests that most literary works are metaphorical or allegorical, where deeper meanings are concealed behind the literal events of the plot. These underlying messages are often revealed through the use of figurative language, such as symbolism, metaphor, irony, and allegory. According to Abrams & Harpham, (2009), literary devices like irony, symbolism, and metaphor are essential in uncovering these hidden meanings, as they often reflect broader moral dilemmas, social critiques, or existential themes. In this context, figurative language becomes the key to unlocking the layers of meaning that go beyond what is immediately apparent in the narrative.

Geoffrey Leech, (2016) presents a nuanced classification of meaning, categorizing language into seven distinct types: conceptual, connotative, social, affective, reflective, collocative, and thematic meanings. Conceptual meaning refers to the direct, literal interpretation of a word, representing its objective, dictionary definition. In contrast, connotative meaning encompasses the emotional and cultural associations a word may carry, offering a deeper layer of interpretation beyond its literal sense. Social meaning reflects the contextual and relational dynamics within language use, revealing the speaker's social identity, status, and relationships. Affective meaning, meanwhile, conveys the speaker's emotional response or attitude towards the subject, such as joy, sadness, or frustration. Reflective meaning emerges from the interplay of a word's multiple senses, triggering different interpretations based on context. Collocative meaning involves the associations a word has with other words it commonly co-occurs with, establishing conventional patterns of usage. Finally, thematic meaning focuses on how sentence structure and word choice highlight the central themes or focal points in a given utterance. Leech's framework provides a critical lens for analyzing the complex layers of meaning in language, making it particularly valuable for examining how figurative expressions in both literary and cinematic contexts convey nuanced emotional and thematic elements.

Nosi, (2022) emphasizes that uncovering the hidden meaning of figurative language allows readers to gain a deeper understanding of the values and life lessons embedded in the text. This is particularly evident in films, where visual and auditory elements work in tandem with figurative expressions to deepen the viewer's emotional engagement. In the case of *A Dog's Way Home*, the use of figurative language serves as a means of communicating complex themes of loyalty, identity, and resilience, which are not always explicitly conveyed through the dialogue alone. The hidden meanings in these expressions invite the audience to look beyond the

surface and reflect on the broader philosophical and emotional messages of the film. Sejati & Wijaya, (2024) also highlight the role of hidden meanings in media, noting that visual symbols such as colors, facial expressions, and settings when combined with figurative language, create a multi-layered narrative that encourages viewers to engage critically with the text. Thus, uncovering these hidden meanings not only deepens the appreciation of the work but also fosters a more profound connection between the audience and the narrative.

By analyzing figurative language in *A Dog's Way Home*, this study aims to reveal how such expressions contribute to the portrayal of hidden meanings, ultimately enriching the narrative and enhancing the audience's emotional and intellectual engagement. Understanding these implicit messages is crucial in appreciating the full depth of the film, where figurative language acts as a vehicle for communicating universal truths and personal experiences that resonate with viewers on a deeper level.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method to explore the hidden meanings of figurative language used in the film *A Dog's Way Home* (2019). The research design is structured chronologically, beginning with data collection, followed by classification and interpretation. The primary data source is the official movie script, which contains the dialogues and narrative expressions that potentially include figurative language. To enrich the analysis, the movie itself is used as a secondary data source, allowing the researcher to observe how each expression is supported by visual and auditory elements such as tone of voice, character gestures, background, and setting. Data were collected through documentation and observation techniques. Documentation was conducted by closely reading the script to identify stylistic expressions, while observation was used to analyze how those expressions are delivered in the movie's scenes, helping to understand their emotional and contextual significance. The analysis involves identifying the figurative language used, classifying them based on Abrams & Harpham, (2009) theory, and classifying their hidden meanings based on Leech, (2016) theory. This method provides an in-depth understanding of how figurative language functions not only as a literary feature but also as a cinematic tool that enhances emotional engagement and thematic depth in the story.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This study explores eight types of figurative language: personification, simile, metaphor, irony, metonymy, paradox, hyperbole, and synecdoche, based on the classification proposed by Abrams & Harpham, (2009). It achieves two main results:

identifying the types of figurative language used in the movie *A Dog's Way Home* and interpreting their meanings. The data from the movie script was analyzed using this framework. Table 1 presents the classification and amount of each type found in the film, highlighting their characteristics and narrative functions.

Table 1. Figurative language in A Dog's Way Home movie

No	Type of Figurative Language	Amount	Percentage
1	Hyperbole	6	9.4%
2	Irony	12	20.3%
3	Metaphor	9	14.1%
4	Metonymy	6	9.4%
5	Paradox	2	3.1%
6	Personification	14	21.9%
7	Simile	12	18.8%
8	Synecdoche	2	3.1%
	Total	64	100%

Based on the data presented in Table 1, the figurative language used in *A Dog's Way Home* consists of eight distinct types, with varying frequencies. Personification (21.9%) and irony (20.3%) are the most prevalent, followed by simile (18.8%), metaphor (14.1%), and hyperbole (9.4%). The use of metonymy and synecdoche accounts for 9.4% and 3.1% respectively, with paradox also making up 3.1% of the figurative expressions.

Table 2. The Meaning Categories of Hyperbole Dialogues

No	Dialogue	Meaning Category
1	I had to have that squirrel!	Affective, connotative
2	This breakfast was harder to hunt than that squirrel.	Affective, connotative
3	I was hungrier than I'd ever been.	Affective
4	It was like 10 feet long.	Affective, connotative
5	We have two big, slobbery dogs.	Connotative
6	Bella is the most gentle dog in the world	Affective

Based on Table 2, it was found that several hidden meanings are described in the dialogues containing hyperbole. These categories of meanings primarily encompass affective and connotative meanings, with some dialogues revealing both simultaneously. Out of the six dialogues, three dialogues contain a single hidden

meaning: "I was hungrier than I'd ever been" (affective), "We have two big, slobbery dogs" (connotative), and "Bella is the most gentle dog in the world" (affective). Meanwhile, the remaining three dialogues convey more than one hidden meaning, including "I had to have that squirrel!" (affective, connotative), "This breakfast was harder to hunt than that squirrel" (affective, connotative), and "It was like 10 feet long" (affective, connotative). From this analysis, it can be concluded that the affective meaning appears most frequently, emphasizing the emotional states and feelings of the characters, particularly in expressing Bella's vulnerability and internal struggles.

Table 3. The Meaning Categories of Irony Dialogues

No	Dialogue	Meaning Category
1	My first home was full of cats. And I'm a dog.	Affective
2	Lucas, you cannot take care of a dog, okay?	Affective, conceptual
3	Animal Control is lying, and so are you.	Affective, social
4	This is a pit bull. And this is a legal impoundment.	Affective, conceptual
5	It's not breaking and entering, Olivia. It's criminal trespass. There's a difference.	Affective
6	They say a dog is good for depression. Who says that? Oh, I'm pretty sure somebody says that.	Affective
7	The one game I didn't like was Go to Work.	Affective
8	Dutch was happy to see this man, but what kind of a man wouldn't be happy to see Dutch?	Affective
9	We need to feed this girl more, though. You can see her ribs.	Affective
10	If they pick her up again, she'll be euthanized. That's the law. That's basically racism for dogs.	Affective, conceptual
11	Animal Control came, but they didn't get 'em all.	Affective
12	And nobody is pulling anyone over for a dog.	Affective

Based on Table 3, it was found that several category of meanings are revealed in the dialogues containing irony. These category of meanings include affective, conceptual, and social meanings. Out of the twelve dialogues, eight dialogues contain a single category of meanings, while the remaining four dialogues convey more than one category of meanings. Upon analyzing the distribution, it is evident that the most

frequent category of meanings present is affective, which focuses on the emotional states and responses of the characters.

Table 4. The Meanings Categories of Metaphor Dialogues

No	Dialogue	Meaning Category
1	Home is the only place you know.	Conceptual, Social
2	I was Big Kitten's Mother Cat now.	Affective
3	Dutch had finally gone home, to a home he deserved.	Connotative
4	I will always be your Mother Cat.	Affective, connotative
5	It started to feel like home.	Affective, connotative
6	Ever so faintly, I could smell Big Kitten on the wind.	Affective, connotative
7	That man belongs alone.	Connotative
8	Lucas was my person, and I was his dog.	Affective, connotative
9	This breakfast was harder to hunt than that squirrel.	Connotative

Based on Table 4, it was found that several category of meaning are revealed in the dialogues containing metaphors. These category of meaning encompasses conceptual, social, affective, and connotative meanings. Out of the nine dialogues, four dialogues contain a single category of meanings, while the remaining five dialogues express more than one category of meanings. Upon analyzing the distribution, it is clear that the most frequent category of meanings is connotative, which adds emotional and subjective associations beyond the literal interpretation of the metaphors. This emphasizes the deeper layers of meaning related to the characters' emotional experiences and relationships.

Table 5. The Meaning Categories of Metonymy Dialogues

No	Dialogue	Meaning Category
1	Animal Control came, but they didn't get 'em all.	Connotative
2	The pull of that invisible leash, stronger than ever.	Connotative
3	The City Council essentially voted that a dog can be banned because of how it looks.	Connotative
4	It was as if the whole world had forgotten me.	Connotative
5	The White House has nothing on this!	Connotative
6	The City of Denver doesn't allow dogs like Bella.	Connotative

Based on Table 5, it was found that several category of meanings are revealed in the dialogues containing metonymy. These category of meanings primarily encompass connotative meanings. Out of the six dialogues, all six dialogues contain a single category of meanings, each reflecting connotative meanings related to emotions, associations, and contextual understanding. This indicates that metonymy in these dialogues serves to evoke deeper emotional or cultural meanings, rather than simply conveying direct or literal interpretations. Thus, connotative meaning is the most frequently occurring category of meanings in this category.

Table 6. The Meaning Categories of Paradox Dialogues

No	Dialogue	Meaning Category
1	Being a good dog didn't work	Conceptual
2	I was chained to him, yet I was free.	Conceptual

Based on Table 6, it was found that several category of meanings are revealed in the dialogues containing paradox. These category of meanings are primarily conceptual. Out of the two dialogues, both contain a single category of meanings, reflecting the conceptual nature of the paradoxes used. This suggests that paradox serves to convey deeper, often contradictory ideas that invite further reflection on the underlying truths or contradictions within the narrative. Therefore, conceptual meaning is the most frequent category of meanings in this category.

Table 7. The Meaning Categories of Personification Dialogue

No	Dialogue	Meaning Category
1	Dutch wanted me to stay.	Affective, conceptual
2	We made a home together.	Connotative
3	Mother Cat became my mother.	Social
4	And the cats trusted him.	Affective, Connotative
5	Nothing had ever felt as good as being held by him.	Affective
6	My Lucas blanket kept me company.	Affective
7	Come on, Bella, relax	Affective, conceptual
8	Now, do your business.	Social
9	I really liked Doing Laundry.	Affective
10	So smart. Good girl.	Affective, conceptual
11	I loved making Lucas happy.	Affective

12	The streets and the houses started to look familiar.	Affective
13	Oh, my gosh, Bella, we missed you so much.	Affective, social
14	Mother Cat watched me leave, just like Big Kitten did.	Affective

Based on Table 7, it was found that several meanings category are revealed in the dialogues containing personification. These meanings category encompass affective, connotative, and social meanings. Out of the fourteen dialogues, nine dialogues contain a single category of meanings, while the remaining five dialogues convey more than one category of meanings. The most frequent category of meanings present in these dialogues is affective, emphasizing the emotional responses and connections between the characters. This suggests that personification is frequently used to enhance emotional engagement and to convey feelings and emotional states in the narrative.

Table 8. The Meaning Categories of Simile Dialogues

No	Dialogue	Meaning Category
1	It was like 10 feet long.	Connotative
2	It smelled amazing, just like Lucas.	Affective, connotative
3	The cats moved like shadows.	Connotative
4	It was like pain all the time.	Affective, connotative
5	The snow was like ice cream falling from the sky.	Connotative
6	The leash felt like freedom.	Connotative
7	It looked like a cat, but it smelled like a dog.	Connotative
8	The city was like a maze.	Connotative
9	The bed felt like clouds.	Connotative
10	His sadness was like a heavy rain.	Affective, Connotative
11	Like I was safe and happy and warm, all at once.	Affective
12	Freedom felt like a cage without him.	Affective, Connotative

Based on Table 8, it was found that several meanings category are revealed in the dialogues containing similes. These category of meanings primarily consist of connotative and affective meanings. Out of the twelve dialogues, eight dialogues contain a single category of meanings, while the remaining four dialogues express more than one category of meanings. The most frequent category of meanings present in these dialogues is connotative, emphasizing the emotional associations and deeper

meanings evoked by the comparisons. This suggests that similes play a significant role in conveying the emotional depth and subjective perceptions of the characters, enriching the narrative with symbolic meaning.

Table 9. The Meaning Categories of Synecdoche Dialogues

No	Dialogue	Meaning Category
1	All hands on deck.	Connotative
2	The claws were everywhere.	Connotative

Based on Table 9, it was found that several meanings category are revealed in the dialogues containing synecdoche. These meanings category are primarily connotative. Out of the two dialogues, both contain a single category of meanings, each reflecting connotative meanings related to emotions and symbolic associations. This indicates that synecdoche is used to evoke deeper emotional or cultural meanings, enhancing the narrative by representing a part to symbolize a larger whole. Therefore, connotative meaning is the most frequent category of meanings in this category.

Discussion

Hyperbole

In the movie *A Dog's Way Home*, the character Bella utters the phrase “*I was hungrier than I'd ever been*”, which shows hyperbole. This phrase goes beyond physical hunger and is hyperbolic. It reveals Bella's inner suffering, sense of isolation, emotional vulnerability, and her deep longing for home and its bonds, rather than simply serving as a marker of physical deficiency. Necessity is portrayed as a powerful symbol of mental strength and emotional struggle because of the hidden meaning contained in this hyperbolic statement.

The dialogues that include hyperbole as a figurative language device found in the film contain hidden meanings following Leech, (2016) theory, specifically affective meaning. The dialogues utilizing hyperbole are intended to emphasize the speaker's or character's feelings or attitudes, aligning with the category of affective meaning. This type of meaning seeks to portray emotional aspects and refers to elements related to feelings, emotions, and moods. However, previous research by Oktaviani and Fitrawati (2021) in their study “*The Use of Hyperbole in Animated Movies*” showed that hyperbole is often used in animated movies to create humor or increase excitement, but in this case, hyperbole emphasizes the vulnerability and struggle Bella faces. This contrast illustrates that figurative language operates differently, being highly dependent on the context of the story and its thematic intention.

In line with Leech's (2016) theory of meaning, many dialogues featuring hyperbole in *A Dog's Way Home* exhibit a strong alignment with connotative

meaning. Hyperbole, while often used to exaggerate for effect, frequently carries emotional weight that evokes deeper, subjective interpretations. This is particularly evident in dialogue such as “I had to have that squirrel!” and “This breakfast was harder to hunt than that squirrel,” where the exaggerated expressions reflect Bella’s intense emotional states, her hunger, frustration, and vulnerability. These expressions transcend their literal meanings, signaling the characters’ emotional struggles and aspirations. In contrast, some hyperbolic expressions, like “We have two big, slobbery dogs,” may not carry such connotative weight but instead focus on a more neutral or descriptive exaggeration, potentially highlighting the literal size of the dogs without any deeper emotional implication. According to Leech, this contrast can be explained by the varying context in which hyperbole is used whether it’s to communicate strong emotions or simply to make a vivid, exaggerated statement. Hyperbole often brings forth connotative meanings tied to emotional expression; its role can also shift based on context, underscoring the flexible nature of figurative language in cinematic narratives.

By incorporating this analysis into a broader understanding of narrative techniques, it becomes clear that hyperbole significantly enhances character development and emotional engagement in a story. Hyperbole in this situation is more than a stylistic embellishment; it amplifies the thematic resonance of the movie. It shows that extreme emotional expression can reveal truths that cannot be explained in words. These results suggest that teaching students to read figurative phrases as not only a rhetorical tool but also essential for understanding the emotional and symbolic aspects of a story is important for educators and researchers.

Irony

Irony In the line, “*My first home was full of cats. And I'm a dog.*”, there is a clear contrast between what is expected and what happens. This statement describes an unusual situation, such as a dog living with many cats. However, it figuratively describes the irony of the mismatch between self-identity and living environment. As a dog, Bella is in a place that is usually unsuitable for her species, but the house becomes a warm place for her. In this case, the hidden meaning is that home and family are not always formed by sameness; instead, they are formed by natural cross-border acceptance and affection. The strangeness of the situation is not the only thing that causes strangeness, but also the fact that Bella finds love and comfort in a place that should not be suitable for her.

This irony illustrates how non-human characters subtly reflect emotional and social realities. The dialogues in the film that feature irony as a figurative device carry underlying meanings that align with Leech, (2016) concept of affective meaning. The use of irony in these dialogues serves to highlight the emotional state or attitude of the speaker or character, which corresponds to affective meaning. This type of

meaning is concerned with conveying emotions and is related to feelings, moods, and emotional experiences.

According to Leech's (2016) theory of meaning, many dialogues employing irony in *A Dog's Way Home* reveal affective and connotative meanings, highlighting the contrast between expectations and reality in the characters' experiences. For instance, the dialogue "My first home was full of cats. And I'm a dog." presents irony by depicting a mismatch between Bella's identity as a dog and her living environment, which is unexpectedly populated by cats. However, this situation transcends mere contradiction; it reflects Bella's emotional state of confusion and alienation, yet also conveys the warmth and connection that can emerge from differences. The irony here does not merely serve as a rhetorical device, but communicates a deeper emotional truth about the character's sense of belonging and acceptance. On the other hand, some dialogues, such as "Animal Control is lying, and so are you," utilize irony to highlight discrepancies between societal expectations and reality, yet they lack the same emotional depth. This indicates that, while irony is often used to illustrate the gap between what is expected and what occurs, its emotional resonance can vary significantly depending on the context. Leech's theory helps explain this variation by suggesting that irony can either emphasize emotional nuances or merely highlight logical contradictions. In short, irony in this film not only underscores the contradictions within the characters' lives but also enriches the narrative by adding layers of emotional and contextual complexity.

This finding can be compared with previous research by Gustari & Hamidah, (2023), in their article "*Pengontrasan "Ironi" sebagai Wujud Kritik Sosial dalam Antologi Geguritan Nono Warnono Kidung Langit: Kajian Stilistika*" explain that irony in Nono Warnono's geguritan functions as social criticism that reveals the moral decline of society due to the development of globalization, with the use of word contrasts that emphasize the discrepancy between reality and social norms. Who found that irony in narratives is often used to criticize social structures or show discrepancies between what is expected and what happens. Irony in *A Dog's Way Home* is not meant to criticize but to emphasize that differences can be the basis of genuine relationships. This shows that irony has flexibility in terms of function and meaning, which can change depending on the tone of the story and the emotional intent of the text.

According to this analysis, irony in literature and film can serve as a tool to convey a deeper philosophy of life, sincerity, and hope rather than simply being satirical or mocking. Understanding irony in this emotional context can help readers, viewers, and educators understand how narratives shape meaning, foster empathy, and challenge common views of identity and acceptance.

Metaphor

The metaphor in the sentence "*Home is the only place you know*" has a deeper meaning than just referring to a house as a place to live. This sentence describes "home" as the only place where Bella, the main character, can gather with others and

remain confident there. In this expression, “home” symbolizes emotional security, bonding, and independence. This metaphor has a hidden meaning because we know that a person's experiences and feelings in this case a dog-are strongly linked to a familiar place, which gives them a sense of belonging and understanding. Not only does this sentence show Bella's loyalty to her home, but it also shows the boundaries of the world she understands world that is small but full of memories and love.

The research findings reveal that the dialogues containing metaphor as a figurative language device correspond to the type of semantic meaning known as connotative meaning. According to Leech, (2016) theory of semantics, connotative meaning refers to the additional, often subjective meanings or associations that a word or expression carries beyond its literal definition. These meanings are shaped by personal experiences, emotions, or cultural context and contribute to the richness of language. Metaphor falls under this category because it involves the transfer of meaning from one concept to another, thus evoking emotions and associations beyond the literal interpretation of the words used. By linking disparate ideas, metaphors enrich the text by adding layers of implied meaning, which aligns with the notion of connotative meaning.

In accordance with Leech's (2016) theory of meaning, metaphor in *A Dog's Way Home* primarily conveys connotative meaning, enriching the narrative with emotional depth and subjective associations. An example of this is found in the dialogue, "Home is the only place you know," where the word "home" transcends its literal meaning as a physical space, symbolizing emotional security, belonging, and familiarity. This metaphor not only reflects Bella's connection to her environment but also communicates a deeper emotional truth about her need for stability in an ever-changing world. Additionally, metaphors such as “I was Big Kitten's Mother Cat now” serve to further underscore the emotional bond between Bella and the other characters, invoking feelings of care, protection, and responsibility. Unlike more straightforward language, metaphor allows for the expression of complex emotional states by linking concrete concepts with abstract feelings. While some metaphors in the film, like "Lucas was my person, and I was his dog," may seem simple, they encapsulate the profound emotional attachment between the characters, demonstrating how metaphors function as vehicles for conveying nuanced emotional and relational experiences. According to Leech, this aligns with the connotative meaning, as metaphors evoke associations beyond their literal interpretations, offering a richer understanding of the characters' emotional journeys. In conclusion, metaphor in *A Dog's Way Home* serves not only to enhance the aesthetic quality of the dialogue but also to deepen the audience's emotional connection with the characters by revealing the implicit feelings and relationships underlying the narrative.

In *A Dog's Way Home*, the metaphor emphasizes continuity about things not changing even though the world around the character changes contrary to the findings of other studies, such as Ainina, (2023), study “*Metafora dan Simbolisasi dalam*

Film Penyalin Cahaya'' This research uses Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis to reveal the metaphors and symbolizations in the film *Copyist of Light*. Anthropomorphic and abstracting metaphors were found that function to describe various aspects of life, including character development and conflict in the film. Symbols and metaphors are used to represent the social and psychological relationships of the characters in the film's narrative, similar to the use of the metaphor of "home" as a reference point in the characters' unstable world.

The results show that metaphors can help connect a character's feelings with the reader or audience without the need for lengthy explanations. Seemingly simple but deeply meaningful sentences can convey profound messages about feelings such as loyalty, loss, or knowing oneself. Studying metaphors like this in education helps students understand that stories are not just about recounting events, but can also teach about feelings and life experiences through beautiful and meaningful language.

Metonymy

"The White House has nothing on this!" is a metonymy for the White House as the ultimate representation of political power and official grandeur in the United States. However, the character uses the building as a symbol of luxury and prestige, not literally. Bella says this to show admiration or happiness for something she considers more important than a symbol of luxury. The emotional value, comfort, or love she feels exceeds the materialistic measures usually associated with status or power, according to the hidden meaning of this sentence.

In this dialog, metonymy is used, showing how the film's characters use powerful cultural symbols to convey deep personal meaning. This indicate that the dialogues featuring metonymy as a figurative language device correspond to the type of semantic meaning known as connotative meaning. Leech, (2016) defines connotative meaning as the secondary, implied meanings or associations that a word or phrase evokes beyond its primary, literal meaning. These additional meanings are shaped by cultural, emotional, and situational contexts, enriching the communication. Metonymy falls under this category because it involves the substitution of one term for another closely related term, often based on a part-to-whole or cause-and-effect relationship. This transfer of meaning creates a deeper layer of understanding, as the metonymic expression evokes associated emotions, concepts, or ideas, thus fitting into the realm of connotative meaning as described by Leech.

In line with Leech's (2016) theory of meaning, the use of metonymy in *A Dog's Way Home* primarily conveys connotative meaning, drawing on cultural, emotional, and situational associations to enrich the narrative. For instance, the dialogue *"The White House has nothing on this!"* utilizes metonymy, where "The White House" stands as a symbol of political power and prestige, yet it is used here to emphasize the emotional significance of the moment. The expression shifts the focus from a literal reference to political power to a more personal and emotional perspective, suggesting that the speaker values the emotional experience over conventional

symbols of status and wealth. Similarly, phrases such as “The pull of that invisible leash, stronger than ever” use metonymy to evoke a deeper understanding of Bella’s emotional state, representing the intangible force that binds her to her home and her journey. These metonymic expressions do not simply serve as literal references but evoke a range of emotional and connotative associations that deepen the viewer’s engagement with the narrative. Leech’s framework helps clarify how metonymy operates by substituting one concept for another closely related concept, which in turn triggers emotional responses and expands the meaning beyond the literal. Therefore, metonymy in the film functions not only to symbolize larger concepts but also to intensify the emotional and contextual layers of the story. In conclusion, metonymy serves as a powerful tool for conveying connotative meanings, allowing the audience to connect with the characters’ emotional and psychological experiences on a deeper level.

According to Lase et al., (2024), It was found that the use of figures of speech such as metonymy and other figures of speech serves to create a strong rhetorical effect and enhance the aesthetic quality of the film dialog. The use of metonymy in the film’s dialog also involves a shared cultural understanding between the speaker and the audience, thus strengthening the meaning and message conveyed. Bella conveys her emotional perspective on this situation in a concise yet effective way, using a common symbol (the White House) to suggest the difference between sincerity and grandeur. In addition, the sentence has a slight comedic effect, but the meaning remains strong.

The results show that metonymy can be an effective tool to establish an emotional connection between the characters and the audience. This kind of analysis is beneficial in literature learning because it helps students understand that dialog in stories not only provides information, but also shows the way characters see and understand the world. It opens the reader’s eyes to the meaning hidden behind seemingly simple words.

Paradox

The sentence “*Being a good dog didn't work*” contains a paradoxical language style because it illustrates the contradiction between expectations and reality. In most cases, being a good, obedient, and docile person is considered a way to achieve good results. However, the character says in this dialog that being a “good dog” did not result in what was expected. This dialog containing paradox as a figurative language device correspond to the type of semantic meaning known as conceptual meaning. According to Leech, (2016), conceptual meaning refers to the core, basic meaning of an expression, which reflects the literal or logical sense that a word or phrase carries. Paradox fits into this category because it involves statements that initially appear to be contradictory or illogical but reveal deeper insights or truths upon further reflection. Rather than invoking emotional or cultural associations, as with

connotative meaning, paradox highlights complex or nuanced ideas, challenging conventional thought. This use of contradiction within a statement encourages a reconsideration of established ideas, thus making paradox an important tool in conveying conceptual meaning as it invites deeper exploration and understanding of the ideas behind the expressions.

According to Leech's (2016) theory of meaning, paradox in *A Dog's Way Home* primarily conveys conceptual meaning, as it presents seemingly contradictory statements that, upon deeper reflection, reveal profound insights about the characters' experiences. For example, the dialogue "Being a good dog didn't work" illustrates a paradox, as it juxtaposes the expected outcome of being obedient with the reality that it did not lead to the desired results. This contradiction not only challenges the conventional notion of reward for good behavior but also highlights the emotional and existential dilemmas faced by the character. Similarly, the line "I was chained to him, yet I was free" exemplifies another paradox, where the character's sense of freedom is juxtaposed with the physical restraint of being chained. This statement encapsulates the internal conflict and psychological tension experienced by Bella, as she grapples with the complex relationship between her desires and her circumstances. Paradox, in these instances, serves to deepen the viewer's understanding of the characters' inner struggles and the multifaceted nature of their experiences. According to Leech, paradox fits into conceptual meaning as it invites reflection on the logical or philosophical implications of a statement, pushing the audience to reconsider their assumptions. In conclusion, paradoxes in the film function as vehicles for conveying deeper, often contradictory truths about the characters, offering a more nuanced exploration of their psychological and emotional complexities.

The results of research conducted by Faisal & Gusthini, (2024), found that figurative language in the film *"A Man Called Otto"* is used to express the inner conflict and psychological tension of the characters, which is in line with the function of paradox in the dialog of animated films. According to their research, paradox is a tool to convey emotional complexity quickly and deeply. In addition, paradoxical expressions in film dialogue can increase the depth of the character and strengthen the emotional connection between the character and the audience. This is supported by research conducted by Hipson & Mohammad, (2021), on *"Emotion dynamics in movie dialogues"* who suggest that emotional dynamics in film dialog show an increase in the use of negatively charged words and emotional disharmony between characters, which strengthens the depth of character and conflict in the narrative.

The result is that paradox can be an effective tool to convey the psychological shifts of characters and show that life is not always black and white. Sentence analysis like this can encourage students to understand that stories not only convey plot but also convey philosophical and existential meaning through conversation. This method encourages students to see that fictional narratives can be a way to reflect on the complex dynamics of life. It also encourages them to read more deeply into seemingly simple statements and symbols.

Personification

An example of the use of personification language style is the sentence “Dutch wanted me to stay”, which gives human traits to a pet, in this case Dutch, who is shown as having a human-like will. Animals cannot express their wishes in human language, but the main character in the film (a dog named Bella) takes Dutch's behavior as a sign of wanting to keep him. This sentence shows that emotional relationships between animals can be considered equivalent to human relationships. The hidden meaning of this phrase lies not in Dutch's literal language ability, but in the relationship the character has with her environment.

The research findings reveal that dialogues containing personification as a figurative language device correspond to the type of semantic meaning known as affective meaning. According to Leech, (2016), affective meaning refers to the emotional nuances and feelings that an expression evokes, reflecting the speaker's or character's emotions, attitudes, and states of mind. Personification fits into this category because it attributes human characteristics to non-human entities, such as animals or inanimate objects, thus allowing the audience to connect emotionally with these characters or elements. By giving human-like qualities to non-human things, personification amplifies emotional resonance and fosters empathy, enabling the audience to experience the feelings and perspectives of the non-human subject in a more relatable way. This use of emotional projection makes personification a powerful tool for conveying affective meaning in language, particularly in cinematic or literary contexts where deep emotional engagement is central to the narrative.

In accordance with Leech's (2016) theory of meaning, personification in *A Dog's Way Home* primarily conveys affective and connotative meanings, attributing human-like qualities to non-human entities to evoke emotional responses and deepen the audience's engagement with the narrative. For instance, the dialogue “Dutch wanted me to stay” personifies the dog, Dutch, by ascribing human desires and intentions to an animal, thus enhancing the emotional bond between the characters. This expression conveys not only the attachment Bella feels for Dutch but also the deeper emotional resonance of loyalty and companionship. Similarly, the line “My Lucas blanket kept me company” personifies an inanimate object, the blanket, further emphasizing Bella's need for comfort and emotional support in her isolation. These instances of personification do more than simply illustrate the characters' interactions with their environment; they evoke a sense of shared emotional experience, allowing the audience to connect with the characters on a more intimate level. According to Leech, personification falls under affective meaning as it projects human emotions onto non-human subjects, thus enriching the emotional depth of the narrative. By attributing human traits to animals and objects, the film fosters empathy and emotional resonance, enabling the audience to understand and relate to the characters' emotional journeys. In conclusion, personification in *A Dog's Way Home* serves as a powerful tool for conveying affective meaning, transforming non-human

elements into emotional touchstones that enhance the film's emotional and thematic impact.

The results follow Research on the soundtrack of the movie *"How Start Stole All Night Away": A Stylistic Analysis Of Personification In movie Trolls' Soundtracks"* shows that personification serves to strengthen the expression of emotions and character perspectives, and the meaning of songs in movies Kolita, (2023). According to the study, personification can help audiences understand the emotions of non-human characters by conveying a universal story. James, (2019), also emphasized a similar point in his article *"Nonhuman Fictional Characters and the Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis"*, The author highlights that the reader's ability to empathize with an animal character depends largely on how the character is animated with human traits, thus building a strong emotional connection.

Simile

"His sadness was like a heavy rain" is a simile since it employs the conjunction 'like' in comparing two dissimilar things. Here, the character's sadness is equated with heavy rain, symbolically representing how overwhelming his emotions were. Heavy rain is typically visually and emotionally associated with a sad, depressed, and downcast mood. This sentence has a hidden meaning which suggests that the sorrow felt is not only deep but also overwhelming, wetting the entire environment and difficult to manage. It is as if it is torrential rain that cannot be stopped.

The research findings indicate that dialogues containing simile as a figurative language device correspond to the type of semantic meaning known as connotative meaning. Leech, (2016) defines connotative meaning as the additional, often subjective meanings that words or expressions carry beyond their literal interpretation. These meanings are shaped by emotional, cultural, and situational contexts, which allow for a deeper understanding of the expression. Simile fits into this category because it compares two unlike things using "like" or "as," thereby creating associations that go beyond the literal meaning of the words. By evoking specific images or emotions through these comparisons, simile helps convey nuanced feelings or attitudes that may not be immediately obvious from the words themselves. The emotional response triggered by such comparisons enriches the text, making simile an effective tool for expressing connotative meaning, as it invites the audience to interpret the deeper emotional layers associated with the comparison.

According to Leech's (2016) theory of meaning, similes in *A Dog's Way Home* predominantly convey connotative meanings, as they compare two dissimilar things to evoke emotional associations and deepen the audience's understanding of the characters' experiences. For instance, the dialogue "His sadness was like a heavy rain" uses a simile to compare sadness to a torrential downpour, symbolizing the overwhelming and pervasive nature of the character's emotions. This comparison not only paints a vivid picture of the character's sorrow but also intensifies the emotional weight of the scene, inviting the audience to experience the depth of the character's

emotional state. Similarly, the line "The leash felt like freedom" uses a simile to juxtapose the concept of restriction with the feeling of liberation, reflecting the internal conflict of the character who perceives a paradoxical sense of freedom in captivity. Similes such as these rely on familiar and evocative imagery to communicate deeper emotional truths that may not be immediately obvious from the words themselves. According to Leech, similes fit into the realm of connotative meaning as they evoke emotions, associations, and personal interpretations beyond the literal sense of the comparison. In conclusion, simile in *A Dog's Way Home* serves as an effective tool for conveying connotative meanings, enhancing the narrative by enriching the emotional depth and allowing the audience to connect with the characters on a more profound, emotional level.

The study of Similes in works of art such as songs and movies serves to deepen the emotional nuances in the narrative, although they do not always explicitly describe feelings Andrian, (2022). Through the use of familiar and imaginative associations, similes help the reader or audience get closer to the characters. Another study conducted by Sari, (2022). Simile works effectively in describing different emotions and helps readers understand the inner state of characters through real and imagined comparisons.

The results show that simile is a very important literary tool to establish an emotional connection between the audience or reader and the characters. Analyzing these kinds of sentences assists the students in observing how figurative language makes the feelings actual and assists them to learn more about the tale of literature. The similes, besides enhancing the narrative, also increase the depth of the symbolic and emotional value of human experience in literary works.

Synecdoche

The expression "*The claws were everywhere*" refers to an animal or person in general by using a part of it, in this case "claws" or paws. Not only do "claws" relate to the physical characteristics of animals in this movie, but they also represent the dangers or threats that threaten Bella, the protagonist. In terms of strength and influence, each "claw" represents a distinct danger.

The dialogues containing synecdoche as a figurative language device correspond to the type of semantic meaning known as connotative meaning. Leech, (2016) defines connotative meaning as the emotional and associative meanings that a word or expression evokes, which go beyond its literal or conceptual definition. Synecdoche fits into this category because it uses a part of something to represent the whole, or vice versa, and this transfer often carries deeper emotional or symbolic significance. For example, using "wheels" to represent "car" or "the crown" to represent "royalty" not only simplifies the concept but also invokes specific cultural or emotional associations. These expressions tap into the audience's emotions or cultural understanding, enhancing the richness of the communication. Therefore,

synecdoche serves as an effective tool in conveying connotative meaning, as it creates connections between the audience and the broader concept through familiar and emotionally resonant elements.

In line with Leech's (2016) theory of meaning, synecdoche in *A Dog's Way Home* primarily conveys connotative meanings by using a part of something to represent the whole or vice versa, evoking emotional associations and enriching the narrative. For instance, the expression "All hands on deck" uses the part "hands" to represent the whole person, emphasizing the collective effort needed in a challenging situation. In the context of the film, such a synecdoche not only draws attention to the individuals involved but also enhances the emotional weight of the scene by focusing on the human effort and connection required to overcome obstacles. Similarly, the phrase "The claws were everywhere" uses "claws" to represent the broader threat or danger posed to Bella, with the part (claws) symbolizing a larger, more pervasive force. This synecdoche evokes a sense of danger and urgency, underscoring the tension and the emotional stakes of the narrative. According to Leech, synecdoche fits into the category of connotative meaning, as it relies on familiar associations to convey deeper emotional and symbolic significance. By representing a larger idea through a part or vice versa, synecdoche enriches the emotional resonance of the film, allowing the audience to grasp the deeper, often implicit meanings behind the dialogue. In conclusion, synecdoche serves as a powerful tool in *A Dog's Way Home*, adding emotional depth and symbolic meaning that connects the audience more intimately with the characters and their experiences.

Body parts and gestures in films are used as stylistic tools to convey emotions and meanings that go beyond words in dialog Nurhaliza, (2023). This is in line with research conducted by Wardani, (2022), who found that figurative language such as metaphor, simile, and synecdoche provided depth in describing the internal conflicts and desires of the characters in the movie "*The Split*".

The results show that synecdoche can be used in works of fiction to augment the narrative with layers of meaning that allow the audience to understand the character's journey more deeply. This style of language helps students learn to appreciate the symbolic power of language and builds sensitivity to reading texts full of implied and emotional meaning. Synecdoche shows how language can convey significant emotion and meaning in simple but powerful words.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study reveals the significant role of figurative language, particularly hyperbole, irony, metaphor, metonymy, paradox, personification, simile, and synecdoche, in conveying deeper emotional and thematic meanings in *A Dog's Way Home*. The findings show that figurative expressions not only enrich the narrative but also deepen the emotional connection between the characters and the audience, with connotative meanings playing a crucial role in expressing the characters' internal struggles and relational dynamics. The emphasis on emotion and

thematic goals is achieved through the use of figurative language, particularly through dialogues designed to reveal meaning across various categories, such as affective, connotative, conceptual, and social meanings. These categories of meaning were consistently identified in the dialogue examples, highlighting how different figures of speech serve distinct emotional and thematic purposes.

The implications of this study suggest that figurative language analysis can serve as a valuable tool in both literary and cinematic studies, offering new insights into how emotional depth is achieved in storytelling. For future research, it would be beneficial to expand the scope of analysis to explore how figurative language in other films or genres contributes to the development of complex characters and themes. Additionally, comparing the use of figurative language across different cultural contexts could offer a broader understanding of its universal and culturally specific functions in narrative structures.

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